

# Westminster Abbey



## Trees of Life

A Service of Remembrance with the  
blessing of saplings for a living  
memorial to honour those who served  
and died in the COVID-19 pandemic

NATIONAL  
**MEMORIAL**  
ARBORETUM



THE NATIONAL  
FOREST



Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2022

Noon

Thank you for joining us today for the Trees of Life Service of Remembrance and Blessing – to honour the bravery and dedication of those who served our country throughout the pandemic, and to remember all who died as a result of COVID-19 in the UK.

Representatives from the NHS, Emergency Services, and other key workers, along with members of the public, join together today for this special service organised by Westminster Abbey, in conjunction with the National Memorial Arboretum and National Forest Company.

A stately Spaeth Alder tree is at the heart of the trees and saplings to be blessed in today's service. It will form the centrepiece of a new Trees of Life glade at the National Memorial Arboretum in the National Forest, where visitors will be invited to pause, take a moment and reflect. The saplings are a mixture of broadleaf species including the Midlands Hawthorn, which with its pink blossom each spring is an attractive variation on the well-known native tree. The majority of the saplings blessed today will also feature in the peaceful new glade at the Arboretum, with some being gifted to locations around the country, to add their colour and beauty to other sites of remembrance. Trees will long outlive us all; their presence offers solace in our sadness and connects us to future generations.

This new Trees of Life glade is the first step towards the delivery of a vision for a 25-acre extension to the Arboretum, creating a living memorial; a new, natural Remembrance space that will be a place for everyone across the nation to reflect on the service and sacrifice of those who have supported our country during the pandemic, as well as a space where all lives lost can be remembered.



*Trees of Life glade: design concept*

## NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM

Since its official opening twenty-one years ago, the National Memorial Arboretum has grown into an inspirational living landscape welcoming over 300,000 visitors each year. Families, friends, and comrades come to celebrate lives lived and remember lives lost.

Situated at the western end of the National Forest, the 150-acre Arboretum is home to more than 25,000 young trees and over 400 memorials. People from all walks of life are represented, with memorials to the Armed Forces, Emergency Services, and civilian organisations.

It is an uplifting place to remember those who have selflessly served and made the ultimate sacrifice for our Nation, and to empower the next generation to learn, discover, and explore.

For more information, please visit [thenma.org.uk](http://thenma.org.uk)

## THE NATIONAL FOREST

From its beginnings in the early 1990s, the National Forest has flourished into a forest of more than 9 million trees, with hundreds of woodlands, spanning 200 square miles of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, and Staffordshire. It is one of the boldest environmentally-led regeneration initiatives in the country, transforming a post-industrial Midlands landscape from black to green and offering a positive response to the climate crisis.

This new landscape is being created in partnership with local communities, local landowners, businesses, and charitable organisations including one of its most important partners, the National Memorial Arboretum. The woodlands of the National Forest are a backdrop to an extensive outdoor learning programme for children and young people, a focus for local people's health and wellbeing, a haven for wildlife, and a setting for businesses to thrive.

During the lockdowns and uncertainties of COVID-19, people have found solace and comfort in the woodlands on their doorstep, with trees providing an important connection with nature, a sense of wellbeing, and a feeling of renewal.

To find out more, please visit [nationalforest.org](http://nationalforest.org)

THE LEAVES OF THE TREES  
art installation by Peter Walker

Laid across the floor of the church around the Grave of the Unknown Warrior and through the centre of the nave, The Leaves of the Trees installation by sculptor Peter Walker was designed as a reflective memorial to the pandemic. Made up of 5,000 steel leaves with the word HOPE written upon them, it creates a beautiful impression of autumn fallen leaves appearing as though naturally scattered by the wind. The leaves symbolise the past, that which has transpired, and also hope for the future. The shape of a sycamore leaf has been chosen because it symbolises strength, protection, eternity, as well as clarity.



