

Thousands of Christians Intercede in Nation's Capital

Two prayer and worship events emphasizing repentance and intercession for the nation brought tens of thousands to Washington, D.C., on Saturday, September 26, to cry out to God for divine intervention. Under mostly cloudy skies, both The Return (led by Jonathan Cahn) and the Washington Prayer March (led by Franklin Graham) gathered Christians from every part of the country to pray amid a tumultuous political season.

Many who showed up for The Return, which took place on the National Mall between the Washington Monument and the U.S. Capitol, migrated to the Lincoln Memorial, where Franklin Graham began the 1.8-mile trek from the memorial to the Capitol building. Stops along the way included the World War II Memorial, the Washington Monument, the White House, the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, the National Archives, and the U.S. Capitol.

Jonathan Cahn framed the day by saying, "You have come because you feel called to be here at the most critical hour when the time is late and our nation is hanging in the balance. We've witnessed the darkest year in modern times. The threats upon our nation may rip it apart."

He noted that most people were probably warned not to come because of the dangers of COVID and unrest. But he said that the tens of thousands present were compelled to attend because of the state of the nation.

President Donald Trump took part in The Return by sending a message to be read to the crowd: "On this inaugural National Day of Prayer and Return, the First Lady and I join millions of Christians here in the United States and around the world in prayer, as we turn our hearts to our Lord and Savior."

The president also highlighted the nation's Christian heritage, quoting a phrase from the Declaration of Independence: "Following in our ancestors' footsteps we continue the 'firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence' that provides us enduring strength and reassurance in our times of need."

At noon, Franklin Graham began leading the prayer march. At least 50,000 prayer warriors assembled before the march began, packing every inch around the Lincoln Memorial and down each side of the Reflecting Pool. Vice President Mike Pence, a surprise participant, thanked the massive crowd for doing the best thing they can for their country: lifting it up to God. Then he prayed and blessed the efforts of all there.

Carol Madison, editor of *Prayer Connect*, attended both events, starting at The Return in the morning. "At first I wondered why the two events were scheduled for the same time. It seemed like a conflict," she says. "But as I first stood with perhaps 50,000 people at The Return, I was overwhelmed by the size of the crowd, even as we got on our knees in repentance. Then as I headed toward the Lincoln Memorial for the prayer march, I was again shocked at the size of the crowd there—another maybe 50,000. I recognized that God brought different streams of the Church together on the same day, and then merged them by the unity of His Spirit. We all prayed in agreement and in one accord."

The two events were broadcast in more than 100 nations, with millions of viewers tuning in through livestream and social media.

—Adapted from International Prayer Connections and Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.