

CHURCH LADIES

by Kathy Frady



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Church Ladies

A comic monolog program
for women's ministry

by Kathy Frady

CAST
(In order of appearance)

NARRATOR

FOYER BOX BETTY

MISS MYRA

TAKE-CHARGE TESS

HAPLESS HANNAH

MAMA ROSA

DO-EVERYTHING ETHEL

PRAYING PATSY

PRODUCTION NOTES

This program of monologs offers a hilarious portrayal of seven zany female personalities which are represented in many churches today. Foyer Box Betty is always collecting something in the box in the foyer. Miss Myra teaches the *old* ladies' Sunday school class. Take-Charge Tess volunteers to lead every committee. Hapless Hannah can't find a place of service and destroys everything she touches. Mama Rosa is a deacon's wife/Mafia maw. Do-Everything Ethel does everything there is to do in the church. Praying Patsy disguises gossip as prayer requests. The Narrator humorously ties this gaggle of church ladies together and offers a touch of wisdom here and there. This collection would be perfect to use at a women's conference or other ladies-only event.

The women may dress as befits their characters. For example, Miss Myra may wear "little old lady" clothes. Hapless Hannah should look not quite put together — perhaps wearing a shirt buttoned wrong or mismatched colors. Do-Everything Ethel could wear a sweatsuit and tennis shoes to signify running around all day. Mama Rosa needs a pin signifying perfect Sunday school attendance.

Only a few simple props are needed: a cane for Miss Myra, a clipboard for Take-Charge Tess, a stack of papers for Hapless Hannah, and a very long, rolled-up list for Do-Everything Ethel. Optional is the gaudy decorated picnic basket for Foyer Box Betty as described in her monolog.

Any setting is fine. Place a podium at one side for the Narrator. A chair may be placed at Center Stage for Miss Myra, Do-Everything Ethel (at the end of her monolog, when she falls asleep), and any other character to use as desired.

1 *(NARRATOR is in place behind the podium.)*

2 **NARRATOR:** So many famous women have made a lasting
 3 **impact on our world.** _____ , *(Insert the name of a*
 4 *well-known Christian woman, such as an author or speaker)*
 5 **Helen Keller, Rosa Parks, Margaret Thatcher ... these**
 6 **women not only changed our world, but they affected**
 7 **the people around them. I'd like to introduce you to**
 8 **some ladies who probably won't make an impact on the**
 9 **world, but if you go to church with them, they will**
 10 **make an impact on you — whether you want them to**
 11 **or not. Take this lady from my church back home,**
 12 **Betty. We call her Foyer Box Betty, because she is**
 13 **always setting out a box in the foyer to collect things**
 14 **for one cause or another. She's collected knit hats for**
 15 **sailors, umbrellas for the blind, teacups for tots,**
 16 **toothbrushes for pet shelters, spare tires for orphans ...**

17 I'll bet you're wondering about that one. Somehow
 18 Betty got it into her mind that a group of orphans in
 19 Africa just couldn't do without mulch under their
 20 playground equipment, and she got the idea to have us
 21 collect spare tires, which would be cut up into plastic
 22 mulch for the poor little children to play on.
 23 Somewhere in Africa a group of kids are probably
 24 heading down a slide into a pile of steel-belted radials
 25 wondering why the crazy Americans sent over ten
 26 boxes of sliced-up tires. No sooner had she shipped
 27 over the last package of tires than she was out in the
 28 foyer with a new box collecting canned peaches for the
 29 toothless.

30 Then there was the "Raisins for the Homeless"
 31 campaign. The city council actually got involved with
 32 that one. Seems Betty was sneaking up on homeless
 33 men sleeping on park benches and putting little boxes
 34 of raisins into their coat pockets — scaring them half
 35 to death. The city council kindly asked her to please

1 stop helping our city's homeless so much.

