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Rush Transcript: Governor Hochul Attends Service at Christian Cultural Center

MEDIA

Governor Hochul: "I need you to be my apostles. I need you to go out and talk about it and say, we owe this to each other. We love each other. Jesus taught us to love one another and how do you show that love but to care about each other enough to say, please get the vaccine because I love you and I want you to live, I want our kids to be safe when they're in schools, I want to be safe when you go to a doctor's office or to a hospital and are treated by somebody, you don't want to get the virus from them. You're already sick or you wouldn't be there. We have to solve this, my friends. I need every one of you. I need you to let them know that this is how we can fight this pandemic."

Earlier today, Governor Kathy Hochul attended service at Christian Cultural Center in Brooklyn.

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

The phrase be to God, this is the day the Lord has made. Amen, amen. Reverend Bernard, you've always made me feel at home here, part of the family, and I thank you once again for giving me what I need most and will continue to need the most - and that is the prayers and support of all New Yorkers but particularly this community.

Before I get started, for a few moments a reflection on what this tremendous honor means to me. I want to recognize a few people that are here with me today, and just as we saw that beautiful video talking about an anniversary coming up, you've had a life partner in First Lady Karen, and I've had the pleasure of having my own life partner who has lifted me up and has been by my side for 37 years, ladies and gentlemen I want to introduce you to the first First Gentleman of New York, my husband Bill Hochul. And not only did he help me, President Obama asked him to work with him to fight crime for eight years as a prosecutor and he broke up a lot of gangs and turned a lot of people around to the right side of the law so he has been a champion to help fight crime and protect our communities for most of his career.

Also joined by someone you're going to get to know and love if you don't already and that is my Lieutenant Governor Brian Benjamin. Brian Benjamin, please stand up. He is smart, he is passionate and he's got the cutest little girl and I just want to see her often as well, so he's a man of great character as well and that's what I was looking for as a partner of mine as we go forth and talk about the needs of the people of the state but also not just talk but to do something about them and solve them.

Another person I got to know so well as a member of Congress, a tremendous friend of mine who always joins me when I come here is Congressman Hakeem Jeffries. Hakeem Jeffries, thank you. Thank you for fighting the good fight in Washington, my friend. He is on our side and we need him.

Also my friend in State government Assemblymember Jaime Williams is here, great friend of mine, and also Councilmember Farah Louis is here, Pastor Jimmy Lim, Rabbi Potasnik who I see almost every day it seems and thank you for your spiritual leadership as well.

I will be brief because I know you want to hear the Word and the beautiful singers who I also draw such strength from. I am humbled and just as Reverend Bernard and First Lady Karen were called to the ministry to leave their lives and serve way back in 1979 I feel that God has tapped me on the shoulder as well because everything I have done in life has been because of the Grace of God leading me to that place and now God has asked me to serve humbly as your servant, as your Governor, and yes it is the first female governor. That's kind of exciting but I feel the responsibility more than ever because of that, because I know I also cannot let my sisters down. I have to succeed for them.

If I can demonstrate that women can govern with strength, courage but also heart and compassion and show a different way to lead this state, we bring people together as women so naturally do, then other women will be able to follow behind me and step into the roles of power. That's what's on my shoulder right now, the weight that I bear, but I embrace that opportunity.

Also, my friends, we have so many people in need. I have walked these streets. You may not know me personally but I know every block. I know these communities. I've been here for seven straight years as Lieutenant Governor and I've seen people at their lowest lows and I've seen them at their greatest highs. I want to make sure that every person, particularly our kids, don't succumb to the hopelessness that leads them to the streets and leads them to crime. They can have a better shot in life if people like all of us and government and the clergy working together can show them that path and that's what I'm committed to do.

Also, I understand the challenges of being new to this country and a new immigrant and what that means and feeling like sometimes it's just not what you expected. I reflect on my own grandparents who fled great poverty and ended up being migrant workers here in this country and ended up working in a steel plant. My father, the eldest of eight children, lived in a trailer park when he first married my mom. That's how our family started, working at the steel plant, toiling with their hands, and unfortunately growing up in an area that was contaminated by pollution but we didn't know any better. But we broke out of that for one reason.

