

The Church of England, Marie Curie, Hope UK, Care for the Family, Ataloss and many charities and organisations across the UK, will join forces on Tuesday 23rd March for a National Day of Reflection to commemorate the first anniversary of the nationwide Coronavirus lockdown.

York Minster will open from 11.30am to welcome people for prayer, quiet reflection and to light candles for family, friends and loved ones. The Minster will fall still at 12 noon for a national one minute silence. A Chaplain will be present throughout the day.

The Revd Michael Smith, Canon Pastor at York Minster said: “This unprecedented event has touched communities all over the world. There has been heart-breaking loss of life, disruption to every sphere of life, enforced isolation that has been extremely difficult to endure and severe economic strain. Even the most basic human interactions such as comforting the sick and dying, or attending a funeral have been impossible for many.

“We have also experienced the very best: the courage and sacrifice of NHS and social care workers, the emergency services and key workers; individuals, groups and an army of volunteers reaching out to isolated and vulnerable people in their communities. We have seen enormous scientific endeavour, collaboration and political consensus to produce safe vaccines to combat the virus.

“The past year has often felt overwhelming, challenging our sense of self, safety and undermining our mental health. Recovery will take time. On Tuesday 23rd March, everyone is invited to come into the stillness of the Minster and to use the space to reflect, to grieve, to remember and to pray.”

Commenting on the day, the Archbishop of York, the Most Revd and Right Honourable Stephen Cottrell said: “As we look back on the sorrows and difficulties of the past year and remember those who have died and those who have suffered so much, we also give thanks for the care we have received through our health service, but also in many other ways, not least the care we have been able to show each other in our local communities. On this day of national reflection and remembrance we pray for a more just and caring world beyond the horrors of Covid”.

The National Day of Reflection will be facilitated in accordance with York Minster’s strict Covid-security measures. These include social distancing, hand sanitising, a one-way system, cleaning of all surfaces between visits and no more than 75 people in the cathedral at any one time.

Notes to Editor

York Minster will be open from 11.30am until 6pm on Tuesday 23 March for the National Day of Reflection on the anniversary of the first lockdown. Pre-booking is not necessary but entry might be slightly delayed to manage capacity inside the Minster.

Marie Curie has produced resources and advice on how to mark the National Day of Reflection at <https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/get-involved/day-of-reflection>. The Church of England has also produced prayers and resources at <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/evangelism-and-discipleship/mission-network-news/23rd-march-national-day-reflection>.

Documents

- [Day of Reflection Postcard](#) (155.53 KB)