



# Annual Impact Report

July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

middle  church

JUST LOVE

2023-2024



## Letter from Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis

The second year of our 3-Year Middle Rising Campaign fills me with gratitude and excitement for the progress we have made! The fire that took our sacred space in December 2020 didn't diminish our commitment to healing our souls and the world with justice, and love. Instead, it ignited fierce resolve to rebuild our space, repair the world, and reclaim Christianity with Just Love!

The construction of our space is now fully underway—with your steadfast support, we have successfully navigated the complexities of removing the damaged facade on 2nd Avenue and have received the necessary approvals to advance our project. Our focus is now on transforming our 50 E. 7th Street building into a vibrant hub for community engagement, worship and the arts. We are praying for Easter, 2025, in that renovated space!

This past year we officially launched the “Just Love Families” program, generously funded by the Lilly Endowment for five years. This initiative will allow Middle to foster a nurturing, intergenerational environment for all families (including the ones we create) where justice and compassion thrive. We are eager to see the impact this program will have on our community and beyond.

Additionally, our Middle Rising Campaign has reached a significant milestone, having commitments of \$8 million to date to add to our insurance funds. This achievement reflects the incredible generosity and dedication of our Middle community and supporters, and it fuels our movement to continue our mission. We have also been able to expand our staff and resources as we move back into an active in-person community to grow our programs and initiatives again.

On behalf of our Consistory chair, Vickie Burns, and the entire team, I want to extend our deepest gratitude for your continued support. Your time, talent, and financial contributions are vital to the success of our campaign and the realization of our vision.

In just love,

Jacqui





July 2023 began the 2nd fiscal year of Middle Rising, our 3-year campaign to Rebuild, Reclaim, and Repair with

**Just  
Love.**

We celebrate tremendous strides this past year because of the commitment of the Middle community to our missional areas, allowing us to boldly stand for those on the margins.

“

*“We are a church that centers the young people, the dreamers, and those pushed to the margins. The programs highlight the needs of these communities and create opportunities for these populations to see themselves as main characters in a growing story that yearns for their liberation.”*

*-Jillian Langford  
Minister for Care & Congregational Life*



# Rebuild

**Goal:** The reimagining and resurrection of our physical space that will accommodate our vision and support transformational ministry for years to come: a Center for Spirituality, Justice & The Arts.

## What we've accomplished:

- We **“broke ground”** on the renovations of our **50 E. 7th Street** site, where we are refurbishing and rebuilding this space into our **Center for Spirituality, Justice & The Arts**.
- The damaged facade was removed (following the 2023 approved vote from NYC's Landmark Commission); Our **building plans** were presented to and **approved** by the NYC Department of Buildings.
- We offered **in-person worship** and programming at East End Temple, made hybrid through streaming, which included: **Kids Enrichment; Village Chorus for Children & Youth; New Adventures; Trainings; Queer Connections; Young Adults; Butterfly Outreach Ministry; Gospel choir**, and many others!
- Our Middling Rising Building Committee and Consistory continue to seek a mission-aligned partner with whom to expand our footprint on the 112 2nd Avenue site that will create **a revenue-generating real estate partnership**.



## Who Joins Middle Church on Sundays?

**Average Sunday attendance:**  
**of 900+ members**  
in-person and online.

**40%** are >55  
**60%** are <55

Over the past year, we have  
Accumulated more than  
**142,000 video views** across  
all of our videos.

Boosting our  
engagement across  
all social platforms  
by **149%**!

“

*I got involved at Middle after hearing Rev. Dr. Jacqui online— actually hearing her on Twitter— and then purchased her book, Fierce Love. What has kept me at Middle is the spirit of love and connectedness I feel. And even though I am an online member, I feel part of the community and have even gotten involved in a number of book discussions, discussion groups, and I plan to continue to participate and get involved.*

**-Troy Pickney, Digital Member**

# Online Community



**Creating a robust digital offering is critical to Middle's overall mission because they allow us to reach past New York City for national and global impact.**

**It is the embodiment of "Heal the Souls. Heal the World."**

**Rev. Natalie Renee Perkins**  
Executive Minister, Digital Church



## Reclaim

**Goal:** Continuing the work to reframe what it means to be a church through established Middle Church and Freedom Rising programs that advance our mission to embody a Welcoming, Artistic, Inclusive, and Bold Movement of Just Love around the globe.

