Written by Carol Pomeday
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Disciples played by Simon Provan and Guy Holling walk through a marketplace near Grafton's historic lime kilns. A pair of Emmy Award winning filmmakers from Ozaukee County chose local actors and locales, including Grafton's Lime Kiln Park, for their film "Road to Emmaus." Turn to page 3C for more about the movie that will be shown on Good Friday in Cedarburg.

Area residents who attend a free showing of "Road to Emmaus" at the Rivoli Theatre in Cedarburg on Good Friday, April 22, may recognize faces and landmarks.

The producers — six-time Emmy-Award winners Mike Trinklein and Steve Boettcher — filmed the 30-minute movie at Lime Kiln Park in Grafton and the Mequon Nature Preserve and cast local actors for all roles except Jesus. Our Savior Lutheran Church in Grafton is sponsoring two showings at 3 and 4:30 p.m. The movie will be preceded by scenes of Jesus' passion and crucifixion from "The Visual Bible" to set the context for two disciples who encounter a stranger as they walk the seven miles from Jerusalem to Emmaus.

Bruce Marchiano of Hollywood portrays Jesus in both films, which together last about 60 minutes.

Discussions will be held after each screening, the Rev. Mark Wagner, pastor of Our Savior, said. Participants will receive a "Road to Emmaus" DVD while supplies last.

Trinklein, who grew up in Cedarburg, will be at both showings to answer questions. Boettcher is on the road this week and unable to attend.

Trinklein and Boettcher, who formed BT Media Works in 1991 in Thiensville, have produced such popular works as the PBS series “Pioneers of Television” and “Pioneers of Prime Time,” a two-hour PBS special “Oregon Trail” and the Green Bay Packers’ “Legend of Lambeau Field.”

They’re proud of all their productions, Boettcher said, but “Road to Emmaus” is special because it reflects their strong Christian faith and beliefs.

“We’re really committed Christians, and we have a desire to use our abilities to share our faith,” said Boettcher, who directed the film.

“We wanted a Bible story that kind of connected the pieces of the Bible together — that would go from the Old Testament to the New Testament.”

In Luke 24: 13-35, the story of Jesus joining two disciples on their way to Emmaus is told so mysteriously that people have pondered for ages what Jesus told the disciples, Boettcher said.

Luke states that Jesus, who the disciples don’t recognize until later, tells them, “‘You foolish people. You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. Wasn’t it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his glory?’

“Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”

The open-ended passage allowed them to fill in the blanks, said Trinklein, who wrote the script over two years.

“What we were trying to answer is ‘What does this all mean?’” he said. “What is the link between Abraham, Isaiah, Moses and Jesus? The first thing one disciple asks is, ‘What do I have to do to get to heaven?’ I think that’s the first question most people would ask. We look at what God says about that.”

Trinklein consulted Biblical scholars from all faiths in framing Jesus’ teachings. The result is a movie that reflects the producers’ Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod beliefs, but has been accepted by most Christian denominations, he said.

“The film was originally designed to be used as a tool in other countries for people who had never heard anything about Jesus and also to serve people like us and address the questions people have today,” Trinklein said. “It had to work on multiple levels.”

The movie won the 2010 Bronze Crown Award for Best Drama at the International Christian Visual Media Association. It has been distributed in 36 countries and translated into numerous languages. More than 136,000 DVD copies have been sold and countless discussion aids

distributed.

“It’s gone beyond our wildest plans,” Boettcher said. “Trust me, we have nothing to do with it. The good Lord’s hand was in this.”

Trinklein added, “From a mountain top in Tel Aviv to the Rivoli in Cedarburg — it never ceases to amaze me how God works. It’s not us. It’s not because of my words. All the credit belongs to God.”

People are surprised that a story set in Biblical times could be filmed in Ozaukee County and look realistic, Boettcher said.

“As we did our Bible research, there were a lot of references to the land of fruit and honey and planting seeds,” he said.

Villages were built near water sources so there would be trees, shrubs, grasses, berries and nuts.

Scenes set in Jerusalem and Emmaus were filmed near the kilns, while walking scenes were shot on Mequon Nature Preserve trails.

“This is my home and I wanted to do it here,” said Trinklein, who often used the lime kilns for movies he made as a teenager.

“I used to run around the parks in Cedarburg, Grafton and Port Washington with a film camera. More than once, we shot things on the lakeshore pretending it was the ocean.”

Trinklein and Boettcher, who grew up in Green Bay, met at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, where they both majored in film production.

They went their separate ways after graduation.

Trinklein moved to Idaho, where he taught film production for 20 years.

Boettcher was the chief news photographer for WTMJ Channel 4 in Milwaukee and started his own video production company when Trinklein contacted him and they decided to team up.

Trinklein likes using his boyhood haunts for the films and documentaries they produce for a wide range of clients, including PBS, Discovery Channel, Learning Channel, major networks, corporations and entertainment and sports organizations.

More often the productions are filmed in Hollywood, New York or on locations around the world, but the final editing is done at their Thiensville studio.

“Although the Pioneer series was mostly editing old films, some scenes were shot here,” Boettcher said. “I like that these big productions can come out of our small Thiensville studio.”

Trinklein and Boettcher have won six Emmy Awards, three New York Film Festival awards, three International Technical Video Association film festival honors, six Broadcast Education Association awards and three United Press International awards.

More information can be found at www.roadtoemmausmovie.com and at www.btmediaworks.com.

For information on the free screenings, call Our Savior Lutheran Church at 377-6363 or e-mail oslcoffice@wi.rr.com.