*Steel leaf from The Leaves of the Trees, by Peter Walker*

*Members of the congregation are kindly requested to refrain from using private cameras, video, or sound recording equipment. Please ensure that mobile telephones and other electronic devices are switched off.*

*The church is served by a hearing loop. Users should turn their hearing aid to the setting marked T.*

*The service is conducted by The Very Reverend Dr David Hoyle MBE, Dean of Westminster.*

*The service is sung by the Westminster Abbey Special Service Choir, conducted by Peter Holder, Sub-Organist.*

*The organ is played by Matthew Jorysz, Assistant Organist.*

*Music before the service*

*Dewi Rees, Organ Scholar, plays*

*Prelude in C minor BWV 546i      Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)*

*Variations sur un thème de Clément Jannequin      Jehan Alain  
(1911–40)*

*Adagio in E      Frank Bridge (1879–1941)*

*Psalm Prelude Set 1 no 1      Herbert Howells (1892–1983)*

*The Tree of Peace      Judith Weir (b 1954)*

*Representatives of Communities of Faith process to places in Quire.*

*The Right Worshipful The Lord Mayor of Westminster, Councillor Hamza Taouzzale, is received. All stand, and then sit.*

# ORDER OF SERVICE

All stand to sing the Hymn, during which the clergy and choir move to places in Quire and the Sacrarium.



**A**LL creatures of our God and King,  
Lift up your voice and with us sing  
Alleluia, alleluia!

Thou burning sun with golden beam,  
thou silver moon with softer gleam:

*O praise him, O praise him,  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

Thou rushing wind that art so strong,  
ye clouds that sail in heaven along,  
O praise him, Alleluia!

Thou rising morn, in praise rejoice,  
ye lights of evening, find a voice:

Thou flowing water, pure and clear,  
make music for thy Lord to hear,  
Alleluia, alleluia!

Thou fire so masterful and bright,  
that givest man both warmth and light:

Dear mother earth, who day by day  
unfoldest blessings on our way,

O praise him, Alleluia!

The flowers and fruits that in thee grow,  
let them his glory also show:

Let all things their Creator bless,  
and worship him in humbleness,

O praise him, Alleluia!

Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,  
and praise the Spirit, three in One:

*Lasst uns erfreuen* 263 NEH  
Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

*Francis of Assisi* (1182–1226)  
translated by William Draper (1855–1933)

*All remain standing. The Very Reverend Dr David Hoyle MBE, Dean of Westminster, gives the Bidding*

**W**E gather in the Abbey as others have gathered here to measure the significance of our experience and to summon up remembrance and hope. In a pandemic that is now woven into the fabric of our lives we recall what has been and imagine what is to come.

This is a moment of complex feelings. We measure the loss of over 200,000 lives, each one precious and particular. We bear that grief. We know that suffering continues amongst those dealing with long term symptoms, those newly taken ill and those for whom other treatments were delayed. Yet we also gather to give thanks for the courage, skill and selflessness of so many different people who put the needs of others before their safety and before their comfort. We recall both the isolation the pandemic imposed and the communities of common purpose that sustained us.

Today, we stand in what has been called 'the solidarity of the shaken'. We are newly aware that we live with risks we cannot contain and that we share a deep dependence on one another. In this service we will pray for the gifts of wisdom, loyalty and hope. May the experience of pandemic prompt the healing of division and a renewed commitment to common purpose. We will bless the trees that will become a permanent witness to our loss and to our thanksgiving. May they stand firm and resilient in all weathers and always remind us of our strength and our fragility in the solidarity of the shaken.

*All sit. Philippa Rawlinson, National Memorial Arboretum, gives a Testimonial*

*Alun Darbyshire plays Pan and Arethusa from Six Metamorphoses after Ovid, by Benjamin Britten (1913–76)*

*John Everitt, National Forest Company, reads*

THE spirit of the Lord God is upon me,  
because the Lord has anointed me;  
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,  
to bind up the broken-hearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and release to the prisoners;  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour,  
and the day of vengeance of our God;  
to comfort all who mourn;  
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—  
to give them a garland instead of ashes,  
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.  
They will be called oaks of righteousness,  
the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.

For as the earth brings forth its shoots,  
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,  
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise  
to spring up before all the nations.

*Isaiah 61: 1–3, 11*

Thanks be to God.



*The choir sings the Anthem*

THE tree of life my soul hath seen,  
Laden with fruit, and always green:  
The trees of nature fruitless be  
Compared with Christ the apple tree.