### How we do this:

- A picnic might feel trivial to somebody, but it could be the first time a single, queer mom is bringing her baby to interact with people she trusts to treat her with care.
- A queer variety show might feel like entertainment, but it's a community building moment to allow a voice pushed from mainstream to be in the spotlight and gain a following.
- A book fair might seem ordinary to somebody, but it's the first time a young Palestinian boy sees his family's traditions represented well in a story where he looks like the main character, written by an author who shares his heritage.



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*I cannot think of something more mission critical to Middle than helping our people feel seen, loved, celebrated, and invited in.*

**Elise Tiralli**

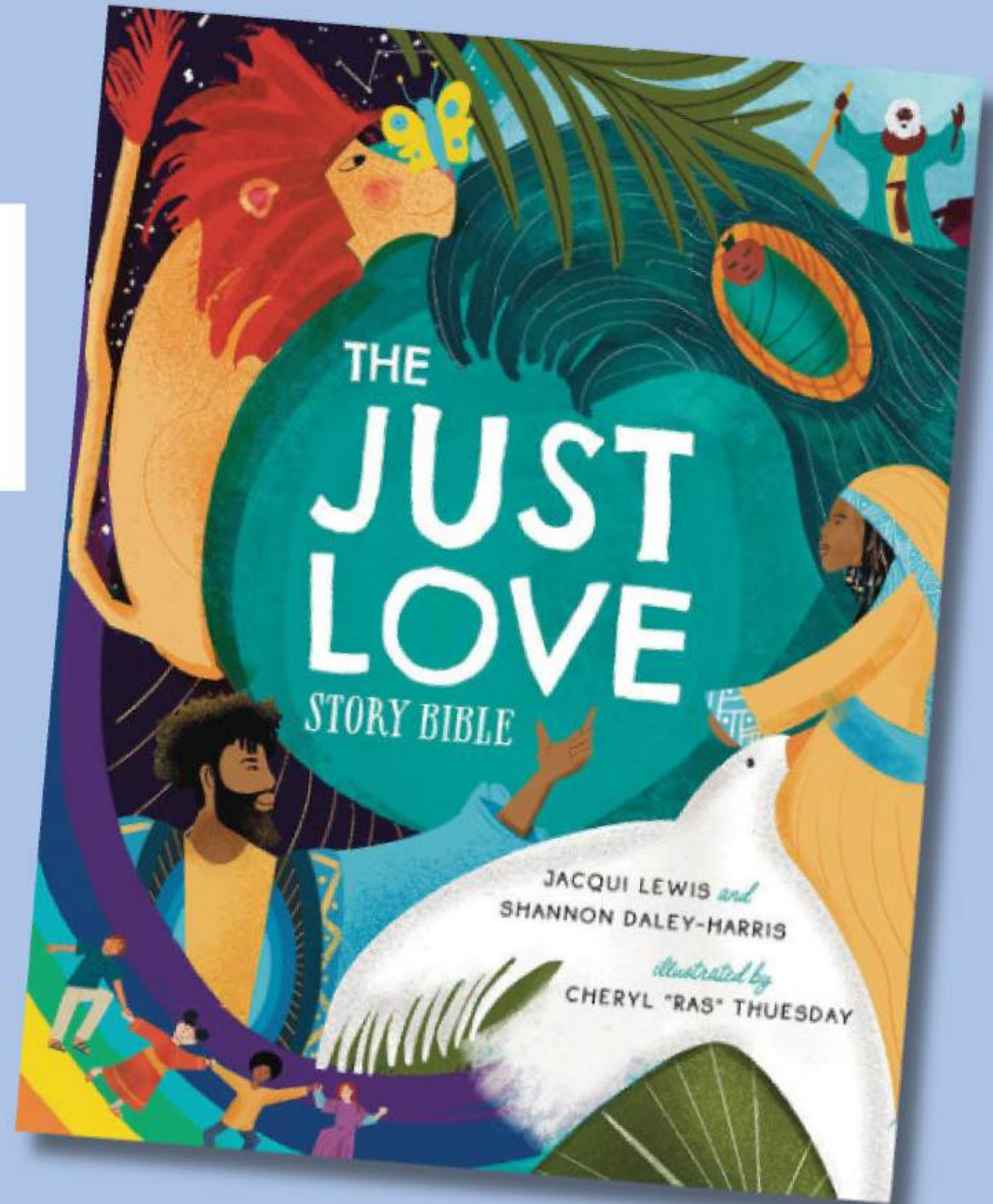
*Director of Programs & Events*

# Just Love Families

In FY24 we kicked off our *Just Love Families* program, which is funded by Lilly Endowment through 2028.

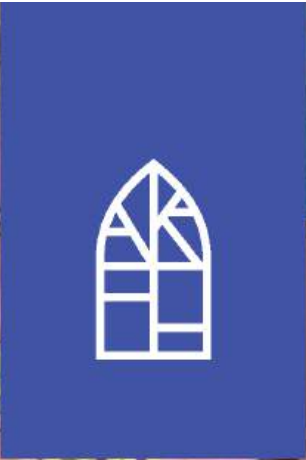
Just Love is the educational model that drives Middle members toward action and service in the world.

The Just Love curriculum being developed this year will help children and their families grow into leaders who can speak boldly about the intersection of faith, love, and social justice.



Inspired by Dr. Jacqui's new book, the Just Love curriculum will include Just Love Story Circles, Just Love Conversation Cards, and the reimagining of Kid's Enrichment to encompass a curriculum that includes a focus on social justice and radical love.





# Freedom Summer Camp

*Raising love and justice*

Serving ages 4 - 11 years old



## Peter Stuyvesant Park Action

Our Reparations Task Force diligently organized this past year, joining efforts with New Yorkers for Reparations; planned and participated in worships; and executed an action against Peter Stuyvesant, who was an enslaver holding upwards of 20 Africans in bondage.



Over 50 people—from Middle and beyond—came together at the Peter Stuyvesant action to raise their voices and stand for justice - on NYC's hottest day in 2024!