2 Then of course there was the great balloon fiasco.
 3 She'd gotten a local printing company to agree to
 4 imprint five hundred balloons she'd collected. The
 5 balloons were to be filled with helium and released,
 6 and they were expected to float as far as five counties
 7 away. There was a mix-up at the printers, however, so
 8 instead of saying, "Don't Use Drugs" and the name of
 9 our church, the five hundred balloons that were
 10 released said, "Donate Rugs" and the name of our
 11 church. Needless to say, our preschool classes now
 12 have more carpet squares than they know what to do
 13 with! Her latest collection project is so, uh, interesting
 14 that I think I'll just let Betty tell you about it herself.
 15 *(Calling Off-stage)* Oh, Betty, these ladies would like to
 16 hear about your latest project. *(FOYER BOX BETTY*
 17 *enters.)*

18 **FOYER BOX BETTY:** Oh, I'd be glad to share. We're going
 19 to send picnic baskets to Canada! Each basket will
 20 contain an American flag, and we'll also include a
 21 painted heart with the precious little message, "Jesus
 22 loves *all* of North America." Thousands of families in
 23 Canada don't have their own picnic baskets. If these
 24 little families up there get the chance to eat outdoors,
 25 they have to pack their food in a Wal-Mart bag, or one
 26 from whatever store the little Canadian families go to,
 27 and how can we expect to win these people to Jesus if
 28 we won't help them rebuild their families by getting
 29 them outside for a meal once in a while? Can you
 30 imagine walking toward a lake in Canada, finding a
 31 shady spot, unfurling your blanket, and setting out
 32 plastic bags of picnic food? Now girls, this just won't
 33 do.

34 I want each of you to stop by the Dollar Store as
 35 soon as this meeting is over. I've made a list of supplies:

1 baskets, of course; miniature American flags; red and
 2 white paint for the hearts; and thread and number
 3 seven needles to sew the flags to the inside covers of
 4 each basket.

5 Now as for the contents of each picnic basket: I
 6 thought we'd send them some good old-fashioned
 7 American food. Since home-cooked picnic foods would
 8 spoil on the way up there, I've decided to send some
 9 substitutes, which are really just as good as the real
 10 thing. Instead of sending hot dogs and baked beans,
 11 we'll pack cans of beanie-weenies. Instead of sending
 12 potato salad, we'll pack cans of shoestring potatoes and
 13 individual packets of mayo so they can make their own
 14 potato salad. Of course, no picnic would be complete
 15 without fried chicken and apple pie, so I thought we'd
 16 pack cinnamon-flavored applesauce instead of real pie,
 17 and for the fried chicken, we can pack bags of fried
 18 pork rinds. The fried part is, after all, the best part of
 19 fried chicken! Now girls, I'm placing a box in the foyer,
 20 and we'll need to get it filled with these items by next
 21 Sunday. What a blessing we will be to our northern
 22 neighbors! (*FOYER BOX BETTY exits merrily.*)

23 NARRATOR: Foyer Box Betty certainly has a lot of energy,
 24 doesn't she? You know, speaking of energy, I've got to
 25 introduce you to Miss Myra. She teaches the *old*
 26 Sunday school class. She's a little slow these days, and
 27 a trifle hard of hearing. But every Sunday she meets
 28 with her ladies for her special brand of Bible study and
 29 sharing. (*MISS MYRA enters slowly, using a cane.*) Oh,
 30 here she comes now.

31 MISS MYRA: Good morning. I'm Miss Myra. I'd like to
 32 welcome you all to the "Ladies of Methuselah" Sunday
 33 school class. Let me just get over to my chair here, and
 34 we'll take the roll. (*She sits.*) We used to have a much
 35 larger roll, but back in '27, Esther Jones got married

1 and moved away. Then in 1942, Mabel Eghert joined
 2 the singles Sunday school class. In 1947, Joyce Teller
 3 started teaching in the young people's class. That just
 4 left me and Fannie and Effie until 1993, when they built
 5 that new senior citizens' home across the street from
 6 the church and Eleanor joined our class. Course we
 7 had to convince Eleanor that even though we were a
 8 mature ladies class, we were also modern — but she
 9 insisted on using her 1611 edition of the King James
 10 Version Bible, even though we told her that the rest of
 11 us in the class used the new large-print 1900 edition of
 12 the King James Version Bible. She said she was going
 13 to keep using her older edition because she wasn't
 14 going to take any chances.

