



middle notes

The Newsletter of Middle Collegiate Church

MAY 2016

Celebration! Worship
Sundays at 11:15 AM

Watch live on middlechurch.org

MAY 1

Communion Sunday

Jacqui Lewis, preacher
In-the-Middle Choir
Middle Church Jerriese
Johnson Gospel Choir
Communion

MAY 8

Mother's Day

Argenys Taveras, preacher
Middle Church Choir

MAY 15

Pentecost/Vision Sunday

Jacqui Lewis, preacher
Middle Church Choir
Middle Church Jerriese
Johnson Gospel Choir
Congregational Meeting
following worship

MAY 22

Pan Asian Sunday

Lynn Min, preacher
Middle Church Choir
Fan Dance

MAY 29

Memorial Day

Christina Fleming, preacher
In-the-Middle Choir
Memorial Day indoor picnic
following worship!

Sunday Concert
Series at 5:00 PM

MAY 15

"A Pentecost Concert: SO MANY WAYS TO SING THANKS!"

Celebrated vocalists from the Middle Church Choir will offer classical, pop, and Broadway music. Original compositions by Mark Rehnstrom, Allison Sniffin, and Charles Brown will celebrate the many genres in which we sing to God. Suggested admission is \$20 or pay what you are able. All proceeds benefit the work of racial reconciliation. Advance tickets at bit.ly/Pentecost-Concert

Seeing Is Believing

I can't see, not like I used to.

"What does this say?" I am often asking John at the grocery store. "How many calories are in that coffee-creamer? Does that say 3 per serving? Oh, 35, hmm, let me think about that." Sometimes I don't see so well. I can't see the fleeting look of impatience on my face that can hurt my husband's feelings.

I can't see that though I love my job and I CAN work ten 10-hour days in a row, that does not let me give my best self to Middle Church, does not model healthy leading, and certainly does not honor the command to keep Sabbath.

Sometimes I can't see that God is at work, as one colleague recently said, using the sandpaper of relationships to change all of us.

I tell you, family, I want to see better through the murkiness of behaviors that wound—including my own—and find the inherent goodness I believe to be hardwired into humankind.

Our vision—what we see, how we see it, and how we respond—is so much shaped by our place in the world and by the people around us. How do they care for us and hold us? Do we feel safe or afraid? Are we lonely and cold, or do loving hands tuck us into a warm bed at night? Do we have a clear sense that when we cry out, someone will come and answer, or do our cries go unheeded? How do we connect our fear or comfort to our sense of the Holy?

Sometimes we are so close up on something, we can't really see it. We have to stand back, get perspective, and look at the thing again. What appears to be one thing may indeed be something else altogether. What looks like a heartbreaking change is a call being answered, a dream come true. What looks like "no" can be "yes" to a new idea, a new way to be faithful.

I believe the faithful, ethical life is about seeing and not being indifferent. How do we learn to see beyond our limits, beyond our borders? How do we learn to see through the lenses of oth-

ers? How do we stand back so we see a larger picture, one seen from a distance? Can we focus our sights on the ethic of love?



Writing about seeing in her powerful memoir, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, Annie Dillard observed, "Light, be it particle or wave, has force; you right a giant sail and go. The secret of seeing is to sail on solar wind. Hone and spread your spirit till you yourself are a sail, whetted, translucent, broadside to the merest puff."

Though hampered with cataracts, I want to see my way to loving God's people by riding the solar wind. I want not just to be the handler of the sail, I want to be the sail. I want to be lifted, sped along, driven by the Light to more Light. I want and need to trust this God who is shining her way toward me, floating me on rainbow currents toward a place of seeing and understanding.

I pray for eyes wide open that can peer into the muddy daily-lived life and have insight about how best to love myself, my neighbor, and my God. I pray for eyes that can screen, discern, analyze, and pry into the murkiness and help us find our way to ethical living in a multi-religious world.

I admit that partial blindness can feel safer than pure sight, and sometimes I choose not to see because I am afraid. Emily Dickinson says, "If your nerve denies you, go above your nerve."

With more faith than doubt, with more courage than fear, I ask you to come with me toward the deep light. Let's go above our nerve. When I can't see, I will ask you, "What does this say?" And you will help me. I promise, if you ask, I will do the same. Seeing, dear ones, is the first step in believing ourselves to a healed world.

