Before every performance, in the opening speech, we announce the upcoming season. Each show gets a different reaction (all positive of course). But whenever we announce one of the CHURCH BASEMENT LADIES shows the reaction is always the same – enthusiastic applause with the occasional cheers.

Why, you may ask, is the mention of one of the installments of the CHURCH BASEMENT LADIES series greeted with such excitement and anticipation? Sure – all of the CBL shows are delightful – filled with hilarious comedy; fun, catchy songs; and more than their share of poignant moments. But there are lots of shows that are funny, tuneful, and warm.

Why do these particular shows elicit such enthusiasm?

I think it’s because when you see one of the shows about these four zany, hard working, brave women and their pastor you can immediately recognize people you know or have known. You may not have belonged to a small rural Lutheran church in the mid-west but these characters will invariably strike a chord in all of us. We watch them cook and argue and support and love one another and we don’t just see characters in a play.

We see beloved friends and family who remind us of our own friends and family.

We care about these people. We laugh with them, we cry with them, and we enjoy every moment of their journey – funny and heart-warming.

This season we are bringing you the forth installment of the CHURCH BASEMENT LADIES saga – A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR BASEMENT. I think I can safely guarantee that you will be engaged, enthralled, moved, entertained, and filled with joy as you watch yet another chapter in this wonderful series of shows.

Don’t miss it.

“... these characters will invariably strike a chord in all of us.”

– Ed Flesch
The popular Church Basement Ladies series began at the Plymouth Playhouse in Minneapolis with the first installment, CHURCH BASEMENT LADIES, in 2005. Its sequel, A SECOND HELPING, and the Christmas Musical, AWAY IN THE BASEMENT, A CHURCH BASEMENT LADIES CHRISTMAS, have been seen in venues coast to coast to cheering, sell-out crowds.

In the latest installment, these “bulwarks never failing” are at it again. The year is 1960 and a reformation is underway. With a new crop of Confrmands, Beverly, the youngest of the bunch, dons her first pair of high heels for her confirmation ceremony. Mrs Snustad, the matriarch of the kitchen, wins top honors at the County Fair for her “Grand Champion” pickles. Mavis, the ablebodied farm wife, must find a way to deal with the new “Super Highway” which cuts through her farm. Karin, the real homemaker of the kitchen, finds new freedom behind the wheel of her husband’s pickup truck and must reconcile a new world of change for her daughter, Beverly. Pastor, who has always found strength and solace in the church basement, has found new love and announces his impending nuptials. The Church Basement Ladies are once again required to face change head-on. Against the changing tide, these pillars of the church stand strong in their faith and in their friendships with more crazy antics, more great new songs and more lessons reluctantly learned.

So make plans now to join us for another helping of fun and fellowship in the church basement kitchen this spring!
Groups from Nativity Church in Green Bay, Wisconsin have been coming to The Fireside from our earliest days as a dinner theatre in the late 1970’s. Initially they were led by Mary Ann Mullin, followed by Judy Van Caster, and most recently by Judy Schroeder. As Judy prepares to pass the torch once again, we wanted to pay tribute to her years of service and found out so much more than we already knew. Talk about your ultimate Church Basement Lady!

Judy worked for the Village of Ashwaubenon’s water utility for 31 years as a utility clerk, data processing supervisor, and bookkeeper. All that time, however, Nativity Church held her heart and her volunteer hours. Her husband referred to it as her second home. In fact, when she moved to the area from Manitowoc County, Mary Ann Mullin was the first person she met at the church and Judy was quickly swept up in all they do for their parish and the community. She came along on many Fireside trips, served as a tour guide for Denny Ruh’s American Classic Tours, and felt well trained to manage the travel program. So she made the reservations, kept track of who wanted to attend, collected the payments, and escorted the trips. She also liked to provide snacks along the way and bought extra breads and muffins at our bakery for door prizes on the way home.

Now retired from her public service job and widowed for four years, here’s a rundown of some of Judy’s activities that largely center around Nativity Church. Judy started and organizes a senior citizen group with monthly activities such as Bingo, Bunco, and dining out. She works in the office as a volunteer receptionist and does computer work for the staff. She is a charter member of the Ashwaubenon Historical Society and a Vincentian with the St. Vincent de Paul Society. In that role she visits families in need to see how the Society can best assist them. She works with a group called VIP - Volunteering in Public Service. Among other things, they direct traffic during runs and help with the “Shop With A Cop” program. Families are selected based on need and then one child in the family goes shopping with a police officer to get gifts for his or her parents and siblings. Then the group helps the children wrap the gifts. She also walks at the local mall for exercise, praying the rosary as she walks. “I pray a lot,” Judy proclaimed!

