

SUNDAY WORSHIP CELEBRATION

AUGUST 11, 2019 • 10:30 AM • THIS IS WHAT LOVE LOOKS LIKE

Welcome home to Middle Church! After worship begins, please wait to be seated.

++ Indicates you may find a seat—an Usher may assist you—or take a bio break.

* Indicates please stand if you are able.

~ GATHERING ~

PRELUDE++ Dionne McClain-Freeney

WELCOME / INVITATION TO WORSHIP++ Natalie Perkins

Please pray with me.

We gather in this place in awe of you Holy one. In thin times and in times thick with joy, through all the ups and downs of our lives, what we can count on is you.

You are present. Soothing. Comforting. Encouraging. Supporting. Inspiring. Reminding us that we can do more than we imagine.

Reminding us that when we can do nothing, YOU are STILL GOD.

Thank you for that blessed assurance. Draw us close to you and keep your eyes on us, God. Increase our Faith, increase our Hope in your unchanging hand.

We love you! Amen.

HYMN*++ “Hold to God’s Unchanging Hand”

~ REFLECTING ~

MESSAGE FOR ALL AGES Marte Samuelstuen
“Siyahamba” —We are marching in the light of God, we are marching in the light of God.

ANNOUNCEMENTS++ Christina Fleming

MOMENT OF SILENCE/PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE LORD’S PRAYER/CONGREGATIONAL AMEN* Christina Fleming

“What the World Needs Now Is Love” (Hal David; Burt Bacharach)

George Winters, soloist

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.**

PASSING OF THE PEACE/WELCOMING GUESTS++

ANTHEM “City Called Heaven” (Josephine Poelinitz)
Alvin Crawford, soloist

SCRIPTURE Luke 12.32–40

SERMON “The Absent God” Rob Stephens

~ RESPONDING ~

INVITATION TO JOIN THE MOVEMENT Elise Tiralli
To become a member of Middle Church, see the clergy/staff at the pulpit after worship.

OFFERTORY/OFFERING “Somewhere” from *West Side Story* (Leonard Bernstein; Stephen Sondheim)

Place gift in bag • Donate at middlechurch.org/donate • Text [Amount] to 917-924-4666

DOXOLOGY/DEDICATION PRAYER* Christina Fleming

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.

HYMN* “The Rich Man’s House”

BENEDICTION* Rob Stephens

POSTLUDE Dionne McClain-Freeney

PARTICIPATING IN THE CELEBRATION • Dionne McClain-Freeney, piano

Summer Choir • Allison Mickelson, Director — Ann Wazelle, Eric Lamp, Wesley Rowell, Alvin Crawford, and volunteers from the congregation.

WELCOME TO MIDDLE CHURCH

We are glad you are here today. If you are visiting for the first time, we invite you to return often and make Middle Church a home for you, your family, and friends. Complete the pew card to receive our newsletter or weekly emails. To join our movement, see staff after worship. Learn more at middlechurch.org. **Please silence your mobile phone and leave food or drink outside. Please do not walk across the front of the sanctuary while worship is in progress. For the safety of all, no animals are permitted in the building. Thank you for your cooperation.**

FOR BEST T-COIL ACCESS TO THE HEARING LOOP, sit by the side, front, and back aisles. By entering the Sanctuary, you grant Middle Collegiate 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 Collegiate Church. If you are uncomfortable, you are welcome to worship in the Sanctuary balcony.

