

Calendar of events

**Saturdays:** Saturday Night Live Open AA meeting in the Education Building, 8PM  
**Today:** Sunday worship: Third Sunday of Advent — Joy, 10:30AM  
**December 15:** New Jericho Choir rehearsal in the Lower Auditorium, 5:30PM  
**December 16:** Brownies Troop meeting in the Education Building, 5PM  
**December 17:** Adult Education in Coventry House, 10AM & 7PM  
**December 18:** Joyful Noise Adult Choir rehearsal in the Lower Auditorium, 6PM  
**December 20:** Middletown Helps Its Own Toy and Christmas Dinner delivery at New Monmouth Baptist Church, 9AM  
**December 21:** Sunday worship: Fourth Sunday of Advent — Love with the Children’s Christmas Pageant, The Drowsy Shepherds written by Nancy Coffin. After worship, a Christmas party and brunch with Santa and his elves in the Education Building  
**December 22:** New Jericho Choir rehearsal in the Lower Auditorium, 5:30PM

Consistory

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| <b>Elders</b><br>Dianne Asay, Financial Secretary<br>Dolores Hofmann<br>Lisa Leidecker, Vice President<br>Cindy Reya, Treasurer<br>Rev. Tricia Sheffield, President | <b>Deacons</b><br>Julie Hertzog<br>Kim Larson, Clerk<br>Dara Steele |
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Middletown Reformed Church Vision Statement

(Adopted by the Consistory 9 May 2016)  
Middletown Reformed Church is a welcoming and affirming congregation, where the inclusive grace of God is the guiding principle for all our ministries. We are people of faith committed to boldly proclaiming and intentionally living out God’s command to do justice, share love, show mercy, and walk humbly with our God in our local and global communities. We are a church on the side of love for all God’s people – providing for those who are in need, advocating for all oppressed peoples, and caring for our earth – we love because God first loved us.

Notes from Pastor Trish

In the event of a pastoral emergency, please call Pastor Trish 212-729-9150 or e-mail at [pastortrishmrc@gmail.com](mailto:pastortrishmrc@gmail.com). You may also call the Church Office phone at 732-671-1786. Messages are picked up during the week. Pastor Trish’s office hours are Tuesday, 1-3, Wednesday, 2-4, Thursday, 1-3 or by appointment. Weekend and evening times are also available. Her day of Sabbath rest is Monday. She does not answer texts, emails, or phone calls on this day, unless it’s an emergency.

In our prayers

**For the healing journey:** Raymond O; Stephanie; Bob Bark; Henry Thorpe; a neighbor; Nancy Coffin; Diane Grady; Joy Sheffield; Tom Smigel; Diana S  
**For God’s support, strength, & comfort:** Terry Raynor & family as they grieve the loss of her brother, Chet; the Hertzog family; Michelle; Corey; Mike; Donna Arnold; Mercedes’ mother, Fran; Florence Horsman; Linda Grasso; Magdala; Fleming; Linda  
**For God’s guidance & discernment:** Suzanne

Please continue to remember all those who have served our country, especially those who are serving: David Celeste & Joseph Petrone, United States Air Force; Michael Howlett & Lloyd Petrone, United States Marine Corps

Social media

**Website:** [www.mrchurch.us](http://www.mrchurch.us)  
**Facebook:** Middletown Reformed Church  
**YouTube:** MRC: A Fabulous Church of Love  
**Instagram:** middletownreformednj  
**Spotify:** Middletown Reformed Church podcast



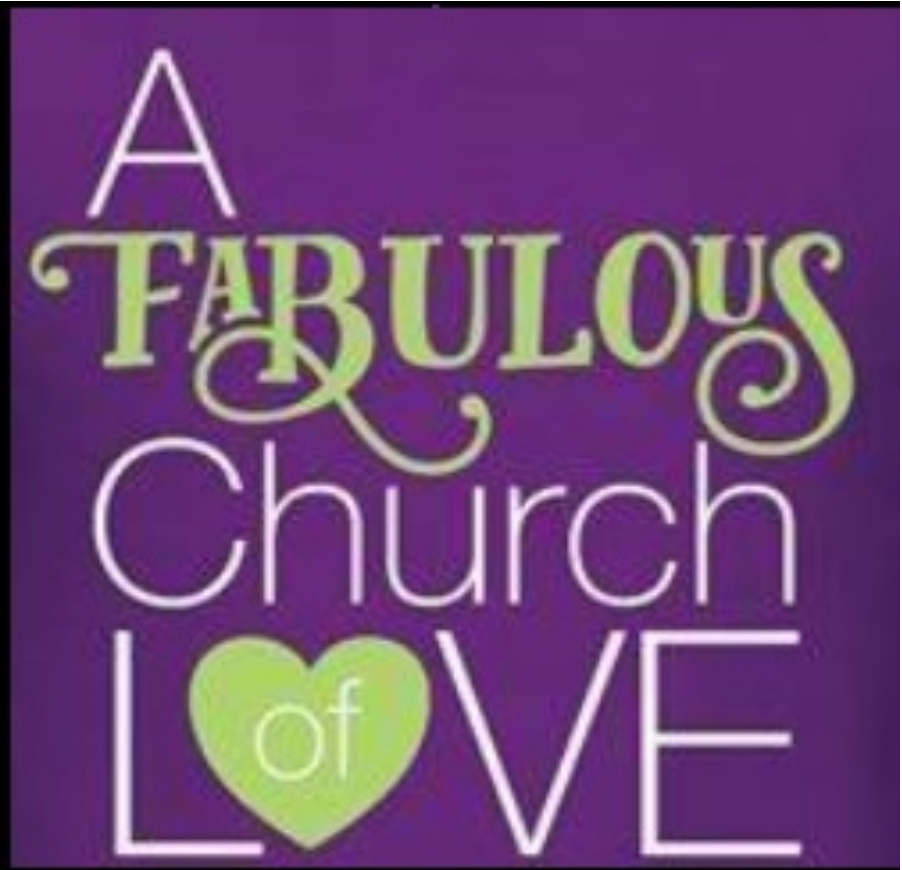
Scan the QR code for a link to our online giving opportunities, or go to [www.mrchurch.us/give](http://www.mrchurch.us/give)