Judy is close to her brother and three sisters, including a twin sister who lives about an hour away. With no children or grandchildren, she fulfills her vocation serving her church and community. She is at the church every day helping out with one project or another. As Judy hands off responsibility for Nativity’s Fireside trips to Joyce Esser, who has promised to try for a year, she is fully booked for our 2020 season and has three of the trips already full. She will be there to support Joyce and see that she’s successful, just as she had the support of those before her. Judy embodies the spirit of the Church Basement Ladies even though her huge heart and loving spirit are certainly not confined to the basement. She is serving the world every way she can!

"Life is Good, because God is Great!"
Chaselyn (Chase) Kenney joined The Fireside’s Box Office staff last summer after graduating from UW–Madison. She had earned degrees in Communication Arts with an emphasis on Radio, Film, and TV Studies and English with an emphasis on Creative Writing. A Sun Prairie native, Chase wanted to stay in the area near her family after college. Already a fan of theatre in general and The Fireside in particular, having seen THE LITTLE MERMAID and GREASE with her Grandmother the year before, she decided to see what opportunities we might have. We're really glad she did that as she's proven to be a delightful addition to our staff.

Chase learned the box office routine quickly and had a naturally great repoire with our guests. Within a few months she was being trained for group sales which is now where her primary responsibility lies.

“I really enjoy working with the group leaders,” Chase offered. “I’m able to make more of a connection with them since we get to talk multiple times from their initial booking through their actual visit. It’s more challenging, too, keeping track of all the details. I’ve met some personally now that I’m starting to do visits to the dining room and am looking forward to meeting more at the group leader party in April.” She has embraced the Fireside philosophy of warm, friendly service and teamwork. She knows it takes all of us working together to make your visits special.

Chase is a proud UW alum and Bucky Badger fan. Her younger brother is a student there now and her father is also an alum. Using her degree in Creative Writing, Chase has been working on a Young Adult novel since her senior year in college. Her goal is to finish it by next summer so she can begin the process of pitching it to publishers. An avid reader as well, she especially enjoys the fantasy fiction genre and recommends “The Night Circus” by Erin Morgenstern. Other down time activities include movies and spending time with her family and their three dogs. They have two Great Danes and a Yorkie to love! And the picture below was caught during a recent hike at Devil’s Lake State Park.

Chase’s favorite show since becoming a Fireside associate is BUDDY – The Buddy Holly story. She wasn’t familiar with him at all but brought her grandmothers to the show and and they all really enjoyed the experience together. Next season she’s particularly looking forward to Rodger’s and Hammerstein’s CINDERELLA.

Chase will take excellent care of you and your groups. You’re going to love working with her!
Hi everyone! My team and I would like to wish you a very Happy New Year and hope you had a very Merry Christmas. It’s time now to look ahead to the menu for A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR BASEMENT.

The first course will be our Chopped Salad which has been a crowd favorite when we have served it in the past. The salad consists of a blend of fresh Greens tossed with Chopped Egg, Red Onion, Avocado, Grape Tomato, Cucumber, Cheddar Cheese, and Cherrywood Bacon Chips. We top it with our house-made Peppercream Dressing and Tortilla Ribbons.

The entree will be our six ounce Boneless Pork Chop that is braised in a pork stock until it’s very tender. Served along side are Whipped Yukon Gold Potatoes which I believe are the tastiest potatoes there are, topped with our house-made Creamed Corn which is fabulous, and our special Cinnamon Apple sauce. (The magical pink color comes from cinnamon red hots we melt down and add to chopped Granny Smith Apples and Apple Sauce.)

The Grand Finale will be our Homemade Apple Pie. Carol makes the pie crust dough, weighs it out, and pressess it into the pans. Then they’re filled with her delicious Apple filling, topped with Streusel, and baked to be served fresh with our house made Vanilla Bean Frozen Custard. How’s that for delicious!

Yumm!!! Yumm!!!

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**Chopped Salad**

**Freshly Baked Breads from our Artisan Bakery**

**Roast Boneless Pork Chop**
Herbed Crouton Dressing with Sauerkraut and Jones Original Recipe Sausage. Served with Whipped Yukon Gold Potatoes glazed with rich homemade Pork Stock Gravy, Creamed Corn, and our specially crafted Cinnamon Apple Sauce.

**Apple Pie**
Homemade Apple Pie with Streusel Topping, served with our Homemade Vanilla Bean Frozen Custard.

**Coffee, Tea and Milk**

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**The Thursday Evening Signature Buffet** begins with our Signature Salad topped with Papaya Chutney Dressing and served with Freshly Baked Breads. Enjoy two special entrée selections in addition to Beef Tenderloin and Roast Turkey from the Carving Station, Barbecued Pork Back Ribs, Chicken Tenderloin Tempura with Brandied Apricot Sauce, Beer Batter Fried Cod, Shrimp and Scallops Fusilli with Tomato Butter Sauce, Fresh Atlantic Salmon, Sweet Potato Soufflé, Whipped Idaho Potatoes and Roasted Farm Fresh Vegetables. Apple Pie for dessert plus coffee, tea and milk are included.

