



Moravian Church Settlements

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Moravian Church Settlements
World Heritage since 2024

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Welcome all

It is with great pride and honor that we introduce this guide to the remarkable Moravian Church Settlements — a testament to our shared heritage and the spirit of community that continues to thrive worldwide.

This project represents a combined effort that has brought together community and church leaders, historians, educators, government officials, and others dedicated to preserving the rich history and cultural significance of these historic settlements.

Moravian Church Settlements in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, USA; Christiansfeld, Denmark; Gracehill, Northern Ireland/UK; and Herrnhut, Germany stand as a beacon of cultural and architectural achievement, much like World Heritage Sites including the Great Pyramid of Giza, the Great Wall of China, the Taj Mahal, Stonehenge and the Statue of Liberty.

Our group initiative, rooted in community-driven efforts, showcases the enduring legacy of the Moravian Church, emphasizing not only its religious and social impact but also its contributions to urban planning, architecture, education, art, industry, and innovation.

By working together, our transnational communities have proven that cooperation and mutual respect lie at the core of preserving our shared heritage. This brochure guide is the culmination of extensive research and partnership — involving numerous experts, site managers, and passionate individuals who have

contributed their time and expertise. Their collective efforts ensure that the stories and values of the Moravian Church Settlements are expertly conveyed and preserved for future generations.

In the spirit of international cooperation, we have exchanged ideas, shared best practices, and supported one another in our quest to protect and celebrate our cultural heritage. This guide also serves as a symbol of the friendships and partnerships that have formed through this project, illustrating the power of unity in achieving common goals.

Our citizens take immense pride in the beautifully preserved Moravian Church Settlements, which are rich in architectural beauty and historical significance. As you explore these remarkable sites, you will witness the profound impact of the Moravian Church on our communities and appreciate the dedication and hard work that has gone into maintaining these treasures.

We firmly believe that these Moravian Church Settlements epitomize the Outstanding Universal Value we strive to protect and promote. This guide is not only a journey through history but also a celebration of the collective Moravian spirit that continues to shape and enrich our communities.

Welcome, and enjoy your exploration of our Moravian Church Settlements.

J. William Reynolds
Mayor of Bethlehem

Knud Erik Langhoff
Mayor of Christiansfeld

Beth Adger
Mayor of Mid and East Antrim

Willem Riecke
Mayor of Herrnhut

We are grateful

For our congregations in Bethlehem, Christiansfeld, Gracehill and Herrnhut, the recognition of “Moravian Church Settlements” as a UNESCO World Heritage Site has been a cause for profound thankfulness and joyful celebration.

We are grateful for the spirit of cooperation and partnership that has sustained this project throughout the nomination process, both on the local and on the international level. We celebrate the strength of our transatlantic Moravian network, created almost 300 years ago, and appreciate all the new contacts that have been formed with local stakeholders including municipalities, museums, and schools.

The Moravian Church dates its founding back to 1457, inspired by the martyrdom of the Czech reformer John Hus, and was renewed in the 1720s when Moravian exiles found refuge on the land of Count Zinzendorf in Saxony, Germany. It was this Renewed Moravian Church that soon traveled to places all around the world, inspired to share their faith, but also the practices of education, caring for the sick, and

building a culture of community. The transnational site designated as “Moravian Church Settlements” has been recognized for the architecture and craftsmanship expressed in characteristic buildings, but also for how these structures and layouts express our spiritual, social, and ethical principles. Many continue to serve as places of worship and ministry, representing our Moravian heritage as a living cultural and religious tradition.

As we celebrate the honor of the World Heritage inscription, we are mindful that this is a recognition not just for our four settlements, but truly an appreciation of the larger Moravian network of communities to which we belong. It is our hope that this designation will be noted and the celebration shared in all other congregations.

Most of all, we give thanks to God and pray for God’s continuing guidance, as we seek to witness to the love of Christ, serve our communities, and share our story and heritage with others.

