



middle notes

The Newsletter of Middle Collegiate Church

OCTOBER 2018

Celebration! Worship
Sundays at 9:30 AM
and 11:45 AM

Watch live at 11:45 AM on
middlechurch.org or Facebook

OCTOBER 7

**Indigenous Peoples' Day
Hispanic Heritage Month**
"This Land Is God's Land"
Psalm 26

Jacqui Lewis, preacher
Jerriese Johnson
Gospel Choir
Communion

OCTOBER 14

Hispanic Heritage Month
"Near, Far—
Wherever You Are"
Psalm 22.1–15
Jacqui Lewis, preacher
Middle Church Choir
In-the-Middle Choir
Baptisms

OCTOBER 21

**National Children's
Sabbath
Unity Day**
"Lives of Hope"
Mark 10.35–45
Amanda Hambrick Ashcraft,
preacher
Jerriese Johnson
Gospel Choir
Village Chorus for Children
and Youth

OCTOBER 28

"Let Me See, Again"
Mark 10.46–52
Jacqui Lewis, preacher
Middle Church Choir
Baptism



RevLove 2018 interviews on
PBS' CHAPTER & VERSE!
[middlechurch.org/about/
blogs/pbs-chapter-verse](http://middlechurch.org/about/blogs/pbs-chapter-verse)

Not Just Survive, But Thrive

It's 3:00 pm on Thursday, September 27. I've just left a protest at the Supreme Court. I've got a sandwich on the tray in front of me, something I bought at Union Station, and a Chardonnay from the Café Car. I am nestled against the window, hoping no one will sit next to me and see my mascara-smeared face and red eyes. I am still wet from the rain that began to fall on us as we stood at the base of the Supreme Court steps, baptizing us in the name of the suffering, the survivors and the Spirit that sustains us all. I let the rain fall on me as long as I could, wanting the water, needing the water, and then pulled up my hood. Standing there, I hugged other survivors, other protestors, sheltered under plastic ponchos and umbrellas. Listening to speakers shout in bullhorns. I was one of the speakers. "I know you think clergy aren't supposed to get angry but I am here because I am hella-pissed off," I began.

I had accidentally boarded the wrong, slower train down to D.C. just that morning, but arrived just in time to meet Rob in the lobby, and watch Dr. Ford's opening statement on his iPhone. Her voice trembled while she recounted what happened to her on a bed in a house with no adults, on a bed onto which she was pushed, in a room with the door closed with the stereo playing loudly. The groping hands, the laughter. The covering of her mouth. The other boy, jumping on the bed, causing all three to fall in a heap on the floor. Her escape into the bathroom. Them ping-ponging downstairs, laughing.

I can see what she is saying. Like I can see my own things, the things that are always there. The tall body bending toward me. The unwanted mouth on mine. The smell of coffee and cigarettes. The feeling of anger and shame and helplessness. The telling of it in pieces. The years, decades it takes to get it all told. Still getting it all told.

I understand. I see her. I believe her. I've been there. Too many of us have been there.

Studies by David Finkelhor, Director of the Crimes Against Children Research Center, show that:

- One in 5 girls and 1 in 20 boys are victims of child sexual abuse.
- Self-report studies show that 20% of adult females and 5–10% of adult males recall a childhood sexual assault or sexual abuse incident.
- In a one-year period in the U.S., 16% of youth ages 14 to 17 had been sexually victimized.
- Over their lifetimes, 28% of U.S. youth ages 14 to 17 had been sexually victimized.
- Children are most vulnerable to child sexual abuse between the ages of 7 and 13.

According to a 2003 National Institute of Justice report, 3 out of 4 adolescents who have been sexually assaulted were victimized by someone they knew well.



Our protests are most certainly about the unfitness of Kavanaugh as a Supreme Court justice. AND our protests are about all of the ways little people are violated in this nation. Yes, stripped from parents. Yes, warehoused. Yes, starved and thirsty from poverty. And

yes, mistreated by trusted adults—clergy, parents, caregivers. What are we going to do about this? I don't fully know. But October 19–21 is the 27th Annual National Celebration of the Children's Sabbath. Our staff wants to collaborate with you. To teach our children, to protect our children, to put our children—the children around the globe—in the center of our lives of faith.

