

## Megan Sikora and Andy Talen to Join the Campaign at **CHURCH & STATE** This Spring



Producer Charlotte Cohn with SCS Innovations LLC, Franklin Theatrical Group, Neil Gooding Productions, Ralph Meranto/JCC CenterStage, Brierpatch Productions, Karen Cohen/Jack Hayflick, Bonnie E. Lautenberg, in association with NewYorkRep, announced today cast changes at *Church & State*, the critically acclaimed play by Jason Odell Williams, a "Best Play" nominee from the Off Broadway Alliance. Directed by Markus Potter (*Stalking the Bogeyman*), *Church & State* is currently playing an open-ended engagement at New World Stages (340 W. 50th Street - between 8th & 9th Avenues).

Megan Sikora (*Holiday Inn*, "Chuck") and Andy Talen (The Blue Man Group, *The Tempest*) will join Rob Nagle ("Castle," "Mad Men") and Christa Scott-Reed (*The Pitman Painters*, *Relativity*). Ms. Sikora will join the cast on May 26, Mr. Talen on May 29.

The creative team includes David Goldstein (scenic design), Burke Brown (lighting design), Dianne K. Graebner (costume design), and Erik T. Lawson (sound design). Roumel Reaux is Production Stage Manager.

*Church & State* is a fast-paced, seriously funny take on faith, politics, and "The Twitter." Three days before his bid for re-election in North Carolina, a Republican U.S. Senator makes an off-the-cuff comment to a blogger that calls into question his belief in God. The Senator's devoutly Christian wife and liberal Jewish campaign manager try desperately to contain the damage with mixed results. This brutally honest and surprisingly funny new play sheds light on how religion, guns, and social media influence our politics and our politicians. (No politicians were harmed in the making of this play.)

Originally developed with Artistic director Ralph Meranto and JCC CenterStage, *Church & State* was produced as a National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere at JCC CenterStage in Rochester and The Skylight Theatre in Los Angeles where it recently received three Ovation Award nominations including Best Playwriting for an Original Play, Best Production (Intimate Theatre), and Best Lead Actor in a Play.

*Church & State* is produced by Charlotte Cohn, Brierpatch Productions, Neil Gooding Productions, Franklin Theatrical Group, Ralph Meranto/JCC CenterStage, Karen Cohen/Jack Hayflick, Bonnie E. Lautenberg and SCS Innovations LLC, in association with NewYorkRep. Casting is by Wojcik I Seay Casting and Brierpatch Productions provides General Management.

### ABOUT THE ARTISTS:

Megan Sikora (Sara Whitmore) can be seen on the new Netflix series *Gypsy* starring Naomi Watts and in the film *Chuck* starring Liev Schreiber. Her Broadway/NYC credits include *Holiday Inn* (Lila Dixon), *The Nance* (Standby), *Under My Skin* (Nanette), *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (Encores!/Gloria), *How To Succeed...*(Miss Krumholtz), *Promises, Promises* (Turkey Lurkey), *Curtains* (Bambi), *Applause* (Encores!/Bonnie), *Showboat* (Carnegie Hall/Ellie), *Wicked* (u/s Glinda/Nessarose), *Dracula* (u/s Lucy/Mina), *Wonderful Town*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (Ruth), *42nd Street* (Lorraine), MTC's *The Wild Party*. Regional: *Kiss Me Kate* (Bianca/The Old Globe/Hartford Stage), *Can Can* (Claudine/Papermill Playhouse), *A Christmas Story* (Miss Shields/TUTS), *Cabaret* (Sally Bowles/Marriott Lincolnshire), *Guys and Dolls* (Adelaide), *White Christmas* (Judy). TV/ Film: "Braindead", "Elementary", "Boardwalk Empire", and "The Bleeder". Proud Equity member since 1996.

Andy Talen (Tom/Marshall/Security Guy/News Anchor) New York: Blue Man Group (Astor Place Theatre), *The Tempest*, *Iphigenia 2.0* (Classic Stage Company), *The Fallen* (Abington Theatre), *The Two Reds* (Classical Theatre of Harlem), *Caucasian Chalk Circle* (Columbia Stages). Regional: Madison Repertory Theatre, Illinois Shakespeare Festival, over ten Productions at Shakespeare & Company in the Berkshires including *Love's Labor's Lost*, *Mother Courage* (with John Douglas Thompson & Olympia Dukakis), *Les Faux Pas*, *Richard III*, *Winters' Tale*, *Julius Caesar*, *The Amorous Quarrel*, & *Venetian Twins* to name a few. Television: "A Crime to Remember" Training: MFA Columbia University. [andytalen.com](http://andytalen.com)