



middle notes

The Newsletter of Middle Collegiate Church

JUNE 2018

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

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

JUNE 3

Children's Day

"Children Will Listen"

Jacqui Lewis, preacher
1 Samuel 3.1-10
Cantabile Choir of
Piedmont College
Communion

JUNE 10

"Living While Woke"

Jacqui Lewis, preacher
Psalm 139.1-18
Traditional Gospel Ensemble
Baptism

JUNE 17

Father's Day

Juneteenth

"Looking for Cinderfella"
Freeman Palmer,
guest preacher
1 Samuel 15.34-16.13
In-the-Middle Choir

JUNE 24

Pride Sunday

"Who We Are"

Jacqui Lewis, preacher
Mark 4.35-41
Middle Church Choir
Jerriese Johnson
Gospel Choir

Sing with Middle!

JERRIESE JOHNSON GOSPEL CHOIR

The Gospel Choir has a powerful and dynamic ministry, both inside and outside the church walls. **Contact John at** jdelcueto@middlechurch.org

IN-THE-MIDDLE CHOIR

This choir features singers from the Middle community partnered with section leaders from the Middle Church Choir. Attend rehearsal and sing in worship the same day. **Contact Tami at** tpetty@middlechurch.org

Puerto Rico and Pride

It's the first of June, and hurricane season has begun. Our family in Puerto Rico is bracing for the inevitable. Storms will come. Power, not yet fully restored, will fail. Infrastructure will weaken. Those who are vulnerable will suffer. Death counts will likely rise. Children will lose ground in their learning, and the ground underneath all of the poor will feel even more shaky.

And our government will not honor the citizenship of our family, not they way it should. More than 4,600 dead Americans. Lost in a liminal space in which brown bodies do not matter to the rich and powerful.

But they matter to us! Partnering with Fort Washington Collegiate Church and our fierce and amazing sister, Rev. Dr. Damaris Whitaker; with Intersections International and the formidable advocate for justice, The Rev. Julie Johnson-Staples, JD; and with Union Theological Seminary and the gifted Jonathan Soto—we've embarked on a Faith Weekend of Action Against Ecological Devastation

Friday, we planned Decolonizing Faith: What's Next for Puerto Rico? Held at Fort Washington Collegiate Church, it's a free discussion on how faith leaders can turn crisis into sustainable change as the new hurricane season begins. On Saturday, June 2, No Refuge from the Storm, a rally at the UN calls for an audit of the Puerto Rican debt and an audit of the actual deaths and devastation in Puerto Rico from Hurricane Maria.

On Sunday, June 3, as we celebrate our children and commit to caring for children everywhere, our worship celebration integrates prayers and liturgy written by Dr. Whitaker for this weekend. We center Puerto Rico and the need for a sustainable recovery, even as we turn our eyes toward Pride Month.

Middle Church has been a movement leader in the quest for LGBTQ justice. We've been in the fight for justice and we aren't going anywhere.

The work the Collegiate Churches are doing in Puerto Rico includes a special emphasis on the vulnerable LGBTQ community there. (Stay tuned to Intersections' work to learn more!) We are intersectional in our justice work; we know that it is impossible to separate racial/ethnic, economic, ecological, and gender/LGBTQ concerns when we are seeking to build God's Reign here on earth.

On June 4, our coalition will be in Washington, DC, participating in the actions sponsored by the Poor People's Campaign. Dr. Damaris will be speaking; Rob, Marte, and Elise will take Middle staff energy to DC; many of you will also go, taking love and pride to the seat of power.

Speaking of Pride: Three of the most actively engaged leaders in our Puerto Rico Recovery Project—Deacon Edna Benitez, Michael Wiener, and Jorge Fontanez—are members of our LGBTQI community. More than half of our consistory are members of our LGBTQI community. Almost two-thirds of our staff are members of our LGBTQI community. When I stand on the

pulpit and look at our congregation, I can see how very deeply committed we are to not only welcoming but celebrating all of God's people into fellowship, leadership, and community in our space. We do Pride 365 days a year at Middle Church, and that makes me super proud to be your pastor.

