

THE CHRISTIANS

BY LUCAS HNATH

DIRECTED BY
ALEXANDRA KALLIS



A Rebel Phoenix Theatre
Collective Production

May 8–10 & 15–17, 2026

THE CHRISTIANS IS PRESENTED BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH BROADWAY LICENSING, LLC, SERVICING THE DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE COLLECTION. (WWW.DRAMATISTS.COM)

A LETTER FROM OUR ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Welcome, and thank you for being here.

Your presence in this space matters. Independent theatre only exists because people choose to show up, to listen, and to sit together in something live and unfolding. We are grateful you are here with us tonight as we share this story and explore what it means to believe, to question, and to belong.

Growing up in a Baptist church, I learned early that faith has the power to shape every corner of a person's life. For some people, the church is where they first experienced love, belonging, purpose, and hope. For others, it is tied to hurt, shame, fear, or wounds that still linger. And for many of us, both of those truths exist at the same time. That is part of what makes *The Christians* feel so deeply human to me. This play does not ask us to choose between the beauty and the damage. It simply asks us to sit in the tension of both and honestly examine the systems, communities, and beliefs that shape who we are.

What has always struck me most about this play is how fragile and interconnected faith can be. Every belief system is built piece by piece over years of experience, teaching, relationships, and trust. But when one part shifts, even slightly, it can change everything connected to it. One question can unravel certainty. One new understanding can force us to reevaluate the foundation beneath us. *The Christians* explores that unraveling with incredible compassion. It does not hand us answers. Instead, it asks us to wrestle with doubt, conviction, loyalty, fear, and the impossible complexity of trying to lead people while also trying to remain honest with yourself.

I am incredibly proud of our director, Alexandra Kallis, and this beautiful cast for the honesty and vulnerability they brought into this room every single day. This company is made up of people from completely different walks of life, with different experiences, different relationships to religion, and different stories they carry with them. Watching those stories collide and connect through this process has been one of the most meaningful parts of creating this production. Together, they have built something truly remarkable, something compassionate, messy, challenging, and deeply alive. Presenting this play inside a former church makes that experience feel even more personal. No matter what your relationship to faith may be, I hope tonight gives you space to reflect, question, feel, and maybe even see parts of yourself somewhere inside these walls.

Thank you for being part of this experience and for supporting the artists who made it possible.

We're glad you're here.

Nat Coe
Artistic Director
Rebel Phoenix Theatre Collective

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Nat Coe', written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

CAST

Ashwini Chandrashekar Pastor Paul
Jesus 'JD' Diaz Associate Pastor Joshua
Rachel Weiss Pastor's Wife Elizabeth
Kerry Tobias Elder Jane
Sarah Ann Cleeland Congregant Jennifer
Matt Snell Choir (U/S Pastor Paul)
Dawn Gunderson Choir (U/S Elder Jane)

Additional Choir Members

Brianna Fallon, Holly Mutascio, Justin Fallon, Melody Startzell,
Tyler Fleck

CREW

Alexandra Kallis Director
Mikayla Evans Stage Manager
Bennett Allen Wood Music Director
Sarah Ann Cleeland Choir Captain
Austin Shaw Musical Liason
Paige Guerrero Costume Designer
Elias Matthews Lighting Designer
Nat Coe Media Designer & Intimacy Director
Victoria Rose Nail Art Designer
Melany Tate Photographer

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Welcome and Thank You for joining us today at Desert Vision Church!

For Rebel's production of The Christians we have prioritized creating an immersive experience for you, our audience. We have carefully curated this show so that you can experience Pastor Paul's life-changing sermon as one of his congregants. Imagine you've been here attending this church, working to build this community, forming bonds with the leaders and other members...

How would you react in the moment?

What about after you had time to think it over?

What if your spouse, friend or child disagreed with your reaction?

What would you be willing to sacrifice to be part of this community?

What questions can you let go unanswered?

Does the life you have in the here and now matter when compared to eternity?

