The Amish Project

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The Amish Project
by Jessica Dickey
What a joy it has been to embark upon this extraordinary journey with students from my past. Six years ago when Morgan landed at Taylor she didn’t come empty handed. She came with passion, wide-eyed curiosity and a play...this play. She loved it then and we have fallen more deeply in love with it in the past four weeks as we have prepared for you. Morgan is now working in Indianapolis area theatre and with the Pendleton prison Shakespeare Behind Bars program, having just co-directed a production there of *Timon of Athens*. Giving through her art form is just her nature.

Erin Gautille, scenic and prop designer on this production, also came eager to pursue her education in theatre. She worked tirelessly as a student and comes back to us with a cognitive and artistic self-confidence that makes me smile as I watch her give instruction, collaborate and offer creative solutions to the problems a play faces. She was the girl who didn’t speak above a whisper and now she shares her knowledge and passion with confidence and generosity...I love that. She will design her first Chicago equity house production this fall and is in consideration of a number of graduate schools for pursing her MFA in design.

Conner Reagan, who’s artistry and technique you will see in the lighting and sound design this evening, is a true miracle of God. After a horrific car accident last year, Conner has felt the slowness that healing requires and the way God can use pain and solitude in our lives to bring about his good purposes. He has worked on a number of productions with us in the past two years as well as lending expertise to theater companies from Bloomington, IN to south Florida. His growth as an artist and as a person is evident in this production.

This play is hard, beautiful and challenging to me. The stories of shootings, crime, evil around the world, give me not only pause but what feel like seasons of stop. They stop me in my tracks, cause me to ask unanswerable questions, drive to me God, away from God and into the safety of hope. I love this story, particularly due to the intentional move toward grace and forgiveness – not rooted in a feeling but in a conviction. This conviction comes from faith. I like that. I like that I don’t have to feel it to be true, I don’t have to feel it to believe it and I don’t have to feel it to act on it.

I loved Jason Francis...he was a friend, an artistic colleague, conspirator and inspiration. That students who would otherwise not be able to attend Taylor come because you all contribute to this scholarship in his name is a JOY! As Velda teaches us in the play; the J is for Jesus, the Y is for you and the O is for others with bridge the two...giving you JOY. “I like that, giving you JOY”. 
Your contribution is a bridge for many students, and hopefully many more, who will be able to come and study, learn and grow as Jason did here at Taylor. We are in our fourth year of dispersing the scholarship and we are up to three award recipients. God is good. If you would like to make a further contribution to this scholarship, please contact me. JOY is for all of us.

This is just the beginning...a year full of truth, goodness and beauty await you here in Mitchell theatre. Be a subscriber, a season ticket holder, come be a part of all that happens here. You’re why we do what we do.

Blessings...and JOY,

Tracy Manning

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THE JASON FRANCIS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

In 2010 Taylor University and the Theatre program lost one of its most beloved and talented graduates, Jason Francis. In his honor a scholarship fund has been initiated which awards an incoming student majoring in theatre. Currently, there are no other theatre scholarships available to new majors.

The faculty joined with Jason’s family and friends to fund the scholarship. We rejoice that we have been able to award this scholarship for a third year to two students who carry on Jason’s legacy.

Our continuing goal is to raise an additional $10,000 to ensure that the principal is large enough to sustain the grants for years to come. Will you consider partnering with us in growing the scholarship? If you would like to be a part of this process you can make a tax deductible contribution in any amount. Simply make your check payable to Taylor University and note “Jason Francis Memorial Scholarship” on the memo line.

Seventy five percent of the revenue from this production will be donated to the scholarship fund. You may also make a donation online at the Taylor website. On the home page scroll to the bottom of the page and click on “Give to Taylor.” Thank you!
Natalie Smiley ('16)
Natalie is a 2016 graduate of the Taylor Mathematics department, and she worked in the Taylor Theatre costume shop throughout her time here. She now works at South Decatur Jr./Sr. High School, where she teaches 8th grade math and costumes for their drama department. She is so grateful to be able to come back home and work in Taylor Theatre again.