**The Sunday Matinee Brunch** begins with an assortment of Quick Breads and Pastries from our Bakery to enjoy with a Fresh Fruit Smoothie. We’ll be carving Corned Beef Brisket and Roast Turkey Breast along with the buffet of Eggs Benedict on Jones Canadian Bacon, Scrambled Eggs, Bacon, Maple Sausage Links, Chicken Tenderloin Tempura with Brandied Apricot Sauce, Biscuits and Sausage Gravy, Fresh Atlantic Salmon, Baked Pudding, Breakfast Potatoes, a featured Beef Tenderloin dish, and Roasted Farm Fresh Vegetables. Apple Pie for dessert plus coffee, tea and milk are included.

*Saturday Evening’s menu also includes an Appetizer course.*
Happy New Year!

As we begin the new year I want to thank you all for helping make 2019 a success. It was a year of many changes and learning and Chase and I enjoyed getting to know many of you. We look forward to seeing you again or meeting you at the Group Leader Party on Saturday, April 4th if you qualified by attending at least two shows last season with 41 or more guests each. You should have received a Save the Date postcard so be sure to put that date on your calendar!

Groups have been booking into the 2020 season since July. If you haven’t booked yet, please call group sales as soon as you choose some dates because shows are filling fast.

The Church Basement Ladies will be back this spring with their crazy, hilarious antics. Uffdah! In their third appearance here at The Fireside, we take you back to 1960. We will follow along through the laughs on a journey with the ladies as their faith and friendships are tested. A Reformation is underway dontcha know! It is always a wild ride with Beverly, Mrs. Snustad, Mavis, and Karin. Come and enjoy A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR BASEMENT. It’s sure to be an unforgettable experience for all. “This is most certainly true!”

I want to take this opportunity to remind you all about our Gathering Group Program. It is designed to help if you find your count for a show has fallen short. For example, If you find you are short numbers to run your trip, call group sales. We can check with other groups coming from your area on the same day. If we find a match we will get you in touch with the group leader to see if you can work something out so no one has to miss a show. The goal is to match groups together for an individual show or on a permanent basis.

On our end of the phone, we have had quite a few individuals asking if there are bus groups coming from their area. We are asking for your help as we try to connect the interested guests with groups near them. Please give us a call and let us know if you would like us to give out your contact information to these individuals.

Let’s make 2020 a fabulous year for your group. I look forward to helping you create beautiful memories for you and your travelers!

Franki Leach, Group Sales
groupsales@firesidetheatre.com
Spring is a time of renewal and a great time to refresh your home and garden decor. This fun new “Welcome to our Home” sign comes with the ten seasonal icons shown below. The velcro backing makes them easy to switch out as the seasons change giving you fresh looks all year long. The sign itself is 28” long by 11” high. We’ll have them in our Garden Shop for you to check out next time you’re here!

Garden flags continue to be extremely popular with more complex and lovely designs coming out all the time. Bird styles are especially prevalent for spring.

New this season are designs that come to life with motion and innovation. These balloon spinners from the Evergreen Flag brand’s 3-D Wind Driven Collection are uniquely designed to rotate in the wind, enriching your landscape with colorful movement. They are designed to hold up even in strong winds and collapse for easy storage.

The solar designs in the collection use Evergreen’s exclusive Light in Motion technology to create dancing light inside the windsock body. Translucent organza material allows the light to shine through for a beautiful display. The dragonfly design is shown here during both daylight and evening hours.

Treat yourself to something new on your next visit – you deserve it!
**GROUPS ARE OUR SPECIALTY - SPECIAL DISCOUNTS APPLY!**

**WHAT IS A GROUP?**

At The Fireside, there are many benefits for any group of 18 or more people attending a performance.

You can hold seating with a small deposit while you finalize your exact count, due four weeks before your visit. You’ll also qualify for a discounted ticket price and your meal gratuity is included.

For weekday matinees, 18 paid tickets earns a complimentary package, for all other shows it’s every 21st ticket. There is plenty of safe, free parking on-site for coaches and cars. The Fireside is accessible to guests with disabilities; just let us know what special needs you have when making reservations.

- You can save over 20% with a group booking over individual ticket prices.
- The three-course dinner and show for groups of 18 or more in 2020 is $75.91 ($71.95 tax exempt) per person.
- The Premier Group Rate offers an additional discount of $3.00 per person when your group attends a performance of *A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR BASEMENT* from April 16 - May 10, 2020.
  - 2020 Premier Group Rate is $72.24 ($68.95 tax exempt) per person.
- The four-course Saturday Night Group rate in 2020 is $80.13 ($75.95 tax exempt) per person. For rates on optional entrée selections call Group Sales.
  - 2020 Premier Saturday Night Group Rate is $76.96 ($72.95 tax exempt) per person.
- 2020 Youth Group Rates for ages 14 and under with the youth meal are offered at $52.70 ($49.95 tax exempt) per youth.
- 2020 School Group Rates are available for Mid-Week matinees as low as $64.95 tax exempt rate per student. Chaperones qualify for the Group Rate.