The flowers today are from the Flower Fund  
If you would like to place flowers in the Sanctuary for worship, contact Dolores Hofmann at 732.671.9308. The cost is \$25.

Our greeters today are Dolores Hofmann & Dara Steele.  
Our greeters next week are Dianne Asay & Cindy Reya.

Our 2025 RCA Annual Denominational Assessment of \$107.10 per member is due. The total amount for the year is \$5,569.55, which the church pays on a quarterly basis (\$1,392.39). **So far we have received \$1,366.60 in assessments/dues.** This assessment supports the work of our Classis, Regional Synod, and the General Synod. The per capita dues of \$7 for the United Church of Christ is also due. Total amount for both RCA and UCC is \$114.10 per member. If you wish to contribute toward the assessment/dues, please mark your check in the memo section “Denominational assessment/ Dues.” You are welcome to request information at any time from the treasurer regarding the current fiscal status of the church.

Middletown Reformed Church



A welcoming & affirming congregation

Middletown Reformed Church

Rev. Tricia Sheffield, PhD, Pastor  
Thomas Martucci, Director of Music  
Julie Hertzog, Coordinator for Children & Youth

Third Sunday of Advent14 December 2025

PreludeLiving Proof

Votum & greeting

Passing of the peace

Message for all ages

Lighting of the Advent Candle — Joy  
(adapted from Worship Ways), AnnaRose Rotondi, liturgist  
Today we light the Candle of Joy. Joy is often considered the easiest of these four weeks before Christ’s holy birth. We may cling to hope, and pray for peace, but in joy, we delight. In joy, our struggles are released. In joy, we find relief and comfort, a connection to friends and family and God. In joy, we find innocence within that has not been ground out. The lighting of this candle is joy and it reminds us of candles lit in our lives. No matter what room it is lit in, the act itself is exquisite. While the flame dances, we are one in the miracle and beauty of its light. Amen

\*Opening hymnO Come, O Come, Emmanuel  
(61, v 5-6)

Prayer of confession(adapted from Worship Ways)  
God, we confess that we have often placed our hope in people and things that can’t fulfill our every need. We have searched for peace in shallow places. We have put limits on the ways we love, excluding those who need our loving kindness the most. God, when we have lost our way, show us yours. Guide us to the hope in you that will renew our strength. Lead us to your peace that transcends all understanding. Fill us with a joy we can only experience in your presence. Remind us that you have always loved us with an everlasting love, so that we may share that love with others. Through Jesus Christ our Lord we pray, who became what we are to make us what he is. Amen

Kyrie eleison  
Lord, have mercy upon us.  
Christ, have mercy upon us.  
Lord, have mercy upon us.

Assurance of God’s grace(adapted from Worship Ways)  
In this season of waiting and expectation, it is good to know that God’s love for us is sure—that God’s commitment to us is definite. Let us live into this gift of forgiveness and grace. Amen

Law of Love/Faithful living

\*Halle, Halle(768)  
Halle, halle, hallelujah!  
Halle, halle, hallelujah!  
Halle, halle, hallelujah!  
Hallelujah, hallelujah!

We listen to God  
Scripture readingIsaiah 55.1-13 (OT page 645)

AnthemNight of All NightsJoyful Noise Adult Choir

SermonWhen God Throws a Party  
Rev. Tricia Sheffield, PhD

We respond to God  
Affirmation of FaithThe Trees of the Field  
We shall go out with joy  
And be led forth with peace  
The mountains and the hills  
Will break forth before us  
There’ll be shouts of joy  
And all the trees of the field  
Will clap, will clap their hands  
  
And all the trees of the field  
Will clap their hands  
The trees of the field  
Will clap their hands  
  
The trees of the field  
Will clap their hands  
While we go out with joy

Invitation to the offering

OffertoryLiving Proof (Reprise)

\*Doxology  
Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below; Praise God, above ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen

The Prayers of the People with the Lord’s Prayer  
You are invited to pray the Lord’s Prayer in any version or language you wish.  
Ever-loving and holy God, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen

\*Closing hymnHark! The Herald Angels Sing (80)

\*Benediction

Postlude

\*Please stand as you are able.

+ Our restroom is located downstairs through the entryway next to the filing cabinets

