



For more information:
The Great Passion Play
935 Passion Play Road
Eureka Springs, Arkansas 72632
Toll Free: 800-882-7529
Local: 479-253-8559
reservations@greatpassionplay.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Great Passion Play Opens May 4 for 50th Anniversary Season

(EUREKA SPRINGS, AR) - The Great Passion Play, “America’s #1 Attended Outdoor Drama,” opens on Friday and Saturday, May 4 and 5, to start its 50-year anniversary season.

“Two years ago, we celebrated the 50th year anniversary of the Christ of the Ozarks, and this year, we are excited to celebrate the 50th year anniversary of The Great Passion Play,” shared the Passion Play’s Executive Director 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. “Last year,” Christy shared, “the *New York Times* named the Christ of the Ozarks the 4th most popular statue in the United States.” The ranking was based on data provided by three sources—Travelport, a United Kingdom based travel technology and research firm, the National Park Service, and TripAdvisor—and placed the Lincoln Memorial in the number 1 spot, followed by Mt. Rushmore, the Statue of Liberty, and the Christ of the Ozarks.

“We are excited to announce, in conjunction with our 50-year anniversary, “the opening of 5-miles of mountain bike and hiking trails,” said Kent Butler, the Play’s operations director. “These trails are free and open to the public, designed for all ages and abilities, and will be open from dawn to an hour after sunset (aside from days where it is

especially wet to prevent damage to the trail),” Butler shared. “These trails will add yet another reason for people to make the pilgrimage to Eureka Springs. And, it’s a special thanks to the Walton Family Foundation for making the trails possible, Tony Boone 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. “This year,” Butler shared, “thanks to a special donation from a church, we are adding a very powerful spotlight in the rear of the amphitheater that has been used on Broadway.”

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, 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's 2018 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>

For more information:

Kent Butler

Director of Marketing

Cell: 870-654-5017

kent@greatpassionplay.com

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