Rev. Janel Rice
Central Moravian Church,
Bethlehem

Rev. Dr. Jørgen Bøytler
Christiansfeld Congregation,
Denmark

Rt. Rev. Sarah Groves
Gracehill Moravian Church,
Northern Ireland

*Rev. Dr. Jill Vogt &
Rev. Dr. Peter Vogt*
Herrnhut Congregation,
Germany



Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, USA



Old Chapel (center) flanked by the rear of the Gemeinhaus (right) and Bell House (left).

MORAVIAN CHURCH SETTLEMENTS

Christiansfeld, Denmark



Moravian Church, Christiansfeld.

Gracehill, Northern Ireland/UK



Congregation Store, Gracehill, viewed across the central pond in the square.

Herrnhut, Germany



Herrnhut Church view from Comenius Street..

WORLD HERITAGE

Where the World Heritage story begins

In the 1960s, the construction of the Aswan Dam in the Nile Valley threatened Abu Simbel's renowned ancient Egyptian temples. A campaign called by UNESCO to save the temples marked the beginning of the World Heritage Convention.

Success of the campaign came from over 50 countries working together.

This experience guided the idea of World Heritage that "... parts of the cultural or natural heritage are of outstanding interest and therefore need to be preserved as part of the world heritage of mankind as a whole."

This has been anchored in the preamble of the UNESCO 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage - known as the World Heritage Convention.

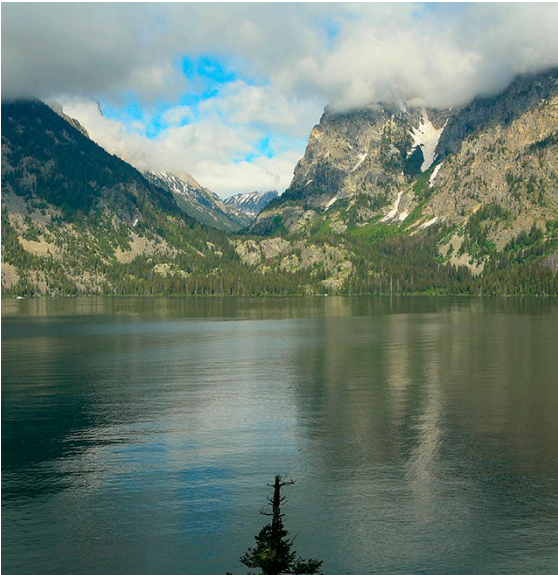
What makes the concept of World Heritage exceptional is its universal application. Based on the principle of equal rights for all cultures and societies, it combines the protection of cultural and natural heritage, regardless of the country in which they are located, and ensures its protection through international cooperation and support.



Ramses II Temple / Emmanuel Pivard



Temple of Kalabsha / Emmanuel Pivard



Yellowstone National Park, United States / Getty Images



Aachen Cathedral Germany / Getty Images



Taj Mahal, India / Getty Images



Great Barrier Reef, Australia / Getty Images

WORLD HERITAGE

The World Heritage List

Places all over the world such as the Taj Mahal in India, the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, Yellowstone National Park in the United States and, Aachen Cathedral in Germany make up the world's heritage.

Being a World Heritage Site means that a place has cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future

generations of all humanity. The selection is based on 10 criteria, at least one of which must be met. These criteria include being a masterpiece of human creativity, an exceptional example of a traditional settlement, or containing important natural habitats.

The goal of the World Heritage List is to represent the most important cultural and natural sites from around the world.

WORLD HERITAGE

Working together with international bodies



The 46th Session of the World Heritage Committee took place from 21 to 31 July 2024 in New Delhi, India. Both the ICOMOS Evaluation Unit and the Monitoring Unit were present through their Directors, along with ICOMOS President Teresa Patrício, General Director Marie-Laure Lavenir, and ICOMOS World Heritage Advisors and Board members.

The World Heritage Committee decides if a property has Outstanding Universal Value at its annual meetings. It is composed of representatives of 21 countries and is the most important decision-making body in the World Heritage system. After a site is inscribed on the World Heritage List, the Committee examines and discusses its state of conservation. The World Heritage Centre in Paris is the secretariat of the Committee and the main contact for any issues related to World Heritage Sites.