15 You know, my mother started this class a long time
 16 ago, when the church was first built — before they
 17 added the fellowship hall. She passed away when she
 18 was one hundred and twenty-seven years old. Never
 19 missed a Sunday. I'm turning one hundred this year, so
 20 I figure I've got another good twenty to twenty-five
 21 years or so of teaching left in me. And I am determined
 22 to teach right here in this room, as long as my ankles
 23 don't swell so bad that I can't get my church shoes on.
 24 Course my doctor says if I'd let him take out my
 25 gallbladder, that would help. But he's already taken out
 26 my appendix and half of my large intestine and
 27 replaced my hip, my knee, and my liver, and that's just
 28 my regular doctor. I go see my heart doctor, my lung
 29 specialist, my chiropractor, and my nerve doctor on
 30 Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and my urologist,
 31 podiatrist, neurosurgeon, and internist on Tuesday and
 32 Thursday. I try to keep my Saturdays open for
 33 emergency visits. They've got me taking so many pills.
 34 I'm so full from them that I end up not being hungry
 35 for my meals. I know it won't be long now. I'm on my

1 way out. I've already asked the pastor to have them
 2 sing "When They Ring Those Golden Bells" at my
 3 funeral. I've been teaching this class for a long time.
 4 I've been through five pastors, twenty sets of deacons,
 5 and ten sets of deacons' wives.

6 Awhile back they decided to pay someone to work
 7 with the young people. Back in my day, we'd just take
 8 our hay wagon and load the youngsters up and cart
 9 them here to church for all-day revivals and dinner on
 10 the grounds. Now you've got to pay a man to be the
 11 minister to the youth. What need do young people have
 12 today that causes us to have to pay someone to minister
 13 to them? Most of them just play that video game box
 14 what-you-call-it, rotting out their brains pushing those
 15 silly knobs and blowing people up on their televisions.

16 When we were young, we were happy to have a rag
 17 doll or a ball to play with. We didn't need fancy games
 18 to keep us happy. We had our front porches to sit on
 19 and fields to run in, and we didn't talk back to our
 20 elders. We knew a thing or two about respect, and if we
 21 didn't, our mommas and daddies introduced our hind
 22 ends to the backside of a hickory stick, and we learned
 23 right quick! That's what's wrong with kids today. We
 24 don't have any hickory trees around anymore. They cut
 25 them all down to make the knobs for those fool video
 26 games.

27 And another thing ... what's that? This isn't my
 28 classroom? Well, I must have turned wrong when I was
 29 coming around the corner. *(To NARRATOR)* If you
 30 could just point me in the right direction, honey ...
 31 *(NARRATOR points Off-stage.)* I'm sure my ladies are
 32 wondering where I am and why I'm so late for class.
 33 *(Waves.)* Toodle-oo! *(MISS MYRA slowly shuffles off.)*

34 NARRATOR: Good-bye, Miss Myra. She really does have a
 35 heart of gold under that pruney exterior. And she is

1 normally on time for her class, and she usually ends up
 2 in the right room. You've probably heard that there's a
 3 meeting after church services today in the fellowship
 4 hall. I suppose you already know that Tess is going to
 5 be there. You do know Tess, don't you? She's a real
 6 take-charge kind of gal. (*TAKE-CHARGE TESS enters,*
 7 *walking briskly and carrying a clipboard.*)

8 **TAKE-CHARGE TESS:** I see that everyone is here for our
 9 committee meeting. I'd like to volunteer myself as the
 10 chairwoman of this committee! I'm retired, so I don't
 11 have a job that would keep me from devoting one
 12 hundred percent of my time to this cause. My children
 13 are grown and rarely visit, and that frees up more time.
 14 Besides, I have been told by several people that I have
 15 real leadership potential, and I am known by everyone
 16 in this church as a person who really cares what
 17 happens around here.

