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Old North Illuminated Receives Grants from The Lynch Foundation and The Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation to Develop Content for New Self-Guided Audio Tours and K-12 Curriculum to be Used Nationwide

BOSTON, Mass. – Old North Illuminated, which is responsible for historic site operations and interpretative, educational, and preservation programs at the iconic Old North Church & Historic Site, has been awarded \$25,000 from The Lynch Foundation and \$32,100 from the Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation. These grants will support the purchase of handheld audio guides and educational content development for a self-guided audio tour that explores the identities and experiences of Old North's Black and Indigenous congregants. This program, which will also include the story of Old North's famous lantern signals, will launch for visitors to the national landmark in the Spring of 2023, and accompanying K-12 curriculum will be developed to be used in classrooms nationwide.

Recent research has been the catalyst for a new reckoning at Old North Church & Historic Site. Like many historic sites in the Northeast, Old North Church sits at a paradoxical intersection of freedom and unfreedom. To many, the steeple is an icon of American liberty and independence. Yet, the church was built in part with the proceeds of human trafficking and enslavement, which filled the coffers of early congregants. To tell the story of the national landmark's connections to human trafficking and enslavement, Old North Illuminated is launching several new virtual programs and onsite exhibits that more accurately depict its place in American history.

"The audio tour will weave together the seminal story of the lantern signals with the experiences of Indigenous and free and enslaved Black congregants, as well as broader context about northern, urban enslavement and our site's connections with Atlantic world slavery," says Nikki Stewart, Executive Director of Old North Illuminated. "We have a responsibility to educate and foster conversations about the complexity of our nation's past and the ways in which our history contributes to persistent inequity today. Our new audio tour and accompanying classroom curricula will help to bring Old North's legacy and relevance into the 21st century."

With support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Old North Illuminated developed a site-wide interpretive plan that presents the story of Paul Revere and the lanterns with themes of active citizenship, the paradox of revolutions, and the complexity of the evolving American identity. The organization will acquire 100 audio guides for visitors to access content while touring the church with support from the Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation. The Lynch Foundation grant will enable the nonprofit to produce 40-minutes of English and Spanish content for the guides and accompanying curricula for K-12 classrooms nationwide.

"The Lynch Foundation shares Old North Illuminated's commitment to providing educational programming that reflect an honest and inclusive approach to history," said Katie Everett, Executive Director of The Lynch Foundation. "We are pleased to partner on this exciting project, which will provide a rich and thought-provoking experience for visitors and locals alike."

This fall, Old North Church & Historic Site will be open to visitors Wednesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and from 12:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday. Holiday hours may vary. Tickets will be offered at \$5 per person. Self-guided tours give an in-depth view of the building that once served wealthy merchants, government officials, and skilled tradesmen. Visitors can walk through box pews, admire the 17th century angels flanking the church's 1759 organ, and learn about the experiences of free and enslaved Black congregants. Tours of the crypt will be an additional \$5. For more information or to purchase tickets in advance, visit: www.oldnorth.com.

About Old North Illuminated / Old North Church & Historic Site

Established in 1991, Old North Illuminated, formerly The Old North Foundation of Boston, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that is responsible for historic site operations and interpretative, educational, and preservation programs at the iconic Old North Church & Historic Site. A secular organization that is independent of Christ Church in the City of Boston, Old North Illuminated welcomes approximately 500,000 visitors annually while



overseeing the preservation of an enduring symbol of American independence. The foundation serves a wide audience by creating meaningful experiences through educational outreach, site-specific programming, and historical analysis. Old North Illuminated works collaboratively with the City of Boston, the U.S National Park Service, the Freedom Trail Foundation, and other non-profits to foster educational and interpretive programs for students and visitors while engaging the public in Old North Church's history and its role in inspiring liberty and freedom. For more information, visit: www.oldnorth.com.