

JUST LOVE LIBERATES



# middle church

## WORSHIP CELEBRATION

JANUARY 18, 2026 • 11:45 AM • KING SUNDAY

### • GATHERING •

#### WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Natalie Renee Perkins

#### HYMN

"I Love the Lord"

(Richard Smallwood)

#### MESSAGE FOR ALL AGES

Bernard & Puppets

#### SIYAHAMBA

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

We are marching, we are marching  
We are marching, in the light of God.  
We are marching, we are marching  
We are marching, in the light of God.

#### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. Natalie Renee Perkins

Text BULLETIN to 833-786-0733 to receive this week's bulletin to your smart device.

## LORD'S PRAYER

Rev. Natalie Renee Perkins

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.**

## CHORAL AMEN

(Trad.)

## PASSING OF THE PEACE

Rev. Natalie Renee Perkins

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

## • REFLECTING •

### ANTHEM      "A Change is Gonna Come"

(Sam Cooke)

Soloist Alex Bertrand

### SCRIPTURE      Amos 5:18-24

Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis

<sup>18</sup> Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD!  
    Why do you want the day of the LORD?  
It is darkness, not light,  
<sup>19</sup> as if someone fled from a lion  
    and was met by a bear  
or went into the house and rested a hand against the wall  
    and was bitten by a snake.  
<sup>20</sup> Is not the day of the LORD darkness, not light,  
    and gloom with no brightness in it?  
<sup>21</sup> I hate, I despise your festivals,  
    and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.  
<sup>22</sup> Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings,  
    I will not accept them,  
and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals  
    I will not look upon.  
<sup>23</sup> Take away from me the noise of your songs;  
    I will not listen to the melody of your harps.  
<sup>24</sup> But let justice roll down like water  
    and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

### SERMON

God Can't Stand Funky Religion

Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis

• RESPONDING •

**INVITATION TO REFLECT**

**POWER THIS MOVEMENT**

Matthew Johnson Harris

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

<b>OFFERTORY</b>	"Ring Them Bells"	(Bob Dylan)
	"Ringing Them Bells"	Soloists Carolyn Traore / Gabbi Beauvais (Junior Garr and Marsha B. Morrison)

*Donate at [middlechurch.org/donate](http://middlechurch.org/donate) or Venmo @MiddleChurch*

<b>DOXOLOGY</b>	(Trad.)
	Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise God all creatures here below. Praise God above ye heavenly hosts. Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.

<b>DEDICATION PRAYER</b>	Matthew Johnson Harris
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<b>HYMN</b>	<u><a href="#">"Lift Every Voice and Sing"</a></u>	(James Weldon Johnson)
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<b>BENEDICTION</b>	Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis
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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 (piano), Booker King (bass), Jonathon Peretz (drums)

**January 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.**

For health and wellbeing for Mary Armour, Janet Laing, Betty-Jeanne Rueters-Ward, and Majora Carter's sister Jackie

For those in hospice care: For Tere Blessings' mother Bertha Burkes and for Lutin Tanner's father

For Heidi Griffiths who grieves the loss of her auntie and godmother Jean Friker

For all who grieve the loss of Geraldine Smith and Bret Shuford

For Matthew and Allan Marrero, for Allan's upcoming bond date, and for his freedom

For all who are harmed by our current administration

For Patrice Stone and, in her words, for all human angels and unexpected blessings

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

## 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 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 Church.

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## GIVING AT MIDDLE

As of January 1, 2026, all contributions made to Middle Church, reserved and restricted for the sole and exclusive use by Middle Church, are, for federal income tax purposes, treated as contributions made to Congregational Collegiate Collective, Inc. and are deductible to the full extent permitted by law.

Our new legal name is Middle Ministry, LLC, but we are authorized to do business and be known as Middle Church. All donations should be written to Middle Church. The parent entity is named: Congregational Collegiate Collective, Inc. EIN# 90-0458930 and is a nonprofit organization

recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

You will see references to our new parent entity's name and EIN on our website, within 2026 donation acknowledgement communications and donor directories such as Candid and GuideStar.

## HERE ARE ALL THE WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT MIDDLE CHURCH

**Back by Popular Demand!** Our brick campaign is here again and you can still leave a lasting mark on Middle Church's future in the very foundation of our renewed home.

Bricks are a powerful way to honor loved ones, celebrate milestones, and show your commitment to love, justice, and joy. Each engraved brick will be placed on our Rising Wall or Freedom Wall, symbols of our collective story and our bold vision for the future.

Your gift not only secures your place in Middle's history, it fuels the fierce love that flows through our worship, justice work, art, and care for one another.

Give a brick today: <https://secure.everyaction.com/kUHfiP3LYUaN5yxP5lgLkw2>

Middle has always been more than a building—it's the love, justice, music, art, and community that flow within and beyond our sacred space. To keep that spirit thriving, we need your continued support for all the vital things that make Middle, Middle: our staff, programs, worship, justice work, and care for one another.