18 Now that I've been placed in this position of
 19 power — I mean, this position of service — I think a
 20 few rules are in order. Number one, as chairwoman, I
 21 must be present at all meetings. Number two, as
 22 chairwoman, I must be given a full twenty-four-hours
 23 notice of a called meeting. Number three, as
 24 chairwoman, I have the deciding vote on all matters.
 25 There's no "I" in "team," so I'm counting on all of you
 26 to follow these rules so we can keep things moving
 27 along smoothly. Are there any questions? (*Without*
 28 *waiting for any*) Good.

29 I propose that we meet at my house next Sunday
 30 morning before the service for an early morning
 31 breakfast meeting. I will, of course, prepare my famous
 32 rutabaga pancakes with apricot syrup in honor of our
 33 first breakfast meeting. I know several of you have
 34 small children, and since we'll be getting together for
 35 our meeting at six a.m., I'll have to ask you to please

1 leave your little ones at home. As you know, I have all
2 those crystal Nativity scenes I bought while I was
3 visiting the Holy Land, and I sure don't want my
4 shepherds covered with sticky fingerprints or any of
5 my wise men to end up missing an arm from being
6 attacked by an unruly two-year-old. Now, as your
7 chairwoman, I feel it is my duty to inform you that if
8 you miss any of our committee meetings, I will have to
9 report you to your Sunday school teacher, the
10 chairman of the deacons, the pastor, and the head
11 usher. I take my role as your leader very seriously, and
12 I expect that you'll do the same.

13 Also as your chairwoman, I'm going to be reviewing
14 your tithing contribution statements. Now, I know what
15 you're thinking, but my husband's cousin Bill is the
16 church clerk, and he won't have any trouble finding
17 those records for me. I will absolutely keep these
18 records in the strictest confidence — unless, of course,
19 I see that you are not tithing properly. If that turns out
20 to be the case, I will, as your chairwoman, have to
21 arrange a specially-called business meeting and present
22 copies of your records to the church body for a vote of
23 membership revokement. But I'm sure that in this
24 group, everyone is all paid up.

25 Now, on to the business at hand. As your leader, I'd
26 like to recommend that in addition to next Sunday's
27 early morning breakfast meeting, we also plan to meet
28 for dinner on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and
29 Friday. I'm busy on Thursdays, so we'll just have to
30 make do with four evening meetings next week. Of
31 course, I can't be expected to open my home four
32 evenings in a row, so I'll be contacting several of you
33 working moms to host us. I figure if you're a mother
34 and you work outside your home, you would be the
35 perfect choice for hosting two or three evening

1 meetings because your life is in such chaos that a
 2 couple more busy evenings won't affect you one way or
 3 the other. Of course, you host working moms will need
 4 to find your own child care on the nights that my —
 5 uh, our — group meets at your home. Well, now, I think
 6 we're off to a fine start, and I look forward to leading
 7 this committee to new heights of excellence as we work
 8 together in unity over the next several months deciding
 9 who will be in charge of changing the light bulbs in the
 10 men's room! (*TAKE-CHARGE TESS strides off.*)

11 **NARRATOR:** Some of you look worn out just from listening
 12 to Take-Charge Tess. Do you remember that old song,
 13 "I'm in the Lord's Army"? Tess is the kind of gal who
 14 makes herself the general, you know what I mean? Of
 15 course if you've got a Take-Charge Tess at one end of
 16 the church lady spectrum, you've got a Hapless
 17 Hannah on the other end. Hannah was trying to take
 18 notes at Tess's meeting just now, but as usual, she
 19 started daydreaming and one thing lead to another.
 20 Well, I'll let you hear Hannah's thoughts from Hannah
 21 herself. (*HAPLESS HANNAH enters with a disorganized*
 22 *stack of papers. She drops a few on her way in and stops to*
 23 *pick them up.*)

