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### Vigil held for victims of synagogue shooting

By MITCHELL WHITE, NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITER  
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Hundreds packed into Congregation B'nai B'rith on Tuesday evening for a vigil for the victims of the synagogue massacre in Pittsburgh last weekend.

More than 500 seats were quickly filled in the temple as residents of all faiths, city leaders and others paid their respects for the victims.

On Saturday, 11 people were killed and six injured in a shooting at the Tree of Life Congregation synagogue in Pittsburgh.

"It's at times like these that we need to be surrounded by friends," said Steve Amerikaner, president of the congregation. "And those who have joined us tonight are most assuredly friends."

The vigil opened with Cantor Mark Childs leading attendees in a pair of songs — "Hineai Mah Tov" and "Nachamu/Comfort Us."

Rep. Salud Carbajal, D-Santa Barbara, gave remarks in which he referred to the shooting as "an anti-semitic hate crime of horrific proportions" before reading the names of the victims.

State Sen. Hannah-Beth Jackson, D-Santa Barbara, spoke not as only as a political figure but someone who was born into a Jewish family and a proud and faithful Jew.

"Our common humanity is the connection that we all share and must continue to share in order to make this world a better place," she said.

Pastor Denish Leichter, of Community Christ Church, told those in attendance that "the worst of what humanity brings upon us," also shows "the best of how humanity responds."

Tuesday's gathering was not only in memory of the victims of the Pittsburgh shooting, but also for two people killed in an attack on a black church in Jeffersontown, Kentucky, last week,

The memorial was led by Rabbi Daniel Brenner, who gave a prayer for healing.

Rabbi Brenner invited Jewish, interfaith and community leaders to serve as candle lighters, including: Itzik Ben-Sasson, of Community Shul of Montecito and Santa Barbara; Elizabeth Gaynes, of Congregation B'nai B'rith; Rabbi Evan Goodman, Santa Barbara Hillel; the Rev. Julia Hamilton, The Unitarian Society; Santa Barbara police Chief Lori Luhnnow; Santa Barbara Mayor Cathy Murillo; Goleta Mayor Paula Perotte; Michael Ressler, Jewish Federation of Greater Santa Barbara; Marlene Rifkin, Young Israel Santa Barbara; Yasmin Sallak, Interfaith Initiative; Steve Lyons, Anti-Defamation League Santa Barbara/Tri-Counties; Pastor Alan Strout, First United Methodist Church; and 2nd District county Supervisor Janet Wolf.

During his remarks, Rabbi Stephen Cohen said several members of the congregation had close connection to the Tree of Life Congregation and the Squirrel Hill neighborhood in Pittsburgh.

The descriptions of their service could easily be mistaken for what happens locally every weekend.

"So even though we are all the way here in Santa Barbara, California, we feel as though we have lost members of our own immediate family," he said.

Outside the congregation, a torn black cloth could be seen to serve as a visual reference of kriah — a symbol of mourning.

"Our Jewish tradition knows that our rage and our grief, if not managed, can destroy the entire world," he said. "So we tear, then we stop. We weep, then we begin — slowly — to heal."

Rabbi Cohen said that President Donald Trump "derives personal pleasure and immense political power directly by inflating the emotions of hate and rage," but he abruptly shut down applause from the crowd and stressed the importance of unity and learning how to disagree and remain friends no matter the policy.

"We do know that we begin, each one of us, with our own heart," he said. "As human beings we have done in time immemorial — in our grief we tear our garment, we weep, then we stop, and begin again."

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Community members light candles Tuesday at Congregation B'nai B'rith temple in Santa Barbara for the 11 people killed Saturday at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh. Two additional candles were lit for those killed in an attack at a black church in Jeffersontown, Kentucky.

ERICK MADRID / NEWS-PRESS



Santa Barbara police Chief Lori Luhnnow lights a candle during Tuesday's observance.

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