



WASHINGTON
NATIONAL
CATHEDRAL

A BETTER WAY

Toward a Better Politics
with
**Governors
Spencer Cox
& Josh Shapiro**

Dec. 9, 2025 | 7 pm



Program

WELCOME

The Very Rev. Randolph Marshall Hollerith
Dean, Washington National Cathedral

PANELIST

Melody Barnes

Founding Executive Director
Karsh Institute of Democracy,
University of Virginia

Heather Gerken

11th president of the
Ford Foundation

Dr. Yuval Levin

Director of Social, Cultural,
and Constitutional Studies
American Enterprise Institute

**The Very Rev. Randolph
Marshall Hollerith**

Dean, Washington
National Cathedral

Moderator

EVENING CONVERSATION

The Honorable Governor

Spencer Cox

18th Governor of Utah

The Honorable Josh Shapiro

48th Governor of the
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Savannah Guthrie

Co-Anchor of the Today Show
& Chief Legal Correspondent
for NBC News

Moderator

MUSICAL SELECTION

Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

CLOSING BENEDICTION

The Very Rev. Randolph Marshall Hollerith

Dean, Washington National Cathedral

This program is part of A Better Way: Sacred Values for Civic Life, the Cathedral's initiative to promote dignity, respect, and moral clarity in public life. Learn more at cathedral.org/better.



Governor Cox

Governor Spencer J. Cox is Utah's 18th governor, a husband, father, farmer, and recovering attorney. He served as 2023–2024 chairman of the National Governors Association and has a long history of public service, including roles as city councilmember, mayor, county commissioner, state legislator, and lieutenant governor before being sworn in as governor on Jan. 4, 2021. In his first term, Gov. Cox cut \$1.1 billion in taxes, advanced water law and infrastructure reforms, secured record education funding, enacted universal school choice, and supported affordable housing. A national advocate for mental health and youth protection from social media harms, he launched early education and workforce initiatives, the One Utah Health Collaborative, and expanded opportunities for women, diverse communities, and rural Utahns. A sixth-generation Utahn, Gov. Cox grew up in Fairview, attended Snow College, Utah State University, and Washington and Lee University School of Law, and returned home to raise four children on the family farm. He and First Lady Abby Cox reside in the Governor's Mansion in Salt Lake City.



Governor Shapiro

Governor Josh Shapiro is the 48th Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Since taking office in January 2023, he has worked across party lines to deliver results for Pennsylvanians, focusing on freedom, opportunity, and community. In his first two and a half years, he has expanded access to state jobs, enacted bipartisan health coverage for high-risk women, invested record funding in public education, hired new State Police troopers, and boosted economic development in underserved communities.

Governor Shapiro has improved student access to free breakfast, mental health resources, apprenticeships, and workforce opportunities. He has streamlined government services through initiatives like CODE PA and automatic voter registration, and led rapid infrastructure repairs, including reopening I-95 in just 12 days. A criminal justice reform advocate, he ensures probation supports re-entry and second chances.

A lifelong Pennsylvanian, Shapiro served as Attorney General, Montgomery County Commissioner, and State Representative. He and his wife Lori, his high-school sweetheart, live in Pennsylvania with their four children: Sophia, Jonah, Max, and Reuben.



Melody Barnes

Melody Barnes is the founding executive director of the University of Virginia's Karsh Institute of Democracy. A dedicated public servant with over 25 years of experience shaping public policy, she served as assistant to the president and director of the White House Domestic Policy Council under President Barack Obama. She was previously executive vice president for policy at the Center for American Progress and chief counsel to Senator Edward M. Kennedy on the Senate Judiciary Committee, and began her law career as an associate at Shearman & Sterling in New York. At UVA, Barnes also serves as W.L. Lyons Brown Family Director for Policy and Public Engagement, professor of practice at the Miller Center, and distinguished fellow at the School of Law. She co-founded MB2 Solutions and serves on multiple nonprofit, corporate, and philanthropic boards.



Heather Gerken

Heather Gerken is the 11th president of the Ford Foundation. A nationally recognized expert on democracy, federalism, and elections, she has spent her career advancing bipartisan efforts to protect the rule of law. Her work focuses on election reform and fostering collaboration to safeguard democratic institutions. Gerken has litigated voting rights cases, testified before Congress, and served in leadership roles on the American Bar Association's Task Force for American Democracy and the Bipartisan Policy Center's Commission on Political Reform. Her "Democracy Index" proposal inspired Pew Charitable Trusts' first Election Performance Index. Before joining the Ford Foundation, she was dean of Yale Law School—the first woman in that role—where she expanded access for veterans, low-income, and first-generation students, and championed initiatives to strengthen academic freedom and free expression.