Let's decide together what that will look like. So our children not only survive, but thrive.

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

Donate at middlechurch.org/donate

Talking with Harold Slazer about the Creative Process

Harold Slazer leads Middle's Acting and Creative Writing groups.

BY CAROL WIERZBICKI

CW: What motivated you to start the Middle Players?

HS: I noticed that the writers in my Creative Writing group sometimes had difficulty speaking in front of people. I wanted to give them a way to achieve a comfort level in public speaking and performing.

How does the program benefit the actors (both professionals and those with no acting experience)?

I've watched how people who have not been able to work, step up; with support, they gain the courage to go out and make a difference, by collaborating on the work we perform. Often, they end up making new friends in the process.

What's next? How would you like to see the program grow?

I would love to produce shows that we could take to schools, libraries, and other communities. We could use theater to educate them about social injustices and express Middle's values. I would also love to do longer runs (more than just one date), and maybe even put on a theater piece during the Revolutionary Love conference.

How do you motivate the Players and get them to focus?

We begin each class with exercises in breathing and relaxation, trust and bonding, and improvisation. We've grown to a group of 25 to 30 people who help each other, not just with memorizing lines and rehearsals, but in their personal lives as well. They become a family.

Once I get them started doing scenes, those who may be naturally withdrawn or shy or anxious about performing are suddenly transformed into people who are capable of intimacy, openness, spontaneity and trust. They learn to be there for each other and to follow through on their commitments.

Being onstage and successfully putting on a play is such a confidence booster—to be able to say, "yes, I did it!" is an amazing thing to take away from the experience.

Acting Class • Mondays, 6:30–8:00 PM

Creative Writing • Thursdays, 6:30–8:00 PM

Catch Christmas one-act plays by Harold and his crew on Sunday, December 16!

Carol Wierzbicki is a Middle member and co-editor of the Middle Collegiate Church literary magazine, Sunday.

REVOLUTIONARY LOVE SERIES

The Politics of Faith with Jacqui Lewis

Tuesdays, October 2, 9, and 16 • 7:00–8:00 pm

Get a taste of this year's Revolutionary Love Conference theme: The Politics of Faith. Develop your spiritual capacity for justice work and explore the role of faith in politics.

BIBLE in the Middle: *Uneasy Ecclesiastes*

Sundays in October • 10:35–11:40 AM

Join Middle member Ivan Anderson for an exciting journey through Ecclesiastes. A fascinating and rich text, in this study we will focus on lessons that emerge around the themes of vanity, wisdom, time, and purpose. Like much of scripture (and life), the text of Ecclesiastes twists and turns on itself, creating contradictions and confusion before the emergence of deeper meaning and understanding.

REVOLUTIONARY LOVE SPEAKER SERIES

Freedom Is an Inside Job

Sunday, October 7 • 2:00–3:30 PM

Zainab Salbi, founder of Women for Women International, will share reflections from her new book, *Freedom Is an Inside Job*. She will be joined by her beloved friends and musicians, Desert Rose. Visiting from South Africa, Desert Rose will perform ancient chants in the Sufi tradition. **Reserve at <http://bit.ly/MCC-Oct7>.**

Intersectional Money

Sundays, October 14, November 11 • 11:45 AM–12:45 PM

Explore money as raced-as, gendered-as, sexed-as, classed-as, nationed-as, faithed-as natures of our shared and interdependent socio-economic existences. Join Paul Alexander for this special series—spiritual, theological, practical, fun, difficult, and filled full and overflowing with #transformativelove.

Beyond Budgeting

Sundays, October 21, November 18 • 11:45 AM–12:45 PM

Who are we and what are we doing with money and why? In this class we delve into the spiritualities and practices of personal finance—from budgeting, work, play, and simplicity to investing and philanthropy to intergenerational economic well-being (and the lack thereof). Led by Paul Alexander.

New Adventures

Thursday, October 16 • 2:00–3:30 PM

Whether you're retired, semi-retired, between jobs, or just have Thursday afternoons free and want to share time with new friends, New Adventures is for you! For information or to RSVP, contact Elise at etiralli@middlechurch.org or 212-477-0666 x319.

