

# Remembering the Newtown victims:

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## GUILFORD RESIDENTS AND CLERGY OF ALL DENOMINATIONS COMMUNE IN QUIET GRIEF

By Lisa Reisman  
Special to the Times

**GUILFORD** - On a wet, dismal Sunday evening, they packed the pews of Guilford's St. George Church to mourn or pray, or because they still couldn't wrap their minds around something that had happened in a town so similar in population,

demographic, and quality of life to their own.

There were far more people than seats, so latecomers to the Interfaith Vigil of Remembrance stood against every inch of wall. As festive holiday lights glowed through the windows, some in the audience wiped tears from their eyes. Others wore blank expressions.

A father held his young son tight. A little girl played with her mother's hair.

The Guilford High School Voices, a choral group that a day before the Newtown massacre had delighted the Rotary Club with Christmas carols at its Annual Senior Luncheon, performed solemn renditions of "Ave Maria" and "There Will Be Rest."

As a cold rain hammered down outside, Guilford First Selectman

Joseph Mazza praised "the outpouring of so many citizens from so many faiths to come in such unpleasant weather."

Said Mazza: "This is not a night to express anger but to pray for the victims' families." Guilford Superintendent of Schools Paul Freeman pledged to recommit himself to the safety and well-being of his 3,600 charges.

Father Anthony Smith, parochial vicar of St. George Church, detailed the frustration he felt as he

tried to interpret conflicting news accounts on the radio while driving to his parents' house on Friday morning and then the sense of his heart sinking as the magnitude of the killings became clear. Concentrate on the light that symbolizes both Christmas and Hanukkah, he counseled. And "never stop telling people they are loved. The root cause of evil is people feeling they are not loved."

Rabbi Emeritus Howard Somner of Madison's Temple Beth Tikvah, quoting psalm, advised against allowing another unspeakable tragedy in our midst to become routine and prayed for those "enveloped in the darkness of loss in this season of faith and hope."

And Rev. Harrison West of Christ Episcopal in Guilford led the audience in a call-and-response recitation of the poem "We Remember Them" from the Jewish Book of Prayer.

Twenty-eight votive candles flickered on a table in front of the church throughout the hour-long service. As members of the clergy read aloud the names of those killed in Newtown, a group ranging from Guilford's grade-school children to its grandparents stood in a circle in the dim light before claiming each candle and vanishing into the crowd.

"Too many," someone breathed as the names went on and on. "Too many."

### We Remember Them

Editor's note: The following is one of the readings from the service in Guilford at St. George Church, Sunday.

*In the rising of the sun and its going down,  
We Remember Them.*

*In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter,  
We Remember Them.*

*In the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring,  
We Remember Them.*

*In the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer,  
We Remember Them.*

*In the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of autumn,  
We Remember Them.*

*In the beginning of the year and when it ends,  
We Remember Them.*

*When we are weary and in need of strength,  
We Remember Them.*

*When we are lost and sick of heart,  
We Remember Them.*

*When we have joys and special celebrations we yearn to share,  
We Remember Them.*

*So long as we live, they too shall live, for they are part of us.  
We Remember Them.*

~ Rabbi Sylvan Kamens and Rabbi Jack Riemer  
from New Hebrew Union Prayer Book

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