



## PEACE LIGHT TO BRIGHTEN IOWA AGAIN THIS YEAR

For 32 years the International Scouting movement has actively promoted global peace and harmony during the Advent and Christmas seasons through the distribution of the Peace Light from the Grotto of the Nativity in Bethlehem. Each year, a child from Upper Austria is named that year's Peace Light Child and travels to Bethlehem, to receive the flame from one of the Grotto's oil lamps. The light is then flown to Vienna, Austria, where it is distributed at a Service of Dedication to delegations of Scouts from across Europe, who in turn take it back, with a message of peace, to their own countries.

The Peace Light is shared with individuals, families, houses of worship, hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, and cultural centers – with anybody who can appreciate the significance of this “gift.” Each year the light is passed to over 30 European countries and, for the past 17 years, to the United States, Canada and Mexico as well.

Following the distribution to European Scouts in Vienna, the Head of Security from Austrian Airline carries “the Light” from Vienna in two explosion-proof British mining lamps, fueled by smokeless paraffin oil to the United States. This year’s “Light” will arrive at Kennedy International Airport in New York on December 1 where after a brief ecumenical service held in the airport chapel “the Light” will begin its journey with Scouts and Scouters through North America. The light travels by a modern version of the pony express being handed off in towns and at rest areas along the interstate highways. From there it travels to the largest cities and the smallest towns. Local Scouts and Scouters fetch the flame and share it in churches, use the flame to light the candles on their Advent wreaths, pass the flame from person to person during candlelight Christmas Eve services, present the flame to the community at tree lighting events, and deliver the flame to shut-ins and those experiencing loss, illness and hardships in addition to sharing the light in individual homes.

“The Light” will arrive at the Mid-Iowa Scout office on Monday morning December 10 at 9:00 AM after being received on its journey during the night on Friday December 7 from a Scouter who will have delivered the light to St. Louis, Kansas City, Denver and Lincoln and Omaha.

This will be the 10<sup>th</sup> year the Peace Light will be shared throughout the Mid-Iowa Council. However, the sharing of this flicking flame is much older than that. The Peace Light from Bethlehem has burned continuously in the Grotto of the Nativity in Bethlehem for over 1000 years. It is meant to promote peace, harmony, unity and love among the people of the world regardless of race, ethnicity or religion.

Have you discovered a meaningful way to teach good citizenship during the holiday season? You should consider having your pack, troop or crew designated a *Messenger of Peace* unit by helping share “the light” of Bethlehem here in Iowa.

“*The Light*” will burn brightly Monday through Friday, December 10 through December 21 at the Maytag Scout Center where you can transfer the flame to a lantern or long burning devotional candle from 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM. In past years, units have distributed “the light” to sponsoring churches, nursing homes, jails and prisons, various civic locations and numerous other locations.

Become an individual *Messenger of Peace* or help your unit receive the *Messenger of Peace* designation by sharing “the light” during this Christmas season in your own special way. You are limited only by your imagination. Come, receive the “Light of Peace” to brighten your Advent and Christmas season.

For information about designating your units a *Messenger of Peace* go to  
<https://www.scouting.org/messengersofpeace.aspx>