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Video, Audio, Photos & Rush Transcript: Governor Hochul Attends Services at Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem

MEDIA

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COVID-19 VACCINE

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Governor Hochul: "Throughout the whole experience of the pandemic, a lot of people prayed to God. ... He inspired the smartest scientists and doctors and researchers to create a vaccine. God gave us that through men and women so we could be delivered from this pandemic. ... And all of you, have to be not just the true believers, but our apostles to go out there and spread the word that we can get out of this once and for all, if everybody gets vaccinated."

Hochul: "And I want our kids back in school because so many of your kids and grandkids and great-grandkids, the little Black and Brown children throughout the state, they're the ones hardest hit. They did nothing wrong. Their moms and dads and grandmas and grandpas wanted them in school and they couldn't go because it wasn't safe. We are fighting to make the classroom safe so they can get back to some sense of normal, start picking up the pieces and let them be children, who can be educated once again and get that shot at the American dream that an education can give all of us."

Hochul: "But the pandemic was not just a health crisis. It was a crisis where people just lost their jobs. They lost their opportunity to put food on the table for their families and many of them were in danger of losing their homes and their apartments. They couldn't even afford to pay rent anymore. I saw this my first days as your governor. I saw that this was a crisis and because of the Supreme Court who didn't really care about people we had to take affirmative action. And I want to thank my lieutenant governor for being one of the leaders to make sure that we fought back. We pulled back the Legislature. ... I said, this is an emergency. You need to show up in Albany right now and we have to pass an extension of the moratorium so some landlord will not throw you out in the street and make sure that you do not end up homeless, no fault to your own."

Earlier today, Governor Kathy Hochul joined Lieutenant Governor Brian Benjamin to Attend Church Services at Abyssinian Baptist Church.

VIDEO of today's remarks is available on YouTube [here \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N0HHmsCNBwk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N0HHmsCNBwk) and in TV quality (h.264, mp4) format [here \(https://protect2.fireeye.com/v1/url?k=b03a26f4-efa11fcb-b038dfc1-000babda0031-ff45b4b8cf5e82d1&q=1&e=baa9dd22-033d-4098-8ddf-dcf769f6a810&u=https%3A%2F%2Fspaces.hightail.com%2Freceive%2FnrDXW8NGVw\)](https://protect2.fireeye.com/v1/url?k=b03a26f4-efa11fcb-b038dfc1-000babda0031-ff45b4b8cf5e82d1&q=1&e=baa9dd22-033d-4098-8ddf-dcf769f6a810&u=https%3A%2F%2Fspaces.hightail.com%2Freceive%2FnrDXW8NGVw).

AUDIO of the Governor's remarks is available [here \(https://soundcloud.com/govkathyhochul/governor-hochul-attends-church-services-at-abyssinian-baptist-church\)](https://soundcloud.com/govkathyhochul/governor-hochul-attends-church-services-at-abyssinian-baptist-church).

PHOTOS will be available on the Governor's Flickr [page \(https://www.flickr.com/photos/govkathyhochul/albums\)](https://www.flickr.com/photos/govkathyhochul/albums).

A rush transcript of the Governor's remarks is available below:

Well, this is indeed the day the Lord has made. Amen? Amen!

Do you feel the spirit just rushing through your body right now? The fact that we are finally back together in person, my friends? This is a beautiful feeling. It's a beautiful day and I thank you for making me feel so welcome once again, at Abyssinian Baptist Church. I have not been a stranger, but I haven't been the governor.

I know governors get a little more attention sometimes. That's okay. That's okay. But I've been an understudy in a sense for the last seven years. So I know what I'm doing now and this is a high honor for me to be able to address you as your governor.

Dr. Calvin Butts whose name is legendary, not just in this community, but across the nation is a true spiritual leader, but also someone who is down to earth in a sense that he understands the very human needs that he can address as a leader of a congregation, a leader of this community. So I want to thank him and thank God for restoring his health, Dr. Calvin Butts.

And the first lady, Patricia Butts, thank you. I understand you had a milestone of 50 years of marriage. Okay. Very congratulations. Quite an accomplishment. I just had celebrated 37 years with my husband, Bill Hochul, and I just re-up for another 37. So we're in good shape.