Lucas Hnath does a beautiful job highlighting the humanity of each character in this play. There are no villains here. There are only people doing their best to do the right thing, to make the right choice. And the stakes could not be higher, because for members of Pastor Paul's congregation, nothing is more urgent than the welfare of one's soul, and no sacrifice is too high when eternal life is on the line.

Theatre, at its best, helps us understand ourselves and those around us in a new, deeper way. So my prayer is that you will leave this chapel with some new perspective... maybe a new appreciation for someone in your life... or a new understanding of a difficult experience in your past... or maybe a new level of compassion for those around you. And I hope you will be inspired to fulfill Pastor Paul's vision for building connections with people from all walks of life.

Enjoy the show!

Alexandra Kallis

Director



About the Author

Lucas Hnath

Lucas' plays include Dana H., The Thin Place, Hillary and Clinton, A Doll's House, Part 2, Red Speedo, The Christians, A Public Reading of an Unproduced Screenplay about the Death of Walt Disney, Isaac's Eye, and Death Tax. He has been produced on Broadway at the John Golden and Lyceum Theatres; Off-Broadway at New York Theatre Workshop, The Vineyard, Playwrights Horizons, Soho Rep, and Ensemble Studio Theatre; and premiered work regionally at the Goodman, Center Theatre Group, Humana Festival of New Plays, Victory Gardens, and South Coast Repertory. He is a New York Theatre Workshop Usual Suspect, a member of Ensemble Studio Theatre, and an alumnus of New Dramatists. Awards: Whiting Award, Guggenheim Fellowship, Kesselring Prize, Outer Critics Circle Award for Best New Play, Obie Award for Playwriting, Steinberg Playwright Award, Windham-Campbell Literary Prize, Lucille Lortel Award, and a Tony Nomination for Best Play.

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Rebel Phoenix Theatre Collective extends our deepest gratitude to the individuals and organizations whose generosity, guidance, and support helped bring “The Christians” to life:

Bill Cook
ASL Impact
Ballet Theatre of Phoenix
Ian Parsons
Liam Powell
All Hearts Cooperative
Victoria Rose and Missfit Nails
Liam Powell
United Methodist Desert Southwest Annual Conference
Russ Burkhammer
Ron Roberts
Rae Lathrop
Fountain Hills Theater

To our extraordinary cast, crew, and Board of Rebel Phoenix Theatre Collective:

Thank you for your heart, talent, and unwavering commitment. And to everyone who offered time, encouragement, resources, or steady belief in this production:

We see you, we appreciate you, and we are grateful beyond words.



BY ROBERT ASKINS
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DIRECTED BY ROB EVANS
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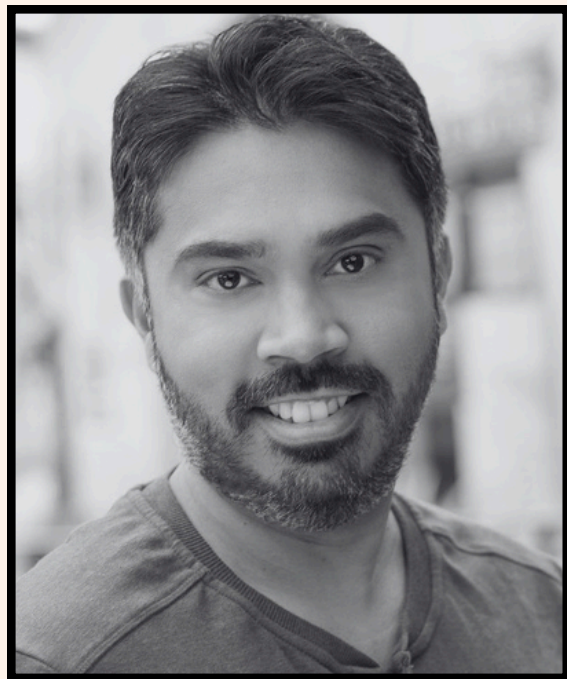
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Plague Play is produced by special arrangement with THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois

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CAST BIOS



Ashwini Chandrashekar ~ Pastor Paul

This is Ashwini's second play and his first with Rebel Phoenix Theater. He plays Pastor Paul and is super thrilled for you to experience the play. Having gone through an ideological transformation of sorts as regards his own relationship with religion, he finds a lot of parallels in the play which inform his preparation for the role. An Engineer by profession, besides his love for acting and the arts, Ashwini loves to travel, cook, go karaoke, and attend comedy shows.

