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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Declaring Independence: Then & Now Reconsidering the promises of the Declaration of Independence: A narrated performance and community conversation

What: A forty-minute performance piece in which a narrator and cast bring to life the Declaration of Independence followed by a community conversation and refreshments

When: Wednesday 6 June 2018, 7:00 p.m.

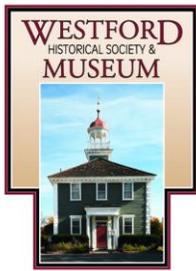
Where: First Parish Church United, 48 Main St., Westford, MA

This event is presented as a collaborative venture by the Westford Historical Society, the First Parish Church United and Freedom's Way National Heritage Area.

For further information visit: www.freedomsway.org

What did the Declaration of Independence mean to citizens of 1776? What meanings does it hold for us today? The thought provoking public performance piece, *Declaring Independence: Then & Now*, seeks to explore these questions through an animated reading of our "American Scripture" presented by living-history re-enactors. As the 18th century words and ideas are performed, a narrator probes their meaning and challenges the audience to consider their relevance and power for today.

"Too often the Declaration of Independence is reduced to the single line, "We hold these truths to be self-evident..." notes historian Mary Fuhrer. "Yet the document is rich with meaning on many levels. It expresses what many Americans by 1776 had come to believe: that Britain's king and Parliament had violated our fundamental rights, that we were justified in abolishing such a flawed government, and that we were entitled – and determined – to create a new and better nation. It also asserts truths that transcend time: that governments derive their power from the people, with the purpose of securing their liberty and



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guaranteeing their equality. The history of our nation has been, and continues to be, the story of our struggle to redeem and defend those promises for all.”

Declaring Independence: Then & Now is part of a multi-year joint initiative of Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area and the American Antiquarian Society to engage citizens in the ideas and transformative potential of the Declaration of Independence. This initiative includes researching the ways in which independence was conceived and debated within colonial communities in the years leading up to 1776; tracing how the Declaration’s role evolved in American communities; and considering the challenges and potential of this living document for Americans today.

The performance will take place at the historic First Parish Church United, located adjacent to the Westford Town Common. The event is free and suitable for ages 8 and up. For further details, please go to www.freedomsway.org or contact (978) 772-3654.

About Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area

The 994-square-mile Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area (FWNHA) includes forty-five towns and cities in Massachusetts and Southern New Hampshire and is home to over 750,000 people. FWNHA connects people, places and communities through educational and interpretive initiatives that protect and promote shared resources and encourage residents and visitors to explore its landscape, history and culture. www.freedomsway.org.

About the Westford Historical Society

The Westford Historical Society (WHS) runs the Westford Museum at 2 Boston Road. The mission of the WHS is to promote the understanding and appreciation of Westford's unique history to the community. By providing programming that features aspects of the daily lives, activities and achievements of Westford residents, they strive to expand and enrich understanding of how the town continues to evolve. They foster an environment of teaching and learning that strengthens a sense of community. www.museum.westford.org

About the First Parish Church United

The First Parish Church United (FPCU) was established in 1727 as the Second Parish Church of Chelmsford. Its existence was a prerequisite to establishing the Town of Westford in 1729. The Rev. Willard Hall was called as its first minister and served until 1775. Today, FPCU remains deeply rooted in its liberal religious history, while continuing to become more inclusive and diverse. It is a member congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association as well as the United Church of Christ, and is a community-based spiritual home for many in the Westford and surrounding areas. www.firstparishwestford.org

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