His beauty doth all things excel:  
By faith I know, but ne'er can tell  
The glory which I now can see  
In Jesus Christ the apple tree.

For happiness I long have sought,  
And pleasure dearly I have bought:  
I missed of all; but now I see  
'Tis found in Christ the apple tree.

I'm weary with my former toil,  
Here I will sit and rest awhile:  
Under the shadow I will be,  
Of Jesus Christ the apple tree.

This fruit doth make my soul to thrive,  
It keeps my dying faith alive;  
Which makes my soul in haste to be  
With Jesus Christ the apple tree.

Jesus Christ the Apple Tree    *anonymous, from the collection of Joshua Smith, 1784*  
*Elizabeth Poston (1905–85)*

*The Right Honourable Baroness Morgan of Cotes, reads*

**I** SAW no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Nothing accursed will be found there anymore. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign for ever and ever.

*Revelation 21: 22–22: 5*

Thanks be to God.

*The Dean gives the Address*

*All stand to sing the Hymn*



**I**MMORTAL, invisible, God only wise,  
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,  
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,  
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.

Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,  
nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;  
thy justice like mountains high soaring above  
thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.

To all life thou givest—to both great and small;  
in all life thou livest, the true life of all;  
we blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,  
and wither and perish—but naught changeth thee.

Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,  
thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;  
all laud we would render: O help us to see  
'tis only the splendour of light hideth thee.

*St Denio 377 NEH*

*Walter Smith (1824–1908)*

*from John Roberts's Caniadau y Cyssegr 1839*

*The Reverend Mark Birch, Precentor, leads the Prayers*

Let us pray.

*All kneel or sit.*

**L**ET us give thanks to God for those who served during the pandemic, and who serve us still; for critical and key workers maintaining infrastructure, emergency services, education, healthcare, social care and food supply; for all who laboured for our comfort and protection; that they may be blessed in their service, and be granted dignity, protection, and a just reward.

Lord, in your mercy

**hear our prayer.**

*Richard Webb-Stevens QAM, London Ambulance Service Motorbike Response Unit, says*

**L**ET us hold in loving-remembrance and in prayer those who died as a result of the pandemic; those whose time was cut short, those who were poorly-protected, those whose lives were put at risk in the service of others; that they may dwell in the heavenly city, nourished and healed by the Tree of Life.

Lord, in your mercy

**hear our prayer.**

*Becky Warren, The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, and Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps (Reserve), says*

**L**ET us pray for the work of the National Memorial Arboretum and the National Forest Company; that the Lord would prosper and guide their work; for a blessing upon this living memorial to those who died; for all that honours public service, and encourages remembrance, healing, and peace-of-heart.

Lord, in your mercy

**hear our prayer.**

*Rose Morgan BEM, Supermarket key worker, says*

**L**ET us give thanks to God for all that gives us hope and builds our resilience; for all that sustains us in community, and encourages our recovery; for our King and Government and for the work of Parliament; for State and Voluntary agencies; for Communities of Faith and all who serve their localities; that each may have the opportunity to contribute and to flourish.

Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

*The Venerable Tricia Hillas, Canon in Residence, says*

**L**ET us pray especially for those who continue to suffer; those who mourn, those who have lost health of body or mind, those who have missed opportunities in education and been set-back in their aspirations; that, in on-going challenges, none may be left behind or forgotten.

Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer**

*The Precentor concludes*

These and all our prayers let us offer to our heavenly Father in the words that Jesus taught us:

**O**UR Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

*All sit. The choir sings the Anthem*

THE spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he hath anointed me  
to preach the gospel to the poor:  
he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted,  
to preach deliverance to the captives,  
and recovering of sight to the blind,  
to preach the acceptable year of the Lord;  
to give unto them that mourn a garland for ashes,  
the oil of joy for mourning,  
the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness,  
that they might be called trees of righteousness,  
the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.

For as the earth bringeth forth her bud,  
and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth,  
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise  
to spring forth before all the nations;  
as the earth bringeth forth her bud.