June will be a powerful month of celebrating who we are, how we love, and our amazing bodies, designed by God. We'll be singing, dancing, preaching, praying, and acting up to make heaven on earth. Stay tuned to our website for ways to do justice, and for all things Pride.

I love you!



Beth Ellor

The art installation “Divinity: Queer Icons” continues through June 30 in the sanctuary. Above, the artist Gabriel Garcia Roman shared insights with Rob Stephens at the opening reception. Thank you, Linda Badami, for championing this art installation. More at gabrielmariogarciaroman.com/queer-icons-home/



Beth Ellor

On Saturday, May 19, friends and family gathered to remember long-time Middle Church Choir member Pamela Warrick-Smith who passed away on April 25. Memorial contributions may be made to the Pamela Warrick-Smith Music Fund at Middle Church. To contribute in Pamela's memory, visit middlechurch.org/donate and in "Notes about your donation" mention the Pamela Warrick-Smith Music Fund.

Pride Sign-Making and Tie-Dye Party

Sunday, June 17 • 10:45–11:30 AM • 3rd and 4th Floors

Join your Middle family to make signs for the Pride March and tie-dye your own “Love.Period.” T-shirt! Children get one free shirt—adult tie-dye T-shirts available for \$10.

New Adventures

Thursday, June 21 • 2:00–3:30 PM • 4th Floor Studio

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 Rob at rstephens@middlechurch.org.

Youth Pride

Saturday, June 23 • 12:00–6:00 PM • 14th St. Park

Youth are invited to join Elise Tiralli, Ministry for Specialist Congregational Life, at a NYC Pride celebration for LGBTQIA+ and ally teens. RSVP by June 15 to Elise at etiralli@middlechurch.org.



Gina Kropf

Our neighbors saw Love.Period. in action at our annual street fair! Thank you to all the dedicated volunteers who shared the Middle ministry by offering information, dyeing T-shirts, singing onstage, dancing in the street, and making art and bouncing with our kids. You made the day a success!



Minister Rob Stephens represents Middle Church each Monday in Washington, D.C. as a coordinator for the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival. The Poor People's Campaign, first started by Dr. King 50 years ago, stands against racism, poverty, militarization, and ecological devastation. Our partner, Bishop William Barber, has been a leading force in this movement. Each week Rob leads civil disobedience trainings. The Poor People's Campaign is active in 39 states and DC. **Join Rob and Jacqui for the culmination of the 40-Day Campaign on Saturday, June 23 in DC.** For more information or to RSVP for the June 23 event, email Elise at etiralli@middlechurch.org.

Butterfly Meal Program Needs You!

Sundays, 9:30–10:30 AM; 11:45 AM–12:45 PM • Social Hall

Join us as we prepare bag lunches for distribution to the hungry in local parks! More hands and feet are always needed. Distribution begins at 1:00 PM. **For more information about volunteering, email Cheryl at ccochran@middlechurch.org.**

Now Available! Sunday Literary Magazine “Complete the Dream: Finish and Start”

The seventh issue of *Sunday*, Middle's very own literary and arts magazine, is now available for sale. The editors, Carol Wierzbicki and Harold Slazer, thank all the writers and artists who contributed their wonderful work! Check it out at bit.ly/MC-Sunday.

Volunteers Transform Lives

Almost 20 years ago, Elder Danita Branam had a feeding ministry idea that has touched thousands of lives. Here is a recent story she shared.

One recent Saturday evening I was having my usual dinner at the bar of a favorite Italian restaurant. I know the bartender so the conversations flowed easily between the food specials, which wines to choose, the banter between customers waiting for a table, the weather (atrocious!), street fair season, the baseball teams on TV, and why I worked almost two all-nighters in the past week. This led the bartender to ask what I planned to do Sunday, quickly offering that he bet it would include some extra sleep-in time. I responded that I still had to rise early to handle Butterfly, especially because my volunteer partner was out of the country on vacation. The bartender understood my response.

