

JUST LOVE LIBERATES



middle church
WORSHIP CELEBRATION

MARCH 15, 2026 • 11:45 AM • WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH • LENT

• GATHERING •

INTROIT Woman Karen Coughlin

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Rev. Amanda Hambrick

HYMN [Lead with Love](#) (Mealnie DeMoore)

MESSAGE FOR ALL AGES Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis

SIYAHAMBA

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, 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, in the light of God.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE Matelyn Alicia

LORD'S PRAYER Monique Fortuné

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 Monique Fortuné

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

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

• REFLECTING •

ANTHEM

El Necio

(Sylvio Rodriguez)

Carolyn Traore, Hajime Yoshida

El Necio by Sylvio Rodríguez moves through a world full of advice — voices urging the singer to change, to repent, to become safer, quieter, or easier to accept. None of these voices sound especially harsh; most sound practical. And yet, the song keeps going its own way.

It doesn't claim to understand destiny or promise neat outcomes. Life here is something shaped by walking, choosing, and becoming — by staying in motion rather than standing still waiting for answers.

There is humor in this music, and imagination, and a willingness to look foolish. It keeps dreaming, praying in unexpected ways, and believing in shared life even when others say that kind of hope is outdated or naïve.

The song also names the cost of living this way. It doesn't look away from misunderstanding, loss, or even harm that can come when a person refuses to sell their values or soften their truth. What remains by the end is quiet and steady — not a lesson or a speech, but the feeling of being able to say: *this is how I lived*. A life held together by integrity, without a price.

SCRIPTURE

The Acts of Paul and Thecla
27.1-3, 32.1, 35.1-2

Rev. Natalie Renee Perkins

27 1 But [Alexander] at once, loving her and also being dishonored by what had happened to him, brought her before the governor. And when she confessed the things she had done, he sentenced her to the wild beasts. 2 And the women were panic-stricken and cried out before the court, "Evil judgment! Unholy judgment!"

3 And the women along with the children cried out from above, saying, "God, a godless judgment has been passed in this city!"

32 1 Then there was an uproar and rumbling of wild animals, and a cry from the people, and the women sitting together, some saying, "Bring in the sacrilegious one!" but others saying, "Let the city be destroyed for this lawlessness! Destroy all of us, Proconsul! Ferocious spectacle! Evil judgment!"

35 1 And the women, when other, more frightening, wild animals were being thrown in, cried aloud, and some threw petals, while others nard, and others cinnamon, and yet others cardamom, so that there was an abundance of perfumes. 2 And all the wild animals which were let out were held as if by sleep and did not touch her.

SERMON

Were It Not for the Women,...

Rev. Natalie Renee Perkins

• RESPONDING •

INVITATION TO REFLECT

POWER THIS MOVEMENT

Gloria Tate

If you'd like to join our movement for love and justice, go to middlechurch.org/join.



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OFFERTORY

The Healing

(Raina Sokolov-Gonzalez)
Sam Waite, Small ensemble

Donate at middlechurch.org/donate or Venmo @MiddleChurch

DOXOLOGY

(Trad.)

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.

DEDICATION PRAYER

Gloria Tate

HYMN

[I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light](#)

(Kathleen Thomerson)

BENEDICTION

Rev. Natalie Renee Perkins

PARTICIPATING IN THE CELEBRATION

Director of Music and Choirs • John Del Cueto

Middle Church Band • Dionne McClain-Freeney (Piano), Bernice Brooks (Drums)

February 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 We are praying for all our Middle family every day.

Please pray with us this week for these people:

Allan Dabrio Marrero & Matthew, Piero Bracamonte and Peter Calderon his uncle, Kathe Lovegren & family, Tonya & Susan Evans, Troy Pinkney, Sheryl Williams & friend Jo Anne, Stephen Hanna & little Maverick, Carol Geu & family, Tere Blessings & family, Elise Tiralli & family, Rev. Amanda Hambrick & family, Antwayn Hopper & family, Leslie Hahne & family, Julia Bartholomew-King & family, For all of those whom Melvin Cunningham holds in his heart, the LGBTQIA+ community, people facing health and housing challenges, people affected by war and conflict, and for the safety and well-being of all in our Middle community.

To make a prayer request, speak to a minister, or inquire about financial assistance, visit middlechurch.org/prayer/.



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Welcome to Middle Church

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.

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.

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# 90-0458939 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/.

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 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!



