

"Tree of Life" Memorial Comments by Rabbi Listfield

[View this email in your browser](#)



Dear members of Etz Chayim,

It's been a hard week for Americans. It's been a hard week for Jews.
It's been a hard week.

I knew five of the *kedoshim* (people murdered simply for being Jewish) very well. They were my congregants at Tree of Life in the mid-2000's. Whatever you heard on tv or read in the paper about what good people they were is only partly true; they were all *100 times better* than any reporter or journalist could ever convey.

I spoke Tuesday evening at the memorial service at Ahavath Achim Synagogue in Atlanta. If any of you wish to receive a recording of my personal reflections, please let me know and I shall forward it to you, via email or text.

We of course don't know what will happen next in our country. One thing is sure: There will be more outrages of gun violence. After

Columbine and Newtown and Charleston and Orlando and Las Vegas and Parkland and now Pittsburgh — with my apologies for omitting so many other such episodes — it is certain that more depredations are soon coming our way.

Our nation is divided on the question of how to address all this. Is it a hate problem, is it a mental health problem, is it a socioeconomic problem; do we need more gun control, or do we need more guns?

Would 11 people not have been murdered Saturday morning, because an armed guard would have saved them? Or would 11 people not have been murdered Saturday, because an armed guard — set upon by a maniac with an assault rifle — would surely have made it TWELVE people who were murdered? I heard on the radio that a good guy with a gun defeats a bad guy with a gun. Me, I don't know. It is not my role to even try to answer such questions.

I know that I grieve for my former congregants and friends who were massacred on Shabbat morning. I know that you join me in that grief. Let that suffice for now.

Stephen Listfield

Rest in Peace

Joyce Fienberg – Yiddis Bultcha bat Aba Menachem

Jerry Rabinowitz – Yehudah ben Yechezkel

David Rosenthal – Dovid ben Eliezer

Cecil Rosenthal – Chaim ben Eliezer

Irving Younger – Yitzchak Chaim ben Menachem

Dan Stein – Daniel Avram ben Baruch

Rose Mallinger – Raizel bat Avraham

Richard Gottfried – Yosef ben Chaim

Bernice Simon – Beila Rachel bat Moshe

Sylvan Simon – Zalman Shachna ben Menachem Mendel

Mel Wax – Moshe Gadol ben Yosef

