

 NATIONAL CHRISTMAS
TREE LIGHTING 2020



The 2020 National Christmas Tree: A Shining Example of Patriotism

For the past 57 years, GE Lighting has provided the lighting and design for the National Christmas Tree while part of General Electric. Now for the first year as part of Savant Systems Inc., GE Lighting, a Savant company will continue the privileged tradition for the 58th year.

In honor of our love for our country, this year's patriotic design includes red, white and blue opaque lights in a larger, traditional style LED light bulb that are strung naturally around the tree, resulting in a simple, yet classic design. And no tree is complete without a topper. The dazzling six-sided, handcrafted 3D gold star features LED tape lighting and adorns the tree in celebration of the season.

This is the 12th year that GE LED lights, many of them Energy Star® certified, have been used exclusively in the lighting of the National Christmas Tree. New advancements in LED lighting offer the opportunity to create innovative designs and help utilize energy efficiencies. This year's design includes 18,000 LED lights and only uses 3,500 watts. Each strand of the GE LED holiday lights uses nearly 80 percent less energy than traditional holiday lights, while providing the festive lighting.

GE Lighting, a Savant company is proud to partner with the National Park Foundation on the 2020 National Christmas Tree lighting and design.

The National Christmas Tree will be lit until 10:00pm Sunday through Thursday, and until 11:00pm Friday and Saturday through New Year's Day.

GE Lighting
A SAVANT COMPANY

PROGRAM

Greetings

The Honorable David Bernhardt, *Secretary of the Interior*
Margaret Everson, *Counselor to the Secretary of the Interior*
Exercising the Delegated Authority of the
Director for the National Park Service
Will Shafroth, *President and CEO, National Park Foundation*

Lighting of the National Christmas Tree

President Donald J. Trump and the First Family

Guest Performers

Colton Dixon	Matthew West
Jerrold Niemann	Melodie Malone
Jillian Cardarelli	NPS Arrowhead Jazz Band
Jillian Edwards	Tucson Arizona Boys Chorus
Kellie Pickler	U.S. Navy Band Sea Chanters
Laine Hardy	“The President’s Own”
Leaving Austin	United States Marine Band

Lynda Randle & Michael Tait

Segments prerecorded

While the COVID-19 pandemic precludes us from gathering in person for the first time, the National Christmas Tree remains a symbol of the festive season and a living witness to the history being made in our nation’s capital.

Enjoy the 98th annual lighting of the National Christmas Tree from the safety of your home, available on demand beginning December 3 at TheNationalTree.org

A CHERISHED TRADITION

**SINCE 1923,
PRESIDENT'S PARK
HAS PLAYED HOST
TO THE ANNUAL
NATIONAL CHRISTMAS
TREE LIGHTING
CEREMONY, ONE OF
OUR COUNTRY'S
MOST TIME-HONORED
TRADITIONS.**

The history of the Lighting of the National Christmas Tree is 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 over the decades.

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 a 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.



**PRESIDENT CALVIN COOLIDGE
LIGHTS THE VERY FIRST
NATIONAL CHRISTMAS TREE
ON THE ELLIPSE IN 1923.**

Library of Congress



**THIS 1963 PHOTO INCLUDES THE
NATIONAL CHRISTMAS TREE,
AS WELL AS THE TREES THAT
MADE UP THE "PATHWAY OF PEACE."**

National Archives

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 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.

Last year, yet another new tree was planted on the Ellipse. The 30-foot Colorado blue spruce from Palmyra, Pennsylvania, was lit last year for the first time by President Trump and the First Family.

Christmas is always a special time in and around the White House and, while the COVID-19 pandemic precludes us from gathering in person, the National Christmas Tree remains a symbol of the festive season and a living witness to the history being made in our nation's capital. Audiences around the world will join us for this 98-year-old tradition, webcast on the internet for all to enjoy.

To learn more about the history and view archival photos of previous tree lighting ceremonies, go to TheNationalTree.org.



**THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT STANDS
BEHIND THE NATIONAL CHRISTMAS TREE
IN THIS 1983 PHOTOGRAPH.**

National Park Service

STATE AND TERRITORY ORNAMENTS

MORE THAN 1,500 SCHOOL STUDENTS FROM EACH U.S. STATE, TERRITORY, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA HAVE GIVEN OF THEIR TIME AND TALENTS TO DESIGN AND CREATE ORNAMENTS REPRESENTING THEIR HOME STATE OR TERRITORY FOR THE AMERICA CELEBRATES DISPLAY SURROUNDING THE NATIONAL TREE.

Alabama

Shelby County High School

Alaska

IDEA Homeschool

American Samoa

Lupelele Elementary School

Arizona

Pinnacle High School

Arkansas

Wooster Elementary School

California

Riverside STEM Academy

Colorado

Meeker High School

Connecticut

Berlin Public Schools

Delaware

Newark High School

District of Columbia

Columbia Heights
Education Campus

Florida

Port Salerno Elementary School

Georgia

Davidson Fine Arts Magnet School

Guam

Agana Heights Elementary School

Hawaii

Governor Wallace Rider Farrington
High School

Idaho

Mountain Home High School

Illinois

Richland County Community Unit
School District

Indiana

Brown County High School

Iowa

Karen Acres Elementary School

Kansas

Rolling Ridge Elementary School

Kentucky

Dishman-McGinnis
Elementary School

Louisiana

Parkway Elementary School

Maine

Regional School Unit #38

Maryland

Hyattsville Middle School

Massachusetts

All Saints Academy

Michigan

Brimley Area School District

Minnesota

St. Alphonsus Catholic School

Mississippi

Terry High School

Missouri

Nixa Public School

Montana

The Polaris School

Nebraska

Chadron Public School

Nevada

Damonte Ranch High School

New Hampshire

Amherst Middle School

New Jersey

Delaware Township School

New Mexico

Harrison Schmitt Elementary School

New York

Champlain Valley

Educational Services

North Carolina

West Buncombe Elementary School

North Dakota

Kindred Public School District

Northern Mariana Islands

Grace Christian Academy

Ohio

Liberty Tree Elementary School

Oklahoma

Jenks High School

Oregon

Howard Street Charter School

Pennsylvania

Neshaminy School District

Puerto Rico

Escuela Dr. Francisco Hernández
y Gaetán

Rhode Island

Frank E. Thompson Middle School

South Carolina

J.G. McCracken Middle School

South Dakota

Hill City High School

Tennessee

Beaumont Magnet Academy

Elementary School

Texas

Caldwell High School

Utah

Union High School

Vermont

Milton Town School District

U.S. Virgin Islands

St. Croix Educational Complex
High School

Virginia

Appomattox Regional Governor's
School for the Arts and Technology

Washington

Tukes Valley Middle School

West Virginia

Robert L. Bland Middle School

Wisconsin

St. Thomas More High School

Wyoming

West Elementary School

IN APPRECIATION

The 2020 National Christmas Tree Lighting is presented by the National Park Service and the National Park Foundation, with the generous support of the following companies:



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 Pleasant Street Entertainment and LKJ Productions:

Kristi Foley	Jason Seagrove	Tommy Duncan	Brandon Smith	Peter Shedleski
Leon Knoles	Elise Perry	Hannah Oneida	Jeffrey Higgs	Brian Dziura
Taylor Cernansky	Don McClurkin	Rusty Lee	Mike Ducassoux	TNDV
Matt Russell	Sewell Johnson	Julion Francis	Max Jeffers	Bella Faccia Inc.
Larry Boshers	Mike Peters	James Boore	Jabari Jefferson	Uppercut
Thom Peachee	Doug McKinley	Olivier Revel	Rod McDonald	22 Degrees
Dave Thibodeau	Darryl Player	Andy Bell	Peter Marengo	
Ryen Watkins	Martin Whittier	J.J. Hacker	Joe Corbin	
Tosha Potter	Chris McCrary	Joe Foster	Curren Bennett	Program:
Keziah Potter	Joseph Kurtz	Andrew Humphries	Susan Kelleher	J.W. Arnold

The National Park Service and the National Park Foundation would like to thank their staff members, as well as their partners in the White House Visitors Office, who have contributed their time and talent to the production of the event.

WONDER CALLS

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.



**National
Park** Foundation

Get involved at nationalparks.org