Say hello to Bill Hochul, who is the first first gentleman of New York. So how's that for making some history?

You mentioned my lieutenant governor. There's no truth to the rumor that I picked him so I could get Kathleen. Okay? They are a package, and as a daughter of Abyssinian, I know that she's no stranger here and they're just a beautiful family.

And that's exactly what I want to have, the people I want at my side, as we go through a journey that is going to be sometimes some turbulent waters, but to have people of faith who understand where all of our power and our inspiration derives from. It's not from man or woman. It's from God, and I want people at my side who understand the power of harnessing that to do good for people, because that, my friends, is what I am to the core.

Just a simple servant of God, a public servant. And I'll always honor the responsibilities that have been entrusted in me and make sure that we do good for God's people. Also, it's always fabulous to see my friend Hazel Dukes. She's been at my side for many, many years. Hazel Dukes. Thank you for your incredible leadership in our state.

And another friend of mine who I see over in the corner, Congressman Charlie Rangel, who when I was a brand new member of Congress, somehow as a Democrat winning a seat in the most Republican district in the State of New York, so no one expected me to make it to Washington, but I tried anyhow. When I won that election, Charlie was one of the first to greet me and say, welcome to the family. And so Charlie, you've been at my side for many years. Thank you for your leadership, and your friendship as well.

It does feel good to be home, doesn't it, my friends? This is beautiful. This is beautiful. And every one of you is able to participate in person because you did something that was really smart. You got vaccinated, right? You're all able to sit here because you got vaccinated.

And also you actually believe that it's smart to wear masks, right? I mean, this is a rather simple thing, but out there, there are forces that don't believe in this. Well, let me tell you they're so wrong. Because we reflect back on what we just came through for 18 excruciating months. It was like we were led to the valley of death for a long time. We lost too many people that we cared about and too many people ended up in hospitals on ventilators, and too many people didn't even get the dignity of a proper service at the end of their lives as they transition, because we are still in this incredible surreal experience, where we couldn't even gather to mourn as a community. We were denied all that and also our healthcare workers, and I'm so glad to see our friends from Sloan Kettering.

You are truly God's angels on earth, what you've done, you and so many others are fearless. Talk about fearless people, still while there's a threat of their own lives being snuffed out because of this pandemic, you still put on your uniforms and you went into your office and you went into the hospital, you went into medical centers and you stood there and said, we are the first line of defense to protect the people against this pandemic. To our healthcare care workers across the State of New York, Let's give them a resounding round of applause. You are incredible.

But throughout the whole experience of the pandemic, a lot of people prayed to God. Right? Did a lot of prayers. I prayed, I prayed to God, God deliver us from this. And then he did. He inspired the smartest scientists and doctors and researchers to create a vaccine. God gave us that through men and women so we could be delivered from this pandemic. So how can you say no to that? How can you believe that God would give a vaccine that would cause you harm? That is not the truth. Those are just lies out there on social media. And all of you, have to be not just the true believers, but our apostles to go out there and spread the word that we can get out of this once and for all, if everybody gets vaccinated.

And we'll get it done. And I want our kids back in school because so many of your kids and grandkids and great-grandkids, the little Black and brown children throughout the state, they're the ones hardest hit. They did nothing wrong. Their moms and dads and grandmas and grandpas wanted them in school and they couldn't go because it wasn't safe.

We are fighting to make the classroom safe so they can get back to some sense of normal, start picking up the pieces and let them be children, who can be educated once again and get that shot at the American dream that an education can give all of us. The American dream that was delivered to my own grandparents when they fled great poverty. When they came to America and had a great big family, my dad being the oldest, it was an education, a college degree that lifted him up from living in a trailer park. I've seen firsthand how an education can elevate people. And I want every one of our babies to have the best education they possibly can. So they also can live that American dream that we're all entitled to. So we need them back in school. We need to keep them safe. So spread the word. Children that are 12 to 17, they can get a vaccine right now. You don't send your babies off to kindergarten till they're vaccinated, right? You can't enter the door in kindergarten until you're vaccinated. This is just one more vaccine. I want those children vaccinated because right now in the State of New York, only 50 percent of them are vaccinated. We can do better my friends, can we not do better than that? Let's protect those kids so they can get a good education and end up with a great life. That's what this is all about.