24 **HAPLESS HANNAH:** Yes, Tess. I made notes of everything
 25 you said about the breakfast. I do hope I can keep all
 26 of this straight. I remember the last time we had a
 27 church breakfast. I was supposed to make cinnamon
 28 toast for the preschoolers, and I got distracted and
 29 sprinkled on chili powder instead of cinnamon. Poor
 30 little things. Their faces got so red, and there were
 31 tears streaming down their cheeks after just one bite. I
 32 felt just terrible. I offered to make them all some
 33 chocolate milk to wash away the taste, but by that time
 34 I was so flabbergasted that instead of adding chocolate
 35 powder to the pitcher of milk, I added coffee grounds.

1 I discovered my mistake after one little boy took a gulp
2 of his coffee milk. Apparently that didn't sit too well on
3 his tummy with the chili-powdered toast, because he
4 got sick all over himself. I felt just terrible, so I offered
5 him a wet dishcloth to wipe his face with, only I'd
6 forgotten that I'd used that particular dishcloth to wipe
7 up some mayo that I'd spilt earlier that morning while
8 I was looking for a tub of butter to go with the toast.
9 Of course, when that poor child put that mayo-coated
10 cloth to his mouth, it just added to his troubles.

11 After that incident, I was politely asked to step down
12 from the kitchen committee and find another place of
13 service within the church. I thought I'd like to try the
14 choir. I made it to the first rehearsal on time, so I was
15 feeling pretty happy with myself, so when the choir
16 director asked for someone to pass out the sheet music,
17 I offered to help — but I didn't know how sharp the
18 edge of a piece of sheet music could be, and I got an
19 awful paper cut that made me drop my piece of music.
20 The two ladies sitting closest to me both reached down
21 to pick it up at the same time, and one lady's head
22 accidentally hit the other lady's lip and busted it open,
23 and as soon as one of the sopranos saw the blood, she
24 stood up and fainted, and when she did that, her chair
25 somehow got pushed backward and it hit the bad leg
26 of the piano. Well, the next thing you know, there's an
27 awful crack of wood, and that big old piano just
28 toppled over onto its side. After that, I was politely
29 asked to leave the choir and find another place of
30 service within the church.

31 I thought I'd like to try the landscaping team. I was
32 very encouraged because all the landscaping takes
33 place outside of the church building, and the team is
34 made up of two teenage boys who mow the grass and
35 one other lady who waters the flowers. So on the first

1 Saturday of the month, I watched as one of the boys
 2 pushed the fertilizer spreader-thingy and the other boy
 3 rode the lawnmower and the lady watered the flowers.
 4 They had asked me to please just stand in the shade
 5 and watch over the lemonade. When they took a break
 6 at lunchtime, I was sure I'd be able to help them out. I
 7 thought that if only I could get the fertilizer into the
 8 riding lawn mower that I'd save them all so much time.
 9 My plan was to hold the hose in one hand so I could
 10 water the flowers and steer the mower with the other
 11 hand so I could fertilize the grass and then cut it.

12 Well, let's just say that when they got back from
 13 lunch, I was politely asked to please step down from
 14 the landscaping team and find another place of service
 15 within the church. I've been advised to consider the
 16 prayer ministry, as food, people, and machinery are not
 17 involved. (*HAPLESS HANNAH walks off, shrugging her*
 18 *shoulders.*)

19 **NARRATOR:** Do you ever feel like Hapless Hannah? You
 20 want to find your place of service, you mean well, but
 21 somehow you just can't find a place to fit in, and every
 22 so often you are politely asked to find another place of
 23 service within the church? Well, if you ever need help
 24 finding a particularly sought after place of service in
 25 the church, you might find yourself paying a visit to
 26 Mama Rosa. (*MAMA ROSA enters.*)

27 **MAMA ROSA:** So, what can Mama Rosa do for you? I knew
 28 this day would come. I knew it was just a matter of
 29 time before the former deacon chairman would meet
 30 with an untimely accident and my Mario would become
 31 the new head deacon. What an unfortunate accident,
 32 too. Who knew that Brother Joseph would slip on a
 33 devised egg at last month's deacon dinner and throw
 34 his back out? Good thing my Mario was there to step
 35 in as interim deacon chairman until Brother Joseph is

1 able to fulfill his duties again. My Mario had waited a
2 long time for this opportunity. I have a feeling my
3 husband is going to be the interim deacon chairman for
4 quite some time. And so if he has power, the family has
5 power, and if the family has power, Mama Rosa has
6 power.