Three advisory bodies – ICOMOS, IUCN and ICCROM - support the World Heritage Committee: ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) is a non-governmental organization that ad-



ICOMOS presented Moravian Church Settlements' World Heritage Nomination to the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session in New Delhi, India, in July 2024. / UNESCO photo

vises the World Heritage Committee on cultural sites. IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) is a global organization that advises the World Heritage Committee on natural sites. ICCROM (International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property) is an intergovernmental organization that provides assistance for protection and preservation of heritage sites.



Aerial view of Christiansfeld town square, complete with restorations.

WORLD HERITAGE

What does it mean to be a World Heritage Site?

As a **World Heritage Site**, you must protect and preserve the site for future generations. This includes:

- Working with the World Heritage Committee to preserve and explain the site.
- Complying with international standards for protection of World Heritage Sites.
- Carrying out conservation and restoration work to maintain the site's Outstanding Universal Value.
- Monitoring and reporting on the state of conservation of the World Heritage Site.



Herrnhut's Kirchensaal

- Preventing or mitigating anything that could harm the site, such as development, pollution or natural disasters.
- Working with local people and groups to help them manage the site in a sustainable way.
- Implementing a management plan to safeguard the site's value.

By fulfilling these obligations, you

contribute to the global effort to protect and preserve cultural and natural heritage for the benefit of all humanity.



Genealogical tree of Moravian Church settlements, mission stations, people and events. Undated, Christiansfeld Moravian Church.

MORAVIAN CHURCH SETTLEMENTS WORLD HERITAGE SITE

A global phenomenon and shared heritage

The Moravian Church started in the 15th century with the Bohemian-Moravian Hussite movement and the Czech Reformation. This first period is known as ‘ancient’ Unity. The present-day Moravian Church originates in the settlement of Herrnhut in 1722 and the Unity’s ‘renewal’ there in 1727.

Key to the community’s development was the creation of a large network of people beyond Herrnhut and the decision to begin missions. The first Moravian missionaries were sent to the West Indies in 1732, while others followed to Greenland and Labrador, Africa and the Americas, Asia and Australasia. By the 1750s, Moravians were a vibrant international community with a distinct spiritual life and liturgical

culture. Women played a major role in the life of the community.

The 18th century is the formative period of Moravian Church cultural tradition and architecture. Until 1808, many new Moravian Church settlements were built according to a settlement plan that reflected their beliefs and included original building types and spaces. Moravian Church settlements have distinctive buildings, including a Gemeinhaus (congregational building), church, and choir houses (large structures designed as communal dwellings for unmarried men, unmarried women and widows) as well as a God’s Acre (cemetery) nearby.

What makes this a place of importance for all humanity



God's Acre, Christiansfeld

The Moravian Church is one of the oldest Protestant denominations in Christianity, founded sixty years before Martin Luther's Reformation. It is characterized by its network of settlements built to welcome immigrant congregations which sustained missions and their migration around the world. No other denomination built in such a systematic and comprehensive fashion.

The Moravian Church Settlements in Herrnhut (Saxony, Germany), Bethlehem (Pennsylvania, United States of America), Gracehill (Northern Ireland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), and Christiansfeld (Jutland, Denmark) together demonstrate the cultural significance of this Protestant movement,

and fulfill two criteria for inscription on the World Heritage List:

They bear an exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition which is living.

They are an outstanding example of a type of architectural ensemble which illustrates a significant stage in human history.

The justification for inscription on the World Heritage List – the so called Outstanding Universal Value – is based on the global importance as:

- An exceptional testimony to a living cultural tradition.
- An outstanding example of religious town planning.

Built manifestation of Moravian Church Principles



Herrnhut's The Vogtshof was erected between 1730 and 1746 as administrator's house.

