



Protesters gather to denounce policies of President Donald Trump's that they describe as authoritarian during a "No Kings" rally in Miller Place, N.Y., Oct. 18, 2025. Similar demonstrations took place throughout the day in cities and towns across the nation, drawing millions of participants, according to media reports. (OSV News/Gregory A. Shemitz)

Fiona André

[View Author Profile](#)

Religion News Service

[View Author Profile](#)

[**Join the Conversation**](#)

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. [Learn more](#)

October 20, 2025

[Share on Bluesky](#)[Share on Facebook](#)[Share on Twitter](#)[Email to a friend](#)[Print](#)

A diverse group of faith leaders gathered in Manhattan on Oct. 18 to offer prayers at an interfaith prayer vigil before joining a massive "No Kings" march in Times Square, one of thousands of demonstrations organized to denounce the Trump administration and to support the United States' commitment to democracy and the rule of law.

The "No Kings" march, taking place in 2,600 locations across the country Saturday, including Washington, San Francisco, Boston and Chicago, was organized by the advocacy group [Indivisible](#) with other liberal-leaning organizations. It is the second protest under the "No Kings" banner, following a slightly smaller set of demonstrations held mid-June.

The interfaith vigil, organized by the Interfaith Center of New York and the religious freedom network Interfaith Alliance, drew a small crowd of about 50, including Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish and Buddhist ministers, to Columbus Circle, at the southwest corner of Central Park, where the group has been holding "Multi-faith Mondays" rallies for the past six months.

Interfaith Alliance has urged clergy across the country to join their local "No Kings" marches since June's protest. The group hosted webinars on the history of faith-based political resistance movements and provided toolkits for holding local "No Kings" rallies at houses of worship. Nearly 2,000 registered for their most recent webinar on Oct. 14, said Adam Friedman, the group's organizing and elections strategist.

"Interfaith Alliance understands this moment as one that directly speaks to the core of people's identities as Americans of faith," said Friedman. "We want to make sure that folks across our country, however they're showing up in this moment, have the support and the tools to do that."

Led by the Rev. Chloe Breyer, an Episcopal priest and Interfaith Center of New York's executive director, the group then marched south to what authorities say was New York City's largest rally in Times Square. Across the city's five boroughs, according to [a post on X](#) from the New York Police Department, more than 100,000

demonstrators marched on Saturday without incident.

At Columbus Circle, the group of faith leaders began by singing, "It's time we all show up for each other now, it's time we all show up for our democracy." They held up signs reading "Jesus would be at this march" and "Jesus flipped tables, so can we."

Advertisement

Breyer said that followers of Jesus' teachings were called to oppose the administration's methods, which she said weaponized the Christian faith and desacralized houses of worship by allowing U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to pursue and arrest people in or near their churches and other sacred spaces.

Sunita Viswanath, executive director of Hindus for Human Rights, connected the march's purpose to the message of Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights that begins Oct. 20. All Americans, she said, should aim to "be the light" that prevails.

"As a Hindu of conscience, as an American and as an Indian, with my eyes open and my heart awake, I say a resounding 'no' to the growing tide of authoritarianism here, there and everywhere, from Delhi to Washington," said Viswanath in a prayer offered at the vigil.

The Rev. Winnie Varghese, recently appointed dean of the Episcopal Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, prayed for hope for those who, fearing arrests, decided not to attend "No Kings," those angered by the political situation and those "defeated by the politics of today, by the real experience of their lives."

Varghese later told Religion News Service that New York's diverse faith community needed to "claim our moral voice in this moment."

Hussein Rashid, a Muslim scholar who teaches at Union Theological Seminary, addressed the crowd wearing a T-shirt reading "Salam," Arabic for peace. "God is called the compassionate and the merciful often in the Quran. That is how we are meant to be in the world, compassionate and merciful," he said. "Today we're reminded that there are those who do not want that compassion and mercy of the world, those who not only want to be our kings, but who wish to be our masters."

Also attending the vigil were former Manhattan Borough President and former president of American Jewish World Service Ruth Messinger; the Rt. Rev. Matthew Heyd, Episcopal bishop of New York; the Rev. Micah Bucey, pastor of Judson Memorial Church; Riverside Church's social justice minister, the Rev. Mira Sawlani-Joyner; and Rabbi Ayelet Cohen of the Jewish Theological Seminary.

In Times Square, many protesters wore yellow, the color the organizers chose to align with Hong Kong's 2014 Umbrella political movement and the Ukrainians' Yellow Ribbon resistance movement that followed the Russian military invasion.

As the faith leaders joined the raucous crowd in the square, the Rev. Ann Kansfield of Brooklyn's Greenpoint Reform Church said the administration's treatment of vulnerable Americans clashes with the values "Jesus teaches in the gospels, committed to loving one another, treating others decently and with kindness."

Acknowledging that the Trump administration has embraced Christian leaders who support its agenda, Kansfield said it seemed "there are two faiths both called Christianity that are very different from one another."