

# Midway commemorates 9/11

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"It just felt right," said Rev. Heather McColl of Midway Christian Church.

Sunday, nearly 200 Midway citizens gathered for the first annual Service of Peace and Hope. The event commemorated the toll of Sept. 11, 2001, was sponsored by eight local churches, and was initiated by McColl.

Seated in the Bradley Park pavilion, the worshipers were surrounded by a panorama typical of Woodford County and the Bluegrass. The view included fenced pastures, grazing horses and a steeple of Midway College.



Community members came in all ages, shapes and sizes, sporting fashions that announced membership in one of the many generations in attendance. The overall scene could be described as a collage of virtual snapshots, any one capable of inspiring a Norman Rockwell magazine cover.

There were seniors arriving with the help of walkers and golf carts; families struggling to carry toddlers; pre-schoolers clutching American flags; a father, son and grandfather attending together; (*Photo: Alton, Joshua and A.D. Reed*) and a city council member arriving in a pick-up truck carrying additional folding chairs for the overflow.

The audience was diverse. Yet, when members rose to "pass the peace," *right*, and began greeting neighbors, the scene looked more like a community than a collection of individuals.

The service was simple, ecumenical and moving. Ministers and lay people representing six churches took the podium to read scripture and share their thoughts.

A cascade of concise messages flowed from the pulpit.

Phrases like: "Father give us strength," from a reading by city council member Joy Arnold.

From the Rev. Don Johnson: "Where there is unity there is strength." And, "Although we worship in different buildings we should worship as one."

At times, the worshipers reacted to message lines with a simple "Amen."

Other messages talked of the history of 9/11 as a placeholder. "We felt a lot safer before then," said Bud Ratliff. "It was easy to think that peace and quiet, was the same thing." Ratliff ended his thoughts with topical humor: "If the wolf and the lamb





can lie down together, there may even be hope for the elephant and the donkey." (Photo: Bud with daughter Zoe)

Between each message the audience sang well known songs like "Down by the Riverside," and "We Shall Overcome." The crowd's voices were reinforced by the Community Choir and backed by keyboardist Angela Eaton and guitarist Blake Jones, *right*.

After sharing communion, the crowd was invited to prepare "peace flags," using their imaginations to express their own personal feelings. The flags were attached to lines and displayed around the pavilion.

"It was a perfect place and a perfect setting," McColl said afterward. "They loved getting together as a community, and we've decided to make this an annual event."

