PROGRAM

WELCOME TO PRESIDENT’S PARK!

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE AND NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION ARE EXCITED TO HAVE YOU JOIN US TONIGHT IN PRESIDENT’S PARK, A NATIONAL PARK THAT SHARES BOTH THE STORY OF THE WHITE HOUSE AND THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES.

AS YOU ENJOY TONIGHT’S FESTIVITIES, REMEMBER OUR NATIONAL PARKS ARE WONDERFUL PLACES TO VISIT WITH YOUR FAMILY DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON.

TO PLAN YOUR NEXT VISIT, GO TO NPS.GOV

LL COOL J, Host

Holiday Music
Howard University Gospel Choir
U.S. Army Band Downrange

Greetings
Will Shafroth, President and CEO
National Park Foundation

The Honorable Deb Haaland
Secretary of the Interior

Christmas Message and Lighting of the National Christmas Tree
President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
and Dr. Jill Biden

Guest Performers (in alphabetical order)
Kristin Chenoweth
H.E.R.
Juanes
Keb’ Mo’
Patti LaBelle
Maren Morris
Billy Porter
Chris Stapleton

Audience Sing-A-Long with Santa
TONIGHT’S PERFORMERS

LL COOL J
Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inductee, two-time GRAMMY® Award-winning Hip-Hop icon, Kennedy Center Honoree, recording artist, actor, author, NAACP Image Award winner, entrepreneur, philanthropist, and founder and CEO of Rock The Bells, LL COOL J has created one of the most multifaceted careers and brands in entertainment and continues to display his wide range of talents with every project. Three decades after he first burst onto the scene, LL COOL J continues his vibrant, trailblazing career.

KRISTIN CHENOWETH

H.E.R.
H.E.R. kicked off 2021 in the most stellar of ways by winning two Grammy Awards – Song of the Year for “I Can’t Breathe” and Best R&B Song for her contribution to Robert Glasper’s “Better Than I Imagined,” plus an Academy Award for her powerful song “Fight For You” from the film “Judas and the Black Messiah.” In 2019, she won two Grammy Awards for Best R&B Album and Best R&B Performance and a NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Female Artist, among additional awards and honors.
JUANES
Born and raised in Medellín, Colombia, Juanes is unquestionably Latin Rock’s leading global ambassador and champion for social change. Hailed by TIME as “one of the 100 Most-Influential People in the World,” and The New York Times as “Latin America’s hottest singer-songwriter... a soulful poet with electric guitar,” Juanes is the only artist holding two of Billboard’s ”Top-5 Latin Pop Songs of All-Time,” 12 #1 U.S. singles, dozens of television appearances, and 25 combined GRAMMY® & Latin GRAMMY® Awards.

KEB’ MO’
With five GRAMMYs, 14 Blues Foundation Awards, and a groundbreaking career spanning nearly 50 years under his belt, Keb’ Mo’ stands as one of the most accomplished and respected artists working in contemporary roots music. In the decades that followed his 1994 debut album, Keb’ would go on to top the Billboard Blues chart seven times and perform everywhere from Carnegie Hall to the White House. Keb’s newest album, “Good To Be,” weaves together the sounds of his childhood in Compton with his adopted hometown of Nashville.

PATTI LABELLE
Beautiful simply does not describe the incomparable force known to the world as Patti LaBelle. Through the years, the songbird’s name has become synonymous with grace, style, and class. Her effortless ability to belt out classic rhythm and blues renditions, pop standards and spiritual sonnets has created the unique platform of versatility that the artist is known and revered for. For almost 60 years, Patti’s strong and soulful voice has left an indelible mark all over the world.
MAREN MORRIS
Maren Morris is one of the leading voices in music today. Her triple platinum single “The Bones” dominated 2020, topping the Billboard Hot Country Songs chart for 19 consecutive weeks and became the first solo female multi-week #1 in country radio since 2012. The single earned Morris Song of the Year and Female Artist of the Year at the 2021 ACM Awards and Female Vocalist of the Year, Single of the Year and Song of the Year at the 2020 CMA Awards, plus and a 2021 GRAMMY® nomination for Best Country Song.

BILLY PORTER
Billy Porter is a GRAMMY®, EMMY®, and TONY® Award-winning singer and actor. Porter took home the EMMY® Award for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Drama Series in 2019 for his work on “Pose,” making history as the first openly gay man to do so. Time Magazine named him one of the “100 Most Influential People” of 2020. Billy released his memoir, “Unprotected,” in October. His directorial film debut, “What If,” is set to drop in 2022. Billy kicks off his next chapter in music, his first love, with a new album coming soon.

CHRIS STAPLETON
Kentucky-born Stapleton is a 5-time GRAMMY®, 10-time CMA and 9-time ACM Award-winner and one of the country’s most respected and beloved musicians. This past fall, Stapleton released his critically acclaimed new album, “Starting Over” – a record that examines life’s simplest joys and most serious struggles. Released to widespread acclaim, it won Album of the Year at the 56th ACM Awards and landed on several “Best of 2020” lists, including NPR Music, Rolling Stone, Billboard, Esquire, Vulture, and The New York Times.
U.S. ARMY BAND DOWNRANGE
The U.S. Army Band Downrange supports the men and women of the Armed Services through popular music, while reaching all audiences, young and old, with their continuously up-to-date repertoire of rock, pop, country, R & B, and inspirational signature patriotic arrangements that are popular with all listeners. The professional musicians are among the most accomplished in the Army and regularly perform at official events in Washington, D.C., as well as public concerts.

