

Temple Shalom holds vigil to remember those gunned down in Pittsburgh synagogue

By [Angela Love](#)-
October 30, 2018

Filling every seat and standing at the back, temple members, supporters from the community and local clergy came together Tuesday night at Temple Shalom of Central Florida under heightened security.

They were there for a memorial service to honor the victims of the horrific shooting that occurred this past weekend at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh.



Temple Shalom Primary Service Leader Larry Wallace pays tribute to the 11 victims who were gunned down in a shooting this past Saturday at Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh. The local temple was filled to capacity by members and area residents who attended the memorial service.

"We are not just remembering the 11 who died," said Larry Wallace, primary service leader at the temple. "We pray for their souls, but we also pray for the physical recovery of the six injured people – four of them police officers – who are still in the hospital. We pray for the psychological recovery for the

families of the victims and all those closely connected to the Tree of Life synagogue. And we pray for us as we try to figure this out.”

Wallace led the service, accompanied by Sandy Solomon, temple president. Drew Willard, pastor at Unity Church of Christ of The Villages, representing the Interfaith Council of Central Florida, said a prayer.



Temple Shalom was filled to capacity Tuesday night as area residents attended a memorial service remembering those gunned down in a Pittsburgh synagogue this past Saturday.

In one of the most poignant moments of the service, Wallace used big screens to show photographs of the 11 victims – Rose Mallinger, 97; Melvin Wax, 88; Sylvan Simon, 86; Bernice Simon, 84; Joyce Fienberg, 75; Daniel Stein, 71; Irving Younger, 69; Dr. Jerry Rabinowitz, 66; Richard Gottfried, 65; Cecil Rosenthal, 59; and David Rosenthal, 54 – while taking time to describe the lives they had led. He said that all of them had a strong devotion to the Tree of Life synagogue.

“I kept asking myself today, how could this happen?” Wallace said. “All I can think is, never again.”

At the close of the program, the roughly 500 in attendance recited the 23rd Psalm and the Mourner's Kaddish, then left the synagogue in silence while Mizzette Fuenzalida played the cello – a powerful moment for everyone in attendance.



Temple Shalom Primary Service Leader Larry Wallace, Temple President Sandy Solomon and United Church of Christ of The Villages Pastor Drew Willard, who was representing the Interfaith Council of Central Florida at Tuesday night's memorial service.

While watching television coverage of the senseless tragedy this past Sunday, Wallace said he knew he had to do something. So he contacted Solomon and they decided to put together the special remembrance service.

"We were receiving a lot of calls from members asking, 'What are we going to do?'" Wallace said.

"When you are in pain, it feels better when you have support," Solomon added. "This is for people of all faiths. We have a strong connection with the Interfaith Council. There are many faiths represented here tonight."

Temple member Susan Sirmai Feinberg attended Tree of Life for three years when she lived in Pittsburgh after graduating from college.

"It is hard to imagine anything like that happening there," she said. "You could say the same thing about us right here," she added, while pointing out that the temple has enhanced its security in recent years.



Those attending Tuesday's night vigil at Temple Shalom recited the 23rd Psalm and the Mourner's Kaddish before filing out in silence.

Speaking before the program, Willard said more opportunities are needed to interact with people of other faiths.

"We need to remove the 'they' and just see the beauty of each other's religion," he said. "Empathy will play a big role in the change that is needed. We have to be determined to let love work. Not love in the sentimental way. We have to ask ourselves, 'What is the loving thing to do for all humanity.'"

Willard added, "We need a climate change of our culture right now. This transcends politics."