



# middle notes

The Newsletter of Middle Collegiate Church

DECEMBER 2018

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

Watch live at 11:45 AM on  
[middlechurch.org](http://middlechurch.org) or Facebook

**DECEMBER 2**  
**First Sunday of Advent**  
**Christmas Eve for CBS**  
"This One Child"

Jacqui Lewis, preacher  
Isaiah 9.6-7; Luke 2.1-14  
Middle Church Choir  
Jerriese Johnson Gospel  
Choir • Art & Soul Chorus  
Village Chorus for Children  
and Youth • Dance

**DECEMBER 9**  
**Second Sunday of Advent**

Bertram Johnson, preacher  
Luke 3.1-6  
In-the-Middle Choir  
Lighting the Advent Candles

**DECEMBER 16**  
**Third Sunday of Advent**  
**Gift to Bring Sunday**

Amanda Hambrick Ashcraft,  
preacher  
Zephaniah 3.14-20  
Middle Church Choir  
Village Chorus for Children  
and Youth  
Children's Walk-on  
Christmas Pageant  
Lighting the Advent Candles

**DECEMBER 23**  
**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

"Magnificent"  
Jacqui Lewis, preacher  
Luke 1.47-55  
Middle Church Choir  
Lighting the Advent Candles

**DECEMBER 30**  
**First Sunday**  
**after Christmas**

Derrick Harkins, preacher  
Luke 2.41-52  
Special Music

**CHRISTMAS EVE**  
**Monday, December 24**

**7:00 PM**  
**A CLASSICAL CHRISTMAS**  
Middle Church Choir

**9:00 PM**  
**A GOSPEL CHRISTMAS**  
JJ Gospel Choir

## A Gift to Bring

*Come they told me,  
A new born King to see,  
Our finest gifts we bring,  
To lay before the King,  
So to honor Him,  
When we come.*

*Little Baby,  
I am a poor boy too,  
I have no gift to bring,  
That's fit to give the King,  
Shall I play for you,  
On my drum?*

*Mary nodded,  
The ox and lamb kept time,  
I played my drum for Him,  
I played my best for Him,  
Then He smiled at me,  
Me and my drum.*

"Carol of the Drum"  
by Katherine Kennicott Davis



When I was a little girl, my Dad used to play this song over and over and over again, wearing a groove in his favorite Christmas album by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

I didn't yet know the meaning of the words *Mormon* or *Tabernacle*, but I fully related to being a child of relatively poor parents who might not have the right gift to bring to this baby in the manger.

It was my mother who taught us that anything we gave in love to each other, to the world, or to God was indeed a splendid gift.

It's the adult Jacqui who coined the phrase "Gift to Bring" about this season of generosity and year-end giving.

Whatever gifts you have—your time, your talent, and your treasure—are indeed splendid gifts fit for a child born in wonder.

Every gift is fit to build the Reign of God on earth.

As the holidays come fully upon us, remember your giftedness.

You, too, are fit for the building of the Reign of God on earth as it is in heaven, just exactly as you are.

When you look in the mirror, please thank God for making you *you*.

And as you think of gift-giving, please keep Middle Church in your heart and prayers. Every gift powers love and #LoveTransforms.

You are Loved SO much,



**Our second annual Children's Multicultural Book Fair was a hit!** Thanks also to everyone who attended the event and supported our children and youth ministries by purchasing books. Young people of all different ethnicities, faiths, and gender identities were able to see themselves featured as the main characters in a variety of stories from diverse authors. And special thanks to our dynamic, intergenerational volunteers (ages 12–70+) who helped with readings, crafts, book sales, and justice-oriented projects including care packages for kids in Puerto Rico and advocacy for #FamiliesBelongTogether.



**Celebrating our three youth ambassadors from Middle Church.** Kellen Levy, Tyrese Levy, and Ruby Salvatore Palmer joined with the Lower Eastside Girls Club for a Civil Rights Trip in Louisiana and Alabama last month. In Montgomery, they spent time at the Memorial for Peace and Justice and the Legacy Museum, connecting from our nation's history of enslavement to today's mass incarceration. In New Orleans, they visited sites critical to the Civil Rights movement as well as places of deep community organizing following Hurricane Katrina. Watch for more highlights to come, including their interviews of activists and organizers which will soon be featured on WGRL (Girls Club's radio station).



