ACT Readers Theatre continues its series of "Meeting of Minds" productions with show 8 scheduled for March 27, 28 and 29. The show will present a new cast of characters including Martin Luther, Voltaire, Plato and Florence Nightingale. Produced and directed by Dudley Carpenter, "Meeting of Minds, Show 8," is scheduled for March 27 at the Piney Creek Meeting House at the intersection of Route 93 and Piney Post Office Rd., Piney Creek; March 28 at the Alleghany Senior Center, 85 East Whitehead Street in Sparta, and March 29 at the Alleghany Public Library, 122 N. Main Street, Sparta. All performances are at 7:00 pm and admission is free.

The cast includes some familiar faces and one newcomer. Nathan Lundy returns to play Martin Luther. Luther, a major figure in the Protestant Reformation, strongly disagreed with the church allowing members to purchase their freedom from God's punishment for sin with money. Lundy portrayed Attila the Hun in a previous "Meeting of Minds."

Bob Bamberg also returns to portray Voltaire. Voltaire was a writer, historian and philosopher during the French Enlightenment. He believed in freedom of religion, freedom of expression and separation of church and state. Bamberg played Charles Darwin in an earlier "Meeting of Minds" episode.

Frank Hazard, who played Galileo in a previous "Meeting of Minds" performance, returns to portray Plato. Plato, a student of Socrates, was a philosopher, mathematician and founder of the Academy in Athens, the first institution of higher learning in the Western world.

Muffet Gray, a newcomer to ACT Readers Theatre, will play Florence Nightingale. Nightingale is a well-known English social reformer and statistician, and the founder of modern nursing. Gray, a retired R.N. herself, moved to Alleghany County from Indiana a year and a half ago.

The "Meeting of Minds" series is based on Steve Allen's PBS series, which won a Peabody Award, an Emmy, three Emmy nominations, a TV Critics Circle Award, the Encyclopedia Britannica Award and the Film Advisory Board Award. "Meeting of Minds" uses a typical talk-show format, but features guests who play important roles in history. One critic called it "the ultimate talk show."

Director Dudley Carpenter has been an Alleghany County resident for 12 years after a 30-year career in Washington, DC as a video writer, producer, director and voice talent. He has been a member of The Highland Camerata and the Winston-Salem Symphony Chorale. He has also been active with the Alleghany Community Theatre doing producing, directing, and acting as well as a board member. He has degrees in theatre as well as radio and TV.

ACT Readers Theatre is a staged, dramatic reading of a play. There are sometimes music, sound effects, a few props, and simple movement, often with a narrator describing action or location information necessary to understand what is going on.

Anyone wanting further information on "Meeting of Minds, Show 8" should contact Dudley Carpenter at 336-372-7901. There is also information on ACT's Facebook page and website, www.alleghanycommunitytheatre.com.