The four Moravian Church Settlements bear exceptional testimony to Moravian Church principles, which developed in the 18th century and are expressed in their town layouts, architecture, and craftsmanship. Many of the buildings are still used for their original purpose or for the continuation of Moravian Church activities and traditions.

Each of the four settlements - Herrnhut, Bethlehem, Gracehill, and Christiansfeld - has its own characteristic and telling part of the story of the Moravian Church Settlements. Together, they are part of a worldwide network in which no settlement or congregation exists in isolation.

The continuing presence of Moravian Church communities in each of the settlements ties their historic layouts and structures to the living cultural tradition of the Moravian Church and to the larger Moravian Church community.



Vogtshof interior.



Gracehill, 1829

MORAVIAN CHURCH SETTLEMENTS

Urban planning for community

The four Moravian Church settlements are an outstanding example of religious town planning. They combine the spiritual and practical aspects of community life. Each architectural ensemble shows the Moravian Church's idea of a city that is unified and coherent, inspired by the concept of an "ideal city" and the Enlightenment ideals of equality and social improvement that became a reality much later elsewhere.

The Moravian Church's democratic organisation is shown in its town planning and buildings for the common good, and in the visual and functional connections between individual elements and with the landscape setting. These settlements stand for the movement towards democratisation. They offer the same standard of living to all members and serve the group as a whole.



Aerial of Moravian Church Settlements — Bethlehem.

HERRNHUT, BETHLEHEM, CHRISTIANSFELD, GRACEHILL

Four places that represent the Moravian Church heritage



Herrnhut



Bethlehem



Christiansfeld



Gracehill

Four Moravian Church Settlements represent the transnational scope and consistency of the international Moravian community as a global network.

Together, the four settlements exemplify an unparalleled global phenomenon of planned “ideal” towns, guided by the spiritual, societal, and ethical principles of the Moravian Church.

Each architectural ensemble bears witness to the Moravian Church’s vision of a unified, coherent urban



design, inspired by the concept of an “ideal city” developed by the Church during its formative phase in the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries.

The four settlements illustrate unity through homogeneous groups of buildings with shared styles, materials, and proportions (each adapted to local conditions), together with a high quality of craftsmanship. At the same time, each settlement also makes a unique contribution to the World Heritage Site.



Moravian Church and settlement, Herrnhut.

HERRNHUT, GERMANY 1722

The “Mother” settlement of the Moravian Church



Widows' House, Herrnhut

Herrnhut (**‘Lord’s Watch’**) is located in Upper Lusatia in the Free State of Saxony, Germany, around 70 km east of Dresden. It was established in 1722 in undulating wooded and open rural countryside as a ‘new town’, the ‘mother’ settlement of the Renewed Moravian Church.

Its contribution to the World Heritage Site:

- **Original ‘mother’ settlement** which first functioned as a refuge for Moravian and Bohemian religious exiles, and which evolved into a congregational settlement in step with the Brethren’s principles that defined all Moravian Church settlements.
- **Origin of the fundamentals** of Moravian Church town planning, of the architectural style of Moravian Church Civic Baroque, and of prototype urban structure, buildings and spaces, including choir houses and God’s Acre.
- **Origin of the organisational system** of the Moravian Church leading to the development of a network of planned idealised Protestant colonies and mission stations. Administrative headquarters of the worldwide Moravian Church during the eighteenth century, together with a centralised building administration.

The first permanent and best-preserved Moravian Church settlement in North America



Bell House complex and Sisters House, Bethlehem.

Bethlehem is located in Northampton County in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, around 80 km north of Philadelphia and 133 km west of New York City. It was the first permanent Moravian settlement in the North American continent.

Its contribution to the World Heritage Site:

- **Built to accommodate** a congregation of Moravian Church immigrants from Europe to sustain missionary outreach to Native Americans funded by a General Economy centred on the Colonial Industrial Quarter and supplemented by light manufacturing in choir houses.
- **First permanent congregational settlement** in the North American continent, containing an unparalleled ensemble of early buildings centred on the only surviving Gemeinhaus in the series.
- **Linear settlement**, governed by topography and natural resources, with zoned residential and industrial areas
- **Preeminent religious**, administrative, and educational centre of Moravian Church activity in North America.