Jesus 'JD' Diaz ~ Associate Pastor Joshua

JD is honored to join Rebel theater and this amazing talented cast of the Christians. Some favorite past productions they have been involved in were Sister Act (Pablo), School of Rock (Doug), Scrooge in Rouge (Lottie), Annie (Rooster), Little Shop of Horrors (puppeteer) and will be playing Bill in an upcoming production of The Guy Who Didn't Like Musical at Main Street Creative Arts Center this June. They are grateful to Ali, Mikayla, and the whole Rebel team for their support and encouragement through this whole process and hope you enjoy the show.



Rachel Weiss ~ Pastor's Wife Elizabeth

Rachel is thrilled to make her debut at Rebel in this powerful production! Rachel caught the acting bug at age 6 playing Frog in Frog and Toad and has been performing ever since. She has had the privilege of performing in 17 states and being asked to sing the National Anthem at a ceremony on Gettysburg Battlefield. Favorite previous roles include Jessie ('night, Mother), The Wicked Witch of the West (The Wizard of Oz, ariZoni nomination), Julie (Jake's Women), Annelle (Steel Magnolias), Rose (Dancing at Lughnasa), Ado Annie (Oklahoma!), and Mary Bailey (It's a Wonderful Life, ariZoni nomination). Special thanks to Ali, Mikayla, Nat, and this wonderful cast and crew! Love to Taylor, Eddie, and Bailey.

Kerry Tobias ~ Elder Jane

After 20 years, Kerry has brushed the rust off herself and is grateful to Rebel Theatre for giving her the opportunity to bust her acting chops again. She last performed in Philadelphia in The Brick Playhouse's Night of A Thousand Plays in 2005 and 2006. Then, prior to that she was at The Player's Ring in Portsmouth, NH as Margaret in Goodly Creatures and Tom/Phyllis/Leslie in Sylvia. She received her BFA in Theatre with a music minor from Denison University umpteen years ago.



Sarah Ann Cleeland ~ Congregant Jennifer

Originally from St Louis, Sarah moved to Phoenix in 2019. She has performed around the valley in various roles such as Miss Shields in A Christmas Story (ABT), Betty Jean in the Marvelous Wonderettes (TheaterWorks, DST), Anytime Annie in 42nd Street, Jolene in Dirty Rotten Scoundrels, and Mush and Katherine U/S in Newsies (Hale). Congrats to the cast and crew! A super special thank you to Ponce, the most incredible and supportive husband I could ask for.

Matt Snell ~ Choir (U/S Pastor Paul)

Matt is thrilled to make his Rebel Phoenix Theatre Collective debut. Some of Matt's favorite past roles include Dr Parker (Bat Boy, Neon Cactus), Cogsworth (Beauty and the Beast, Zao), Daddy Cane (Bright Star, MET) & , Brother Jeremiah (Something Rotten, DST). He would like to thank Ali, Nat & the rest of the RPTC team for introducing him to this thought-provoking play and for entrusting him with this challenge/opportunity. Most importantly, Matt would love to thank Amy & Tyler for their constant love, support, and talking him into that first audition years ago. Happy Mother's Day to Amy and any other mothers that have come out to the May 10th understudy performance!!