TODAY AT MIDDLE CHURCH

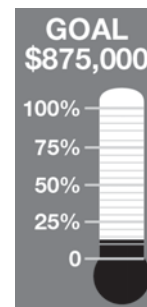
- **SUMMER CHOIR REHEARSAL** — 9:30–10:15 AM • *Sanctuary* — Attend rehearsal and sing in worship today. Contact amickelson@middlechurch.org. — *Arts*
- **BUTTERFLY MEAL PREPARATION** — 9:30–10:30 AM • *Social Hall* — Help prepare sandwiches for distribution to the hungry in local parks. — *Give Help*
- **WEE CARE (INFANT–AGE 4)** — 10:00 AM–1:00 PM • *3rd Floor Nursery* — Childcare.
- **SUMMER CELEBRATION! WORSHIP** — 10:30–11:30 AM • *Sanctuary* — **THIS IS WHAT LOVE LOOKS LIKE** • Rob Stephens, preacher • Summer Choir. — *Worship*
- **JOIN THE MOVEMENT** — 11:35 AM–12:00 PM • *Sanctuary* — Learn about Middle membership.
- **COMMUNITY HOUR** — 11:35 AM–12:30 PM • *Social Hall* — Coffee and conversation. — *Community*
- **KIDS IN THE MIDDLE (GRADES K–5)** — 11:45 AM–12:45 PM • *3rd Floor Studio* — Explore the Bible with the arts—singing, acting, and drawing. — *Children and Youth Education*
- **SERMON TALKBACK** — 11:45–1:15 PM • *4th Floor Studio* — Join Middle Church staff to reflect, explore, and further discuss the week’s sermon. — *Adult Education*
- **CENSUS 2020 FORUM: WHAT IT MEANS TO BE COUNTED** — 12:00–1:30 PM • *Sanctuary* — Census 2020 has cause for even greater concern to immigrants and undocumented people, with the inclusion of the citizenship question being ruled on by the Supreme Court. Come learn about the #WhyWeCount Campaign and the national effort of Complete Count Commissions in New York State and nationwide working on a complete and accurate count. This event is led by Justice Committee Member Jorge Fontanez. — *Adult Education*
- **BUTTERFLY MEAL DISTRIBUTION** — 12:30–1:30 PM • *Meet at Social Hall* — Help to distribute bag lunches for the hungry in local parks. — *Give Help*
- **FREEDOM SCHOOL: VILLAGE CHORUS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH** — *Summer break.* For info, contact John at jdelcueto@middlechurch.org. — *Arts*

VIDEOS AND PODCASTS — Worship music and sermon videos: [youtube.com/MiddleNYC](https://www.youtube.com/MiddleNYC). Re-watch the Worship Celebration livestream: [facebook.com/MiddleCollegiateChurch](https://www.facebook.com/MiddleCollegiateChurch). Middle Church Celebrations podcast: bit.ly/middlechurchcelebrations.

DEAR MIDDLE FAMILY— The consistory and I are SO very proud of the way you showed up last program year, raising money for our special Christmas Eve broadcast, our Puerto Rico missions, and our operating budget! Thank you so much!

Our new fiscal year began July 1. This year we must give \$875,000 in order to fund our ministries and programs. As you know, we are committed to funding 50% of our budget by 2022, and this year’s goal is an important part of getting there. **As of this printing, we have donations and pledges for \$115,522.65 which is 13.2% of our offering goal. THAT’S AMAZING!**

Your participation and investment in this work, whether through an annual pledge or weekly or monthly recurring gifts, is critical to powering this movement, making sure we can meet our goal to reclaim and reframe Christianity toward LOVE. Period. Donate NOW at middlechurch.org/donate. —In gratitude, Jacqui, Darren, and Middle Consistory



PRAYER CORNER *Please pray with us this week for these people and concerns.* India, Cousin Jim, Aunt Gin, Mom, Dad, Ravi, Eddie Joe, JaVonne and Family, Roz and Eldora, Robin, Hannah and Jim; There are not enough words, Anger, pain, sorrow, grief, impotence, frustration and any compassion and empathy for those directly impacted by the violence; Jake, Sammy, Laurie, Bill, Lucy, Ely and family, Susan; D.O.E. Mikey, LND, Zia, Joslow Fam; Peace and Democracy in Hong Kong; Phyllistine, Jorryn, Victor, Robert and Grethen Mushatt, Darrell and Sheineka Thomas, Earnestine Adams, Middle Staff and Clergy, Homeless, Unemployed and Underemployed, Susan M, Sierra Goodale, Sandy Stone, Anita Parker, Donna Johnson; Pete, Taina, Jose, Mariah Ramos, Ramos family and friends

THIS WEEK AT MIDDLE CHURCH

Check middlechurch.org for full details of all events, including AA, NA, and Alanon.

