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MEDIA CONTACT:

John Chambers  
773.405.0325  
jrchambers3@gmail.com

SHAKESPEARE'S GENDER-BENDING TWELFTH NIGHT OPENS MARCH 17 AT EDGE OF THE WOOD

CHICAGO, IL (March 9, 2017) – The Resident Theatre at Edge of the Wood presents *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare's gender-bending comedy, in their space at the Edgebrook Community Church, March 17-26.

The familiar plot features a complex love polygon. Moody Duke Orsino wants to marry melancholy, mourning Countess Olivia. Shipwrecked Viola disguises herself as a man and promptly falls in love with the Duke, but is forced to be the messenger of his love to Olivia. Olivia falls in love with Viola disguised as Cesario. And, meanwhile, Olivia's servant Malvolio is tricked into believing that Olivia secretly loves him, and he falls head over heels for her. When Viola's supposedly dead twin brother shows up, things get truly complicated.

Directed by Resident Ensemble member Amy Gray, Edge's production is set in 1918. Duke Orsino and his men are soldiers returned from WWI, Olivia's mourning is for her brother killed in the fighting. The setting throws the often-romanticized characters into a more contemporary context, and makes them seem a little more familiar - and a little more fragile.

"It's funny. It's a romantic comedy. But it's told through the eyes of some very fallible, very vulnerable people," says Artistic Director, John Chambers. "Their situations are absurd, even tragic, but they are filled with hope. We just have to love them and can't help but root for whichever underdog is on stage at that very moment."

The performers include several returning Resident Theatre performers, a few new faces, students from the Edge of the Wood theatre school, and several musician/actors who sing and play instruments during the show.

*Twelfth Night* runs March 17<sup>th</sup> through the 26<sup>th</sup>. Tickets are \$18 for adults and \$10 for students. For tickets and information visit [edgeofthewood.com](http://edgeofthewood.com).

**ABOUT EDGE OF THE WOOD THEATRE**

The Edge of the Wood school in Chicago's Edgebrook Community Church is a complete theatre program where young people, ages 6-18, become versed in acting, improv, speech, movement, and musical theatre skills in a professional atmosphere. Now in its 18<sup>th</sup> year, Edge of the Wood has served hundreds of students, many of whom have gone on to careers in the performing arts and arts education.

The Resident Theatre at Edge of the Wood was founded in 2013 and produces family-friendly shows across genres, bringing professional-caliber theatre to the Edgebrook community, and engaging and inspiring young people as performers and theatre-goers. Past productions include the Pulitzer Prize-winning American classic *Our Town*, the ensemble of which Lt. David Haynes of WGN Radio called "phenomenal."

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Press photos available at [edgeofthewood.com/resident-theatre](http://edgeofthewood.com/resident-theatre).