7 So what can I do to help you? You want to sing in
8 the choir? I'll get my nephew Pauly to rough up a few
9 tenors, if you know what I mean. No? You want to be
10 off the nursery rotation list? I'll get my cousin Angelo
11 to permanently erase your name. No? You want to be a
12 committee chairman? I'll get my brother Veto to make
13 a place for you on the Long-Range, Strong Arm
14 Planning Committee. No? Well, then what is it you want
15 Mama Rosa, the interim deacon chairman's wife, to do
16 for you today?

17 You don't like the black garbage can liners our
18 church janitor uses? They break too easily, eh? So the
19 church down the road uses scented garbage can liners,
20 and you want the janitor to rework his budget and buy
21 those? You know of someone who is interested in
22 becoming our scented garbage bag supplier? Your
23 cousin is in the scented garbage bag liner business?
24 Yes, yes — send him by next week and we'll talk. If the
25 people at the church down the road throw their
26 garbage out in rose-scented bags, we have every right
27 to do the same. That's the kind of action we can all
28 expect around here now that my Mario is the Interim
29 Deacon Chairman.

30 Now, if you are finished — what's that? You have a
31 second request for Mama Rosa? Oh, you young people
32 are so bold! But I am feeling generous today. What is
33 your request? You want for you and your family to be
34 able to move from the fourth pew to the last pew so
35 that you can get to the lunch buffet before the rush,

1 huh? Hmm. Now, wait — it can be done. It is just a
 2 delicate matter, this switching of Sunday morning
 3 seating. But I like your face. And I tell you what I'm
 4 going to do. I'm gonna do this thing for you. Perhaps
 5 in the future, I will call upon you to do a small favor
 6 for me. Now if there is nothing else, you may kiss my
 7 Sunday school perfect attendance pin. (*MAMA ROSA*
 8 *points to pin, then flounces Off-stage.*)

9 **NARRATOR:** Ah, Mama Rosa. You know, not every church
 10 is blessed to have such a dedicated interim deacon
 11 chairman's wife. She might be the neck that turns the
 12 head of the interim deacon chairman, but Ethel is the
 13 lady who really gets the work done. You know Do-
 14 Everything Ethel, don't you? She gets more work done
 15 for her church than anyone else. Of course, that's
 16 because she can't say no, and she refuses to let anyone
 17 help her do anything. (*DO-EVERYTHING ETHEL runs in*
 18 *with long to-do list.*)

19 **DO-EVERYTHING ETHEL:** OK, where is my to-do list?
 20 (*Unrolls long sheet of paper.*) OK, I have to make and
 21 serve egg casserole at the Mother-Daughter Missions
 22 Breakfast on Saturday. Oh, and I need to bake
 23 brownies for the Tiny Tots Bake Sale that afternoon. I
 24 promised I would stop by our church's tutoring
 25 ministry before lunch, and I told Mama Rosa I'd
 26 volunteer a few hours sorting shirts in the clothing
 27 closet tomorrow, too. I've got to find some time to
 28 punch out my flannel board Bible characters and
 29 restaple the flannel to the flannel board so I'll be ready
 30 to teach the preschool class on Sunday. And tonight
 31 there is that church softball game. I said I'd work in
 32 the concession stand to help them out. And since the
 33 after-game fellowship for the youth group is at our
 34 house, I'd better stop by the store and pick up some
 35 chips and dip and two-liter bottles of soda. And I need



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