MONDAY, AUGUST 12

- **MOMENTUM MEALS** — *Social Hall* — Lunch 11:30 AM–1:00 PM / Dinner 5:30–6:30 PM • Free, nutritious meal for clients and the community. — *Get Help*
- **ACTING CLASS** — *Summer break.*

TUESDAY, AUGUST 13 — NO PROGRAMMING

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14

- **PEOPLE NOT THINGS** — 6:30 PM • *Meet at the gallery at 916 Bedford Avenue, Brooklyn* — Visit to Genesis Be’s “People Not Things” exhibit. For more information, contact Marte at msamuelstuen@middlechurch.org. — *Just Arts*

THURSDAY, AUGUST 15

- **NEW ADVENTURES** — 2:00–3:30 PM • *Offsite at The Kitchen, Second Ave and 5th Street* — Retired or just between jobs? Share time with friends. Contact Elise at etiralli@middlechurch.org. — *Being Group*
- **MIDDLE MIXER: IBRAM X. KENDI BOOK READING** — 7:00–9:30 PM • *Judson Memorial Church, 55 Washington Square South, Manhattan* — Join a group from Middle Church for an evening with Ibram X. Kendi. Kendi will present on his newest book *How to Be Antiracist*. **Purchase tickets at bit.ly/ibramxkendi** — *Just Arts*
- **CREATIVE WRITING** — *Summer break*
- **JERRIESE JOHNSON GOSPEL CHOIR** — *Summer break.* For info, contact John at jdelcueto@middlechurch.org. — *Arts*

FRIDAY, AUGUST 16 — NO PROGRAMMING

SATURDAY, AUGUST 17 — NO PROGRAMMING

SUNDAY, AUGUST 18

- **SUMMER CHOIR REHEARSAL** — 9:30–10:15 AM • *Sanctuary* — Attend rehearsal and sing in worship today. Contact amickelson@middlechurch.org. — *Arts*
- **BUTTERFLY MEAL PREPARATION** — 9:30–10:30 AM • *Social Hall* — Help prepare sandwiches for distribution to the hungry in local parks. — *Give Help*
- **WEE CARE (INFANT–AGE 4)** — 10:00 AM–1:00 PM • *3rd Floor Nursery* — Childcare.
- **SUMMER CELEBRATION! WORSHIP** — 10:30–11:30 AM • *Sanctuary* — **THIS IS WHAT LOVE LOOKS LIKE** • “Outdoing Jesus: Why it’s good news and how you are doing it” Doug Pagitt, guest preacher • John 14.12 • Summer Choir. — *Worship*
- **JOIN THE MOVEMENT** — 11:35 AM–12:00 PM • *Sanctuary* — Learn about Middle membership.
- **COMMUNITY HOUR** — 11:35 AM–12:30 PM • *Social Hall* — Coffee and conversation. — *Community*
- **KIDS IN THE MIDDLE (GRADES K–5)** — 11:45 AM–12:45 PM • *3rd Floor Studio* — Explore the Bible with the arts—singing, acting, and drawing. — *Children and Youth Education*
- **SERMON TALKBACK** — 11:45–1:15 PM • *4th Floor Studio* — Join Middle Church staff to reflect, explore, and further discuss the week’s sermon. — *Adult Education*
- **MIDDLE MIXER: BEACH DAY AT THE ROCKAWAYS** — *Depart from Social Hall at 11:45 AM* — Join Marte, Elise, and Allison for a day at Rockaway Beach with Middle family of all ages. We’ll leave from Middle’s Social Hall, take the R train downtown to Whitehall Street / South Ferry, and then ride the Rockaways Ferry from Pier 11. Bring snacks, sunscreen, and a towel. Cost: \$5.50 for round-trip ferry transportation per person plus money for purchasing snacks and dinner. We’ll get dinner together before jumping on the ferry back to Wall Street. **Please RSVP by Wednesday, August 14 to Marte at msamuelstuen@middlechurch.org.**
- **BUTTERFLY MEAL DISTRIBUTION** — 12:30–1:30 PM • *Meet at Social Hall* — Help to distribute bag lunches for the hungry in local parks. — *Give Help*
- **FREEDOM SCHOOL: VILLAGE CHORUS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH** — *Summer break.* For info, contact John at jdelcueto@middlechurch.org. — *Arts*

SHARE OUR MIDDLE WELCOME AS A HOSPITALITY VOLUNTEER
Do you enjoy the yummy food at Community Hour every Sunday? Did you know you can help serve the food? **Contact Elise at etiralli@middlechurch.org or 212-477-0666 ext 319 to receive more information on volunteering for this important Hospitality food ministry.**

Hold to God's Unchanging Hand

(Text: Jennie Wilson; Tune: F. L. Eiland, arr. Stephen Key)

Time is filled with swift transition.
Naught of earth unmoved can stand.
Build your hopes on things eternal.
Hold to God's unchanging hand.