# Repair

**Goal:** Middle Church continues to be on a world-healing journey reaching beyond the walls of our current location and into the world to share Jesus' radical love. We aim to heal souls and the world by dismantling racist, classist, sexist, ethnocentrist, ableist, cisheterosexual and other systems of oppression.

**What we've accomplished in FY24:** Part of this work is moving outside our walls and establishing secular partnerships in education and organizing.



- **Middle Church secured \$1.25M** in grant funding from Lilly Endowment through their **Christian Parenting Initiative** to fund our Just Love Families program through 2028; this allowed Middle to welcome Jillian Langford, Phd., to our team for the role of Minister for Care and Congregational Life to oversee this work.
- Freedom Rising, Inc., our 501(c)(3) secular fundraising partner to Middle's work, **welcomed new Officers** to the Board of Directors including Chair, Dominique Lee; Vice Chair, Katrina Monzon; and Treasurer, Paul Devlin
- Our Senior Minister, Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis wrote the **Just Love Story Bible** with colleague Rev. Dr. Shannon Daley Harris, which is ready for pre-order now wherever you buy books and will be published by Beaming Books in February 2025.
- **New New Yorkers Community Partnership:** Rev. Amanda Hambrick Ashcraft spearheads this program which began in the fall of 2023 as a grassroots partnership between East End Temple, Children's Workshop (PS 361) and Middle Church.
  - We built community with close to 20 immigrant families (roughly 80 ppl) at Children's Workshop
  - Provided monthly culturally relevant meals; resources for social workers, language and job information; and programs for children.
  - We took everyone to the NYPL to get library cards; developed an accompaniment program to walk alongside families as they were forced to relocate shelters; and strengthened our local footprint by working closely with government officials, local schools, and other NGOs and houses of worship.
- Freedom Summer 2023 was highly successful, seeing an extremely diverse roster of **25 campers**. We had excellent facilitators, including renowned anti-racist educator Tabitha St. Bernard Jacobs, and East Village legend Chino Garcia. Campers learned music and dance, flexed their justice and empathy muscles, and experienced beloved community.

# Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis

## Senior Minister and Public Theologian



### **Taking *Fierce Love* to the public square**

- Jacqui took our fierce love with her to speaking engagements around the country and to trainings in Canada. She offered a TheoEd talk with Candler Theological Seminary; spoke at Awakening Soul in NC
- Jacqui also preached at the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Institute, at a Lenten Series in Memphis, at a conference in Georgetown and at the Festival of Homiletics in Pittsburg.
- Jacqui was the closing preacher at the Wild Goose Festival and did a day-long conversation with several national leaders on white Christian nationalism.

# Our Impact in Numbers:

## 2023-2024



**Middle Church is present across Instagram, Facebook, X, and YouTube social media platforms.**

**Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis has further amplified this impact, using her voice to expand our reach and influence on popular media platforms.**

@RevJacquiLewis	@MiddleChurch
5k+	10k+
Blog Subscribers	
91k+	62k+
Instagram Reaches	
60k+	16k+
x (Twitter) Followers	
7k+	200+
Threads Followers	Tiktok Followers

- Last year's media highlights included:**
- Three MSNBC and one NBC newscast
  - Two Laura Flanders broadcasts
  - Jacqui's award-winning piece for Starts with Us
  - Middle Church and Samuel DeWitt Proctor podcasts
  - Upcoming Nutopia show Jesus Crown of Thorns (Holy Week 2025)
  - Features on The Work of the People and Kunhardt Foundation's Life Stories
  - Cultural consultation on Parade with Matthew Johnson Harris and Josh Stanton





# Freedom Rising: You. Move. The World.

Middle Church hosted our 18th annual justice conference last April, *Freedom Rising: You. Move. The World.*, with Candler Theological Seminary as our digital presenting partner.

35 speakers joined for conversations offering tools and tactics to heal our nation over a three-day conference, led by Executive Producer Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis, including:

**Actor Aunjanue Ellis**

**Producer/Director Charles Randolph-Wright**

**Preacher William Barber**

**Justice warrior Linda Sarsour**

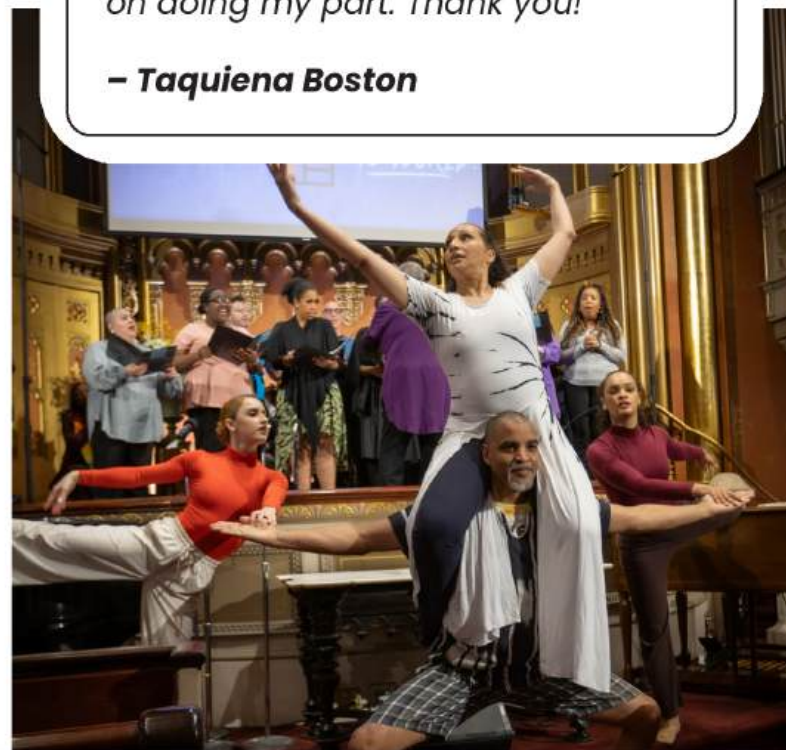
**Gun-reform activist Nelba Márquez-Greene**