Central Moravian Church Sanctuary, Bethlehem.

The best-preserved Moravian Church Settlement in the British Isles



Gracehill during Christmas season.



Family house in Gracehill.

Gracehill is located 3 km from Ballymena in Mid-County Antrim, Northern Ireland, UK. This planned Moravian Church Settlement was founded in 1759 among numerous scattered Diaspora societies and is one of the four larger settlements in the British Isles.

Its contribution to the World Heritage Site:

- **Exemplar** of a Moravian Church settlement built to serve an existing concentration of Diaspora societies, translating Moravian theology and philosophy into a contrasting cultural context and remote rural environment.

- **The most precise** demonstration of a gender axis in the urban plan, part of an evolving series implemented in the post-Zinzendorf era of settlement foundation (after 1760).

- **Exceptional illustration** of the blending of eighteenth-century European continental Moravian Church architectural style.



Moravian Church, Christiansfeld.

CHRISTIANSFELD, DENMARK 1773

The Moravian Church’s “Ideal City”

Christiansfeld is located 15 km south of Kolding in South Jutland, Denmark. It was established in 1773 as the 25th settlement, 50 years after Herrnhut. It is the only example of a Moravian Church Settlement in northern Europe.

Its contribution to the World Heritage Site:

- **The best-preserved** and most complete Moravian Church Settlement in the world.
- **Outstanding example** of a planned idealized Moravian Church Settlement and reflects the new ideas from the Age of Enlightenment in its city plan.
- **Architectural style** of ‘Christiansfeld Baroque,’ a fusion of Moravian Church Civic Baroque with local Danish tradition.



God's Acre, Christiansfeld.



Delegates from the Moravian Church Settlements' Transnational Working Group and more assembled at Bethlehem's Bell House Complex on Oct. 17, 2024 as the city hosted a series of official UNESCO World Heritage inscription events.

TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION

Managing a World Heritage site across borders



Delegates from Moravian Church Settlements, Pennsylvania and US officials, and UNESCO representatives attended a official inscription event on Oct. 17, 2024 at Moravian University's Foy Hall.

A group of people from all four countries and settlements worked together to prepare the World Heritage nomination — with full support of all congregations and communities.

An international management system helps to develop ways to protect, preserve, manage and present the site. It is made up of:

- **An overarching Intergovernmental Committee (IGC)** based on a letter of intent among all countries and taking into account the legal and sovereign responsibilities under the World Heritage Convention.
- **A Transnational Coordination Group (TCG)**

to coordinate and advise stakeholder management in the four countries, to be responsible for the Moravian Church Settlements International Management Plan, and to report to the Intergovernmental Committee on monitoring and other important issues.

- **A Moravian Church Transnational Advisory Group (MCTAG)** to represent the views of this overarching transnational stakeholder and to maintain communication and actions among all settlements, sharing experiences and knowledge, ensuring authentic interpretation and maintaining ties to the global Moravian community.



Children play as visitors enjoy a day at Christiansfeld's Moravian Church square.

MORAVIAN CHURCH HERITAGE

Our vision for the future

The **Moravian Church** and local communities work together to raise awareness of the Church's heritage. We also work to protect and preserve Moravian Church settlements for future generations. This involves collaborating with local communities to ensure the sustainable use of these sites, while also benefiting the local economy and quality of life.

Our principles are:

- **Ensure continued** robust protection, harmonious shared management, and sustainable use.
- **Raise awareness** of our heritage of Outstanding Universal Value and share its values with people everywhere.
- **Work with** other countries in the context of World Heritage of religious interest, using our heritage as an anchor point in the understanding and valuing of the network of Moravian heritage worldwide.



Choir sings at Moravian Church Settlements inscription celebration at Central Moravian Church in Bethlehem.



Rev. Janel Rice speaks at Moravian Church Settlements celebration at Central Moravian Church in Bethlehem.



