

Passion Play Returns in 2016

Popular Easter event scheduled for March

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By: Becky St. Clair

Andrews University invites the community to mark their calendars to attend the 2016 Easter Passion Play taking place March 26 in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Registration begins at 8 a.m. and rotations continue every half hour throughout the day, with the last rotation beginning at 5:30 p.m. Spanish rotations will also be offered. Admission is free, but reservations are required. The Passion Play is a 90-minute walking and standing tour that takes place indoors and outdoors and is geared for all ages.

In 2003 the University first presented its Passion Play. The event took place annually until 2013 when it took a brief hiatus due to lack of funding. Thanks to the generosity of several sponsors, the play is now back and ready to transport attendees back in time to follow in the steps of Jesus Christ during his life, death and resurrection.

The Passion Play offers a chance to witness firsthand the greatest story ever told. This indoor-outdoor walking experience begins in the Howard Performing Arts Center with well-known scenes from Jesus' life, revealing his love and mercy. Led by a guide in biblical-era costume, the audience will follow Jesus through the Jerusalem marketplace—after they've paid Herod's tax collector, of course!

In the marketplace, merchants will sell their wares and offer food samples for visitors to taste. Live animals in the stable area and live traditional Hebrew dance add to the ambiance of the marketplace.

After passing through the Roman encampment outside the market, the audience travels in the footsteps of the Savior during the dramatic scenes of the Last Supper and the Garden of Gethsemane, to the poignant moment of the trial in Pilot's court and, ultimately, the crucifixion.

The play concludes in Johnson Gym with an unforgettable portrayal of Christ's resurrection as he emerges victorious from the tomb, but the experience doesn't end there.

Following the performance, guests can visit the hospitality tent for refreshments and an opportunity to reflect on their experience in the prayer room. Free shuttle service is provided back to the main parking area.

The Andrews University Passion Play is the result of the vision and determination of Ron Whitehead, director of the Center for Youth Evangelism at Andrews University. He attended passion plays throughout his childhood and was concerned to find there were none within a two-hour radius of the Andrews campus. Under his direction the first play took place in 2003. Since then, the event has grown exponentially and now draws thousands of visitors each year.

Hundreds of volunteers from the campus and community lend their time and talent to making the Passion Play a success. For many of them it is an enriching experience. For information on how you can contribute your time, energy and skills, email passionplay@andrews.edu or call 269-471-8342.

"This is a huge undertaking, and I am honored to be entrusted with this project," says Josh Stahl, director. "The Passion Play at Andrews has become an Easter tradition for many families, and has been an important part of the college experience for many students over the years. I look forward to sharing this experience with the community next spring, and will continue to pray that once again God uses this special event to touch hearts and lives."

Though the event is free, guests are strongly encouraged to make reservations early to ensure a spot in a rotation. Reservations can be made soon at passionplay.andrews.edu.

Related Website(s): <http://passionplay.andrews.edu>

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