

Bereavement / Remembrance Ceremony



Hospice honors those who were cared for

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WINCHESTER — It was a day once again to say goodbye to loved ones in Christ Episcopal Church. The Blue Ridge Hospice held its annual Remembrance Day on Sunday, a chance for families and friends of those who died in the hospice over the past year to “gather together to give thanks for their presence among us, to grieve their death, to affirm the ongoing love we have for them, and to rejoice in the gifts they have shared with us,” according to the program for the service.

This is a time for us to remember those we have taken care of,” said Ernie Carnevale in his greeting to the audience of approximately 100. “This is a time to greet the families and the caregivers of these people and to remember those we love and miss so badly.” The service consisted of three poem readings, several musical selections, and, in lieu of a sermon, the reading of the names of more than 300 hospice patients who passed away in the past year.

Among those names read was that of Donald Myers, who died on Nov. 28, 2005. Myers’ wife, Ann, came to the service, which she said provided her with a sense of community. “This has been really super great,” she said. “I came here for remembrance and as a way to honor his life and what he meant to all of us.” Mrs. Myers was joined by her husband’s mother, Blanche, and his sister, Dolores O’Day, who remembered growing up with him when their parents divorced.

“He was a great family man,” she said. “He really enjoyed playing his music with his son and his grandchildren. He loved his music and the music today will help us.” When their parents divorced, O’Day said “He took over the family and became the breadwinner. And he was the only boy, so he was special to my mother. She kind of spoiled him.” Blanche offered a smile as a response.

Besides remembering those who passed away, the event offered the staff of the hospice, which included grief counselors and other therapeutic personnel, the opportunity to offer further support for the families.

“This is a chance to follow up with these families,” said Director of Clinical Services Lynn Gray. “The staff sees the families, they say hello to them and they see how they’re doing. This is right before the holidays, which can make this an even harder time for them.”

—Robert Igoe