Your giving today fuels this ministry of fierce love. Together, we are not just restoring a church, we are building the movement for justice and joy our world so deeply needs.

Please give at [middlechurch.org/donate/](http://middlechurch.org/donate/).

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

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

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

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

\*\*Charitable Giving may require the search via Congregational Collegiate Collective, Inc EIN: 90 - 0458930 in order to designate it to Middle Church.

### DONATE BY PHONE

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



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



Text BULLETIN to 833-786-0733 to receive this week's bulletin to your smart device.

# Middle Events Calendar

All events are listed in ET unless noted.

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

## SUNDAY, JANUARY 18

- 10:00 AM [Just Love Family Programming](#)
- 10:00 AM [Bible in the Middle](#)
- 10:00 AM [Youth Claiming Power](#)
- 11:45 AM [Worship Celebration](#)**
- 12:00 PM [Just Love Kids](#)
- 12:45 PM [Chat & Chew - Hybrid](#)
- 1:00 PM [Stories That Heal](#)
- 1:15 PM [Village Chorus for Children & Youth](#)
- 1:45 PM [Community Social Hour](#)

## MONDAY, JANUARY 19

- 6:30 PM [Acting Class - Hybrid](#)

## TUESDAY, JANUARY 20

- 7:00 PM [Prayer Shawl Project - Hybrid](#)

## WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21

- 8:00 AM [Pray to Rise](#)

## THURSDAY, JANUARY 22

- 1:00 PM [New Adventures](#)
- 6:30 PM [Creative Writing](#)
- 7:00 PM [Jerriese Johnson Gospel Choir](#)

## SUNDAY, JANUARY 25

- 10:00 AM [Just Love Family Programming](#)
- 10:00 AM [Bible in the Middle](#)
- 10:30 AM [New Members Gathering](#)
- 11:45 AM [Worship Celebration](#)**
- 12:00 PM [Just Love Kids](#)
- 12:45 PM [Chat & Chew - Hybrid](#)
- 1:00 PM [Community Social Hour](#)
- 1:00 PM [Leadership Lab](#)
- 1:15 PM [Village Chorus for Children & Youth](#)
- 5:00 PM [Spiritual Sounds](#)

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



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**Want to get more involved?** To learn more about programs, regular volunteer opportunities, and community groups, please reach out to our Director, Events and Community Center, **Elise Tiralli** - [etiralli@middlechurch.org](mailto:etiralli@middlechurch.org).

## Want to host your next event at Middle?

Visit [middlechurch.org/rentals](http://middlechurch.org/rentals) to find our rates and inquiry form here:



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## MIDDLE COLLEGIATE CHURCH

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Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis, Senior Minister, Public Theology and Partnerships  
Macky Alston, M.Div. Executive Minister, Operations and Development  
Rev. Natalie Renee Perkins, Executive Minister, Hybrid Church  
Rev. Amanda Hambrick, Community Minister, Justice & Community Organizing  
Making it Happen: Middle Church Staff, and YOU!

**MAILING** Middle Church  
50 E 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York NY 10003

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

**WORSHIP** Sundays at 11:45 AM ET online & in-person at: Middle Church  
50 East 7<sup>th</sup> Street New York, NY  
10003

[Facebook.com/MiddleCollegiateChurch](https://Facebook.com/MiddleCollegiateChurch)  
[Facebook.com/Rev.Jacqui.Lewis](https://Facebook.com/Rev.Jacqui.Lewis)  
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[Jacquilewis.substack.com/](https://Jacquilewis.substack.com/)  
[Middlechurch.substack.com/](https://Middlechurch.substack.com/)

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

**WEBSITE** [middlechurch.org](https://middlechurch.org)

**PHONE** (212) 477-0667



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**HYMN****“I Love the Lord”**

(Richard Smallwood)

I love the, the Lord  
Who heard my cry  
And pitied every groan  
Long as I, I live  
And troubles rise  
I'll hasten to  
God's throne

[Back to Bulletin](#)**HYMN****“Lift Every Voice and Sing”**

(James Weldon Johnson)

Lift every voice and sing,  
Till earth and heaven ring,  
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;  
Let our rejoicing rise  
High as the list'ning skies,  
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.  
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,  
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;  
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,  
Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,  
Bitter the chast'ning rod,  
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;  
Yet with a steady beat,  
Have not our weary feet  
Come to the place for which our people sighed?  
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered.  
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,  
Out from the gloomy past,  
Till now we stand at last  
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,  
God of our silent tears,  
Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;  
Thou who hast by Thy might,  
Led us into the light,  
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.  
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,  
Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;  
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,  
May we forever stand,  
True to our God,  
True to our native land.

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