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## Winthrop Holds Blue and White Friday in Support of Charleston Victims, State

Winthrop University

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# Winthrop Holds Blue and White Friday in Support of Charleston Victims, State

## Quick Facts

- More than 200 people gathered at the Little Chapel for the half-hour ceremony.
- The gathering was held to show unity with Charleston after last week's church shooting where nine people were killed.
- It was part of "Blue and White Friday," a grassroots effort created on Facebook to bring people together and share South Carolina pride.



ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA – The Winthrop University community came together June 26 at its most sacred spot on campus – **the Little Chapel** – to **show unity with Charleston** after last week's church shooting where nine people were killed. The gathering was part of "**Blue and White Friday**," a grassroots effort created on Facebook to bring people together and **share South Carolina pride**.

**Winthrop Acting President Debra Boyd** said South Carolina residents and other

Americans have spent considerable time reflecting on the senseless tragedy at Mother Emanuel A.M.E. Zion Church. A white man, Dylann Roof, visited a Bible class there June 17 and killed the pastor, S.C. Sen. Clementa Pinckney, and eight church members.

More than 200 people – many of them wearing blue and white to honor the victims and to show unity for the families' and the Palmetto State's response to the tragedy – gathered at the Little Chapel for the half-hour ceremony. **Nine chimes played**, one for each victim, at 9:09 a.m. and then the crowd stood in silence for the **playing of "Amazing Grace."** The event also featured a **group photo** in which volunteers held placards above their heads to form the South Carolina flag while others attendees gathered around them.

Boyd noted in her remarks that appreciating diversity has been a key component of the Winthrop experience. Alumnus Jay Karen '96 had expressed on Facebook this week that during his four years at Winthrop, he lived, played and worked with others of various backgrounds, colors, sexualities and political persuasions. "Only from these experiences, he said, did he have the courage to go outside of his comfort zone and truly get to know and appreciate people who are not like him," said Boyd.

After the group photo, the placards were inscribed with notes of unity, love and hope as well as attendees' signatures. The placards will be displayed in the DiGiorgio Campus Center for others to sign, before being distributed in a meaningful way to the people of Charleston.

“And while we cannot undo what’s been done in Charleston,” Boyd concluded, “We can use it as a foundation to move forward: to **face ignorance with education, fear with fortitude and hatred with love.**”

Sponsors of the event were Winthrop’s Staff Assembly and the Office of University Relations. To see photos of the event, go to Winthrop’s [Facebook page](#).

For more information, contact Judy Longshaw, news and media services manager, at 803/323-2404 or [longshawj@winthrop.edu](mailto:longshawj@winthrop.edu).

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