**PEACE LIGHT OF BETHLEHEM**

**We are very pleased to announce that your unit, family, church and community can participate in this powerful and moving ceremony this coming December. The Light of Peace will be coming into our area in early December 2019. Once we get details from our European Scout team when it will arrive in North America, we will share specific dates and locations with you via the council newsletter.**

**AN AMAZING STORY**

**Each year, a young Scout from Upper Austria fetches the Peace Light from the grotto in Bethlehem where Jesus was born. Historians believe that it has burned continuously for at least 700 years and perhaps as many as 1400 years in this grotto.**

**The Peace Light is then flown to Austria from where it is distributed at a Service of Dedication to delegations from across Europe who take it back, with a message of Peace, to their own countries for use at ecumenical services throughout the Continent. Boy and Girl Scouts and Guides can then take the light on to houses of worship, hospitals, homeless shelters, retirement homes, prisons, and places of public, cultural and political importance - to anybody who appreciates the significance of the "gift" of the Peace of Christ. It is also a challenge to each of us to serve as a messenger of peace in a turbulent world.**

**This light was carried in two blast proof miners lamps on an Austrian Airlines jet from Tel Aviv Israel to Vienna  Austria from where it was distributed at a Service of Dedication to delegations from across Europe who take it back, with a message of Peace, to their own countries. Austrian Airlines then flew the miners lamps containing the Peace Light from Bethlehem to New York City. It is then spread across North America where the flame is displayed in homes, churches and unit meeting places.**

This tradition started in Linz, Austria in 1986. The Peace Light first came to New York in 2001 by Canadian Scouts who brought it to Ground Zero in New York City.

**HOW YOU AND YOUR UNIT CAN SHARE THE LIGHT**

This light will arrive in our area in early December thanks to the efforts of hundreds of volunteers who transport it. There will be a ceremony of sharing where you can bring a lantern to receive the Light. Many Scout units return home and share this light, born of a flame burning for over a thousand years, with their families, church and communities in a special ceremony. Thus, the Light of Peace spreads across the world. For more information, contact your council international representative.