HOWARD UNIVERSITY GOSPEL CHOIR
Founded in 1968, the Howard Gospel Choir is the first collegiate choir of its kind in the world and has pioneered an international legacy in gospel music ministry. With an active roster of fifty-plus persons, the choir is one of the largest religious life organizations on campus. The choir has performed with Stevie Wonder, Bonnie Raitt, Chaka Khan, Mary J. Blige, and Fantasia, and is currently under the musical direction of Reginald Golden, a Howard University double graduate from University Heights, OH.

PRE-SHOW ENTERTAINMENT
Marvelous carolers and entertainers welcome guests to the Ellipse tonight:
Central Bucks High School – West Choir, Doylestown, Pennsylvania
Culpeper County HS Blue Devils’ Infinity Acapella, Culpeper, Virginia
Powerhouse Brass – Pritchard Music, Gaithersburg, Maryland
The Washington Football Team Drumline, Washington, DC
Pre-Show Producer: Elizabeth Yoder
Pre-Show Coordinators: Rosemary Lopez, Mary Thomas
The history of the National Christmas Tree is closely intertwined with the history of America. Through peace and war, from national celebration to national mourning, Americans have gathered together and celebrated the season at this holiday event.

The first National Christmas Tree was placed on the Ellipse south of the White House in December 1923. The tree was a 48-foot Balsam fir donated by the President of Middlebury College in Vermont. At 5 p.m. on Christmas Eve, President Calvin Coolidge walked from the White House to the Ellipse to light the tree from his native state. The tree was decorated with 2,500 electric bulbs in red, white and green, donated by the Electric League of Washington. Music for this first lighting ceremony was provided by a local choir and a quartet from the U.S. Marine Band. This first National Christmas Tree led to the tradition we celebrate today, even as the tree’s location and lighting ceremony have changed.

From 1924 to 1933 the tree, renamed the National Community Christmas Tree, was located in Sherman Park, south of the Treasury Building and southeast of the White House grounds. During these years, simple lighting ceremonies and community singing were accompanied by the U.S. Marine Band. The National Park Service’s responsibilities for the lands and the tree ceremony began in 1933.

The years 1941 to 1953 found the National Christmas Tree on the South Lawn of the White House. In 1941, on December 24, only weeks after the attack on Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill led the lighting ceremony and addressed the crowd.

In 1954, the tree moved back to the Ellipse, where it has been located ever since. Also, in 1954, the tree lighting became known as the Christmas Pageant of Peace, a celebration conceived by the Washington Board of Trade and the
Washington Citizen’s Committee.

The tree lighting ceremony moved from Christmas Eve to earlier in December and was followed by three weeks of presentations by community groups on the stage at the Ellipse.

While the actual location of the tree in President’s Park has moved and the lighting ceremony program has evolved over the years, the purpose remains the same: to bring our local and national communities together to celebrate the season and share the universal message of peace during the holiday season.

In 1978, National Park Service horticulturalists searched for a perfect tree whose life had started under similar environmental conditions as those of Washington, D.C., and a tree that would be healthy and strong enough to survive a move to the Ellipse.

They found the tree in York, Pennsylvania, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. William E. Myers. It appeared to be the perfect shape and size, with no disease, and living in just the right soil. The tree had been planted by the Myers’ grandchildren. After discussions with the National Park Service horticulturalists, the Myers agreed to let their tree become the nation’s Christmas tree.

That tree had grown to over 42 feet, served as the National Christmas Tree for six different U.S. Presidents (Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama) and was featured in 33 annual National Christmas Tree Lighting events before being toppled by a strong wind gust on February 19, 2011.

On March 19, 2011, the National Park Service completed the planting of a new National Christmas Tree, exactly one month to the day after the previous National Christmas Tree was felled. This new National Christmas Tree was a 26-foot-tall Colorado blue spruce from a tree nursery in New Jersey.
The tree served as the National Christmas Tree for one tree lighting ceremony in December of 2011. Unfortunately, that tree died of transplant shock and was removed on May 5, 2012.

On October 27, 2012, National Park Service horticulturalists completed the planting of a new National Christmas Tree. That National Christmas Tree is a Colorado blue spruce—the same species as the previous two trees—and, just like the 1978 tree, came to the Ellipse from a private residence, this time from nearby Virginia. That tree was irreparably damaged in 2018 when an individual attempted to climb it.

A new tree was once again been planted on the Ellipse. The 30-foot Colorado blue spruce from Palmyra, Pennsylvania, played the starring role in this revered holiday tradition for two more years before being replaced by the National Park Service.

Tonight, for the first time, President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. and Dr. Jill Biden will light a white fir tree, planted just a few weeks ago in its new home on the Ellipse in President’s Park. That tree will once again be decorated and lit next year to mark the eagerly anticipated centennial of this beloved holiday tradition.