REFRAIN

Hold to His hand, God's unchanging hand.
Hold to His hand, God's unchanging hand.
Build your hopes on things eternal.
Hold to God's unchanging hand.

Trust in Him who will not leave you.
Whatever years may bring.
If by earthly friends forsaken,
Still more closely to Him cling.

REFRAIN

Covet not this world's vain riches
That so rapidly decay.
Seek to gain the heav'nly treasures.
They will never pass away.

REFRAIN

Words: Jennie Wilson; Music: F.L. Eiland; arr. Stephen Key, © 2000 GIA Publications, Inc.
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THIS WEEK: THE ABSENT GOD

We learn a lot about God during times when God feels close. But Jesus and the prophets were clear that God would also feel distant at times. The text today is one of the several parables Jesus tells about an "absent God."

- What can we learn about God in God's absence that we can't learn in God's presence? Is it possible to get clarity in absence as well as presence?
- Where does God feel absent in your life, in your family, in your community and in the world?

LAST WEEK: STEADFAST. FOREVER.

- One way to think about human development is that a "good enough mother" holds us while we become whole. How is God a good-enough mom?
- To quote my Mama Ruby, "Where does it hurt?"
- How can God, Love, we, you help heal it?

MIDDLE MIXER: MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER GAME

Saturday, September 7 • 2:30-6:00 PM

Enjoy a day with your Middle family at a professional soccer game at Yankee Stadium between the New York City Football Club and New England Revolution. All ages welcome! Tickets \$20 a person in a covered seating area. After the game, some participants from Middle will go on the field to do penalty kicks. For more info, contact Marte at msamuelstuen@middlechurch.org. **MUST REGISTER by September 4 at 11:59 PM.** Registration at bit.ly/MCC-MLS19

MIDDLE COLLEGIATE CHURCH VISION STATEMENT

Middle Collegiate Church is a multicultural, multiethnic, intergenerational movement of Spirit and justice, powered by Revolutionary Love, with room for all. Following in the Way of Jesus' radical love, and inspired by the prophets, Middle Church is called by God to do a bold new thing on the earth. We aim to heal the soul and the world by dismantling racist, classist, sexist, xenophobic, and homophobic systems of oppression.

Because our God is still speaking in many languages, we work in inter-religious partnerships to uproot injustice, eradicate poverty, care for the brokenhearted, and build the Reign of God on earth. This activism is fueled by our faith; our faith is expressed in art; our art is an active prayer connecting us with the Holy Spirit. Middle Church affirms the transformative power of moral imagination, reclaiming and reframing Christianity inside our walls, on the street, and in virtual spaces around the globe.

The Rich Man's House

(Traditional)

Well, I went down to the rich man's house
And I took back what he stole from me
Took it back, took back my dignity
Took it back, took back my humanity.

REPEAT

Under my feet, under my feet
Under my feet, under my feet
Ain't gonna let the system walk all over me.

Well, I went down to the border
And I took back what they stole from me
Took it back, took back my dignity
Took it back, took back my humanity.

REPEAT

Under my feet, under my feet
Under my feet, under my feet
Ain't gonna let the system walk all over me.

Well, I went down to the White House
Took it back, took back my dignity
Took it back, took back my humanity.

REPEAT

Under my feet, under my feet
Under my feet, under my feet
Ain't gonna let the system walk all over me.

THE SUMMER CHOIR NEEDS YOUR VOICE!

Sundays, July 28-September 8 • 9:30-10:15 AM • Sanctuary

Come as you are. Attend rehearsal and sing at the 10:30 AM worship celebration the same day. For more information, contact Allison at amickelson@middlechurch.org.

MIDDLE COLLEGIATE CHURCH

Rev. Jacqueline J. Lewis, Ph.D. – *Senior Minister in Charge*
Rev. Amanda Hambrick Ashcraft – *Exec. Minister for Justice, Operations, & Movement Building*
Rev. Chad Tanaka Pack – *Interim Exec. Minister for Care & Membership*
Rev. Rob Stephens – *Consulting Minister for Organizing*
Marte Samuelstuen, M.Sci. – *Director of Children, Youth, & Young Adults*
Christina Fleming, M.Sci. – *Director of Communications and Digital Strategy*
Cheryl Cochran – *Director, Community Center*

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welcoming
**A BOLD
NEW** artistic
THING
inclusive

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



Middle Collegiate Church

welcoming • artistic • inclusive • bold