Conner Reagan ('17)
Conner studied technical theatre, mechanical engineering, and mathematics at Taylor. Some of his production design credits include Night Watch (Student-Directed), Oklahoma! (Taylor Theatre), Sea Level Rising (Miami Children’s Museum), and ART (New City Players). Currently, he teaches high school physics at Calvary Christian Academy in Ft. Lauderdale, FL; is a member of New City Players, a Ft. Lauderdale theatre company; and does design work for Miami Children’s Museum. connermreagan.weebly.com

Erin Gautille ('17)
Currently, Erin is living in the Chicago area working as a freelance Scenic Designer and Properties Master. Since graduation Erin has worked as a technical director at Cardinal Stage Company in Bloomington, Indiana for their 2017-2018 season. She designed the scenery for their productions of Robin Hood and The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe. Erin has also returned to Taylor to design the scenery for the Lyric Theatre production of Pirates of Penzance and the Taylor Mainstage production of Cyrano De Bergerac. She has also worked as an over-hire carpenter in Chicago. This summer Erin was the Properties Master for NHSI Cherubs program at Northwestern University. Upcoming she has productions with First Floor Theatre and Babes with Blades. Erin is considering starting graduate school to pursue her MFA in Scenic Design in the fall.

SCENIC DESIGNER

LIGHTING DESIGNER

COSTUME DESIGNER
**TECHNICAL DIRECTOR**

Terrance Volden

Terrance is in his seventh year as Taylor Theatre’s Technical Director. He graduated from Sterling College in Kansas in 2008 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication and Theatre Arts. After graduation, he spent almost three years as a missionary outside of Chiclayo, Peru, working for Latin American Children’s Fund as a teacher, pastor, and translator. In 2012, he obtained his education licenses in both Theatre and Vocal Music, also from Sterling. His theatre credits include three years as Scene Shop Supervisor at Sterling College and freelance scene design and construction across Kansas and Oklahoma. His past work at Taylor includes scene designs for *Waiting for Godot*, *Freud’s Last Session*, *The Cherry Orchard*, and *Wit*, along with directing *The Servant of Two Masters*.

**ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR**

Tamara Peachy (‘18)

On May 19th, 2018, Tamara received a bachelor’s degree in Theatre Arts from Taylor University. Tamara stage managed *Arab-Israeli Cookbook*, *Though the Earth Give Way*, and *The Matchmaker* at Taylor University. She was Properties Master for *Freud’s Last Session*. She also worked deck crew for various productions during her time at Taylor University. This is her first time in the role of assistant director. She wants to thank the Manning family and Daphna Tobey for their support. She also wants to send her love to her father and mother, David and Jean Peachy. She is glad she said yes to this project.

**SPECIAL THANKS**

- Lana Wilson
- Linda Lambert
- Bradley Jensen
- The Jensen Family
- Sara Bailey
- Tammy Neel
- Grace Rose
- Lucy Manganello
- Sophie Manganello
- Media Services
- Facilities Services
The Amish Project

All roles performed by Morgan (Turner ‘16) Morton

**Anna** - Amish girl, age 14. Victim of the shooting

**Carol Stuckey** - Widow of the gunman, age 31. English/non-Amish.


**Bill North** - English/non-Amish, 50s. Scholar and professor on Amish culture, as well as friend and spokesman to several Amish families affected by the shooting.

**America** - Hispanic girl, age 16. Pregnant. Works in the local grocery store.

**Eddie Stuckey** - The gunman of schoolhouse shooting, age 33.

**Sherry Local** - English/non-Amish woman, age 53. Resident of Nickel Mines, PA.

**SETTING**

This play is a fictional exploration of a real event that took place on October 2, 2006 in Nickel Mines, PA. Characters are entirely fictional and are not meant to represent real people.
Morgan Morton (‘16)

Morgan is thrilled to be returning to the Mitchell stage in, The Amish Project. She graduated from Taylor University’s Theatre department in 2016 and has since been exploring theatre opportunities in both Atlanta and Indianapolis. Previous theatrical credits include Sense and Sensibility, Rabbit Hole, and A Midsummer Night’s Dream. She was most recently seen onstage as “Marie” in Carmel Community Player’s production of, Is He Dead?. She would like to thank her parents and Madison, this one is for them.

DRAMATURG

The Amish are known as a simplistic people, especially for their barring of technology and their dress code. Additionally, the Amish community is not allowed to play instruments or listen to music (unless it comes from their song book, the Ausbund). Although, the Amish community appears to have more restrictions than freedoms, the Amish consider these restrictions necessary to remain holy and humble before God.