Christmas is always a special time in and around the White House, and the National Christmas Tree remains an internationally-recognized symbol of the festive season and a living witness to the history being made in our nation’s capital.

*To learn more about the history of the National Christmas Tree and view archival photos of previous tree lighting ceremonies, go to TheNationalTree.org.*
GE Lighting, a Savant company, is honored to provide the lighting and design for the 2021 National Christmas Tree for the second straight year. Over the previous 57 years, the Tree was sponsored by GE Lighting while it was a General Electric company.

This year’s design includes a background of warm white lights with a delicate sprinkling of sparkling red and warm white sphere ornaments placed in a cascading pattern from the top all the way down the newly planted white fir tree, with a cluster of sparkling red and white spheres on the lower branches. A simple, yet elegant star topper finishes off the design.

Using the latest in LED lighting products, this is the 13th consecutive year that GE LED lights, many of them ENERGY STAR® certified, have been used exclusively to light the National Christmas Tree.

The National Christmas Tree is a cherished tradition, and with the advancements in LED lighting, innovative designs create new memories year after year. These advancements also offer an opportunity to utilize energy efficient and lighter weight options, helping conserve resources and preserve this living tree.

The total wattage is around 5600 watts and because the lights are GE LEDs, they use up to 80% less energy than incandescent lights. The tree will be lit from dusk until around 11:00 P.M. every night.

Check out this year’s National Christmas Tree, as well as lighting designs from years past, at TheNationalTree.org.
OVER 1,500 STUDENTS FROM EACH STATE, TERRITORY, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, AS WELL AS BUREAU OF INDIAN EDUCATION AND DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE EDUCATION ACTIVITY SCHOOLS, HAVE GIVEN OF THEIR TIME AND TALENTS TO DESIGN AND CREATE ORNAMENTS REPRESENTING THEIR HOME STATE OR TERRITORY. WE HOPE YOU ENJOY YOUR STROLL THROUGH OUR GREAT AND DIVERSE COUNTRY, REFLECTED IN THE ARRAY OF DESIGNS PRESENTED HERE IN THE AMERICA CELEBRATES DISPLAY.

Alabama
McAdory High School

Alaska
Ayaprun Elitnaurvik/Chinook E.S.

American Samoa
Manulele Tausala Elementary School

Arizona
Nogales High School

Arkansas
Virtual Arkansas

Bureau of Indian Education
Pine Springs Day School, AZ
Cheyenne-Eagle Butte School, SD
Lac Court Orielles Ojibwe School, WI

California
Thousand Oaks Elementary School

Colorado
Grand Mountain School

Connecticut
Andover Elementary School

Delaware
Laurel Middle School

Dept. of Defense Education Activity
Vogelweh Elementary, Germany
Humphreys High School, South Korea
Ramey Unit School, Puerto Rico

District of Columbia
Eastern High School

Florida
Osceola High School

Georgia
North Paulding High School

Guam
Academy of Our Lady of Guam

Hawaii
William McKinley High School

Idaho
Idaho Arts Charter School

Illinois
Betty Shabazz International Charter School

Indiana
Danville North Elementary

Iowa
Johnston High School

Kansas
Blue Valley and Most Pure Heart of Mary Schools

Kentucky
Marion County High School

Louisiana
Washington Marion Magnet H.S.
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<td>Dr. Francisco Hernández y Gaetán</td>
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The 2021 National Christmas Tree Lighting is presented by the National Park Service and National Park Foundation, with the generous support of the following companies and organizations:

Special thanks to Mountain Top Fraser Fir, Santa’s Choice Tree Farm, and Merlyn Farms for donating the trees lining the America Celebrates display.

The National Christmas Tree Lighting is a production of White Rose Way Entertainment.

Leon Knoles  Dino Shorte´
Kristi Foley  Don Mcclurkin
Renato Basile  Doug Mckinley
Leonard Gonzalez  Gerard Brancato
Anthony Lalumia  James Boore
Antonio Sol  James Gironta
Bern Rexer  Jeff Latonero
Charles Hill  Jennifer Naranjo
Chris Williams  Joe Rose
Darryl Player  Joey Despenzero
David Buengermeister  Jonathan Burch
David Thibodeau  Joshua Jackson

Kenny Gritton  Marc Urselli
Kenny White  Matt Russell
Kevin Horiuchi  Megan Monahan
Kevin Murphy  Nasrin Rashidi
Kobe King  Olivier Revel
Kris Simms  Pat Gleason
Kyle Farmer  Paul Bell Jr
Larry Boshers  Paul Wittman
Linda Carrizzo  Pawel Butkiewicz
Lindsay Saunders Carol  Peter Arsenault
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All Mobile Video  Charm City
Charm City  Maryland Sound
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Norton Projects  Saunders Electric
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Tiffany Keys  Program: J.W. Arnold

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Working together with a growing community of passionate park champions, the National Park Foundation strives to ensure that all people are able to discover their own personal sense of wonder and connection to parks, because they don’t just stand for where America has been – they inspire where we go next.

Get involved at nationalparks.org