The Montgomery Oak in Gracehill.

What we protect: Tangibles



In 1975 Gracehill became the first Conservation Area in Northern Ireland.

The World Heritage Convention is about preserving tangible evidence that reflects global values. You can see the Moravian Church Settlements' values in:

- The town plan, its unity and functional distribution related to Moravian Church ideals and the concept of an 'ideal city'.
- The architectural style of Moravian Church Civic Baroque and its variations influenced by cultural reach and national styles.
- Moravian Church building types and their characteristic proportions, features, and consistent craftsmanship and detailing.
- God's Acre cemetery, its placement and character in relation to the town and its shared features reflecting spiritual beliefs.
- Views out into the landscape, and from the landscape into the town.
- The evolution in Moravian Church town planning and architecture expressed through the development of urban designs, architectural style and building forms.
- Moravian Church ownership and activities, including interaction with the town and its buildings.



Gemeinhaus commemorative bell tower with church bell tower, Herrnhut.



Students tour Moravian University's campus in Bethlehem near Comenius Hall.

MORAVIAN CHURCH SETTLEMENTS

Fundamental linkages between local communities and their heritage



Guests visit Central Moravian Church Sanctuary, Bethlehem.

Understanding and supporting the links between tangible and intangible heritage is important to understand World Heritage Sites. Moravian Church Settlements provide an inspiring example of protecting both tangible and intangible heritage. Each place has a congregation that keeps the traditions alive.

Ingenuity and creativity are exemplified in Moravian contributions in education, medicine, technology, music, equality and diversity.

Their global identity embraces the greater good of the world community regardless of race, nationality, gender, language, or religion.

The Four Settlements



Visitors tour Bethlehem's grounds near the Bell House complex.

The four settlements will focus their work on the main fields of action: coordination, communication, education and research. These fields are outlined in detail in the International Management Plan which provides the basis for the transnational management of the Moravian Church Settlements World Heritage Site.

The joint fields of action include:

1.) COORDINATION

Strengthen long-term cooperation across borders and maintain an effective flow of information.

Ensure transnational cooperation and effective management in a spirit of open exchange, respect and friendship.

Strengthen the network of people responsible for the World Heritage Site and ensure learning from each other.

2.) COMMUNICATION

Make the Moravian Church Settlements visible as one UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Raise awareness of the Outstanding Universal Value of Moravian Church Settlements and the World Heritage concept among locals, tourists and guests.

Keep working together on communication, including internal and external communication.

The Moravian Church Settlements are connected or bound together on the basis of their Outstanding Universal Value.

Moravian Church Settlements and their value are well known among decision makers. Visitors can experience and use the property in a sustainable way.



Moravian Unity Archives, Herrnhut.

3.) EDUCATION

Raise awareness of the importance of the World Heritage Convention and the interdependence of cultures among young people.

Make Moravian Church Settlements places of learning. Use the network to cooperate, educate and exchange with other countries.

Get young people and local communities involved in conserving cultural heritage, assisting with intercultural contact and understanding.

Make the topic of World Heritage part of Moravian Church youth programs and university study.

Promote youth and school exchange programs among young people in full-time education.

Moravian University, through its Institute of Moravian History and World Heritage, will lead educational and research initiatives at the Moravian Church Settlements World Heritage site. The University will create immersive learning experiences, promote international partnerships, and engage the community to ensure the preservation and appreciation of Moravian heritage. Additionally, it will offer academic programs in Moravian World Heritage and Tourism and work with the Moravian Archives to digitize historical documents for global scholarly access.



Second Single Brethren's House in Bethlehem

4.) RESEARCH

Promote a better understanding of Moravian Church Settlements' heritage and its significance within the global Moravian Church.

Work with other academic agencies and scholars to share knowledge.

Support young scholars from different cultures with education and research.

Support professional research on Moravian Church settlements.

Moravian Church Settlements is an outstanding cultural heritage site that has an important role to play in supporting sustainable development.

Moravian Church Settlements

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