

MIDDLETOWN

Officer honored; flag raised

*BY DANNY ADLER
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About a hundred people gathered at sunset Sunday outside Middletown's municipal center for a candlelight vigil, offering prayers for fallen police Det. Chris Jones, the township's first officer killed in the line of duty.

Jones' family, friends, fellow police and township workers gathered for the solemn 15-minute vigil before police raised the American flag outside the building. It had been lowered to half-staff after Jones' tragic death.

Jones died Jan. 29 after giving a speeding motorist a traffic ticket on the Route 1 Superhighway in Middletown. While walking back to his car, a car slammed into his police cruiser, which was pushed on top of him.

"Our hearts are still flying at half-mast and they will be for a long time," Middletown police Chaplain Bruce Gerstle said. He added, "I wish we could heal as quickly as that flag going up."

The somber crowd of children and adults clutched white flickering candles not far from a tribute police cruiser with pictures of Jones and his badge number.

One woman began singing "Amazing Grace" as a police officer raised the flag and the crowd joined in.

John Lehnen, chaplain of the Pennsylvania Fraternal Order of Police Bucks County Lodge No. 53, stepped up in front of those assembled and read a Native American prayer:

"I give you this/ One thought to keep/ I am with you still/ I do not sleep ... Do not think of me as gone/ I am with you still/ In each new dawn."

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