



RECLAIM REPAIR REBUILD  
**WORSHIP**  
**CELEBRATION**  
REFRAME

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## Sunday Worship Celebration

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AUGUST 17, 2025 • 11:45 AM • JUST LOVE LIBERATES

• GATHERING •

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Rev. Natalie Renee Perkins

**HYMN**

["Joy In The Morning"](#)

(Adam Podd)

**MESSAGE FOR ALL AGES**

Matthew Johnson Harris, Isaac Bush

**SIYAHAMBA**

//We are marching in the light of God  
We are marching in the light of God//

(Trad.)

//We are marching, marching, we are marching  
Marching we are marching in the light of God//

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

**LORD'S PRAYER**

Allen Singleton

Ever-loving and holy God, hallowed be your name. Your reign come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for yours is the reign, and the power, and the glory, forever. **Amen.**

**CONGREGATIONAL AMEN**

(Trad.)

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## PASSING OF THE PEACE

Allen Singleton

*As you are able, please make your way to the microphone to also greet those worshipping with us online*

### • REFLECTING •

**ANTHEM** “Desires for Smiles & Laughs: Mr. Neihaus Comes Home” (Richard Tschudy)  
Soloist – Ai Ra

**SCRIPTURE** Hebrews 12:1-2 / Luke 12:49-12:51 Rob Stephens

#### Hebrews 12:1-2

**12:1** Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us,

**12:2** Looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

#### Luke 12:49-12:51

**12:49** I have come to cast fire upon the earth, and how I wish it were already, ablaze!

**12:50** I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what constraint I am under until it is completed!

**12:51** Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division!

**SERMON** Faith On Fire Rob Stephens

### • RESPONDING •

#### INVITATION TO REFLECT

**INVITATION TO JOIN MOVEMENT** Matthew Johnson Harris, Isaac Bush

*If you'd like to join our movement for love and justice, go to [middlechurch.org/join](https://middlechurch.org/join).*

**OFFERTORY** “At This Table” (Idina Menzel)  
Soloist – Madge Dietrich

Donate at [middlechurch.org/donate](https://middlechurch.org/donate) or Venmo @MiddleCollegiateChurch



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**DOXOLOGY** From all that dwell below the skies  
Let faith and hope with love arise.  
Let peace, goodwill on earth be sung  
Through every land, by every tongue.

(Trad.)

**DEDICATION PRAYER**

Matthew Johnson Harris

**HYMN** ["Lead With Love"](#)

(Melanie Demore)

**BENEDICTION**

Rev. Natalie Renee Perkins

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**PARTICIPATING IN THE CELEBRATION**

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**Director of Music and Choirs** • John Del Cueto  
**Middle Church Band** • Dionne McClain-Freeney (Pianist)



**July Playlist:** Did you miss anything at Middle last month? Check out our monthly recap for a selection of moving musical performances and a touching sermon. Watch them again or share the playlist with friends.

**PRAYER CORNER** *Please pray with us this week for these people and concerns.*  
**We are praying for all our Middle family every day.**

To make a prayer request, speak to a minister, or inquire about financial assistance, visit [middlechurch.org/prayer/](http://middlechurch.org/prayer/).



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# Welcome to Middle Church

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**We are glad you're here today!** If you are visiting for the first time, please fill out the card you were given with the bulletin and drop it in the offering bag when it comes by. We hope you'll come back often to be with us!

To learn more about the history of this church— we call it a movement — or to learn about New Members classes, or to get involved with our community groups, visit us at [www.middlechurch.org](http://www.middlechurch.org).

By entering the Sanctuary, you grant Middle Collegiate Church unrestricted right to use and publish, transmit, or telecast photographs or likenesses that might be taken of you this day for use in communications related to the church. You agree that all such material will be the sole property of Middle Collegiate Church.

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## GIVING AT MIDDLE

Our new sacred space is almost complete! Easter Sunday 2025 is our return to 50 E. 7th Street as we near the end of Phase 1 of rebuilding on our site following our tragic fire in 2020. Thanks to our dedicated members and friends, our three-year Middle Rising "One Fund" Campaign is almost complete as well. It is now time to fund what we put into this building! We've raised \$9.3M of our \$10.5M goal to fund Middle's operations, staff, programming, and some of the construction costs.

You can help us complete this campaign to Restore and Renew our Ministry Brick by Brick. Starting Easter Sunday through May 15th, you have the opportunity to purchase a commemorative brick to make your mark on this journey. Every brick you fund becomes part of Middle's story, a testament to the power of collective love and resilience. **A Commitment to Freedom Rising** - \$1,000 per brick placed near our Liberty Bell on the Freedom Wall, symbolizing our quest for justice and liberation. **A Celebration of Middle Rising** - \$250 per brick placed near our elevators, symbolizing our rise from the ashes. To purchase a brick visit <https://www.middlechurch.org/middle-rising>.



Sunday Worship and programs happen thanks to our clergy, staff, musicians, volunteers, and all of you who participate in-person and online. We can't do it without you! Please visit [www.middlechurch.org/donate](http://www.middlechurch.org/donate) to make your gifts to support our ongoing operations and programming of this new building. We are the ones we've been waiting for and together, with you onboard, we will have enough!

