



Old North Church & Historic Site Becomes a Site of Conscience

BOSTON, Mass. – Old North Church & Historic Site, an enduring symbol of the American Revolution, has transformed its programming in recent years to provide an honest and in-depth look into our nation’s founding. This year, the city’s oldest surviving church known for the lantern signal on the night of Paul Revere’s ride is celebrating its 300th anniversary, offering fan-favorite experiences as well as new programming that grapples with enslavement and colonialism. New initiatives include the launch of self-guided audio tours, curricula that explore Old North’s connections to enslaved labor, and the award-winning *Illuminating the Unseen* video series. In recognition of this work, the historic site has been named a Site of Conscience, now one of only two members of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience in Boston.

The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (the Coalition) is the only global network helping historic sites, museums and memory initiatives connect past struggles to today’s movements for human rights and social justice. With over 350 members in 65 countries, the Coalition builds the capacity of its members through grants, networking, training, transitional justice mechanisms and advocacy. Each member abides by the Coalition’s four operating principles:

1. Interpret history through site.
2. Engage the public in programs that stimulate dialogue on pressing social issues.
3. Share opportunities for public involvement and positive action on the issues raised at the site.
4. Promote justice and universal cultures of human rights.

Old North Illuminated, the Coalition’s newest member, inspires active citizenship and courageous, compassionate leadership by interpreting and preserving the Old North Church & Historic Site. Widely known for “One if by land, and two if by sea,” and the midnight ride of Paul Revere, the legacy of Old North Church as a symbol of liberty and the patriot cause is discussed in history and civics classrooms nationwide.

“The story of the American Revolution that most of us learned in school is more mythology than history,” says Nikki Stewart, Executive Director of Old North Illuminated. “The revolution did not bring liberty and freedom to all Americans, and that failure has enduring implications through the inequitable laws, policies, and systems that we live with today. It is an honor to join the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, a community of partners who share our belief that understanding the past is essential to improving our present.”

The Coalition’s members vary in size and subject matter from the Tenement Museum in New York to the National Center for Civil and Human Rights in Atlanta, Maison des Esclaves in Senegal, and the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum in Cambodia — but they all have one thing in common: using the power of history and memory to spark action and civic engagement.

"The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience is beyond thrilled to welcome Old North Illuminated as a member of our global network, which now includes over 365 sites in more than 65 countries," says Ashley Nelson, Communications Director for the Coalition. "Through its work interpreting and preserving Boston's Old North Church - a landmark of the American Revolution - Old North Illuminated exemplifies the mission of Sites of Conscience by using the past to create spaces for dialogue and advocacy on today's most pressing social justice issues. We are excited to share their extraordinary work and look forward to many future collaborations."

This summer, Old North Church & Historic Site will be open to visitors Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and from 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday. Holiday hours may vary. Tickets will be offered at \$5 per person.



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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. An immersive audio tour is available in English or Spanish for an additional \$3. Guided tours of the bell ringing chamber or sanctuary gallery, where Black and Indigenous congregants once sat, are offered for 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 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.

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