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From the Clergy Assistant

Interfaith Religious Leaders of Ridgewood and Newtown Interfaith Clergy

One Thursday late in April, 14 members of the Interfaith Religious Leaders of Ridgewood drove up to Newtown, CT to have lunch with the members of the Newtown Interfaith Clergy group.

One of our group's members, the Rev. Kathleen Green from the Unitarian Society of Ridgewood, had lived in Newtown years ago. It was through Kathleen's feeling of deep grief and connection to that community, along with the support of our Ridgewood group, that she reached out to the clergy of Newtown to see if we could do something as simple as take them out to lunch. No agenda, no program, just lunch and fellowship, and any support we could offer. And so, those of us who were able went up to Newtown to do just that.

We broke bread together around one large square of tables, talked, listened, laughed, and cried—all with the understanding that anything that was shared in that room stayed in that room. But I feel safe in sharing that the role of the Holy Spirit in the lives and ministry of these Newtown clergy members as they ministered to the community and to each other was quite powerful. Time and again, it was shared that it was only through God's Grace and the power of the Holy Spirit working through each of them and the community that they have been able to minister to each other. They also are very grateful for everyone's prayers and asked for prayers to continue, please. The clergy of Newtown have felt those prayers and know that those prayers have also played a huge part in helping them and the community to get through these very difficult days and months and to begin to heal.

This time with the Newtown clergy was a very powerful experience for our Ridgewood interfaith leaders, a great witness to what it means to serve as priest, pastor, and prophet. I am grateful to have been able to share in this witness. As I have mentioned many times before, it is a true blessing to be a part of such a thoughtful, respectful, and engaging group as the Interfaith Religious Leaders of Ridgewood. Although this is a very diverse group, it is one whose members and their congregations are deeply rooted in God and in their ministry to the community.

The Rev. Joan F. Conley
Clergy Associate