Butterfly Meal Program Needs You!

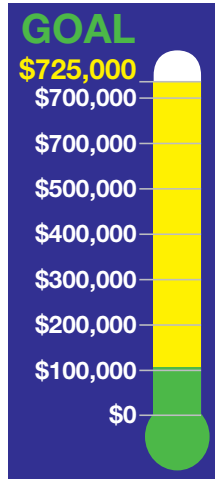
Sundays: 11:45 AM–12:45 PM • Social Hall


Join us as we prepare bag lunches for distribution to the hungry in a local park. More hands and feet are always needed. Distribution begins after the last worship celebration. For more information, contact Gloria at gmoy@middlechurch.org.



Partnership: Mustard Seeds

Mustard seeds are tiny but they grow into beautiful trees almost as tall as our sanctuary and provide shade and comfort on the hottest of days. At Middle, we're growing a movement with a canopy of radical welcome that provides comfort and restoration in these hot mess times. Last year, gifts to Middle between \$1 and \$20 came to nearly \$40,000—so never underestimate the potential of every size of gift, and every action of compassion, kindness, love, and justice. For each one impacts us all and our beautiful movement of solidarity, strength, friendship, and Revolutionary Love—which we're sustaining and growing with this year's offering goal of \$725,000. What's your mustard seed? Whatever it is, come plant it here at Middle Church, and watch it grow—because together we ain't tiny! Visit middlechurch.org/donate





Sunday, November 4
1:30–3:30 PM

Children (Grades K–8) and their families are invited to join the fun—group readings, design-your-own book bag, raffle prizes, snacks, and book sales featuring the diverse cultures of our city.

For info, contact Marte at msamuelstuen@middlechurch.org.

New Face at Middle Church

We are excited to welcome our new Minister for Congregational Life, **The Rev. Amanda Hambrick Ashcraft**. She previously served as the Director of Outreach Ministries at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City and Outreach Coordinator at the Metro Baptist Church and Rauschenbusch Ministries in New York. She earned her M.Div. from Baptist Theological Seminary in Virginia. She founded Raising Imagination and has been a freelance writer for Refinery 29. She is married to Graham Ashcraft and has three children: Zane, Levi, and Skyler.



We are delighted to share that **Minister Rob Stephens** plans to be ordained as Minister of the Word and Sacrament at Middle Church on Sunday, November 11 at 3:30 PM. In August, his wife Rev. Hershey Mallette Stephens was called to be an Associate Priest at St. Johns in Bethesda, Maryland. This fall Rob has been both in New York and Bethesda. His last Sunday's full-time staff will be November 11. We will miss him and are grateful for all his leadership with our justice initiatives.

October

Check middlechurch.org for full details of all events.

Sundays

- **Wee Care** (under age 4) – 9:15 AM–1:15 PM • 3rd Floor Wee Care
- **In-the-Middle Choir Rehearsal** – **OCT 14** – 9:00–9:25 AM • Community Room
- **CELEBRATION! WORSHIP** – 9:30–10:30 AM • Sanctuary
- **Join the Movement** – 10:35–10:45 AM • Sanctuary
- **Community Hour** – 10:35–11:40 AM • Social Hall
- **KIDS in the Middle** (Gr. K–6) – 10:35–11:40 AM • 3rd FI Studio
- **YOUTH in the Middle** (Gr. 6–12) – **OCT 14, 28** – 10:35–11:40 AM • 3rd FI Youth Room (306)
- **BIBLE in the Middle** (Adult Ed) – 10:35–11:40 AM • 4th FI Studio
- **Young Adults Small Group** – **OCT 21** – 10:35–11:40 AM • 4th Floor
- **Moms in the Middle** – **OCT 28** – 10:35–11:40 AM • 5th FI Parlor
- **Dads in the Middle** – **OCT 28** – 10:35–11:40 AM • Conference Room
- **CELEBRATION! WORSHIP** – 11:45 AM–12:45 PM • Sanctuary
- **Butterfly Meal Prep** – 11:45 AM–12:45 PM • Social Hall
- **Intersectional Money** – **OCT 14** – 11:45 AM–12:45 PM • 5th FI Parlor
- **Beyond Budgeting** – **OCT 21** – 11:45 AM–12:45 PM • 5th FI Parlor
- **Join the Movement** – 12:45–1:15 PM • Social Hall
- **Community Hour** – 12:45–1:45 PM • Social Hall
- **Family Room** (Grades K–5) – **OCT 7** – 1:00–3:00 PM • 3rd FI Studio
- **Butterfly Meal Distribution** – 1:00–2:00 PM • Meet at Social Hall
- **Village Chorus for Children & Youth** (Ages 6–17) — For information, contact John at jdelcueto@middlechurch.org
- **Revolutionary Love—Freedom Is an Inside Job: Zainab Salbi and Desert Rose** (Adult Ed) – **OCT 7** – 2:00–3:30 PM • Sanctuary
- **AA/Big Book Meeting** – 7:00–8:00 PM • 4th FI Studio

