FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: LoriAnn Wukitsch, Vice President and Managing Director
Email: lwukitsch@historicbethlehem.org
Office: 610.882.0450 ext. 16
Date: October 1, 2021

Historic Bethlehem Museums & Sites Announces Historic Holidays Celebration

BETHLEHEM, PA, October 2021 – As the Christmas season returns to the Christmas City, Historic Bethlehem Museums & Sites (HBMS) looks at traditional Moravian holiday celebrations. One of the most familiar symbols of Christmas is the Christmas tree – an evergreen also representing the Garden of Eden. Originally a German tradition, the very first Christmas tree in the United States was right here in Bethlehem in the 1741 Gemeinhaus during the Christmas of 1747. Light and candles are an essential decoration, giving light to the darkness of winter. The continuing tradition of a candle in every window lights the way for the Christ child. Perhaps the most locally recognized Moravian symbol hanging from nearly every porch, the Moravian Star, had a unique beginning as a geometry assignment in a boys boarding school in 1850 and were lit by oil lamps.

Honoring these centuries old traditions, Historic Bethlehem Museums & Sites is excited to announce the upcoming Christmas season running November 19, 2021 through January 9, 2022. Visitors to Christmas City, USA will be able to experience these Moravian traditions and partake in new additions including Horse-Drawn Carriage Rides, Christmas City Stroll Walking Tour, Bethlehem By Night Bus Tour, and the Live Advent Calendar. Added to the line-up in 2020, Christmas in the Quarter will also be returning for the 2021 season.

Cozy, serene horse-drawn carriage rides take you through Bethlehem’s beautiful downtown are the perfect way to enjoy the lights, sights, and sounds of Christmas city with your family and friends. Meet your carriage on Main Street in Bethlehem in front of the Central Moravian Church to be whisked away on your private carriage ride. Carriage rides run Fridays through Sundays November 19 to December 1; Thursdays through Sundays December 2 through December 19; Wednesday and Thursday December 22 and 23; Sunday through Friday December 26 through 31 every 20 minutes between 3 pm and 9 pm. Each carriage is $75 to reserve for your group of up to 4 adults and 2 children on laps and can be reserved online.

New for 2021, Horse-Drawn Trolley Rides have been added to the activity lineup. Running on December 11, 18, and 19, visitors can journey through Bethlehem’s beautiful downtown and enjoy the lights, sights, and sounds of Church Street, Main Street, and Market Street on a cozy horse-drawn trolley. Trolleys run between 5 and 9 pm on the half hour and leave from Payrow Plaza at 10 E. Church Street, Bethlehem. Tickets are $25 per person and can be reserved online.

Take a walk through beautiful downtown Historic Bethlehem with our certified guide in period dress on the Christmas City Stroll Walking Tour. Discover the story of Bethlehem’s unique beginning in 1741, the tales of a candle-in-every-window, and the renowned Bethlehem Star. Historic highlights include Bethlehem’s exquisite Victorian and colonial architecture, including
two National Historic Landmarks. This outdoor walking tour includes a walk-through of the Moravian Museum of Bethlehem. Tours run Fridays through Sundays November 19 through December 1; Thursdays through Sundays December 2 through 19; Wednesday, Thursday, and Sunday December 22, 23, and 26 at 1 pm, 3 pm, and 6 pm. Tours leave from the Historic Bethlehem Visitor Center at 505 Main Street, Bethlehem, PA 18018. $15 adults, $6 children, $10 members, special combination offers and discounts available in the HBMS online store.

Deemed “the best way to see Bethlehem,” the Bethlehem By Night Bus Tour explores the history and traditions of Bethlehem. Sit back and experience the Christmas City on a trip back in time with our certified costumed guide. Visit the famous star atop South Mountain, get a look at early and current local holiday traditions, and access to historic highlights in north and south Bethlehem. Tours run Fridays through Sundays November 19 through November 30; Thursdays through Sundays in December; Monday through Thursday December 20-23; Sunday December 26; Friday December 31 at 5 pm, 6 pm, and 7 pm. Tours leave from the Historic Bethlehem Visitor Center at 505 Main Street, Bethlehem, PA 18018. Tickets are $15 for adults and $9 for children and can be reserved online.