**Interfaith leaders Dr. Hussein Rashid and Rabbi Rick Jacobs**



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*I was blown away by this conference. The knowledge and passion of the speakers and overall energy was fantastic! I now have hope that we will keep fascism from taking over this country and a higher belief in the potential of humanity. I'm ready to get to work on doing my part. Thank you!*

**- Taquiena Boston**



3 Days. 35 Speakers. 400 attendees.

# Partnering for Financial Sustainability:

Middle deepened relationships and outreach efforts for mission-aligned institutional funding in FY24 to work further toward our goal in this campaign to secure substantial programming support via grants.

Last year we are proud to have been in receipt of grant money from the following foundations:

- **Trinity Church Wall Street Philanthropies** – Mission Real Estate Development – awarded \$100,000 in feasibility and assessment grant monies toward our building project.
- **Wellspring Philanthropic Fund** – in partnership with Freedom Rising for education and organizing programs. The 2nd year of our 3-Year Grant award of \$250,000 per year.
- **Lilly Endowment via the “Christian Parenting Initiative”** – 1st full year of a 5-Year Grant (through 2028) awarded at \$1,250,000 for the “Just Love Families” program.
- **Focus For Health** – \$35,000 for Freedom Rising programming.



*Butterfly Community Food Outreach*

*Freedom Rising Training Seminar 2024*

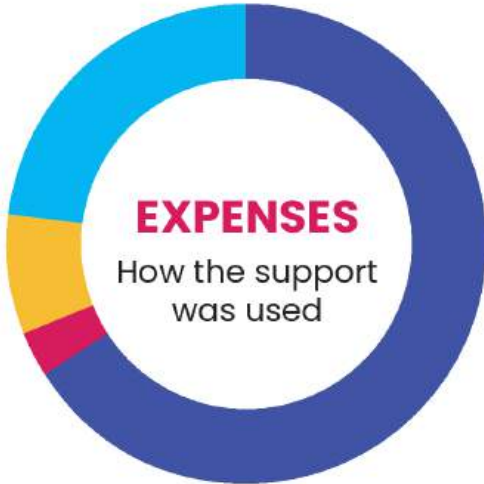


# Middle Church Financials 2023-2024



● Donations 53%	\$1,874,264
● Pledges 33% (not yet received)	\$1,140,213
● Foundations/Grants 6%	\$225,000
● Collegiate Church 6%	\$197,000
● Events/Programs 2%	\$67,813

**Total \$3,504,290**



● Program 32%	\$1,832,486
● Fundraising 3%	\$175,575
● Administrative 5%	\$317,820
● Building 60%	\$3,477,510
<i>(paid from insurance proceeds)</i>	

**Total \$5,803,391**



# Where We Are

## Middle Rising Campaign Phase I

**July 2022 – December 2025:**

The focus of Phase I is to address all four areas of the campaign and make meaningful progress toward Middle Rising with the goal of:

- **Stabilizing our damaged site**
- **Rehabilitating 50 E. 7th Street into our Center for Spirituality, Justice and The Arts**
- **Funding Middle's Programming for 3 years (through 2025)**





# What Comes Next

## Middle Rising Campaign Phase II

**January 2025 – December 2028:**

The focus of a Phase II is to continue all four campaign areas with the goal of:

- **Funding Programming for the next 3 years**
- **Endowing Middle for sustainability**
- **Developing our 2nd Avenue site with a mission-aligned partner**
- **Sustainable Funding Sources**



Thank you for being part of this community. Without your Fierce Love and commitment, the critical work outlined in these pages would not be possible. **We love you and are so happy to be on this journey with you.**



### Leadership

**REV. DR. JACQUI LEWIS**  
Senior Minister  
Middle Collegiate Church

**VICKIE BURNS**  
Chair of the Board  
Middle Collegiate Church

**MARK REED**  
Chair  
Middle Rising Rebuild Team

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