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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Great Passion Play Opens 50th season on May 5

(EUREKA SPRINGS, AR) - The Great Passion Play, “America’s #1 Attended Outdoor Drama,” opens on Friday and Saturday, May 5 and 6, to start its 50th season.

“Last year, we celebrated the 50th year anniversary of the Christ of the Ozarks, and this year we are excited to celebrate the 50th season of The Great Passion Play,” shared the Passion Play’s CEO Randall Christy. Dedicated in 1966, the Christ of the Ozarks memorial statue stands 7 stories tall and is one of the most visited attractions in the Ozarks.

“We broke a 15-year attendance record the last night of the Passion Play with over 2,200 people coming for our special military and service appreciation night,” Christy said. “The first Passion Play performance this year, we are doing the same thing and giving away free tickets for military (active and vets), law enforcement, police, firefighter, EMT, first responders and their immediate families can get in for just \$50.”

“We have been very busy this year in preparation for the season,” said Kent Butler, an actor and marketing director for the production. “Last year we used 250 gallons of paint to give the entire grounds a facelift.” To do this, Butler shared that over 500 people volunteered with 238 of those going on summer mission trips in June and July. “We have worked with mission groups like Team Effort, the World Mission Team, and Youth with a

Mission, and in 2017 we are starting our own mission trips with groups coming from Arkansas, Oklahoma, Nebraska, and Mississippi.”

Featuring a cast of over 150 actors and actresses, the Play is performed amid a 550-ft historically accurate stage and brings to life the thrilling epic drama surrounding Christ’s last days on earth, including his death, resurrection and ascension. The Great Passion Play runs 1 hour and 45 minutes, featuring an original musical score composed by Phil Perkins and performed by the world-renowned National Philharmonic Orchestra of London. This year’s performance also features horses, donkeys, and dozens of birds as well as 2 camels donated by the “Wild Wilderness Drive through Safari” in Gentry, Arkansas.

While on the grounds, walk through Jerusalem’s Eastern Gate, experience a Biblical Marketplace, and journey through recreations of the Holy Land including the Tabernacle in the Wilderness. See the Sacred Arts Museum with hundreds of pieces of rare works in 64 different forms, the Bible Museum with 6,000 Bibles (including an original 1611 King James Version of the Bible) and artifacts dating back to 2,000 B.C., and introduced in 2016, the History Museum which provides a biblical perspective of history. Experience the popular free performances of David the Shepherd and the Parables of the Potter. Eat the buffet dinner that is served on nights the Play is performed.

New attractions on the Passion Play grounds for 2017 include the Noah’s Ark Park Petting Zoo at the beginning of the Holy Land area, a special showing of the musical movie “God with Us: New Testament” in the Jerusalem Chapel, and a bomb shelter similar to ones used in Israel today. Christy said, “The cinematic footage within the

musical *God with Us* was filmed onsite here in Eureka Springs, then they filmed the stage performance. It's a very neat storytelling concept.

The Great Passion Play's 2017 season will run from the first weekend of May through the last weekend of October. For reservations, performance schedules, volunteer opportunities, or special event information, go to GreatPassionPlay.org or call toll free 800-882-7529. Join the 7.8 million who have seen "The Greatest Story Ever Told" at The Great Passion Play in Eureka Springs, Arkansas.

The Great Passion Play is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

For high resolution pictures of the Play:

<http://www.greatpassionplay.org/high-resolution-photos.html>

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For complimentary media passes, please do not hesitate to contact us!