A gentleman (Adam) seated nearby shared that he traveled frequently to New York for work, but he and his family lived in Los Angeles. Adam inquired, "What is 'Butterfly'?" I explained and he asked the usual questions: what is involved, how many brunch bags, how many parks, how many participants, at what time, and so forth. I explained that while it originated to provide some small sustenance for homeless youth literally living in the park during the summer months, we now offer the brunch bag to anyone who would like one; and that many people who don't look homeless accept the gift.

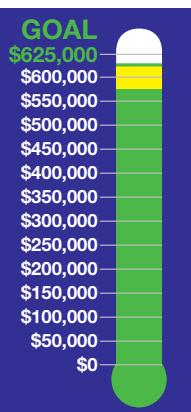


Béatrice de Céa

Adam asked how much it cost each week and how long had I been doing this—to which I responded about \$75 per week—and proudly added "for 18 years!" He just stared at me for a few moments. He explained one of the recent company surveys revealed that the employees don't feel their company is sufficiently giving outside their walls. Then Adam reached in his pocket. I could tell he was counting off bills which he folded over and placed on the bar saying "for Butterfly."

I assumed it was \$75 to cover a week and just shoved the folded bills in my purse, while thanking him profusely. In the morning I retrieved them to put in a special envelope for the offering with a note. When I unfolded the bills and counted them, it was ten 50 dollar bills!!!

That will nicely cover some "Butterfly transformation."



Butterfly needs volunteers to prepare, pack, and deliver brunch bags.
To volunteer, contact Cheryl at ccochran@middlechurch.org.

Since July 1, 2017, you have given and pledged \$571,503.01. We need \$53,496.99 to meet our offering goal by June 30, 2018. Please consider creating a recurring gift or making a major donation to help us reach our goal. Donate NOW at middlechurch.org/donate.

June

Check middlechurch.org for full details of all events.

Sundays

- **Wee Care** (under age 4) – 8:30 AM–2:30 PM • *3rd Floor Nursery*
- **Family Room** (Grades K–5) – 8:30–9:30 AM • *3rd Floor Studio*
- **CELEBRATION! WORSHIP** – 9:30–10:45 AM • *Sanctuary*
- **Butterfly Meal Prep 1** – 9:30–10:30 AM • *Social Hall*
- **BRUNCH in the Middle** – 10:50–11:40 AM • *Social Hall*
- **BIBLE in the Middle** (Adult Ed) – 10:50–11:40 AM • *4th Floor Studio*
- **KIDS in the Middle** – 10:50–11:40 AM • *Grades K–5 – 3rd Floor Studio*
- **YOUTH in the Middle** (Gr. 6–12) – 10:50–11:40 AM • *4th Floor Classrm*
- **PRIDE Sign-Making and Tie-Dye Party – JUN 17** – 10:50–11:40 AM • *3rd and 4th Floor Studios*
- **CELEBRATION! WORSHIP** – 11:45 AM–1:00 PM • *Sanctuary*
- **Butterfly Meal Prep 2** – 11:45 AM–12:45 PM
- **Family Room** (Grades K–5) – 1:00–2:30 PM • *3rd Floor Studio*
- **Butterfly Meal Distribution** – 1:00 PM • *Meet in Social Hall*
- **Middle Project Young Adult Leadership Lab Reunion – JUN 10** – 1:00–3:00 PM • *4th Floor Studio*
- **Heritage of Pride March – JUN 24** – 1:00 PM • *Fifth Avenue!*
- **Village Chorus for Children & Youth** (Ages 6–17) – 1:15–2:30 PM
- **Moms in the Middle – JUN 3** – 1:15–2:30 PM • *5th Floor Parlor*
- **Dads in the Middle – JUN 3** – 1:15–2:30 PM • *Conference Room*
- **Young Adults Small Group – JUN 3** – 1:15–2:30 PM • *4th Floor*
- **In-the-Middle Choir Rehearsal – JUN 10** – 1:15–1:45 PM • *5th Floor Parlor*
- **JJ Gospel Choir Spring Concert: The Storm Is Passing Over – JUN 3** – 2:30–4:00 PM • *Sanctuary* – \$20 suggested admission.
- **AA/Big Book Meeting** – 4:00–5:00 PM • *4th Floor Studio*