*from The Apostles Op 49  
Edward Elgar (1857–1934)*

*Isaiah 61: 1–3, 11*

*All remain seated.*

*The Dean and representatives of Communities of Faith move to places at the  
Sacrarium steps for the blessing of the saplings*

*The Dean says*

Let us pray that these saplings may grow into a living memorial of those who served and died in the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Words of Blessing are said by the following*

*Representing the Shi'a Muslim Community*

Dr Sayed Ali Abbas Razawi

*Representing the Hindu Community*

Mrs Trupti Patel

*Representing the Jain Community*

Mr Vinay Shah

*Representing the Zoroastrian Community*

Mr Malcolm Deboo

*Representing the Sunni Muslim Community*

Shaykh Ibrahim Mogra

*Representing Reform Judaism*

Rabbi Mark Goldsmith

*Representing the Baha'i Community*

Mrs Annabel Djalili

*Representing Liberal Judaism*

Rabbi Charley Baginsky

*Representing the Sikh Community*

Dr Parmindar Kaur Sahni

*Representing the Buddhist Community*

The Venerable Bogoda Seelawimala

*The Dean says*

Let us pray

**G**OD our creator, by your gift the Tree of Life was set at the heart of the earthly paradise, and by your mercy the Wood of the Cross became for us the means of eternal life and peace. By your blessing may these trees flourish in memory of those we have loved and see no longer; let their leaves be for the healing of sorrow and the cherishing of memory, until we are brought into that paradise where there will be no more sorrow nor pain, but life everlasting; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*The Dean sprinkles the saplings with holy water, then censes them, while the choir sings*

**U**NTO him that overcometh shall be given of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. On either side of the river groweth the tree of life: the leaves of the tree are for thy healing. In the midst of that fair city flows the river of water of life, clear as crystal. Who so will, let him take of the water of life freely. Who so drinketh of this water shall never thirst. Take thou the leaves of the tree of life, so shalt thou enter in through the gates of the city.

The Song of the Tree of Life  
*Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)*

*after verses from Revelation 2, 22*



*All remain standing. Michael Rosen reads*

**T**HESSE are the hands  
That touch us first  
Feel your head  
Find the pulse  
And make your bed.

These are the hands  
That tap your back  
Test the skin  
Hold your arm  
Wheel the bin  
Change the bulb  
Fix the drip  
Pour the jug  
Replace your hip.

These are the hands  
That fill the bath  
Mop the floor  
Flick the switch  
Soothe the sore  
Burn the swabs  
Give us a jab  
Throw out sharps  
Design the lab.

And these are the hands  
That stop the leaks  
Empty the pan  
Wipe the pipes  
Carry the can  
Clamp the veins  
Make the cast  
Log the dose  
And touch us last.

*Michael Rosen (b 1946)*

*All remain standing. The Dean says*

In the power of the Spirit, let us renew our commitment to one another; to remember, to serve, and to support.

*All stand*

Will you remember those who died; the critical and key workers, the friends and family members, the vulnerable and those poorly-protected?

**We will remember them**

Will you uphold those who serve others at cost to themselves; those who defend the powerless, give care to the sick, and comfort to those who mourn?

**We will uphold them**

Will you support others as much as you are able; to enable recovery, to build resilience, and offer hope?

**We will support one another**

May God, who has given you the will to do these things, give you also the grace to fulfil them.

**Amen.**

*All stand to sing the Hymn*



**A**LL my hope on God is founded;  
he doth still my trust renew.  
Me through change and chance he guideth,  
only good and only true.  
God unknown,  
he alone  
calls my heart to be his own.

Pride of man and earthly glory,  
sword and crown betray his trust;  
what with care and toil he buildeth,  
tower and temple, fall to dust.  
But God's power,  
hour by hour,  
is my temple and my tower.

Daily doth th'Almighty giver  
bounteous gifts on us bestow;  
his desire our soul delighteth,  
pleasure leads us where we go.  
Love doth stand  
at his hand;  
joy doth wait on his command.

God's great goodness aye endureth,  
deep his wisdom, passing thought:  
splendour, light, and life attend him,  
beauty springeth out of naught.  
Evermore  
from his store  
new-born worlds rise and adore.