Dawn Gunderson ~ Choir (U/S Elder Jane)

Dawn is excited to be in a show with Rebel Phoenix Theatre Collective in its inaugural season! Since retiring from teaching high school English and theatre arts in MN, Dawn splits her stage time between MN & AZ. In her first few years of retirement, she has met so many incredible new friends through being in shows at Mesa Encore Theatre, Zao Theatre, TheaterWorks, & Fountain Hills Theater. Earlier this year, Dawn played Mother Superior in Sister Act and Miss Prism in The Importance of Being Earnest with Mesa Encore Theatre. Some favorite credits: Mama Murphy (Bright Star); Dotty Otley (Noises Off); Clairee Belcher (Steel Magnolias); Chris (Calendar Girls); Grandmama (The Addams Family). Best role, however, is grandma to Truen & Tinsley. This summer, Dawn will return to MN to direct 3 children's shows and teach at Trollwood Performing Arts School. She looks forward to AZ's next theatre season of opportunities!

Brianna Fallon ~ Choir

Brianna (also known as Ms. Bri) is an actor, director, playwright, teaching artist, singer, and musician. She received her AA in Fine Arts with a focus on Theatre from MCC and has studied acting at Scottsdale Conservatory Theatre and the Megaw Actors studio. She is passionate about her job as Academy Manager of Childsplay's Theatre Academy. Some of her favorite roles have been Dragon in "Shrek the Musical", Pennywise in "Urinetown", and Lady in Brown in "For Colored Girls..." When she's not performing, Brianna can be found exploring the outdoors with her husband Justin, designing a graphic for something, or learning a new instrument.



Holly Mutascio ~ Choir

Holly is honored to be a part of this production with Rebel Phoenix Theatre Collective. Some favorite recent roles include Grace McPhee (Between the Lines), Student/Lab Tech (WIT), Ensemble/Little Sally u/s (Urinetown) and Tiblyn (Firebringer). When she isn't on stage, Holly enjoys Sacred Harp Shape Note singing. Holly would like to thank the production team, cast, her family and friends—and especially her wonderful partner James for his unwavering encouragement and support.

Justin Fallon ~ Choir

Justin unfortunately forgot to turn in a bio, but we promise they are much more organized and dependable in rehearsal than this moment might suggest. They have been a valued part of this production process and brought a great deal of care, humor, and hard work to the room throughout the run of the show. While we cannot provide a list of credits, fun facts, or heartfelt thank yous on their behalf, we are incredibly grateful for everything they contributed to this production. Please enjoy their work tonight and pretend this bio was submitted exactly on time.



Melody Startzell ~ Choir

Melody is thrilled to be joining Rebel Phoenix Theatre in their production of “The Christians.” She is a graduate from Arizona State University with a degree in Voice Performance. Past stage credits include Nun/Ensemble in “Sister Act” (Mesa Encore Theater), Elaine in “The Miss Firecracker Contest” (Stage Left Productions), Marjorie in “The Cottage” (Stage Left Productions, Zoni Nominee), Celeste #2 in “Sunday in the Park with George” (TheaterWorks), and Johanna in “Sweeney Todd” (Mesa Encore Theater, Zoni Nominee).

Tyler Fleck ~ Choir

An Arizona native from Chandler, Tyler Fleck is relatively new to the stage. He debuted in 2025 as the villainous Curtis in Mesa Encore Theater’s Sister Act, and recently played Charles Whitmore in AACT’s Shadows on the Canvas. Offstage, Tyler enjoys reading, video games, hosting Rock Band Karaoke, and sharing life with his beautiful wife, Noelle.



CREW BIOS



Alexandra Kallis ~ Director

Alexandra passionately applies both her artistic and organizational skills to bring theatre to life. Ali holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. While studying there she was awarded both the "Outstanding Achievement at Technical Production Track" for her Costume Design work on Sweeney Todd, and the "Outstanding Transfer Student Award" in Directing from Playwrights Horizons Theater School. Much of her life since has been spent raising and homeschooling her two children, including 3 years of full time travel as a family.

Recent theatre credits here in Arizona include Director, Assistant Director, Properties Designer, Costume Designer, Set Designer, and Stage Manager for Mesa Encore Theatre, Actor's Youth Theatre, Inspire Theatre Company, And our own Rebel Phoenix Theatre Collective.