Mondays

- **Momentum Meal** – Lunch 11:30 AM–1:00 PM / Dinner 5:30–6:30 PM • *Social Hall*
- **Acting Class** – 6:30–8:00 PM • *3rd Floor Studio*
- **NA/Village Spiritual Workshop** – 6:30–7:30 PM • *4th Floor Classroom*
- **Meditation on the Lower East Side** – 7:00–8:30 PM • *5th Floor Parlor*

Tuesdays

- **AA/Step Meeting** – 7:00–8:00 PM • *3rd Floor Studio*
- **AA/Artist in Recovery** – 7:00–8:00 PM • *4th Floor Studio*
- **AI-Anon** – 7:30–9:00 PM • *Community Room*
- **AA/Closed Discussion** – 8:30–9:30 PM • *4th Floor Studio*

Wednesdays

- **Jam Session – JUN 6** – 7:00–8:30 PM • *Social Hall*
- **Collegiate Pride WeWo – JUN 20** – 6:15 PM • *Marble Church Loft*

Thursdays

- **New Adventures – JUN 21** – 2:00–3:30 PM • *Parlor*
- **Creative Writing** – 6:30–8:00 PM • *4th Floor Studio*
- **JJ Gospel Choir Rehearsal** – 7:00–8:30 PM • *Community Room*
- **AI-Anon/East Village Topics** – 7:30–8:45 PM • *3rd Floor Studio*

Fridays

- **Shul of NY Shabbat – JUN 1, 8** – 6:30–8:30 PM • *Social Hall*
- **Collegiate '70s Dance Party – JUN 8** – 7:00–10:00 PM • *Fort Washington Collegiate Church (729 West 181st Street)*
- **NA/It's About Change** – 6:30–8:00 PM • *3rd Floor Studio*
- **NA/Finally Found a Home** – 8:00–9:00 PM • *4th Floor Studio*

Saturdays

- **AA/Beginners** – 7:00–8:00 PM • *3rd Floor Studio*
- **AA/Open Discussion** – 7:00–8:00 PM • *4th Floor Studio*
- **AA/Closed Discussion** – 8:30–9:30 PM • *4th Floor Studio*
- **Youth Pride – JUN 23** – 12:00–6:00 PM • *14th St. Park*



Middle Collegiate Church

50 East 7th Street • New York, NY 10003

Celebrate PRIDE Month with Middle Church



- **COLLEGIATE '70S DANCE PARTY** – Friday, June 8 – 7:00–10:00 PM • *Fort Washington Collegiate Church (729 West 181st St.)* – Put on your boogie shoes!
- **PRIDE SIGN-MAKING AND TIE-DYE PARTY** – Sunday, June 17 – 10:50–11:40 AM – Make signs and tie-dye T-shirts for the Pride March.
- **COLLEGIATE PRIDE WEWO** – Wednesday, June 20 • 6:15 PM • *Marble Loft (274 Fifth Ave.)* – Michael Bos, Chad Tanaka Pack, and others, preachers
- **YOUTH PRIDE** – Saturday, June 23 • 12:00–6:00 PM – For more information or to RSVP, contact Elise at etiralli@middlechurch.org
- **PRIDE WORSHIP CELEBRATION** – Sunday, June 24 • 9:30 and 11:45 AM – Preacher Jacqui Lewis, Middle Church Choir, and JJ Gospel Choir.
- **HERITAGE OF PRIDE MARCH** – Sunday, June 24 • 1:00 PM – Celebrate that we are all made in God's image. "Love. Period." T-shirts available for \$20.



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 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. 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.