

Youths add new approach to Living Stations

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

IRONDEQUOIT — Often sung during recitation of the Stations of the Cross, the hymn "Were You There?" will carry some extra meaning this week for youth group members at Christ the King Church, 445 Kings Highway S.

The CTK youths are taking an interesting approach to this year's production of the Living Stations, which will be presented this Friday, April 17, at 8:15 p.m. Acting as narrators will be two group members portraying an elderly couple who — as youths — had witnessed Jesus' journey to Calvary and subsequent crucifixion.

Portrayed by Aaron Thiell and Kristi Ross, the narrators not only describe what happened during Christ's final journey on earth, but also give vivid interpretations of what they had seen.

As "Grandfather," Thiell describes Christ's agony between his second and third fall: "I could hear him gasping for breath. I could see the pain in his face. Yet he moved on, and I wondered how much longer he could continue."

And as Christ was being nailed to the cross: "Why did they have to use nails? Even criminals are usually tied to the cross. What did he do to deserve such cruelty?"

"Grandmother" (Ross) describes the atmosphere as the moment of Christ's death approached: "The thunder grew louder and louder, and lightning filled the sky. The whole earth seemed to tremble ... I knew something awful was happening."

This personalized approach will



Babette G. Augustin/Photo editor

Alex Spacher of Christ the King Church will play the role of Christ in the Irondequoit parish's youth-group production of the Living Stations of the Cross.

hopefully draw members of the congregation even closer to the pain and purpose of Christ's passion, according to CTK youth minister Paul Anastasia.

"It's an older person talking to a younger person and saying, 'I remember.' It's a different angle where kids can relate better to what's going on," said Anastasia.

"This is supposed to bring a man-on-the-street point to it," added Steve Leo, 18, an Irondequoit High School senior who plays Pontius Pilate.

During the narration, other youth-group members act out each station of the cross. The most challenging role has been assigned to Alex Spacher, who plays Christ.

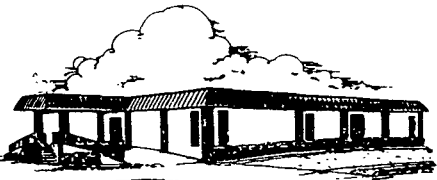
This is not the first time that 18-year-old Spacher, also a senior at Irondequoit High, has undertaken the role. He also portrayed Christ in Irondequoit Summer Theater's 1990 production of *Godspell*.

Director for the 1992 Living Stations is youth-group member Gary Sauer, a Monroe Community College student who played Christ two years ago. This marks the third consecutive year that CTK is presenting a Living Stations. The youth group obtained money for costumes through fundraising activities, and many members of the parish lent a hand by helping sew the costumes.

Anastasia noted that participation in the Living Stations has had long-lasting effects on his youths.

"The kids doing it for the first time don't know what's going to happen, but the other ones — it changes their lives, especially the ones who play Jesus," Anastasia remarked.

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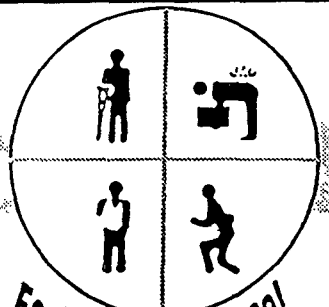
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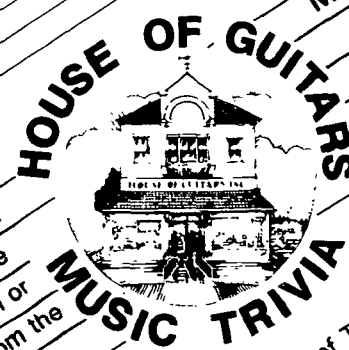
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