Still from man to God eternal  
sacrifice of praise be done,  
high above all praises praising  
for the gift of Christ his Son.  
Christ doth call  
one and all:  
ye who follow shall not fall.

*Michael 333 NEH*  
*Herbert Howells (1892–1983)*

*Meine Hoffnung stehet feste Joachim Neander (1650–80)*  
*translated by Robert Bridges (1844–1930)*

*All remain standing. The Dean pronounces the Blessing*

**G**O forth into the world in peace; be of good courage; hold fast that which is good; render to no one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honour all people; love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always.  
**Amen.**

*All remain standing as the Procession leaves the church.*

*Music after the service*

Cortège et Litanie Op 19

*Marcel Dupré (1886–1971)*

*The bells of the Abbey are rung*

**Members of the congregation are kindly requested to remain in their seats until invited to move by the Honorary Stewards**

*There is a retiring collection in aid of Westminster Abbey and the new living memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum*

## A NEW LIVING MEMORIAL

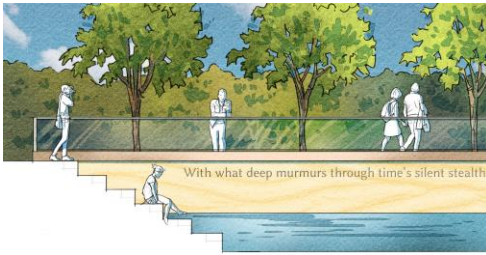
In response to huge public demand, the National Memorial Arboretum and National Forest Company present their ambitious plans to create a new living memorial that recognises service and sacrifice, and remembers every person who died as a result of the pandemic. It will be a place for people to remember their loved ones, recognise the bravery and dedication shown by key workers and members of the NHS, and reflect on the impact that it has had on all of our lives.

The development of a further 25-acres of land to the north end of the existing Arboretum is part of a new ambitious vision for modern remembrance which has sustainability, accessibility, and inclusion at its core. Neighbouring quarry operator Tarmac has donated the 25-acre plot on which the new living memorial will be created.

The existing scrubland and silt pond will be transformed into an inspirational living landscape, representative of the changing seasons, where people can gather to reflect and contemplate the impact of the pandemic and remember loved ones who died as a result. Lockdown Landscapes - a community activity programme funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund - in collaboration with Westminster Abbey and the National Forest Company, is a national engagement programme using creative methods to gather people's stories and experiences of the pandemic. Recording and sharing these lived experiences will help influence the design and interpretation of the woodland, and ensure the preservation of important memories for future generations. By engaging with communities at every step of the project we will ensure that the new woodland evolves and responds to the needs of the Nation.



The landscape design will feature diverse wildlife habitats and will incorporate reflective glades, areas for gathering and play, an inclusive space for contemplation and worship, and an expansive lake.



An avenue of water will run through the centre of the woodland, evoking a range of emotional responses as visitors are taken on a unique and

highly personal journey through a series of water features, layered in meaning.

The extension would also include new visitor facilities: accessible toilets, a small refreshment outlet and a flexible undercover event space that could see the existing 300,000 visitor footfall increase to over 500,000, reaching younger and more diverse audiences to further cement the Arboretum's position as the nation's year-round place to remember, and a key destination within the National Forest.



## WE NEED YOUR HELP TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN

The pandemic touched each and every one of us, from those who stayed at home in circumstances they never dreamed of, to those who so freely and so bravely gave their service and their lives to our Nation.

We need your support to mark our shared history, to heal our shared communities, and to create a special and tranquil space to remember those who gave so much during the darkest of times. Plans are currently being drawn up to determine the cost of this multi-million-pound project but we need more large-scale funding partners to create this lasting tribute. If you or your representative organisation are interested in joining us, please email Graeme Williamson at: [memorialwoodland@thenma.org.uk](mailto:memorialwoodland@thenma.org.uk). Once the majority of core funds have been secured, a public appeal will be launched to support the latter phases of the project.

Alternatively, if you would like to be kept up to date with activity and developments at the National Memorial Arboretum, please sign up to our mailing list here: [www.thenma.org.uk/about-us/keep-in-touch](http://www.thenma.org.uk/about-us/keep-in-touch)



*A new living memorial: design sketches*