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– JOINT PRESS RELEASE –

Navajo Nation Day of Prayer service held in
honor and memory of all lives lost to COVID-19

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 17, 2022



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Speaker Seth Damon, and Chief Justice JoAnn B. Jayne gathered at the Veterans Memorial Park to recognize March 17, 2022 as “Navajo Nation Day of Prayer”.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Navajo Nation leaders gathered at the Veterans Memorial Park on Thursday morning, for a prayer service to honor and remember all of the lives lost to COVID-19 since the first case was confirmed on the Navajo Nation two years ago. The three branch chiefs also issued a proclamation recognizing March 17, 2022 as “Navajo Nation Day of Prayer.”

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“Today, we come together with all faiths, to join in prayer to honor and remember the lives lost to COVID-19 over the past two years and to ask for strength and comfort for all of the families. We also pray for continued blessings for our communities, health care workers and frontline warriors, and our entire Nation as we continue to persevere through the pandemic. Through the strength and teachings of our ancestors and the guidance of our public health experts, we continue to see a decline in new cases and hospitalizations. We must continue to pray, take precautions, and get vaccinated as we move forward together,” said Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez.

As of March 16, there have been 52,754 COVID-19 cases reported and 1,657 lives lost since the start of the pandemic. 75-percent of individuals, 12 years and older, have received two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine on the Navajo Nation..

“We gather to offer corn pollen and protection prayers to bring comfort to the countless families affected by COVID-19. The last two years brought us together as one Navajo family to protect our elders, young people, and those most vulnerable. The vaccine saved millions of lives around the world and allowed the Navajo Nation to be a leader for Indian Country for vaccinations. Science prevailed again as face masks and other preventive measures proved to be the first step to ending this pandemic. We are grateful for our frontline workers, our nurses and doctors, police officers, and emergency medical personnel for risking what they have to battle this virus. May the Creator continue to bless all our families in and around our Four Sacred Mountains, and bring healing to Mother Earth,” said Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatoh).

With the proclamation, the Navajo Nation recognizes the hardships, sacrifices, and losses that our people continue to endure and we pray for protection and recovery from COVID-19, and we recognize and thank our health care personnel and frontline workers who put themselves in harm’s way to save countless lives.

“Peace, healing, strength, and joy come in many ways to bear our burdens. We are grateful for the hand of God for health, wisdom to make courageous decisions for our families through troubled times, yet forecasting an abundant life with opportunities, gratefulness, and finding joy in daily activities, knowing and thanking the sacrifices of many for our well-being. We pray for a prosperous life within the Four Sacred Mountains and beyond, knowing that our ancestors are forever present. Ahéhee,” said Chief Justice JoAnn B. Jayne.

Former Navajo Nation Vice President Rex Lee Jim and Pastor Ron Harvey offered prayers during the morning service. Also in attendance for the prayer service were Miss Navajo Nation Niagara Rockbridge, Navajo Area Indian Health Service Director Roselyn Tso, and Division Directors.

In accordance with the proclamation, all flags on the Navajo Nation will be flown at half-staff on Thursday, March 17, 2022 in honor and memory of the lives lost to COVID-19.

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