But the pandemic was not just a health crisis. It was a crisis where people just lost their jobs. They lost their opportunity to put food on the table for their families and many of them were in danger of losing their homes and their apartments. They couldn't even afford to pay rent anymore.

I saw this my first days as your governor. I saw that this was a crisis and because of the Supreme Court who didn't really care about people we had to take affirmative action. And I want to thank my lieutenant governor for being one of the leaders to make sure that we fought back. We pulled back the Legislature.

They're not used to coming back in the summertime. That's all right. They work hard in their districts. They usually come back in January. I said, this is an emergency. You need to show up in Albany right now and we have to pass an extension of the moratorium so some landlord will not throw you out in the street and make sure that you do not end up homeless, no fault to your own.

But also to help the landlords who themselves have been struggling. There's money from the federal government. Thank you, Joe Biden, for making sure we had this money, but it wasn't getting out. So please, there are forms out there. There's information. Let everyone know who feels in danger of losing their home or a landlord who needs that help, that there's money available to them. So I want all of you, I'm needing all of you. You're out there in the community. You're the influencers. You talk to a lot of people. Please tell them this information.

And lastly, one of my highest priorities that I spoke about as I was sworn in, we have to protect our streets. We need to get our crime under control.

We need to get guns out of our neighborhoods, out of our children's hands and give them a job instead of a gun. That's what we have to do next, my friends. And again, my partner in government, our lieutenant governor is going to be side-by-side with me as we work tirelessly to eradicate the loss of human life, the young people gunned down in their neighborhoods, perhaps joining a game because they didn't think there was another alternative or perhaps to support a drug habit. And I was passionate about fighting the heroin and opioid crisis because I lost my own nephew to that, a young man starting out of high school, job, sad to think about. Just a kid, got injured at a job, workplace injury, doctor prescribed prescription drugs. You trust the doctor, you take the prescription drugs, all of a sudden an addiction develops, and then you end up on the streets and sometimes in and out of jail and in homeless shelters, and then your life spirals out of control because you're in the throes of something you can't control.

I don't want that to happen to anyone else. That is too painful for families. So, we're going to do this together, my friends, and we're also giving people the dignity of a great home over their heads. Everybody deserves to live in a NYCHA building that is safe, that is warm in the winter, cool in the summer, that the elevators work. We have some problems, my friends. I've been in there; we can do better.

So, I am so fired up. I really feel I'm up for the challengers because as God knows, sometimes we need partners to move forward. And I think back to about someone named Joshua, Joshua from the Old Testament. Now, Moses was the big name. I mean, Moses is the one who led everybody years of wandering, you know, parting the rivers, safe, getting people to safety.


But when it came down to it, Joshua was also at his side. Joshua was there to help lead the people and he didn't have the staff to part the Jordan River when they needed to get across. So what did he use? He used the promise of God. If you keep moving forward, I'll be there to help him find the way. Just like Joshua, my side of my lieutenant governor and I were going to keep leading the people were going to keep moving forward.

And if there's a raging river or a flood or a hurricane that I had last week with a lot of flood waters, we know how to cross over. We know how to bring the people with us and we will get there. And we will be a stronger, more inclusive state where everybody, regardless of the color of the skin or where you were born or where your grandparents from, it doesn't matter. This is the greatest state in the history of mankind. This is the great state of New York. We came through COVID, we fought back. We fought back after 9/11 and no one will dare touch us again because we are so courageous in the many years after that horrible specter.


So, this is in our DNA, my friends, we have this, we have this power and it doesn't come from man or woman. It came from God. And I will always honor the responsibilities that God has put on my shoulders. As I dropped to my knees, when I found out if I be governor, I said, God, please grant me wisdom and grant me strength. And I feel it coming through your prayers and I'm asking for more. And I thank you for the privilege of representing you.

This is the highest honor of my life. Thank you very much.

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