My dad was able to get a college degree, and very young person who wants the ticket out, we have to make sure that they have a world-class start in life from the time they're little preschoolers all the way on up to let them fulfill their dreams in whatever career they want. That is my commitment to you to make sure that those opportunities are there and people help find them.

We also got hit so hard by this pandemic and I don't want to take you down a bad flashback or watch that movie again because it was so excruciatingly painful, and we still have people who are not back to their jobs, no fault to their own. Many of our restaurant workers, people who work in hotels, people whose jobs are not their yet and it's not their fault. They were having trouble making the rental payments and we had money because of Chuck Schumer and Hakeem Jeffries and Kirsten Gillibrand and our other leaders and President Joe Biden. Thank God for President Joe Biden. He sent money to us to help people with the rent payments but it wasn't being spent for some reason.

My first day on the job I said, no more. Get this money out to the people who need it, and we're so proud of the success we've had to help people make those rental payments to their landlords who also are sometimes are small businesspeople who are just struggling so much.

We also have to get more money out to our small businesses, help them survive. Child care money - I found that there's all these pods of money that haven't been spent and we're going to be making sure that that money gets out to people.

But also make sure that we fight for true criminal justice reform and that's not just locking people up, it's saying you are only there if you need to be there but when you've paid your debt to society welcome back and we're going to help you find a job because you are now reunited with your family. That's the hope we have to give people.

And as far as coming back, we have to get this community back and what we went through this pandemic made us stronger. I believe that, especially when I talk to young people who weren't able to have their graduations from high school or a normal life for the last 18 months. I say to them whatever comes your way in life you are stronger. You are more resilient. God let you survive this pandemic because he wants you to do great things someday. He let you live through this when so many other people did not and that is also your responsibility. But how do we keep more people alive?

We are not through this pandemic. I wished we were but I prayed a lot to God during this time and you know what - God did answer our prayers. He made the smartest men and women, the scientists, the doctors, the researchers - he made them come up with a vaccine. That is from God to us and we must say, thank you, God. Thank you. And I wear my 'vaccinated' necklace all the time to say I'm vaccinated. All of you, yes, I know you're vaccinated, you're the smart ones, but you know there's people out there who aren't listening to God and what God wants. You know who they are.

I need you to be my apostles. I need you to go out and talk about it and say, we owe this to each other. We love each other. Jesus taught us to love one another and how do you show that love but to care about each other enough to say, please get the vaccine because I love you and I want you to live, I want our kids to be safe when they're in schools, I want to be safe when you go to a doctor's office or to a hospital and are treated by somebody, you don't want to get the virus from them. You're already sick or you wouldn't be there. We have to solve this, my friends. I need every one of you. I need you to let them know that this is how we can fight this pandemic, come back to normal and then start talking about the real issues that we have to - fighting systemic racial injustice which exists today and if there is a denier I will take you on every day because I've seen it,

I know it exists and we're not going to have a blind eye to this ever again any longer under my watch. That is my commitment to you.

You're going to see a very diverse administration. You're going to see people from all walks of life having a shot to make a difference in government because I believe the only purpose of government is to lift people up and to serve. I've been a public servant my whole life and I believe there is a strong intersection between the teachings of the New and the Old testaments and what we have been told to do, the lessons we've been given, delivered to us in places like this all over America, and if we're listening to those messages, it's calling all of us but particularly those who've been called to serve as public servants, positions like Governor and Congressman, Assemblymember, Council Member, all of us have an extra weight of responsibility because as you heard in the earlier songs today and they're so beautiful and I thank them for lifting my heart and my soul listening to music, one of the messages was, God will keep his promise to you. God will keep his promise to you.

And here is my promise to you, my friends. I will use the inspiration of God in my life and fight for you every single day as your governor and beyond. Thank you very much for listening. Thank you for the privilege of representing you.


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