The Amish faith emerged from the Anabaptist movement. The Anabaptists are pacifists, which means they reject war and violence of any kind. Separation of church and state is another tenant of the Anabaptist faith. They also reject infant baptisms. One early Anabaptist leader, Menno Simon, later became one of the founders of the Mennonite faith. Jakob Ammann joined the Mennonite movement, but eventually introduced some controversy by requiring that men stop trimming their beards. He also warned against wearing fashionable clothes and introduced the practice of shunning or excommunication. These new observances led to the formation of another faith, which we now recognize as the Amish faith.

The Amish have a system to welcome others into their tight-knit community. The outsider must first live with the community for an entire year. For that year, the outsider must attend every home Sunday worship service. Since the Amish are committed to hard labor, the outsider must also find a job within the community. They must also learn the unique Amish language, which is Pennsylvania Dutch. Once the year is completed, the outsider must decide if he or she still wants to be Amish. If they decide they still wish to convert, they must learn the ordinances of the church. Finally, the Amish hold an election, where the church members vote whether it is acceptable for the outsider to join the community. If the vote is in the convert’s favor, he or she are welcomed into the community as family.
I have learned through the making of The Amish Project that the boundary between fact and fiction is a fraught one; it feels appropriate to open a window into my negotiation with that boundary.

The facts: The Amish Project is a fictional exploration of a true event. I absorbed a great deal about the Nickel Mines shooting just from watching the news when it occurred, and so in preparation for writing the play, I focused my attention on researching the Amish themselves. Once the play was written and the characters firmly established, I included details about the shooting that I felt would strengthen the texture of the play.

The fiction: I was highly aware through the entire process that somewhere out there the real people who went through this event – the widow of the Nickel Mines gunman and her children the Amish families of the girls who were targeted in the shooting...In an effort to balance the conflicting desires to remain sensitive to the real people who were affected by the shooting, while giving myself creative license to write an unflinching play, I purposefully did not research the gunman or his widow, nor did I conduct any interviews of any kind. The characters in The Amish Project are fictional, and should not be misconstrued as the real people.

The play: July 28th, 2008, my director and I traveled to Nickel Mines to find the location of the shooting. We had read that without an informed guide, it was nearly impossible to find, as shortly after the event the Amish tore down the school and replanted the area so that it is now a simple field where animals graze. The only indications of where the shooting occurred are three maple trees.

As we drove through the small intersections of farmland that is Nickel Mines, I realized that every person we saw, gardening or hanging clothes on the line, had likely grieved the loss of a child or the children of friends...As the sun was setting and we stood quietly looking at the three maple trees and the vacant space where they used to shade the one room schoolhouse, I could feel the tragedy that had occurred here, but even more I could feel the presence of those we had passed en route, the people who carry the memory of that day with them....

It is my private prayer that this play, should they ever know about it, would not hurt them further, but somehow honor the goodness they forged in the face of such tragedy. In my mind, that is the legacy of the Nickel Mines shooting.

-Jessica Dickey
On October 2, 2006, a shooting occurred at the West Nickel Mines School, an Amish one-room schoolhouse in the Old Order Amish community of Nickel Mines, a village in Bart Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Gunman Charles Carl Roberts IV took hostages and shot eight out of ten girls (aged 6–13), killing five, before committing suicide in the schoolhouse. The emphasis on forgiveness and reconciliation in the Amish community’s response was widely discussed in the national media. The West Nickel Mines School was torn down, and a new one-room schoolhouse, the New Hope School, was built at another location.

- 3 A.M.: Charles Carl Roberts IV, age 32, a milk tanker-truck driver, returns to his Georgetown Road home in Bart Township after delivering milk from area farms to a processing plant.
- 8:45 A.M.: Roberts walks two of his children to a nearby bus stop. He returns home and, after his wife leaves, writes several suicide notes.
- 10 A.M.: Roberts drives a borrowed pickup truck to West Nickel Mines School, about a mile away.

  He brings a 9mm semi-automatic pistol, a 12-gauge shotgun, a 30-06 rifle, 600 rounds of ammunition, a stun gun, two knives, gunpowder, a change of clothes, lumber, plastic flex-cuff fasteners and a five-gallon bucket holding tools, tape, screws, bolts and wire. After backing up his truck to the school, Roberts enters the one-room building, holding the pistol.