See what I mean?

Love,

Jacqui

Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis is Senior Minister at Middle Collegiate Church.

New Faces at Middle Church

We are excited to welcome new teammates to Middle Church.

Rob Stephens—Associate Minister for Justice and Organizing

Rob worked with The Rev. Dr. William Barber, the Moral Monday's campaign, and the NAACP in North Carolina. Recently, Rob has helped Dr. Barber and the Rev. Dr. Jim Forbes to launch a revival about voting rights. He was raised in North Carolina and Kenya. He will focus on Middle Church's commitment to economic, racial, gender, and LGBTQI justice. Rob will also support our feeding and clothing programs and liaise with space partners in our building. He is married to Hershey, an episcopal priest. He is now part-time at Middle and will start full-time on May 16. You can view Rob's recent sermon, "Then I Remembered Something New," on the Middle Church YouTube channel.

Lynn Min—Associate Minister for Care and Community

Lynn comes to us from the staff of Bronxville Reformed Church in Bronxville, New York. She is finishing her Masters of Social Work and has a private counseling practice. Along with coordinating small groups and being the "minister of 'let's connect,'" Lynn will work with the clergy team to coordinate the pastoral care of congregants who are ill, hospitalized, or in need of a social

worker or counseling. She has three young children and is married to Peter, also a minister. She begins full-time at Middle Church on May 9. You can view Lynn's recent sermon, "The Fishy Truth About Love," on the Middle Church YouTube channel.



Jacqui introduced Rob on Conference Sunday.

Valarie Kaur—Scholar in Residence

Valarie Kaur is the founder of the Groundswell Movement at Auburn Seminary, an Auburn Senior Fellow, an activist, and a filmmaker. She will be a consultant to Middle Church, working on a six-month project on growing our virtual church with a focus on messaging, stewardship, and partnerships. Valarie is married to Sharat, also a filmmaker, and they have a son.

Greetings, Middle Family,

I believe God is calling me to be senior pastor, and I will soon follow God's call to First Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn. My time of service with you will end on Sunday, May 15th—7 years 11 months and 2 weeks from the day God called me to Middle Church.



It has been an amazing journey, and you have been an amazing community to me and my family. So many of my major life and ministry events happened with and among you—ordination, marriage, and Petal's baptism. You have lovingly held my family and taught me so much.

I am thankful for the extraordinary ministry you have allowed me to join you in offering: to serve the hungry, care for the hurting, and extend God's radical welcome to all people. I pray that God's vision will continue to flourish wonderfully in and among you. I wish you every blessing as you do your specific part to move this community of faith into God's preferred future. You will be in my thoughts and in my prayers, and I will be grateful to be in yours.

*You are loved . . . more than you know,
Rev. Adriene Thorne*

Celebrate Adriene's ministry at Middle Church on Sunday, May 8 after the worship celebration.

People Are Talking About #RevLove2016!



Anders van Minter 😊 feeling emotional with Jennifer Coleman at Middle Collegiate Church.

April 19 at 6:26pm · New York, NY · 🌐

I can't even begin to explain how healing it was to participate in an action that centered a church congregation's attention and energy on the lives and bodies of people of color and LGBTQ people. After experiencing decades of spiritual violence in the name of Christ, it is incredibly powerful and empowering to be loved and valued by this community of faith. **REVOLUTIONARY LOVE WINS!**

Thank you Middle Collegiate Church for bringing me home again!

(I'm standing on the right, with my head down crying, with my cousin Jennifer at my side)



Love Comment Share

You, Anne-marie Davies, Patrick Mulcahy and 49 others

Second Avenue Street Fair

Saturday, May 7 • Noon–5:00 PM

Take Middle's message to the streets! Join us for our annual Middle Church Second Avenue Street Fair. At noon, the kids' bounce house opens, a tie-dye station, and sidewalk chalk art begins for families. And at 1:00 PM our mainstage programming begins featuring beloved Middle musicians and spoken word artists featured in our latest *Sunday: Revolutionary Love* literary magazine.

When You Join, You Raise the Stakes!