**Reserve your spot for REVOLUTIONARY LOVE!** We hope to see to you at *Revolutionary Love: The Politics of Faith*, April 5–7, 2018 at Middle Church. Speakers include raci Blackmon, Wajahat Ali, Gary Dorrien, Marianne Williamson, Ritu Bhasin, Ruby Sales, Mark Charles, Zainab Salbi, Shane Claiborne, Simran Jeet Singh, Jacqui Lewis, and others. Register at [bit.ly/Rev-Love](http://bit.ly/Rev-Love). Choose 1 General Admission ticket. Then, at top right, click "Enter Promotional Code." Enter the code **Middle2019** to receive special discount rate of \$100 per ticket.

## World AIDS Day Memorial Remembrance

**Tuesday, December 4 • 7:00-8:00 PM**

Join members of the Middle community for a time of reflection and remembrance to honor those we love and have lost and the millions whose lives are impacted by HIV/AIDS.

## Jam Session

**Wednesday, December 5 • 7:00-8:30 PM**

Let's play together and share your music. Bring your uke, banjo, guitar, anything unplugged with strings. All levels welcome! For info or to RSVP, contact Tami at [tpetty@middlechurch.org](mailto:tpetty@middlechurch.org).

REVOLUTIONARY LOVE SPEAKER SERIES

## Sacred Shelter

**Sunday, December 9 • 1:30–2:30 PM**

Middle Deacon Dennis Barton and Dr. Susan Greenfield will discuss their new collaboration, *Sacred Shelter: Thirteen Journeys of Homelessness and Healing*. Please join us for this powerful story of love and transformation.

## BIBLE in the Middle: Bible Unbound

**Sundays, December 9, 16, 23 • 10:35–11:40 AM**

Join Middle member Lars Swan for a journey through the Gospel of Luke following the lectionary texts for December.

## In-the-Middle Choir

**Sunday, December 9 • rehearse 8:30 AM for 9:30 AM worship; rehearse 11:05 AM for 11:45 AM worship**

This choir of volunteer singers from the Middle community sings with section leaders from the Middle Church Choir. Attend rehearsal and sing in worship the same day. For more information, contact Tami at [tpetty@middlechurch.org](mailto:tpetty@middlechurch.org).

## Blue Christmas

**Tuesdays, December 11, 18 • 7:00–8:00 PM**

For those of us who have lost loved ones, here are two opportunities to come to a quiet space of prayer, reflection, and song.

## Children's Walk-on Christmas Pageant

**Sunday, December 16 • 9:30 & 11:45 AM worship celebrations**

No need for your child(ren) to attend any rehearsals! Simply attend either worship celebration on December 16, and young people of all ages will be invited into the Christmas Pageant. On this Gift to Bring Sunday, there's also a part for the grown-ups!

## Middle Writers and Players Present

**Sunday, December 16 • Writers: Holiday Readings at 2:00–3:00 PM • Players: Siblings Christmas Show at 3:00–4:00 PM**

Middle Players and Writers cordially invite you to their holiday readings and original one-act plays. Enjoy the creative fruits of our writing and acting classes, with some holiday spice!



December 2018



**Middle Collegiate Church**  
welcoming • artistic • inclusive • bold

Dear Middle Family,

### **#LoveTransforms**

As I write to you, I have an image of tear-gassed toddlers burned into my heart. As we prepare to celebrate the birth of a particular baby, a brown Jewish baby from an Afro-Semitic people, I am desperate for love to transform hearts everywhere.

### **How can love transform?**

Jesus was a homeless baby, a refugee. He began life as a shivering baby in a stable, and only survived because his family was welcomed into Egypt as they were escaped persecution. **Hot mess times.** But he overcame. Love—love of his people and God's love for him—transformed him into a prophet who preached Revolutionary Love, and went on to transform the lives of everyone he touched.

### **LoveTransforms.**

Love transforms each of us individually, and all of us together in community. Transformative love is not silent, passive, weak, or nice. It is vocal, active, strong, and encouraging. It reaches out to those who feel isolated, rejected, displaced, and abandoned. It transforms them. It transforms the ones who hurt them.

