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### Third Annual Night of Prayer Draws Large Crowd



Perris Mayor Pro-Tem Malcolm Corona, Mayor Michael Vargas and City Clerk Nancy Salazar at the third annual Night of Prayer on Aug. 13. The trio praised the event as a wonderful opportunity to show unity among the many different faiths in Perris.

#### Media Contact

Joe Vargo  
Public Information Officer  
951-943-6100  
jvargo@cityofperris.org

In a country and world torn by discord and hate, a group of Perris ministers, elected officials, City residents and people of faith gathered Monday (Aug. 13) at the Bob Glass Gymnasium to offer what they believe is the ultimate antidote: prayer.

The Perris chapter of the Cop's n' Clergy Network's third annual Night of Prayer drew a crowd of more than 150 who came to sing, pray and plead for an end to strife and a return to civil discourse and mutual respect.

Ministers from 13 Perris congregations joined with City elected representatives, law officers, youth groups and other people of faith to make the annual Night of Prayer a rousing success.

The City contingent was led by Perris Mayor Michael Vargas, Mayor Pro-Tem Malcolm Corona, City Councilwoman Tonya Burke, Councilwoman Rita Rogers, City Clerk Nancy Salazar. Moreno Valley City Councilman Ulises Cabrera also attended.

Rogers organized the Night of Prayer in 2016 and has seen the outreach grow since inception.

"As a community comes together to pray, the community improves," Rogers said. "Our country is divided. Fires are raging throughout our state, including in Lake Elsinore. School kids are returning to class. Veterans are committing suicide at the rate of 22 each day. We come together this night to pray for all this, but most of all for unity."



Perris City Councilwoman Rita Rogers and Pastor Pete Perez pray in silence during the Night of Prayer at the Bob Glass Gymnasium.

Rogers called Perris a "community of faith, of believers who believe in the power of prayer."

#### Changing lives, communities

Vargas noted that Perris is home to more than 70 churches of many faiths. He praised Rogers for "the great thing she is doing" to bring the community together through prayer.

"Prayer can be a powerful influence in peoples' lives," Vargas said. "Prayer has changed a lot of peoples' lives."

Corona called Night of Prayer "a fantastic event that brings a great variety of people together to pray for important causes."



Perris City Councilwoman Tonya Burke said of the Night of Prayer: "Inspiring to see people, because of the love for city, come together."

"In Perris, although we have a lot of different faiths, we are all united to pray for our City," Corona said. "It's great to pray for good things to happen."

Burke said she is honored to represent a community that is "open and welcoming to all clergy."

"You don't see events like this in too many other cities," Burke said. "It's inspiring to see people, because of the love for the city, come together. Prayer really works."

Salazar said she was thrilled to see so many adolescents and young adults in the crowd. A large contingent of teenagers from Rock of Generations Church in Perris enthusiastically prayed and sang throughout the evening.

"Prayer is always good—at home, with your family and kids, in your car—trust me, I've done that a lot!" Salazar said. "It's awesome to see the younger generation present."



A crowd of more than 150 people gathered at the Bob Glass Gymnasium Aug. 13 to celebrate the third annual Night of Prayer in the City of Perris.

#### Feel the energy, passion

Cabrera, the Moreno Valley City Councilman, came away impressed by the passion of the speakers, the audience and the City for organizing the Night of Prayer.

"You feel the energy," he said. "This was powerful!"

Passion flowed from the gym's stage as well, as all the ministers offered prayers for specific causes. Pastor Wade Forde, offering prayers for America, called upon God to use "our blessings to be a people of kindness, a nation of caring."

"Help the progress of your people—prioritize the goodness of your people," Forde said. "Help those who are weak become strong."



Ministers at the Night of Prayer stand while Pastor Wade Forde addresses the audience Aug. 13 during the Night of Prayer in Perris.

In praying for California, Pastor Terry Wells said: "We need you Lord. We need you right now. Heal our land."

"Let California be a beacon of light," Wells said. "Where your spirit is, there is peace, there is mercy, there is freedom."

Pastor Chris Thompson prayed for the City of Perris, asking God "to make it a better place."

"We ask for your presence at City Hall," Thompson said. "We pray for safety among the residents of this City."

Other pastors prayed for schools and students, veterans and military members, the sick and disabled, law enforcement and firefighters, families and children and for unity. Following the program, pastors offered prayers to individuals in need of spiritual healing.



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101 N. D Street  
Perris, CA 92570

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