



and churches, with prayer vigils and services due to take place, to mark 19 lockdown.

National Covid Memorial Wall

Services and events are to be held across the country for the National Day of Reflection tomorrow (Wednesday March 23), with ‘walls of reflection’ and remembrance created in cathedrals and churches where people can bring photos, prayers and memories to honour those who have died.

The Day, coordinated by the charity Marie Curie, will see some cathedrals joining other landmarks across the country lighting up in yellow as a sign of support.

Only Human, a poem commissioned by [York Minster](#) from the Poet Laureate, Simon Armitage, will have its first reading at a choral Evensong tomorrow at the Minster while a memorial concert, [Remember Me and Never to Forget](#) will be held in St Paul’s Cathedral.

[Southwell Minster](#) will launch Portraits from an Artist in Isolation (Real People Real Heroes) – an exhibition of 49 paintings and the culmination of eighteen months work by artist, Sarah Flanagan, as a tribute to keyworkers in the pandemic.

Postcards on which people can write the name of someone who has died have been created by [Chelmsford Cathedral](#) and will be made into a Wall of Remembrance with a printed prayer card available to take home. The cathedral will hold services in the garden and inside the Cathedral.

A ‘Wall of Reflection’ was put in place last week at [Sheffield Cathedral](#) for people to honour and remember loved ones who died during the pandemic by adding their names. At [St Albans Cathedral](#), a Wall of Reflection has been created outside the Cathedral with cards available for people to write prayers.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said: “As we mark this second National Day of Reflection, our prayers are with all those whose lives have been changed forever in the last two years by the Covid-19 pandemic.

“We think especially of those whose grief for lost loved ones will still be deeply painful, and for all those suffering from Covid and experiencing the debilitating effects of long Covid. May God hear and know the suffering of His children, and bring them comfort in their darkness.

“When things change so greatly, we cannot go back to where we were and pretend nothing has happened.

“Today is a moment to acknowledge all we have been through - individually, in our relationships, and as a nation - to mourn all we have lost and recognise all we have learnt about the importance of compassion and community.

“Christ calls us to be His presence in the world: may this difficult time be for us a turning point, a moment where we resolve again to build a fairer, kinder society together - one which honours those we have lost and the hardships we have faced.”

The Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally, who is Chair of the UK Commission on Bereavement, said “Since March 2020, the country has experienced

a sort of collective grief on a scale not seen for a great number of years.

“On the second anniversary of the first lockdown, I recall how helpless so many people, including myself, felt in the early days of the pandemic, surrounded by constant reminders of the magnitude of loss being experienced across the country.

“Today is a day to reflect. To pause and remember those we have lost over the past two years. And to pray for the millions of people who have been bereaved during the pandemic, who were left unable to grieve in traditional ways with the support of family and friends.

“As Chair of the UK Commission on Bereavement, hearing the hurdles that so many have faced to access good bereavement support has strengthened my resolve to ensure that every person who faces the death of a loved one doesn’t have to do it alone.”

The three churches in the benefice of Gloucester City and Hempsted will be offering prayer stations inside and outside for people to write prayers and to pause and remember.

Rector Revd Canon Nikki Arthy, said: “As we mark this second National Day of Reflection, we will offer space both inside and outside the churches of our parish for people to pause and to pray.

“We reach out to those who grieve, remembering people who have died from Covid and those who have died during the pandemic from other causes across our communities.”



St Albans Cathedral

Pictures above: The Archbishop of Canterbury at the National Covid Memorial Wall, below, St Albans Cathedral Wall of Reflection

- At a Loss, provides signposting and information for bereaved people.
- Remember Me is an online book of remembrance from St Paul's Cathedral, open to people of all faiths and none, to remember all those who had died as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since its launch in May 2020, more than 10,000 people have been memorialised on the Remember Me online book of remembrance, which remains open for as long as it is needed.

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