



# Mayor's Remarks at December 20, 2012, Prayer Service

December 21 2012 9:43 AM

Good Afternoon. My name is Tom Hoechst and I am the Mayor Alton. I want to thank the Ministerial Alliance and the many ministers for organizing this prayer service and thank all of you for attending.

On behalf of the citizens of Alton I want to express to the citizens of Newtown, Connecticut ... our hearts ache for you. Although we may feel powerless to help you, we share in your deep grief, sorrow and sadness.

At times like this, when communities are shaken to their core, it is also important people in every community come together -- at events like this one but most importantly in their hearts and minds -- to remind ourselves that despite any differences we may have we share an obligation to look after each other -- to care for each other -- to support each other.

The people of Alton also offer our prayers:

We pray for first responders – police, fire, mental health professionals and teachers -- in Newtown, in Alton and around the country, who are on the front lines everyday protecting us.

We pray for our leaders, that they may have the courage to bridge their differences, find common ground and do all in their power to protect our communities.

We pray, also, for us – all...of... us -- that we not let the public debate that is sure to unfold divide us. Whether it is a conversation about gun control, our mental health system or any other aspect of public debate, we pray that we may have the grace and dignity to work together to find solutions that protect our communities without letting differences of opinion define us.

And finally, the people of Alton offer our prayers for the souls of the 20 angels – the children -- who were so tragically taken; for the Sandy Hook teachers who gave their lives protecting their students; and for the families who lost loved ones, may God hold all of them ..... in the palm, of his hand.

Besides the Mayor, the following Pastors spoke at the service:

Pastor Gino Austin

Pastor Artemese Dennis

Pastor David Goins

Pastor Gregory Harrison

Pastor Johnny Buford

Phyllis Banks also sang during the ceremony.