



Pennsylvania  
Historical & Museum  
Commission

**Ephrata Cloister**  
632 West Main Street  
Ephrata, Pennsylvania 17522

(717) 733-6600

[ra-ephratacloister@pa.gov](mailto:ra-ephratacloister@pa.gov)



**Ephrata Cloister Associates**

## WHO WE ARE

The **Ephrata Cloister** is a former protestant monastic community founded in 1732 by German immigrant Conrad Beissel. The 250-acre Cloister's populace consisted of celibate Brothers and Sisters who lived on the grounds, and a married congregation who lived in the surrounding area. Members, who were waiting for Christ's return, sought spiritual rather than earthly rewards, choosing Saturday as their main day of worship. During its most prosperous years, 1740s and 1750s, the congregation consisted of nearly 300 members. Members of the Cloister were known for their self-composed hymns, Germanic architecture, calligraphy known as Frakturschriften and printing. The last celibate member died in 1813, and the remaining married congregation – known as the **German Seventh Day Baptist Church** – continued to live and worship at the Cloister until 1934; seven years later in 1941 they sold the remaining 28-acres and nine original structures to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

## WHAT WE DO

Today, the Ephrata Cloister is comprised of 28-acres and nine original buildings. The Ephrata Cloister is one of 26 historic sites and museums administered by the **Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission** ([www.phmc.state.pa.us](http://www.phmc.state.pa.us)), who preserves and maintains Pennsylvania's rich historical and cultural heritage. The site is supported by the **Ephrata Cloister Associates**, incorporated in 1958, as a non-profit organization dedicated to the continued preservation and interpretation of the Ephrata Cloister. The Associates sponsor educational programs such as the Ephrata Cloister Chorus and the Student Historians Program, operate the Museum Store, and support the Back to the Cloister Fund, which returns original artifacts to the Cloister ([www.EphrataCloister.org](http://www.EphrataCloister.org)).

## HOURS OF OPERATION

January – February: Wednesday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday noon to 5 p.m.  
March: Tuesday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday noon to 5 p.m.  
April – October: Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday noon to 5 p.m.  
November – December: Tuesday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday noon to 5 p.m.

The Ephrata Cloister is closed on Easter, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving and the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. It is open for all summer holidays including Memorial Day, 4<sup>th</sup> of July and Labor Day. Guided tours are offered daily, which is the only way to see the two main structures in the community. Additional buildings are open for self-guided and cell phone walking tours.

## ADMISSION

Admission to the Ephrata Cloister is \$9.00 for adults, \$8.00 for senior citizens age 65 and above and AAA members, and \$6.00 for youth ages 3 – 11. Children under age 3 are admitted free. Some special programs may have additional costs.