  He releases all 15 male students, a pregnant woman and three women with infant children. The female teacher and at least one female student flee. Roberts lines all 10 remaining girls students age 6 to 13 in front of the blackboard, ties their feet together or ties them to one another, and barricades the doors with lumber.

- 10:36 A.M.: The teacher reaches a nearby home and calls 911.
- 10:45 A.M.: State police arrive at the school. They try to talk to Roberts, using public-address speakers in their cruisers, but Roberts does not respond.
- SHORTLY BEFORE 11 A.M.: His wife, returning home and finding at least one of his notes, tries to reach Roberts on his cell phone.
- 11 A.M.: Roberts uses his cell phone to call his wife back. He tells her that he’s left notes for her and the children, that the police are at the school and that he will not be coming home.
- MOMENTS LATER: Roberts calls 911, saying he will start shooting if the police don’t leave in 10 seconds. Police trace Roberts 911 call to his cell phone and try to call him back, but can’t get through.

  Roberts begins rapidly shooting the girls in the backs of their heads, firing about a dozen rounds from the pistol and three rounds from the 12-gauge shotgun. He also shoots once at police, missing. Police, without returning fire, storm the school. Discovering the doors are blocked, they enter through the windows. They find Roberts and one girl dead; A second girl dies in the arms of a state police trooper carrying her out of the school. A third dies en route to Lancaster General Hospital. Overnight, a girl taken to Christiana Hospital in Delaware and a girl taken to Hershey Medical Center also die, bringing the number of fatally wounded to five.
Artistic Director.........................................................................................*Tracy Manning
Scenic Designer...........................................................................................*Erin Gautille
Lighting and Sound Designer.................................................................*Conner Reagan
Costume Designer....................................................................................Natalie Smiley
Technical Director...................................................................................*Terrance Volden
Stage Manager/Assistant to the Director....................................................*Tamara Peachy
Master Carpenter.....................................................................................*Andrew Baker
Charge Scenic Artist....................................................................................Maddy Logan
Faith Marsh
Ethan Rice
Brielle Fowlkes
Anna Poole
Properties Master.....................................................................................*Tamara Peachy
*Erin Gautille
Master Electrician..................................................................................*Ty Kinter
Benj Morris
Light Board Operators..............................................................................*Evangeline Bouw
Andrew Wulf
Sound Technician.....................................................................................Ethan Rice
Costume Shop Supervisor........................................................................*Bradley Jensen
Master Carpenter....................................................................................*Andrew Paul Davis
House Manager.......................................................................................*Brandt Maina
Rachel Knight
Emily Klingstein
Katherine Kunz
Olivia Chamberlain
Daniel McHenney
Jessica Dundas
Lydia Jembere
Lakeisha Eglaus
Abigail Pyle
Kyrie Lewis
Rachel Blagg
JD Fritzeen
Hailey Hamilton
Emily Knight
Maggie Cripe
Luke Williams
Ashton McKenzie
Peter Williams
Benjamin Morris
Katherine Kunz
Paige Kennedy
Micah Mosse
Emily Daniels
Kelsey Moody
Miranda Steitman
Anna Kaye Schulte

*Denotes Alpha Psi Omega Membership
National Theatre Honor Society
I discovered this play in the Fall semester of my Freshman year at Taylor, six years ago. I don’t remember how I came across it but I do remember not being able to put it down. I chose a monologue from it for my very first acting class and then four years later for my first professional audition. I’ve read it over and over again, not being able to help but tell everyone around me how powerful of a script it is. This play has always been on my shelf and in close range, but in all the years of talking about it and working excerpts, I could never have guessed that I would be here with the opportunity to share The Amish Project as a fully realized production. It is an honor to be able to come back into this space, in some ways it feels like no time has passed at all. During the rehearsal process I have been reminded how to risk almost everything in every rehearsal in order to find your way to a more believable character, or in this case characters. Taylor Theatre, especially Tracy and Terrance, help make this space a place where you can risk without having to hesitate or fear that you won’t land on your feet. In my experience of working in the theatre outside of Taylor, I have found that I have to create this sort of space for myself. It’s usually not created for you by the director or other cast members, it’s up to me as the actor to risk and fall and learn and grow. Here at Taylor my abilities and skills sharpened and came into focus, preparing me to continue as a disciplined artist out in the professional theatre community. In a beautiful serendipitous kind of way, it sort of feels like I’m back where I began: On Mitchell stage, exploring these seven characters, and under the direction of Tracy Manning who is one of the best collaborators to be in the room with. I am filled with joy to be here with you all and I sincerely hope you enjoy Jessica Dickey’s, The Amish Project.