Trees of Historic Bethlehem, a time-honored tradition, returns this year. For 2021, over 26 trees will be on display across five historic sites, each decorated by the Bethlehem Garden Club to reference a classic holiday movie including favorites such as It’s a Wonderful Life, The Grinch, and A Christmas Carol. The exhibit runs Thursdays through Sundays November 19, 2021 through January 9, 2022 from 11 am to 6 pm. Trees are located at the Kemerer Museum of Decorative Arts, Moravian Museum of Bethlehem, Single Sisters House, Luckenbach Mill, and 1810 Goundie House. A multi-site pass can be purchased for $25 and a single site pass for $12, children are $9. Special combination offers and discounts available in the HBMS online store.

The Holiday Putz Trail returns to two historic sites, the Moravian Museum of Bethlehem and the Single Sisters’ House. A Putz is a traditional Moravian decoration used around Christmas time. The word comes from the German term, which means “to decorate” or “to embellish.” These miniature replicas depict various settings of the Nativity story through the use of ornate, hand-crafted figurines. Each set may feature animals, buildings, and amazing details to recreate the holiest of scenes. This year, the Historic Bethlehem Putz displays feature hand-crafted models of the buildings that make up the Moravian Landmark District. A multi-site pass can be purchased for $25 and a single site pass for $12, children are $9. Putz Displays are included in your Trees of Historic Bethlehem pass. Special combination offers and discounts available in the HBMS online store.

The only one of its kind in the country, visitors can gather outside the door of the 1810 Goundie House each evening December 1 through 23 at 5:30 pm for the Live Advent Calendar. Each day, a designated audience member will knock on the door and a different local business will be behind the door to provide a treat to all. In partnership with the Downtown Bethlehem Association. The 1810 Goundie House is located at 501 Main Street, Bethlehem, PA 18018.

Christmas in the Quarter promises to be buzzing with cheer December 11-12 and 18-19! The Historic Colonial Industrial Quarter is the perfect setting for holiday festivities. Enjoy that classic Christmas feel with lights lining the historic buildings and fun for the whole family. Activities
include pop-up shopping, Walking Tours, Christmas kids zone, a preview of Trees of Historic Bethlehem, a winter art exhibition from the Lehigh Art Alliance, Colonial Blacksmith demonstrations, and live music. Whether you're looking for a festive spot to lounge and enjoy music with a cup of cocoa, or you're still on the hunt for the perfect, one-of-a-kind gift, you'll find your holiday spirit here! Christmas in the Quarter will be held in the Colonial Industrial Quarter at 459 Old York Road, Bethlehem, PA 18018 with parking available onsite and in the Spring Street Lot. Activities run 3 pm - 9 pm. Special combination offers and discounts available in the HBMS online store.

Visit the Historic Bethlehem Museums & Sites website for more information and to purchase tickets.

Historic Bethlehem Museums & Sites is a not-for-profit institution that brings to life three centuries of American history. Historic Bethlehem tells the story of a small town of great influence, home to some of our nation’s early settlers, to the first pumped municipal water system in the American colonies, and to one of the world’s greatest industrial companies. Historic Bethlehem is located in eastern Pennsylvania, only an hour’s drive north from Philadelphia and 2 hours west of New York City. Historic Bethlehem is an Affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution and part of a National Historic Landmark District - a designated site on the US World Heritage Tentative List. HBMS is proud to be a part of the effort to bring World Heritage Site status to Historic Moravian Bethlehem. We are pleased to share that as of Spring 2021, HBMS will be working in tandem with international Moravian Sites – Herrnhutt, Germany and Gracehill, Northern Ireland to prepare a joint serial nomination to the World Heritage List – a first for the United States.

###