### **LoveTransforms.**

But it is not easy. Love can include difficult and courageous conversations with family and colleagues. Love holds us as we engage the hard stuff, and is also with us as we care for each other and build a movement to change the world. This is the challenging and life-changing love that God bestows on everyone and everything. It is what we at Middle Church pledge to each other and the world as we rehearse God's reign.

How do we rehearse God's reign? We are putting our worship, education, and justice works into the public square. Our CBS special airing on Christmas Eve, a new podcast, and shorter clips from worship and education that will nurture souls are just some of what we are cooking. We are building a new website and a new people management system so we can engage with a world-yearning-for-love more quickly, and invite you and that world to connect with us in real time. Because Middle is at a turning point—busting at the seams with our ever-expanding transformative love—we want to keep our unique connection with each other. Therefore, we are creating more small groups and a more comprehensive care system so we can stay connected even as we grow.

### **How can you can help?**

We need each other, and you specifically, to fulfill the vision and mission of Middle Church. In these **hot mess times**, we are asking you to partner with Middle Church, and give your prayers, your time, and your financial resources, so that together we can reach this year's fundraising goal of \$725,000. We need you to fulfill our **bold** vision: to heal the soul and the world by dismantling racist, classist, sexist, and homophobic systems of oppression; to reclaim and reframe Christianity as love-in-action; and to build the Reign of God on earth. Please use the enclosed envelope to let us know what you might give and how you might pray to make love everywhere.

I love you,

Rev. Dr. Jacqueline Lewis  
Senior Minister

P.S. Make a hassle-free recurring weekly gift online by Gift to Bring Sunday, December 16. Visit [middlechurch.org/donate](http://middlechurch.org/donate)

# Advent at Middle Church



## FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT – Sunday, December 2

**Celebration! Sunday Morning Worship at 9:30 AM and 11:45 AM**  
**Christmas Eve for CBS “A Bold New Thing”** Jacqui Lewis, preacher  
• Isaiah 9.6–7; Luke 2.1–14 • Middle Church Choir • Jerriese Johnson  
Gospel Choir • Art & Soul Chorus • Village Chorus for Children and  
Youth • Dance

## SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT – Sunday, December 9

- **Celebration! Sunday Morning Worship at 9:30 AM and 11:45 AM**  
Bertram Johnson, preacher • Luke 3.1–6 • In-the-Middle Choir •  
Lighting the Advent Candles
- **BIBLE in the Middle: Bible Unbound (Adult Ed) at 10:35–11:40 AM**  
Join Middle member Lars Swan for a journey through the Gospel of  
Luke following the lectionary texts for December.
- **Revolutionary Love Speaker Series: “Sacred Shelter” at  
1:30–2:30 PM** – Middle Deacon Dennis Barton and Dr. Susan  
Greenfield will discuss their new collaboration, *Sacred Shelter:  
Thirteen Journeys of Homelessness and Healing*. Please join us for  
this powerful story of love and transformation.

## BLUE CHRISTMAS – Tuesday, December 11 at 7:00–8:00 PM

For those of us who have lost loved ones, here are two opportunities  
to come to a quiet space of prayer, reflection, and song.

## THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT – Gift to Bring Sunday, December 16

- **Celebration! Sunday Morning Worship at 9:30 AM and 11:45 AM**  
Amanda Hambrick Ashcraft, preacher • Zephaniah 3.14–20 • Middle  
Church Choir • Village Chorus for Children and Youth • **Children’s  
Walk-on Christmas Pageant** • Lighting the Advent Candles
- **BIBLE in the Middle: Bible Unbound (Adult Ed) at 10:35–11:40 AM**  
A journey through the Gospel of Luke following the lectionary texts.
- **Middle Writers and Players Present at 2:00–4:00 PM**  
Middle Players and Writers cordially invite you to their holiday  
readings and one-act plays. Enjoy the creative fruits of our writing  
and acting classes, with some holiday spice! Readings 2:00 PM;  
Plays 3:00 PM.