-Morgan Morton

What is it like being back working with Taylor theatre?

My first impulse to answer this question is to say it’s like coming home. But that feels a bit too simplistic and perhaps idealistic. It is nice to be back in a familiar space where I already know the quirks and even as simple as where things are located. And working with people that you have shared a significant part of life is great. But there is a bit of an oddity to it as well. There is a part of you that wants to go right back to where we all were when we were together but that’s just not the reality, we have all created lives for ourselves since graduation. In a way it’s a wonderful way to remember how we got where we are, and see the way the people we have worked with have grown. It’s an interesting merging of being grown and reveling in that and feeling like you are trying to fit back into your old clothes. But overall it’s nice to work with and see friends again.

-Erin Gautille
This show has so much in it. Every show has its own unique challenges and The Amish Project was certainly no different. It asks a huge amount of versatility from the actress. Which also means it asks versatility of the set. The world has to be able to work with her as she moves from person to person and not overwhelm the single actress on stage. Because of that I went with a minimal and abstract approach. The goal was to focus on the important aspects of how each character’s world feels and the things their stories share. The thing that ties all of these characters together is that this event has broken their typical world apart and turned it on its head. The school house is the central location the story revolves around, but many of the characters would not belong there. I took some of the visuals of the school house and broke it apart and flipped it on its head. The wall of the schoolhouse has become the floor. The walls have dissolved as the usual private lives of a small community are placed on the world stage. The pieces that remain of the structure are pulled apart at the seams. But not truly destroyed, it’s still possible to see how the building goes together but to get it back to normal is going to take a lot of forgiveness and hard work.

Erin Gautille

Three years ago, Morgan, Tracy, Terrance, Erin, and I sat down and first read this play together. At the first reading, I was struck by the diversity of character in this one-woman show—Amish and English, whose stories take place in living rooms, a rural grocery store, a press conference, an Amish schoolhouse, and the countryside around Nickel Mines, PA. But the play itself is more than a collection of characters and settings. It’s an exploration of their intersections—collisions, sometimes—as well as the emerging perspectives on joy, evil, forgiveness, cultural intelligence, and faith in trying times. So, the lighting and sound design must do more than differentiate one character or location from the next. Rather, through these media the people are connected,

Tamara Peachy

ALUMNI REFLECTIONS

My freshman year (2009) introduced me to a community of intelligent, dedicated, and talented individuals. It was never easy to say goodbye, but by the end of my senior year, I was ready to turn the page and write another chapter. However, God took me through a humbling journey during the summer, which changed my trajectory. I tricked myself into thinking that graduation required drastic change and meant moving many miles. In only a few months, I discovered that Upland could remain my home. This small town could be a place to thrive and experience fulfillment, if I only recognized its potential. I joyously returned this season because, truly, Taylor Theatre is a beautiful, magical place where God is honored. I loved working with alumni Morgan, Conner, Andrew, Erin, and Natalie again. We have rich history together and their talents continue to astound me. I look forward to sitting front row for the rest of the season.

Tamara Peachy

DESIGNERS’ NOTES

This show has so much in it. Every show has its own unique challenges and The Amish Project was certainly no different. It asks a huge amount of versatility from the actress. Which also means it asks versatility of the set. The world has to be able to work with her as she moves from person to person and not overwhelm the single actress on stage. Because of that I went with a minimal and abstract approach. The goal was to focus on the important aspects of how each character’s world feels and the things their stories share. The thing that ties all of these characters together is that this event has broken their typical world apart and turned it on its head. The school house is the central location the story revolves around, but many of the characters would not belong there. I took some of the visuals of the school house and broke it apart and flipped it on its head. The wall of the schoolhouse has become the floor. The walls have dissolved as the usual private lives of a small community are placed on the world stage. The pieces that remain of the structure are pulled apart at the seams. But not truly destroyed, it’s still possible to see how the building goes together but to get it back to normal is going to take a lot of forgiveness and hard work.

