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RELEASE

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LAMENTATION, THANKSGIVING, AND HOPE: THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE MOURNS 700,000 COVID DEAD AND HONORS HEROES OF THE PANDEMIC WITH THREE-DAY SERIES OF SERVICES AND TRIBUTES



Public invited to build altars and share images of loved ones to be commemorated in Cathedral

In recognition of the COVID-19 pandemic's almost unimaginable human toll, The Cathedral of St. John the Divine will dedicate a three-day series of worship services, art installations, and public events to mourning the dead and honoring those who cared for the sick and dying with **Lamentation, Thanksgiving, and Hope, beginning Sunday, October 31 through Tuesday, November 2, 2021 at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, 1047 Amsterdam Avenue (at 112th Street).**

November 1 and 2 are recognized as All Saints and All Souls Day respectively in the Episcopal calendar, and are days of somber meditation and joyous promise as Christians reflect upon life, death, and the promise of eternal salvation. Led by Cathedral and interfaith religious leaders, New York and national political figures, and artists and thinkers on the human condition and the interconnection of life and death, the Cathedral will this year invite people from throughout New York City and the nation to remember the trauma and the blessings of the past 20 months and to look ahead in hope.

The COVID-19 pandemic in the United States has wreaked a deadly toll on communities of color in particular. In recognition of this racial disparity, and in celebration of the New York Mexican-American and Latinx communities, the Cathedral will invite members of the public to build altars in commemoration of el Día de Muertos starting on Saturday, October 30.

Collaboratively crafted by artist Sebastian Gamez together with the public, and incorporating rich symbolism of ancestry, life, death, and rebirth, these sacred objects will become monuments to all those lost to the coronavirus, and will be prayed at over the course of the following three days of services and events.

On Sunday, October 31, the Eve of All Saints, the Cathedral will hold a festive Evensong at 5 pm, culminating in a procession outside onto the Cathedral steps and Amsterdam Avenue. The 5 pm evening service will include the premiere of a setting of the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis by Daniel Ficarri, the Cathedral's newly-appointed Associate Organist.

Monday, November 1, the Feast of All Saints, will begin with a service of Choral Morning Prayer, honoring and giving thanks for medical personnel and others who tended the sick and others who made life possible during the days of lockdown. The Reverend Dr. Malcolm J. Byrd of Harlem's historic Mother AME Zion Church will preach at the Cathedral's November 1 midday Holy Eucharist service, and congregants are invited to return later in the evening for a quiet, meditative service of Compline at 9 pm. Images and remembrances of the over 700,000 American victims of COVID will put faces and names to the scale of ongoing trauma the country has suffered since 2020, humanizing and bringing home the immensity of the pandemic. Members of the public are welcomed to send images of loved ones and family members to be honored and mourned in the Cathedral.

On All Souls Day, November 2, all are invited to participate in a morning service of prayer and remembrances led by The Reverend Paul Daniels. In the evening, the Cathedral's renowned choir, led by Director of Music Kent Tritle, will present Gabriel Fauré's evocative *Requiem*, adding the power of music to soothe and comfort to the three-day series of gatherings. At the culmination of the days of *Lamentation, Thanksgiving, and Hope*, the Cathedral will host a National Memorial Service, speaking to the depths of grief New Yorkers and people across the country have experienced. Speakers on November 2 will include Thomas Lynch, poet, essayist, and funeral director, whose reflections on mortality have helped millions come to terms with their own lives. In solidarity with all those who have suffered, and with all those who continue to risk their own lives to save others, these services and events will imagine a continuing path of healing, health, and hope.

To protect the health of the NYC community, the Cathedral requires proof of COVID-19 vaccination for entry. The Cathedral's full COVID policy [is available here](#). For information on all *Lamentation, Thanksgiving, and Hope* services and events, visit stjohndivine.org.

About The Cathedral

The Cathedral of St. John the Divine is the Cathedral of the Episcopal Diocese of New York. It is chartered as a house of prayer for all people and a unifying center of intellectual light and leadership.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Cathedral has responded to changing needs in the local community and across the city and state. People from many faiths and communities worship together in daily services held online and in person; the soup kitchen serves roughly 50,000 meals annually; social service outreach has an increasingly varied roster of programs to safely provide resources and aid to the hardest-hit New Yorkers; the distinguished Cathedral School prepares young students to be future leaders; Advancing the Community of Tomorrow, the renowned preschool, afterschool and summer program, offers diverse educational and nurturing experiences; the outstanding Textile Conservation Lab preserves world treasures; concerts, exhibitions, performances and civic gatherings allow conversation, celebration, reflection and remembrance—such is the joyfully busy life of this beloved and venerated Cathedral.