Mikayla Evans ~ Stage Manager

Mikayla's back on the other side of the stage for this production of "The Christians." She has stage managed before with a version of "Peter and the Starcatcher" during her college days. Set building, choreography, costume designing, you name it she dipped her toes in. There is nothing she hasn't tried in the theatrical industry (well, expect maybe lights and sound). Having let theater consume four years of her life and even getting an associates in theater arts, she always knew the stage is where she belonged. Notable performances are Margo in "Bright Star" and Detective and Cora in "Lost Girl" by Rebel. She couldn't be happier to keep working with Rebel.





Bennett Allen Wood ~ Music Director

Bennett has been a professional musical theatre performer in the Valley for many years. They have also music directed at several youth theaters around town. Notable performing credits include Fly More Than You Fall (World Premiere, Broadway World Winner), RENT (Angel), Into the Woods (Jack), and Nevermore (Edgar Allan Poe). Bennett is also a frequent performer at Hale Centre Theatre in Gilbert, currently performing as Arpad in She Loves Me. Bennett would like to thank Nat, Payten, Ali, and the cast and crew for this incredible opportunity, as well as their family, friends, and partner for their endless love and support. and Austin Shaw for being their musical liason allowing the choir to sing with piano scoring. Rebel's mission is deeply important to Bennett and to the community, especially right now. Thank you again, and enjoy The Christians!

Paige Guerrero ~ Costume Designer

Paige would like you to know they are the costume designer for this production, even though they also forgot to turn in a bio on time. While this may raise questions about time management, it does not reflect the level of care, creativity, and attention they have poured into the wardrobe of this show. Every stitch, fabric choice, and last-minute fix has been handled with far more professionalism than this paragraph suggests.



Elias Matthews ~ Lighting Designer

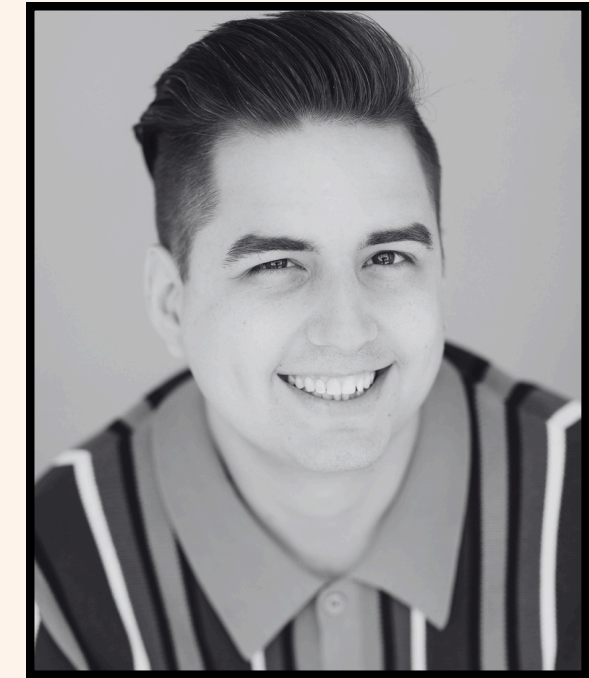
Elias is the lighting designer for this production and did, in fact, forget to turn in a bio on time. However, they did remember how to make the show look good, which we are choosing to focus on.

Please enjoy the show, and know that any moment that looks especially intentional or atmospheric was designed with care, even if this paragraph was not.

Nat Coe ~ Media Designer & Intimacy Dir.

Nat is thrilled to be part of The Christians and to continue building work with Rebel Phoenix Theatre Collective. Previous directing credits include Lost Girl at Rebel Phoenix and Chandler High School, An Inspector Calls at Main Street Creative Arts Center, and 13: The Musical at Greasepaint Youtheatre. Nat has also worked across the Valley as a sound designer, graphic designer, and intimacy director on numerous productions.

Nat is endlessly grateful to the artists, collaborators, and chosen family who continue to support this work and help create bold, meaningful theatre. Thank you for supporting live theatre and local art.



We would like to recognize our Founders Club Members:

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