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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Great Passion Play concludes its 50<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary**

**with HEROES Appreciation Nights**

(EUREKA SPRINGS, AR) – The Great Passion Play is concluding its 50<sup>th</sup> year anniversary on October 26 and 27 with Heroes Appreciation Nights honoring military (active and vets), police, firefighters, EMT, and first responders. Free Play tickets will be available for the service person with half-priced tickets for family.

"Our 50<sup>th</sup> year has been very exciting," shared Randall Christy, Executive Director of The Great Passion Play. "We are excited to close out the 50<sup>th</sup> year with a HEROES weekend, a Service and Military Appreciation on Friday and Saturday, October 26 and 27. Christy continued, "The Play runs May through October, but we have Holy Land Tours year-round and this year for Christmas, visitors can drive through a forest of 300+ Christmas Trees on their way to see the Christ of the Ozarks."

Free tickets will be available on Friday and Saturday night for military (active and vets), law enforcement, police, firefighter, EMT, first responders and half off Play tickets for their families. "Our service and military appreciation night has had over 2,200 people in attendance in the past," Kent Butler, actor and director of operations for the Play, "and we hope to welcome even more this year."

## **Other Activities and More Info about the Passion Play**

“We are also excited to host the Arkansas Interscholastic Cycling League state championships on Sunday, November 4,” Butler shared. “Middle school and high school mountain biking students from across the state will be using our green 4.3 mile beginner loop called Genesis that was designed especially for this NICA race in mind. These trails are free and open to the public, designed for all ages and abilities, and are open from dawn to an hour after sunset (aside from days where it is especially wet to prevent damage to the trail),” said Butler. “These trails will add yet another reason for people to make the pilgrimage to Eureka Springs year-round. And, it’s a special thanks to the Walton Family Foundation for making the trails possible, Tony Boone Trails and Jagged Axe Trails for their actual construction, and our other partners in this endeavor including Eureka Springs Parks, Northwest Arkansas Trailblazers, Oz Trails, and the Ozark Off-Road Cyclists.”

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, a Pharaoh Hound, and dozens of birds as well as camels donated by the “Wild Wilderness Drive through Safari” in Gentry, Arkansas.

While on the grounds, walk through Jerusalem’s Eastern Gate 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 and 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. Experience the popular free performances of David the Shepherd and the Parables of the Potter and new for 2018, the Sculptor. Eat the buffet dinner that is served on nights the Play is performed.

New attractions on the Passion Play grounds include the above-mentioned trails, 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 as well as "I Can Only Imagine," a bomb shelter similar to ones used in Israel today, and the Jerusalem Marketplace area which features biblical craftspeople working with pottery, sculpting, weaving, carpentry, jewelry making, and painting. 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 performs May through October on select nights. Ticket reservations, performance schedules and special event information are available online at [GreatPassionPlay.org](http://GreatPassionPlay.org) or call toll free 800-882-7529.

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*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!