

# Ministerium plans service of mourning and hope

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Post Correspondent



Five firefighters from the Shavertown Volunteer Fire Department came to the prayer vigil to pay their respects to their fallen brothers. From left: Stephen Miknevichi, Jeff Jumper, Jeff Peters, Matt Reschauer, Matt Breyemeier.

## Service

(continued from page 1)

waving in the breeze. Then it hit me. This should be the place where we gather to pray. This should be the place where our little community stands together to make a difference."

Walsh, who calls herself an "ordinary citizen," immediately called several Harveys Lake residents, officials, business owners and pastors to share her idea. Carlene McCaffrey helped with access to Old Sandy Bottom Beach. The mayor, Rick Boice, restaurant owners Rich and Charlotte Williams, Frank Lutinski, the fire chief, Larry Lucario from the Harveys Lake American Legion Post, Pastor Reed from Emmanuel Assembly of God Church, her friend Susan Martin, and countless others pitched in to put the pieces together and get the word out. The American Legion donated flags and Damien's restaurant donated the candles.

As they arrived at the service, people got out of their cars and barely spoke, their faces were stained with tears even before God Bless America was sung, and they held on to their loved ones with a new sense of urgency.

Walsh and Mayor Boice opened the prayer service with words of welcome, inspiration and unity, both remarking how peaceful the lake was and noting the stark contrast to the devastation in New York.

Pastor Reed then comforted those who mourned with these words. "Our hearts are heavy. We gather at the lakeside to say farewell to loved ones who will not be coming home. With God's divine grace, our country and the world will someday

heal. We are not alone. God shares our sorrow because he loves us. We need only to look into our pockets for a reminder of that. Many of our coins say, 'In God We Trust.' We need to pray for our President and those in authority who will pilot us through these uncertain waters."

Harveys Lake Fire Chief Frank Lutinski paid an emotional tribute to "those fallen heroes whose very best was not good enough." He said, "We grieve for those firefighters, police officers and rescue personnel who ran in while others ran out. They wouldn't give up. They searched and hoped as they are still doing today." He urged everyone to take the time to hug those you love, offer a kind word, and do a good deed.

Lutinski read a poem he had written, a poem for fallen comrades. It was engraved on a plaque which will be sent to New York City.

Rev. Thomas Flint from the Alderson United Methodist Church said, "God never leaves us alone. He is with us through each other. There is much we can do. Pray, give blood, volunteer, and make a difference."

"I was amazed," said Walsh. "The turnout was incredible. I really didn't care if only five people came. We just needed to be together."

As the crowd turned away from the lake to quietly leave, many seemed surprised that so many people had gathered behind them. A sea of flags and candles could be seen from the water's edge back to the highway. Many families held hands during the service and contin-

DALLAS - Several members of the Back Mountain clergy met last week to plan a united response to the needs of all people during this time of tragedy and grief. "We want to open our hearts, and minds, and the doors of our churches," said the group's leader, Pastor Chuck Naugle from the Trucksville United Methodist Church. "All of the Back Mountain churches have had individual services of prayer and remembrance for its members, but we want to have at least one single service which will be advertised and open to everyone who wants to attend."

The pastors agreed that as more stories come out, people will need to be comforted by the church and those symbols of God and country that will guide them in a hopeful way. One member of the clergy said that many people are asking, "Where was God?" Another member said, "We invited Him out of our lives in so many ways, it is now time to invite Him back in." Another said, "People are asking, 'what can we do to help?'"

Pastor Charles Grube from St. Paul's Lutheran Church felt very conflicted about the celebration planned for last Sunday to formally dedicate the church's new sanctuary and education building. The rest of the clergy assured him that the celebration



POST PHOTO/SANDY PEOPLES

Back Mountain pastors met last week to plan a public service in response to the tragedies in New York and Washington. The service will be held Sunday, Sept. 23 at College Misericordia, beginning at 3 p.m. From left, first row: Rev. Charles Naugle, Trucksville United Methodist Church; Mary Paley, representing Father Peter Crynes, St. Therese's Roman Catholic Church; Rev. Charles Grube, St. Paul's Lutheran Church; Dr. Noel Keller, College Misericordia. Second row: Rev. David Mansfield, Huntsville Christian Church; Rev. Janet Clark, Shavertown United Methodist Church; Rev. Cheryl Cavalari, Director, Campus Ministries of Northeastern Pennsylvania; Rev. William Lewis, Dallas United Methodist Church; Rev. Mark Harper, Trinity Presbyterian Church; Rev. Robert Nagy, Prince of Peace Episcopal Church.

would be a good thing. "It will be a light in the darkness," Grube said, "to dedicate this house of God for people to come and pray."

The pastors decided to conduct the public prayer service on Sunday afternoon, September

23 starting at 3 p.m. They will lead a procession from the Anderson Sports Center on the College Misericordia campus to the amphitheater, where the formal service will begin at 3:30. In the event of rain, the service will be held in the campus auditorium.

They also developed a plan for ongoing support for the community. They discussed the need for a rotating weekly public service of prayer to include all of the churches in the Back Mountain, and will meet again to set their plans into motion.



POST PHOTOS/SANDY PEOPLES

Patty West holds her little friend, Ariel Courter. Flags and somber faces were in abundance.

ued to do so as they were leaving.

Many small children seemed confused by all of the activity,

but they waved their flags with the energy and wide-eyed innocence reserved for the very young.

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