Love— *Jacqui, Vickie Burns—Board Chair, and the entire Middle Church Board*



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**To support our ongoing ministry, programs, operations, and rebuilding:**

- Visit [middlechurch.org/donate](http://middlechurch.org/donate)
- Venmo @MiddleCollegiateChurch
- To mail contributions to Middle Church, please address them to:

Middle Collegiate Church  
Attn: Stewardship Dept.  
50 E. 7th Street, New York, NY 10003

\*\*Charitable Giving may require use of Middle Collegiate Church's EIN: 13-5564117 (aka "Ministers, Elders and Deacons of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of the City of New York")

Please reach out to our Stewardship Office ([stewardship@middlechurch.org](mailto:stewardship@middlechurch.org)) to discuss any questions about your giving plan.

**DONATE BY PHONE**

To make a donation to Middle Church, scan this code with your smartphone camera.



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## Middle Events Calendar

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All events are listed in ET unless noted.

Visit [middlechurch.org](http://middlechurch.org) for details and the latest updates.

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**SUNDAY, AUGUST 17**

- 10:00 a.m.: [Bible in the Middle](#)  
10:00 a.m.: [Voter Reform Group](#)  
11:45 a.m.: [Worship Celebration](#)  
12:45 p.m.: [Virtual Chat & Chew](#)  
1:00 p.m.: Community Social Hour

**MONDAY, AUGUST 18**

- 6:30 p.m.: [Acting Class](#)

**TUESDAY, AUGUST 19**

- 7:00 p.m.: [Prayer Shawl Project](#)

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20**

- 8:00 a.m.: [Pray to Rise](#)  
7:00 p.m.: [Queer Black Men](#)

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 21**

- 1:00 p.m.: [New Adventures](#)

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 24**

- 10:00 a.m.: [Bible in the Middle](#)  
11:45 a.m.: [Worship Celebration](#)  
12:45 p.m.: [Virtual Chat & Chew](#)  
1:00 p.m.: Community Social Hour

**FOR MORE INFORMATION** about Middle Church events, activities, and the latest updates, scan this code with your smartphone camera.

**Want to get more involved?**

Please reach out to our Director of Programs, Events, and Community Engagement, **Elise Tiralli**, to learn more about programming – [etiralli@middlechurch.org](mailto:etiralli@middlechurch.org).



**We warmly invite you to join our ushering and hospitality ministries!** Every Sunday, we need ushers to offer radical welcome and volunteers to host our Community Social Hour after worship. If you're interested in serving as an usher or sponsoring snacks for the community, please reach out to our Care Minister, **Jillian Langford** – [jlangford@middlechurch.org](mailto:jlangford@middlechurch.org).



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# FREEDOM SUMMER CAMP

## SIGN UP TODAY!

**Grades K - 3  
July 9 - 11**

**Grades 4 - 6  
Aug 25 - 29**



**Email [jangford@middlechurch.org](mailto:jangford@middlechurch.org) for more information!**

### MIDDLE COLLEGIATE CHURCH

Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis, Senior Minister  
 Macky Alston, M.Div. Executive Minister  
 Rev. Natalie Renee Perkins, Executive Minister for Digital Church  
 Jillian Langford, MTS ABD, Minister for Care & Congregational Life  
 Rev. Amanda Hambrick Ashcraft, Consulting Minister for Justice & Community Organizing  
 And Team Middle

**MAILING** Middle Collegiate Church  
 PO Box 1400  
 New York NY 10276

**WORSHIP** Sundays at 11:45 AM ET online & in-person at: Middle Collegiate Church  
 50 East 7<sup>th</sup> Street New York, NY  
 10012

**E-MAIL** [middleinfo@middlechurch.org](mailto:middleinfo@middlechurch.org)  
**WEBSITE** [middlechurch.org](http://middlechurch.org)

Share our message on social media and invite others to like, follow, and connect with us.

- [Facebook.com/MiddleCollegiateChurch](https://Facebook.com/MiddleCollegiateChurch)
- [Facebook.com/Rev.Jacqui.Lewis](https://Facebook.com/Rev.Jacqui.Lewis)
- [YouTube.com/MiddleNYC](https://YouTube.com/MiddleNYC)
- [Instagram.com/middlechurch](https://Instagram.com/middlechurch)
- [Instagram.com/revjacquilewis](https://Instagram.com/revjacquilewis)
- [Twitter.com/middlechurch](https://Twitter.com/middlechurch)
- [Twitter.com/RevJacquiLewis](https://Twitter.com/RevJacquiLewis)
- [Jacquilewis.substack.com/](https://Jacquilewis.substack.com/)
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HYMN

“Joy In The Morning”

(Adam Podd)

JOY IN THE MORNING

by ADAM PODD



We'll find joy in the mor-nin' Joy in the mor-nin'  
 We find hope in our chil-dren Hope in our chil-dren  
 We find strength in each-oth-er Strength in each-oth-er  
 There is love all a-round us Love all a-round us

Joy in the mor-nin' In the mor-nin' we'll find joy.  
 Hope in our chil-dren In our chil-dren we find hope  
 Strength in each-oth-er In each-oth-er we find strength  
 Love all a-round us All a-round us there is love.

BACK

HYMN

“Lead With Love”

(Melanie Demore)

You gotta put one foot in front of the other  
 And lead with love  
 Put one foot in front of the other  
 And lead with love

Don't give up hope  
 You're not alone  
 Don't you give up  
 Keep movin on

Lift up your eyes  
 Don't you despair  
 Look up ahead  
 The path is there

I know you're scared  
 And I'm scared too  
 But here I am  
 Right next to you

BACK



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