

Ansonia community gathers to pray for a Christmas miracle

Solemn vigil held Saturday at Veterans Park

By Patricia Villers

ANSONIA - Holiday lights decorating trees in Veterans Park were an unlikely backdrop to a solemn vigil Saturday to pray for a missing 1-year old's safe return.

About 100 people turned out on a cold evening to show their concern and pray for the welfare of Vanessa Morales, who is believed to have been abducted.

Her mother, Christine Holloway, was found dead Monday in her home at 6 1/2 Myrtle Ave.

The Rev. Jim Midgley, pastor, First United Methodist Church in Ansonia, organized the vigil after conferring Thursday with Mayor David S. Cassetti about showing the family the community's support.

The emotion-charged event featured sacred music offered by Walnut Hill Community Church members and scripture readings.

I was moved by Ansonia High School student Destiny Young's beautiful rendition of *Amazing Grace*. As she sang many others who also were moved started to sing the hymn along with her.

Several clergy members were in attendance, including the Rev. Jeffrey Gubbiotti, pastor, Holy Rosary and Assumption churches, both in Ansonia, and the Rev. Alfred Smith, pastor, Macedonia Baptist Church, also in Ansonia.

A cousin of Vanessa, Joshua Morales of Naugatuck, said he was amazed at the turnout as he handed out flyers to attendees after the vigil.

