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**Old North Church Celebrates 300th Anniversary with an Original Play
*Historic Site Partners with Plays in Place to Produce Revolution's Edge: Opens June 15th***



BOSTON, Mass. – For the first time in Old North Church’s 300-year history, the historic site will host an original play. In partnership with [Plays in Place](#), “Revolution’s Edge” is set in Boston’s oldest surviving church on April 18, 1775, the day before the Battle of Lexington & Concord and a mere hours before the famous “two if by sea” lantern signals. The story centers on the interaction between three fathers, who share a faith but are politically divided, as Boston sits on the brink of war, searching for information and answers as to the best path forward for both their families and the colonies. Opening June 15th, the 45-minute production will run three nights a week through Sept. 19 in the sanctuary at Old North Church & Historic Site.

Commissioned by Old North Illuminated, which operates Old North Church & Historic Site, the theatrical experience follows Loyalist Minister Mather Byles Jr.; Cato, an African man enslaved by Byles; and Captain John Pulling Jr., who is a vestryman of the church as well as an ardent Patriot. Byles has just resigned his position, and Pulling is about to hang signal lanterns in the steeple to alert fellow Patriots of the movement of British troops. The story will spark conversation around American identity, faith, and ethics while making connections between the Revolutionary era and the present day. A [trailer](#) for the play can be viewed on Old North’s website.

“At Old North Illuminated, our vision is a future in which all Americans see their stories, struggles, and hopes reflected in places of prominence and our shared American history,” says Nikki Stewart, Executive Director of Old North Illuminated, which received a grant from the Mass Cultural Council to help fund the startup costs of this production. “We hope this play provides a deeper understanding of our nation’s complex origins while breaking down the misconceptions that cause us to label Patriots and Loyalists as ‘good and bad’ or ‘us and them.’”

Patrick Gabridge, an award-winning Boston playwright, developed the script. He is the producing artistic director of Plays in Place, an organization that works with museums, historic sites, and other cultural institutions to create site-specific theatrical plays and presentations. Plays and Place has written critically-acclaimed plays for the Old State House, the Old South Meeting House, Roosevelt-Campobello International Park, and Mount Auburn Cemetery, and is currently producing pieces for the National Park Service, Historic Northampton, and MassBike.

“Old North Church is such an iconic Boston landmark, so deeply rooted in American history and myth,” says Gabridge, who spent six months researching the church and its congregants to inform the script. “Longfellow’s poem cemented its place in our collective historical sense of the Revolution, but a little digging shows a place and congregation with a lot more complexity and ties to racism and slavery. I went to college in Boston in the 80s, and I loved to walk around the North End and would stop by the courtyard and peek my head into the church. Once I



started writing site-specific plays, I hoped that I'd have the chance to create one for Old North. I hope that this play will be part of Old North's larger conversation on issues facing us at our own moment in time."

Behind the scenes are Director Alexandra Smith, Costume Designer Christina Beam and Lead Producer Jess Meyer. The cast includes Brooks Reeves as Byles, Nathan Johnson as Cato, and Evan Turissini as Pulling, with Eric McGowan and Shifty Celestin as understudies.

Revolution's Edge will run on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday nights from June 15 to Sept. 19 at Old North Church & Historic Site, located at 193 Salem Street in Boston. Doors will open at 5 p.m. Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$10 for youth under the age of 18 and can be purchased in advance or at the door. Content for understanding is recommended for ages 12 and up. Proceeds will support Old North Illuminated's virtual and on-site programs, which aim to inspire children and adults alike to consider the ways in which they can build a more just and equitable world. To learn more and reserve tickets, visit: <https://www.oldnorth.com/revolutions-edge/>.

In April, Old North Church & Historic Site was designated as a Site of Conscience by the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC). Founded in 1999, the ICSC is the only global network of historic sites, museums and memory initiatives that connects past struggles to today's movements for human rights. With over 350 members in more than 65 countries, the ICSC builds the capacity of Sites of Conscience through grants, networking, training, transitional justice mechanisms and advocacy.

About Old North Illuminated / Old North Church & Historic Site

Established in 1991 as the Old North Foundation, Old North Illuminated 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. Old North Illuminated serves a wide audience by creating meaningful experiences through educational outreach, site-specific programming, and historical analysis. ONI works collaboratively with the City of Boston, the U.S National Park Service, the Freedom Trail Foundation, and other partners 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.

About Plays in Place

Founded in 2017, Plays in Place is a theatre company that creates new site-specific plays in partnership with museums, historic spaces, and other institutions. They have extensive experience bringing historic stories and sites to life in ways that deeply engage audiences. Past and current partners and projects include Mount Auburn Cemetery (The America Plays, The Nature Plays, Moonlight Abolitionists), Revolutionary Spaces—Boston's Old State House & Old South Meeting House (Cato & Dolly, I Am This Place, Scipio's Balcony, Imagining The Age of Phillis), Roosevelt-Campobello International Park (Beloved Island: Windows on Campobello), the National Park Service (Suffrage in Black & White), Old North Illuminated, Historic Beverly, MassBike, and Historic Northampton. Plays in Place projects employ dozens of theatrical artists, and in 2023 Plays in Place will work with a diverse group of nine different playwrights researching and developing new plays. For more information, visit www.playsinplace.com.

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