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

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

- Visit middlechurch.org/donate
- Venmo @MiddleChurch

To mail contributions to Middle Church, please address to:

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

Charitable Giving will require a search by EIN 90-0458939 Congregational Collegiate Collective in order to select Middle Church. Please reach out to our Stewardship Office (stewardship@middlechurch.org) for instructions regarding giving securities or 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.



THIS SACRED MESS

New conversation with Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis

Dear ones,

So many of you write to me about the real places of your lives. Questions about faith, family, justice, love, grief, calling, doubt, hope, and how to stay human in a complicated world. I carry those stories with deep care.

I wanted to create a gentle, intentional space for that sharing.

This Sacred Mess is an open invitation. If there is something in your life that feels tender, tangled, unresolved, or simply human, you are welcome to share it with me. I will respond with reflection, presence, and blessing.

Think of it as a kind of pastoral Dear Abby for the sacred, messy parts of being alive.

Anything you share will be held in confidence. When I respond publicly, all identifying details will be removed so your story remains anonymous and protected.

You may send your questions or situations by DM on Instagram or by email at jlewis@middlechurchech.org. Please put Sacred Mess in the subject line.

You are not alone in what you are carrying.

With love,
Jacqui



MIDDLE COLLEGIATE CHURCH

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 7th 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 7th Street New York, NY
10003

Facebook.com/MiddleCollegiateChurch
Facebook.com/Rev.Jacqui.Lewis
YouTube.com/MiddleNYC
Instagram.com/middlechurch
Instagram.com/revjacquilewis
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Middle Events Calendar

SUNDAY, MARCH 15

- 10:00 AM [Financial Wellness with Lauren Williams – Hybrid](#)
- 10:00 AM [Voter Reform Group – Online](#)
- 10:00 AM [Just Love Family Programming](#)
- 10:00 AM [Bible in the Middle](#)
- 10:30 AM [New Members Gathering – Hybrid](#)
- 11:45 AM** [Worship Celebration](#)
- 12:00 PM [Just Love Kids](#)
- 12:45 PM [Chat & Chew – Hybrid](#)
- 1:00 PM [Ushers Special Munch & Learn](#)
- 1:00 PM [Community Social Hour](#)
- 1:15 PM [Village Chorus for Children & Youth](#)
- *[New New Yorkers Community Dinner](#)

**Please see Rev. Amanda for details*

MONDAY, MARCH 16

- 6:30 PM [Acting Class – Hybrid](#)
- 7:00 PM [Queer Connections – Online](#)

TUESDAY, MARCH 17

- 7:00 PM [East Village Group – AA](#)
- 7:00 PM [Prayer Shawl Project – Hybrid](#)
- 8:30 PM [East Village Group – AA](#)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18

- 8:00 AM [Pray to Rise – Online](#)
- 6:00 PM [Watered with Tears: A Lenten Study of Scripture and Song – Online](#)

THURSDAY, MARCH 19

- 1:00 PM [New Adventures – Online](#)
- 6:30 PM [Creative Writing – Online](#)
- 6:30 PM [Leadership Lab: Digital Cohort](#)
- 7:00 PM [Jerriese Johnson Gospel Choir](#)

SUNDAY, MARCH 22

- 10:00 AM [Financial Wellness Workshop with Lauren Williams – Hybrid](#)
- 10:00 AM [Just Love Family Programming](#)
- 10:00 AM [Bible in the Middle](#)
- 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: In-Person](#)
- 1:15 PM [Village Chorus for Children & Youth](#)

All events are listed in ET unless noted.

Visit middlechurch.org for details and updates.

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



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.

Want to host your next event at Middle?

Visit middlechurch.org/rentals or scan this code to find our rates and inquiry form here:



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HYMN

Lead with Love

(Melanie DeMoore)

//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.//

Leader: All

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

Chorus:

Leader: ALL

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

Chorus:

Leader: ALL

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

Chorus

[Back to Bulletin](#)

HYMN

I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

(Kathleen Thomerson)

I want to walk as a child of the light
I want to follow Jesus
God sent the stars to give light to the world
The star of my life is Jesus

In Him, there is no darkness at all
The night and the day are both alike
The Lamb is the light of the city of God
Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus

I want to see the brightness of God
I want to look at Jesus
Clear sun of righteousness, shine on my path
And show me the way to the Father

In Him, there is no darkness at all
The night and the day are both alike
The Lamb is the light of the city of God
Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus

[Back to Bulletin](#)



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