The best way to increase your connection to Middle Church after you join: attend New Member Orientation! Please consider joining us online now, if you are not yet a member: middlechurch.org/connect/join.

New Member Orientation Part 1: Welcome and Connect

May 8 • 9:30–10:45 AM

What is Middle Church's Vision and how did you find your way here? We will connect our story with your faith stories.

New Member Orientation Part 2: Theology, History, and You

May 15 • 1:15–2:30 PM

How did Middle Church come to be and what do we believe? How does your membership matter?

Vision Sunday

Sunday, May 15 • 11:15 AM–2:30 PM

Join us for our annual Vision Sunday worship celebration at 11:15 AM and then stay for a congregational meeting featuring updates on denominational affiliation, stewardship, and more. Then attend your regular Third Sunday Small Group at 1:15 PM and continue the conversation.

Sunday Literary Magazine Now Available

The fifth issue of *Sunday*, Middle's very own literary and arts magazine, is now available for sale at the church. The editors, Carol Wierzbicki and Harold Slazer, thank all the writers and artists who contributed their wonderful work! Also check it out online at <http://www.middlechurch.org/about/news/sunday-a-magazine-of-the-arts-at-middle-collegiate-church>.

Celebrating Jerriese Johnson in June

How do you grow a church? You ask Jerriese Johnson to start a gospel choir, says Gordon Dragt. On June 12, 2016 at 5:00 PM we will celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Jerriese Johnson Gospel Choir. Tickets will be \$30 and will benefit justice and arts.

Partnership Update

As of May 1, we are at 83% of our program year which ends June 30. Together we raised 70% of our of our offering goal—\$402,024 toward \$575,000. Middle Church is powered by You! You influence how people like Anders Van Minter (*see page 2*) view God and themselves through your theology of Love.Period. Please donate today so we meet our offering goal.

70%

Help us meet our goal!

May

Check middlechurch.org for full details of all events.

Sundays

- **Butterfly Meal Preparation** – 9:00 & 10:00 AM • *Social Hall*
- **Wee Care** (under age 4) – 9:30 AM–2:30 PM • *3rd Floor Wee Care*
- **New Member Orientation Part 1** — **MAY 8** – 9:30–10:45 AM
- **The Breakfast Club** (Gr. 7–12) – 10:00–11:00 AM • *4th Floor Studio*
- **In-the-Middle Choir** – **MAY 1, 29** – 10:00–10:45 AM • *3rd Floor Studio*
- **CELEBRATION! WORSHIP** – 11:15 AM–12:30 PM • *Sanctuary*
- **The Ark** (Gr. K–6) – 11:30–12:30 PM • *3rd Floor Studio*
- **Chat & Chew** – 12:30 PM • *Social Hall*
- **Butterfly Meal Distribution** – 12:30 PM • *Meet at Social Hall*
- **Village Chorus** (Ages 6–14) – 1:00–2:30 PM • *3rd Floor Studio*
- **Adult Ed: Reading the Bible from the Middle** – **MAY 1, 8, 22, 29** – 1:15–2:30 PM • *Sanctuary*
- **Adult Ed: Third Sunday Being Groups** – **MAY 15** – 1:15–2:30 PM • *Special Vision Sunday discussions!*
- **New Member Orientation Part 2** — **MAY 15** – 1:15–2:30 PM
- **Clothing Boutique** – **MAY 1, 15** – 1:30–4:00 PM • *Community Room*
- **Food Pantry** – **MAY 8, 22** – 1:30–3:00 PM • *Community Room*
- **SUNDAY CONCERT SERIES: A Pentecost Concert: So many ways to sing thanks!** – **MAY 15** – 5:00–6:30 PM • *Sanctuary* – Tickets \$20
- **AA/Big Book Meeting** – 7:00–8:00 PM • *4th Floor Studio*

Monday

- **Momentum Meals** – 11:00 AM–1:00 PM • Lunch for the community / 4:00–6:30 PM • Dinner for clients and guests • *Social Hall*
 - **Acting Class** – 6:30–8:00 PM • *3rd Floor Studio*
 - **NA/Village Spiritual Workshop** – 6:30–7:30 PM • *4th Floor Classroom*
 - **Gospel Choir Workshop** – **APR 4** – 7:00–9:00 PM • *Community Room*
 - **Meditation on the Lower East Side** – 7:00–8:30 PM • *Parlor*
- Church Office Closed May 30 for Memorial Day**