Erin Gautille
and the constructive interference founded in their coexistence is highlighted. These characters are not isolated; they instead exist for better or for worse in community. Indeed, their overarching presence is felt on stage throughout this story—while we see only one actress, all the characters are superimposed on this one space and time. It is through the lighting and sound design that this picture is painted.

-Conner Reagan

Authenticity was the main goal for the costume for this show. The Amish way of life has such an important role in this story, so representing it as accurately as possible was very important. As I worked on the costume pieces for this show, I learned a lot about the desire of Amish people, and women specifically, to never draw attention to themselves with the way that they dress but to put all the focus on the Lord and on the other people around them. This “Jesus, Others, You” idea is discussed in the play, and that focus has had a significant influence on the way that Amish people dress. This world view is present throughout all of the choices that Amish people make, and it leads them to choose forgiveness over selfishness in all that they do.

-Natalie Smiley
Bradley Jensen
Being the first recipient of the Jason Francis Memorial Scholarship has meant the world to me. I have been in love with Taylor Theatre since I saw a dress rehearsal for Tartuffe my Senior year of high school. Since I’ve been at Taylor I have been able to work on every single production that has come on this stage, from laying out hummus for The Arab Israeli Cookbook to sewing almost eighty costumes for Cyrano de Bergerac, I have grown as an artist, Christian, and person because of my time in Taylor Theatre, and that is only possible because of the scholarships, like this one, that I have received. As I work on these productions and am now—in my Senior year—looking for jobs and graduate programs I am reminded of Jason Francis’ search for the same before his untimely death and I hope and pray often that my work at Taylor and beyond reflects his and honors his memory.

Victoria Koro
Receiving the Jason Francis Memorial Scholarship makes me feel incredibly valued by the Taylor Music, Theatre, and Dance department. The scholarship helps to make it possible for me to study musical theater here at Taylor. I am so thankful for this scholarship because it provides support not only financially, but also emotionally. Knowing that there are people out there who value the arts and want to help young actors, such as myself, pursue their passions is such a light in a world that tends to look down on the arts. This scholarship allows me to take a step closer to achieving my dreams.

Abigail Moore
When I arrived at Taylor for the first time, I expected to go on campus tours, hear various faculty members speak, and spend the night in a residence hall. I never expected to fall in love with the theatre program. In fact, I didn’t even expect to like the school, and yet, God had other plans for me. Through the guidance of Professor Tracy Manning, Monsieur Cyrano De Bergerac, Hans and Sophie Scholl, and others, God showed me the next step of my journey was to join Taylor University’s theatre program. It is because of the Jason Francis Memorial Scholarship and others like it that I have been able to attend Taylor University. More than the financial aspects, though, receiving the scholarship felt like a badge of honor, like Tracy and the department were saying “we see your potential and we believe in you.”
Music, Theatre, and Dance Department
2018-2019

Into the Woods
November 9-11, 16-18

She Loves Me
February 1-3
(Tickets available by calling 765-998-5232)

Metamorphoses
February 22-24, March 1-3

The Mousetrap
April 26-28, May 3-5

Tickets available at
boxoffice@taylor.edu, 765-998-5289,
the Rupp Communication ticket office or online goo.gl/8C8WfJ
Welcome to Taylor University Theatre. If you are a regular supporter of our program we thank you for your encouraging participation over the years. If this is your first visit, we trust that you will enjoy our work enough to return -- again and again and again. We have a distinct calling as a Christian liberal arts theatre program, reflected in our philosophical statement. We welcome your participation, your comments on our work, and any suggestions you might have to help us accomplish our mission.

Come Play with us... 

Taylor University Theatre is a co-curricular educational program supporting the liberal arts mission of the University by providing a broad range of theatre experiences that span most theatrical periods, genres, and styles.

Plays that probe the human condition and reveal human action with integrity, authenticity, and a sense of “grace,” provide us the opportunity to understand better what is true about ourselves and others.

While individual plays may not necessarily reflect the ethos of the Taylor community, we believe that this theatrical pursuit of truth resides at the heart of a Christian Liberal Arts education.