Monday

Church Office closed on October 8 for Indigenous Peoples' Day

- **Momentum Meal** – Lunch 11:30 AM–1:00 PM / Dinner 5:30–6:30 PM
- **Acting Class** – 6:30–8:00 PM • 3rd FI Studio
- **Middle Consistory Meeting** – **OCT 15** – 6:30–8:30 PM • Conference Room
- **NA/Village Spiritual Workshop** – 6:30–7:30 PM • 4th FI Classroom
- **Meditation on the Lower East Side** – 7:00–8:30 PM • 5th FI Parlor

Tuesdays

- **New Adventures** – **OCT 16** – 2:00–3:30 PM • Parlor
- **The Politics of Faith with Jacqui** – **OCT 2, 9, 16** – 7:00–8:00 PM
- **AA/Step Meeting** – 7:00–8:00 PM • 3rd FI Studio
- **AA/Artist in Recovery** – 7:00–8:00 PM • 4th FI Studio
- **AI-Anon** – 7:30–9:00 PM • Community Room
- **AA/Closed Discussion** – 8:30–9:30 PM • 4th FI Studio

Wednesdays

- **Downtown Meditation** – 7:00–8:30 PM • Community Room
- **Jam Session** – **OCT 3** – 7:00–8:30 PM • Social Hall

Thursdays

- **Creative Writing** – 6:30–8:00 PM • 4th FI Studio
- **JJ Gospel Choir Rehearsal** – 7:00–8:30 PM • Community Room
- **AI-Anon/East Village Topics** – 7:30–8:45 PM • 3rd FI Studio

Fridays

- **Shul of New York Shabbat** – **OCT 19** – 6:30–8:30 PM • Social Hall
- **NA/It's About Change** – 6:30–8:00 PM • 3rd FI Studio
- **NA/Finally Found a Home** – 8:30–9:30 PM • 4th FI Studio

Saturdays

- **AA/Beginners** – 7:00–8:00 PM • 3rd FI Studio
- **AA/Open Discussion** – 7:00–8:00 PM • 4th FI Studio
- **AA/Closed Discussion** – 8:30–9:30 PM • 4th FI Studio



Middle Collegiate Church

50 East 7th Street • New York, NY 10003

MIDDLE CHURCH: FAITH IN ACTION



Middle Church visited the Mexico/U.S. Border in September to bear witness the humanitarian crisis.



Middle Members and Amanda Hambrick Ashcraft attended the #BelieveSurvivors rally at the office of Sen. Schumer, while Jacqui attended protests outside of the Kavanaugh/Ford hearings in DC.



The staff stood on the sanctuary steps in solidarity with the #BelieveSurvivors movement.

Contact Elise at etiralli@middlechurch.org to join the Justice Committee at Middle Church.



Middle Collegiate Church

welcoming • artistic • inclusive • bold

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

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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, and homophobic systems of oppression.

Because our God is still speaking in many languages, we work in interreligious 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. Founded prior to this nation, 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.

Care Line In case of pastoral emergency, please leave a message at our Pastoral Care line, **212-477-0666, ext. 318**. Your call is confidential.
In case of medical emergency, please call 911.