## BLUE CHRISTMAS – Tuesday, December 18 at 7:00–8:00 PM

For those of us who have lost loved ones, here are two opportunities  
to come to a quiet space of prayer, reflection, and song.

## FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT – Sunday, December 23

- **Celebration! Sunday Morning Worship at 9:30 AM and 11:45 AM**  
“Magnificent” • Jacqui Lewis, preacher • Luke 1.47–55 • Middle  
Church Choir • Lighting the Advent Candles
- **BIBLE in the Middle: Bible Unbound (Adult Ed) at 10:35–11:40 AM**  
A journey through the Gospel of Luke following the lectionary texts.

If you can’t be with us on Christmas Eve...

Watch the live webcast of our candlelight worship  
at 7:00 and 9:00 PM on [middlechurch.org](http://middlechurch.org)!

Watch Middle Church on WCBS-TV at 11:35 PM

## CHRISTMAS EVE – Monday, December 24

- **A Classical Christmas Candlelight Worship at 7:00 PM**  
Middle Church Choir • Jacqui Lewis, homily
- **A Gospel Christmas Candlelight Worship at 9:00 PM**  
Jerriese Johnson Gospel Choir • Jacqui Lewis, homily

Church Office will be closed December 25–27 for Christmas.

## FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS – Sunday, December 30

**Celebration! Sunday Morning Worship at 9:30 AM and 11:45 AM**  
Derrick Harkins, preacher • Luke 2.41–52 • Special Music • Carol Sing

## JAZZY NEW YEAR’S EVE – Monday, December 31 at 6:00 PM

A jazzy tribute to ring in the year • Bertram Johnson, homily • Music  
from Dionne McClain-Freney

## New Adventures

Tuesday, December 18 • 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](mailto:etiralli@middlechurch.org) or 212-477-0666 x319.

## Middle Literary Magazine Needs You!



Submit your writing and/or art to our 8th annual Literary Magazine! The theme will be "What Gets Me Through." Poetry, fiction, essay, art, photos, children's work—even a video clip—are all welcome! Send your submissions to editor Carol Wierzbicki at [litmag@middlechurch.org](mailto:litmag@middlechurch.org) by February 14, 2019.

## Mission Trip to Puerto Rico

March 24–31, 2019 • Miraflores in Orocovis, Puerto Rico

Middle Collegiate Church in partnership with Fort Washington Collegiate Church will return to Puerto Rico for a fourth Mission Trip. We specifically seeking individuals in the mental health profession, as well as dentists and doctors. Participants pay for their own flights and lodging. The deadline to join the team is January 30, 2019. For more information and to join the team, contact Deacon Edna Benitez at [ezbenitez@me.com](mailto:ezbenitez@me.com).

## Watch Middle on WCBS on Christmas Eve Monday, December 24 at 11:35 PM!

## Partnership Update

Since July 1, you have given **\$196,722**, and we have covenants and recurring donations for **\$129,068** more toward our FY19 goal of \$725,000—that's AMAZING! Your generosity will help us meet our mid-year goal of \$465,000 (60%) by December 31. Please consider making a year-end donation in worship on Gift to Bring Sunday, December 16, or online by December 31.

Visit [middlechurch.org/donate](http://middlechurch.org/donate) to make a recurring or one-time gift!



## Order Memorial Poinsettias for the Sanctuary this Christmas Season

Cost: \$20 each – check or cash  
No IOUs accepted.

Deadline – Sunday, December 16, 2018

Purchase online at [bit.ly/poinsettia-2019](http://bit.ly/poinsettia-2019)

Or mail your payment and the name of the person to be honored in the enclosed envelope