Tuesdays

- **Middle Consistory Meeting** – **MAY 17** – 6:00–9:00 PM • *Parlor*
- **Pub Theology** – **MAY 17** – 7:00–8:30 PM • *Jimmy's No. 43, 43 E. 7th*
- **Alateen** – 7:00–8:00 PM • *4th Floor Classroom*
- **AA/Artists in Recovery** – 7:00–8:00 PM • *4th Floor Studio*
- **AA/Step Meeting** – 7:00–8:00 PM • *3rd Floor Studio*
- **AI-Anon** – 7:30–9:00 PM • *Community Room*
- **AA/Closed Discussion** – 8:30–9:30 PM • *4th Floor Studio*

Wednesdays

- **Meditation in New York** – 7:00–8:30 PM • *Parlor*
- **Marianne Williamson Lectures** – 7:30–9:00 PM • *Sanctuary* • \$20

Thursdays

- **Debtors Anonymous** – 12:30–1:30 PM • *4th Floor Classroom*
- **Creative Writing** – 6:30–8:00 PM • *4th Floor Studio*
- **MCJJ Gospel Choir Rehearsal** – 7:00–8:30 PM
- **AI-Anon** – 7:30–9:00 PM • *3rd Floor Studio*

Fridays

- **Shul of NY Shabbat Services** – **MAY 6, 20** – 6:30–8:30 PM • *Social Hall*
- **NA/It's About Change** – 6:30–8:00 PM • *3rd Floor Studio*
- **AA/Young and Wise Group** – 8:00–9:00 PM • *Community Room*
- **NA/Finally Found a Home** – 8:30–9:30 PM • *4th Floor Studio*

Saturdays

- **SECOND AVENUE STREET FAIR** – **MAY 7** – 12:00–5:00 PM
- **Something with Jim** – **MAY 21** – *Offsite*
- **NA/Meat and Potatoes** – 6:30–8:00 PM • *Community Room*
- **AA/Beginners** – 7:00–8:00 PM • *3rd Floor Studio*
- **AA/Open Discussion** – 7:00–8:00 PM • *4th Floor Studio*
- **NA/SRA** – 8:00–9:30 PM • *5th Floor Parlor*
- **AA/Closed Discussion** – 8:30–9:30 PM • *4th Floor Studio*



Middle Collegiate Church

50 East 7th Street • New York, NY 10003

A Pentecost Concert: So many ways to sing thanks!

Sunday, May 15 • 5:00–6:30 PM • Sanctuary

As part of our Sunday Concert Series, celebrated vocalists from the Middle Church Choir will offer classical, pop, and Broadway music. Original compositions by Mark Rehnstrom, Allison Sniffin, and Charles Brown will celebrate the many genres in which we sing to God. The ensemble includes Charles Brown, Branch Woodman, Robert Hughes, Allison Mickelson, Tami Petty, Nedra Neal, Melissa Casey Jose, Mark Rehnstrom, and Joslyn King. Organist Allison Sniffin will accompany.

Suggested admission is \$20. Tickets can be purchased at bit.ly/Pentecost-Concert. Or pay what you are able at the door.



Middle Collegiate Church

welcoming • artistic • inclusive • bold

Rev. Jacqueline J. Lewis, Ph.D., *Senior Minister*

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Middle Collegiate Church is a celebrating, culturally diverse, inclusive, and growing community of faith where all persons are welcomed just as they are as they come through the door. Rooted in Christian tradition as the oldest continuous Protestant Church in North America, Middle Church is called by God to boldly do a new thing on the earth.

As a teaching congregation that celebrates the arts, our ministries include rich and meaningful worship, care, and education that nurture the mind, body, and spirit, social action which embraces the global community, and participation in interfaith dialogue for the purpose of justice and reconciliation.

Care Line For pastoral care emergencies, call **917-439-9268** to leave your urgent message in the Pastoral Care Mailbox. A Middle Church pastor will return your call as soon as she or he is able. Only Middle pastors have access to the Pastoral Care Mailbox. All messages are treated confidentially.