Dr. Yuval Levin

Dr. Yuval Levin is the Beth and Ravenel Curry Chair in Public Policy and director of Social, Cultural, and Constitutional Studies at the American Enterprise Institute, and the editor of *National Affairs*. He is a contributing opinion writer at the *New York Times*, a contributing editor to *National Review*, and his essays and articles have appeared in numerous publications including *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Commentary*, *The Atlantic*, and many others. He is the author, most recently, of *American Covenant: How the Constitution Unified Our Nation—and Could Again*. He served as a member of the White House domestic policy staff under President George W. Bush and a congressional staffer at the member, committee, and leadership levels. He holds a PhD from the University of Chicago.



Dean Randy Hollerith

The Very Rev. Randolph “Randy” Marshall Hollerith has served as Dean of Washington National Cathedral since 2016, prioritizing hospitality and welcome for all visitors and worshippers. He developed a five-year Strategic Plan focused on Welcoming, Deepening, Convening, and Serving, and launched a \$150 million campaign for mission engagement. He previously served as rector of St. James’s Episcopal Church in Richmond, VA.



Savannah Guthrie

Savannah Guthrie is co-anchor of NBC News’ *TODAY* and the network’s chief legal correspondent. A leader in broadcast journalism, she has conducted major interviews with presidents, world leaders, and cultural icons, and has anchored NBC’s coverage of multiple presidential elections, national conventions, Supreme Court confirmations, and major global news events. Her reporting has earned Edward R. Murrow and Emmy Awards, and she helped lead *TODAY* to multiple Emmys and a Peabody. A Georgetown Law graduate and New York Times bestselling author, Guthrie also serves as an ambassador for the Elizabeth Dole Foundation and Best Buddies International. She lives in New York with her husband and two children.

About the Program

This program is presented by Washington National Cathedral in partnership with Disagree Better, The Wheatley Institute at Brigham Young University, and the National Institute for Civil Discourse and graciously supported by The Pew Charitable Trusts. Learn more about our partners and ways to get involved below.

WASHINGTON NATIONAL CATHEDRAL

Grounded in the reconciling love of Jesus Christ, Washington National Cathedral is a house of prayer for all people, conceived by our founders to serve as a great church for national purposes.

DISAGREE BETTER

Disagree Better is an independent nonprofit that promotes “healthy conflict” in public life by showing that people can hold firm convictions without demonizing one another and by providing the tools and partnerships needed to strengthen respectful disagreement in a pluralistic democracy.

WHEATLEY INSTITUTE

The Wheatley Institute at Brigham Young University is a Christian-oriented academic think tank that strengthens core institutions through public scholarship, hosting events and speakers that bridge faith, society, and civic life while addressing polarization, civil discourse, and civic renewal.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CIVIL DISCOURSE

The National Institute for Civil Discourse promotes civility and constructive engagement across political divides through programs, research, and cross-sector collaboration, emphasizing that Americans are less divided than portrayed and eager for a healthier political culture.

THE PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS

Pew addresses the challenges of a changing world by conducting rigorous research, fostering collaboration, advancing practical strategies for progress, and informing and engaging the public to strengthen communities and democratic participation.



Washington National Cathedral is a house of prayer for all people, conceived by our founders to serve as a great church for national purposes. We strive to serve God and our neighbors as agents of reconciliation, a trusted voice of moral leadership and a sacred space where the country gathers during moments of national significance.

The Cathedral receives no operating support from the federal government or any national church body. Every service, concert and public program is made possible by the incredible generosity of individuals like you.



A B E T T E R W A Y

Upcoming Events

MON, FEB 2 | 7 PM

Amplifying Voices

with Poets Pádraig Ó Tuama and Marilyn Nelson

WED, FEB 11 | 7 PM

The State of Democracy

with Historian Heather Cox Richardson

TUE, FEB 24 | 7 PM

Faith, Pluralism, and Democracy

with Eboo Patel



**In-Person
Tickets**



**Livestream
Tickets**

Learn more at cathedral.org/better

