



A MUSEUM AND HISTORIC SITE

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## Victorian-era "Christmas Carol" show celebrates Dickens' bicentennial at Old South Meeting House



Photo Credit: David Krapes

**(Boston, MA)** — "A Christmas Carol Times Two!", a dramatic reading performance of Charles Dickens "**A Christmas Carol**" combined with traditional 19th century English Christmas carols will take place on **Saturday, December 8 at 2 pm** at **Old South Meeting House**, 310 Washington Street in Boston, Massachusetts. Actor Al LePage will become Victorian-era "Englishman Thomas Hutchinson, Traveling Thespian" complete with English accent, clothing of the period and other accoutrements. He is accompanied by the Rev. Dr. Dianne Carpenter on piano. Before the performance, "Hutchinson" will also engage audience members in a discussion -- from his own very personal British point-of-view -- of relevant history and people as it were the "American Centennial of 1876!"

All ticket proceeds benefit the programming and preservation of Old South Meeting House, a museum and National Historic Landmark on Boston's Freedom Trail. Advance tickets available for \$10 each at <http://ChristmasCarolx2.bpt.me> or by calling 1-800-838-3006. Tickets are available at the door for \$12 each. The performance is best appreciated by adults and children 10 years of age and older. Doors for the performance open at 1:30 pm. All seating is general admission.

"Revolution or rebellion, now that is the question," begins LePage. "So, before the actual performance itself I'll be giving a quick history lesson, too, but from a British perspective. And not only about the famed **Boston Tea Party**, but also a few more surprising, if not shocking, things about tea and taxes and rebellion in American history! And, Old South Meeting House is one of the best places to get revolting one might say. So, get ready for the opening act when I invite you back home to the year 1876 to talk about local history on the hundredth anniversary of the American rebellion against King George III!"

LePage's one-man "solo" performance of Dickens' Christmas Carol is based upon Dickens' own historic, dramatic public reading of the story using voice, facial expressions, gestures and movement to create all 18 characters -- accents and all - plus sound effects, too! From Scrooge to Tiny Tim, from Marley's Ghost to Mrs. Cratchit, there's howls and growls, bangs and bongs, a dance with a song, lively laughter and heartfelt tears. He's sure to bring you lively laughter, and hopefully some tears, during his dramatic reading of Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol."

In January of 1842 while in Boston on his first visit to the United States, Charles Dickens, author of *A Christmas Carol*, shouted when he first saw Old South Meeting House. Upon hearing the outburst, his future friend James T. Fields of the publishing house Ticknor and Fields wondered, "Was it because of its fancied resemblance to St. Paul's or the Abbey?" Where better then to present this re-imagined Dickens' holiday classic than Old South Meeting House, this 18th century landmark that made the author himself shout with glee?



#### ABOUT DIANNE CARPENTER

Dianne Carpenter is minister of the United Methodist Church in Franklin, Massachusetts. A gifted musician from her youth, she pursued her music education degree from *Lowell State College*, teaching music in area schools while also working as a church organist or choir director. She holds a Masters of Sacred Music from *Boston University*, a Masters of Divinity from *Andover Newton Theological School* and a PhD in Christian Social Ethics from *Boston University Graduate School*. She's been a minister in the *New England Conference of the United Methodist Church* for nearly two decades, and continues to publicly perform both on organ and piano, typically now only playing the violin for her own enjoyment.

#### ABOUT AL LEPAGE

Al LePage has portrayed the Victorian-era "Traveling Thespian, Thomas Hutchinson," one of a wealth of characters that he has created for his theater company *Great Stories Alive!*, nationally and abroad since 2006. LePage got his start bringing history to life through improvised portrayals of real people from the past and has been seen by thousands during the eight years he appeared at events with the *National Park Service*, historic sites, museums, and other venues in the Pacific Northwest. He's appeared on the *PBS TV History Detectives* series as everything from a bartender to Robert E. Lee! He's also written and produced his own one-man historical dramas, and recorded his "short" performance version of Dickens' classic holiday story as a one man radio show, an *Oregon Public Broadcasting Radio* production.



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Old South Meeting House is a non-profit museum and National Historic Landmark dedicated to continuing its proud tradition of free speech and assembly. Built in 1729 as a Puritan meetinghouse, this historic site is a living symbol of our country's quest for freedom and justice. It was here in this famed National Historic Landmark that Liberty found her allies and the American Revolution gained its voice. Within the walls of Old South Meeting House, meeting by meeting, vote by vote, a revolution began. Explore the rich history of the Meeting House through rare artifacts, such as a vial of tea from the Boston Tea Party and a charming 3-D historic model of colonial Boston.

Open seven days a week, the museum's hours are 9:30 am to 5 pm from April 1 - Oct. 31, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. from Nov. 1 - March 31. Closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Day. For more information, visit [www.osmh.org](http://www.osmh.org) or call 617-482-6439. Old South Meeting House is located at 310 Washington Street, at the intersection of Milk Street, in Downtown Crossing, Boston, MA 02108.

#### GENERAL CAPTION SUGGESTION for IMAGES:

**"Englishman Thomas Hutchinson, Amateur Thespian" as portrayed by Al LePage presents Charles Dickens classic "A Christmas Carol" with piano music by Dianne Carpenter at Old South Meeting House.**

**NOTE TO MEDIA:** Embedded images are high resolution and offered for free use by the print media for stories related to these performances and may be cropped, color-balanced and adjusted as needed. Please credit the photographer "David Krapes" for "Mr. Hutchinson's" images, accordingly. Thank you.

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