# December

Check [middlechurch.org](http://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** – DEC 9 – 8:30–9:25 AM • Community Room
- **CELEBRATION! WORSHIP** – 9:30–10:30 AM • Sanctuary
- **Join the Movement** – 10:35–10:50 AM • Sanctuary
- **Community Hour** – 10:35–11:40 AM • Social Hall
- **KIDS in the Middle** (Gr. K–6) – DEC 9, 16 – 10:35–11:40 AM • 3rd Fl Studio • Will not meet DEC 2, 23, or 30
- **BIBLE in the Middle** (Adult Ed) – 10:35–11:40 AM • 4th Fl Studio
- **YOUTH in the Middle** (Gr. 6–12) – DEC 9 – 10:35–11:40 AM • 3rd Fl Youth Room (306)
- **Young Adults Small Group** – DEC 16 – 10:35–11:40 AM • 4th Floor
- **Moms in the Middle** – DEC 23 – 10:35–11:40 AM • 5th Fl Parlor
- **Dads in the Middle** – DEC 23 – 10:35–11:40 AM • Conference Room
- **In-the-Middle Choir Rehearsal** – DEC 9 – 11:05–11:35 AM • Community Room
- **CELEBRATION! WORSHIP** – 11:45 AM–12:45 PM • Sanctuary
- **Butterfly Meal Prep and Distribution** – on hiatus until April
- **Join the Movement** – 12:45–1:15 PM • Social Hall
- **Community Hour** – 12:45–1:45 PM • Social Hall
- **Revolutionary Love Speaker Series: Sacred Shelter** (Adult Ed) – DEC 9 – 1:30–2:30 PM • Sanctuary
- **Village Chorus for Children & Youth** (Ages 6–17) – 1:00–2:15 PM
- **Middle Writers and Players Present** – 2:00–4:00 PM • Sanctuary – Readings 2:00 PM; Plays 3:00 PM.
- **AA/Big Book Meeting** – 3:45–5:15 PM • 4th Fl Studio

## Mondays

- **Momentum Meal** – Lunch 11:30 AM–1:00 PM / Dinner 5:30–6:30 PM
- **Acting Class** – 6:30–8:00 PM • 3rd Fl Studio
- **NA/Village Spiritual Workshop** – 6:30–7:30 PM • 4th Fl Classroom
- **CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP** – DEC 24 – 7:00–8:00 PM • Sanctuary
- **CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP** – DEC 24 – 9:00–10:00 PM • Sanctuary
- **JAZZY NEW YEAR WORSHIP** – DEC 31 – 6:00–7:00 PM • Sanctuary

Church Office will be closed Tuesday, December 25–  
Thursday, December 27 for Christmas holidays

## Tuesdays

- **New Adventures** – DEC 18 – 2:00–3:30 PM • Parlor
- **Blue Christmas** – DEC 11, 18 – 7:00–8:00 PM • Sanctuary
- **AA/Step Meeting** – 7:00–8:00 PM • 3rd Fl Studio
- **AA/Artist in Recovery** – 7:00–8:00 PM • 4th Fl Studio
- **Al-Anon** – 7:30–9:00 PM • Community Room

## Wednesdays

- **Jam Session** – DEC 5 – 7:00–8:30 PM • Social Hall

## Thursdays

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

## Fridays

- **Shul of New York Shabbat** – DEC 7, 21 – 6:30–8:30 PM • Social Hall
- **NA/Finally Found a Home** – 8:30–9:30 PM • 4th Fl Studio

## Saturdays

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



# Middle Collegiate Church

50 East 7th Street • New York, NY 10003

Friday, January 4–Sunday, January 6

11TH ANNUAL SPIRITUAL RETREAT

#LoveTransforms

Register at <http://bit.ly/MCC-retreat19>

**Gift to Bring Sunday:  
#LoveTransforms**

December 16, 2018

You are Revolutionary Love.  
Your generosity will help us meet our mid-year goal of \$465,000 (60%) by December 31.

Please consider making a year-end donation in worship on December 16 or online by December 31.

[middlechurch.org/donate](http://middlechurch.org/donate)



## Middle Collegiate Church

welcoming • artistic • inclusive • bold

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

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- OFFICE 50 East 7th Street (bet. First Ave. & Second Ave.)  
New York, NY 10003
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- CARE LINE 212-477-0666 EXT 318
- WEBSITE [middlechurch.org](http://middlechurch.org)
- EMAIL [middleinfo@middlechurch.org](mailto:middleinfo@middlechurch.org)
- FOLLOW US! [facebook.com/MiddleCollegiateChurch](https://www.facebook.com/MiddleCollegiateChurch)  
[twitter.com/middlechurch](https://twitter.com/middlechurch)  
[youtube.com/MiddleNYC](https://www.youtube.com/MiddleNYC)

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. 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.**