



middle notes

The Newsletter of Middle Collegiate Church

APRIL 2017

Celebration! Worship Sundays at 11:15 AM

Watch live on middlechurch.org

APRIL 2

“Born, Again?”

John 3.1-17

Jacqui Lewis, preacher
Middle Church Choir
Communion

APRIL 9 PALM SUNDAY

“Palms and Passion”

Readings from the Gospel of Matthew and Music
Middle Church Choir
Manhattan Brass

APRIL 16 EASTER SUNRISE at 7:00 AM

Jacqui Lewis, homily
Music by Mark Rehnstrom

APRIL 16 at 9:30 & 11:15 AM

“Mary, Don’t You Weep”

John 20.1-18

Jacqui Lewis, preacher
Middle Church Choir
Jerriese Johnson
Gospel Choir

APRIL 23 Earth Day Volunteer Appreciation

Ephesians 5.8-17

Robin Stillwater and
Joe Tolbert, preachers
Middle Church Choir

APRIL 30 Conference Sunday at 9:30 AM & 11:15 AM “A Love Revolution”

Micah 6.6-8

Jacqui Lewis, preacher
Middle Church Choir
Jerriese Johnson
Gospel Choir

Conference Closing Worship April 30 at 6:30 PM

Revolutionary Love Conference Sunday

Rev. William J. Barber II,
preacher
Music from pop rock band
BETTY (Alyson Palmer,
Amy Ziff, and Elizabeth Ziff)

Resistance. Resilience. Rise.

When I was younger, I experienced Lent as a sorrowful time; I’d spend many days ruminating on the death of Christ, and think about my own death, of sure-to-come deaths of my parents, and the deaths of my ancestors. I’d be sad, and somewhat comforted by the promise of resurrection. Now, I have come to understand that from the day we are born, the day we are liberated from the amniotic space of the womb, we take a breath and we begin to die. We fill the room with our first cries, and we are journeying toward death. There is no way to avoid that. So, my sense of Lent has shifted to a journey toward life. It is a time of spiritual reflection, a journey toward our best, most authentic, filled-with-Spirit self. It is a quest for the self, a quest for life.

What is that authentic self like? I am not quite sure, but I feel like I am in a birth canal. I feel pushed, and squeezed, and a little bit traumatized. I watch the news and feel sad and frustrated. Then I go to Twitter and I see all of the pop-up love and organizing and I feel hopeful. Sometimes I feel a strong sense of disequilibrium. At other times, I am quite simply euphoric, like I am in the space of that super-human strength women talk about during childbirth. What I am giving birth to, thanks to all of the forces bearing upon me, is *myself*, thanks be to God.

My friend and Middle Scholar-in-Residence, Valarie Kaur, suggests our nation is in a birth canal. That these crazy times are not about the “darkness of the tomb...but the darkness of the womb.” I know she is right. We are all being born; we are all becoming. We as a people are discovering what we are made of, who we will be, who we are called to be. The Apostle Paul suggested that all of creation is waiting like a mother in childbirth, waiting to see the children of God be revealed. (Romans 8:19-39). I LOVE that!!

I believe these times are about all of us being pushed to discover who we truly are. The current cultural context demands self-examination; it requires conversation partners—friends, pastors, therapists, parents, siblings, lovers—and a space to say, “Can you *believe* this?!?” both about the

terrible, awful things AND about the ways we as a people are witnessing folk resisting and loving their way forward. We as a nation are being reborn, pushed to a new place.

What if our Lenten journey is about resilience, resistance, and rising? What if we look squarely at what must die: oppressive systems of injustice; greed and avarice; a broken sense of entitlement and exceptionalism, for example. What if we imagine these tough times as the dying of those things and the birthing of God’s plan for a healed and whole world?

So, on a personal level, I am inviting us to make our Lenten journey about shedding things, giving up useless things, bad habits, old coping mechanisms. Let’s get free to try on new ways of thinking, of living, of being. Let’s leave the placenta that grew us in the womb, and emerge with fresh new vision, new expectations, new hope. Let’s use Lent to take a deep breath of Spirit and emerge from the birth canal with a primal prayer, “Here I am! Thank you Spirit/Breath for animating me. I am here.” Our own re-birth can help birth a nation that shares the values of the Reign of God. Together, we can pray, “We are here, we’re here for all of us!”

Middle Church and the Middle Project will host our 11th annual conference, April 28-30, that posits multiracial/multicultural congregations as an antidote to racism and discrimination. **Revolutionary Love: Disruptive Ethics to Dismantle Racism** features speakers including Valarie Kaur, William Barber, Bill Moyers, Brian McLaren, Genesis Be, Shaun King, and BETTY! You MUST come to this conference; it is part of our birthing a movement of love and justice. Revolutionary Love is gestating at the conference. A Love Revolution is being born in the pushing and shoving and stress of these days.

Lent is a journey to the Love Revolution in which our best selves are revealed, and our more perfect union is forged. As we go deep and pay attention, even in hot-mess times, we can fuel our resistance with love; we can celebrate our resilience. And we will rise.

Meet Marte

We are excited to welcome **Marte Samuelstuen** as our Interim Director of Children, Youth, & Young Adults. Her previous experience includes supporting churches and nonprofits spanning from India to Ireland, partnering with refugee and immigrant students and their families, and working as a facilitator with Building Bridges in Denver, Colorado. In her previous roles, she has created spaces for young people to address the root causes of hatred, discrimination, and violence.

Marte graduated with a Master of Science in International Affairs and a concentration in Cities and Social Justice from The New School in 2016. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Communication and Philosophy/Theology from Point Loma Nazarene University where she received the M. Estes Haney Award in 2008 from the School of Theology and Christian Ministry as a graduate recognized for embodied theology. Marte became a member of Middle Church in 2015. She recently completed an internship in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia with Hope for Children.



Lenten Bible Study

Sundays, April 2 and 9 • 9:30–10:45 AM • Parlor

Experience the season of Lent grounded in scripture. The Middle Church Lenten "Sacred Presence" Bible study will meet for prayer and reflection using the Gospel According to Luke as our text. Participants may attend all sessions, or drop in as you are able. The Bible Study is led by Middle members Catherine Torpey, an ordained minister, and Susanna Williams. **To RSVP, contact Rob Stephens at rstephens@middlechurch.org.**

The Butterfly Meal Needs You!

Sundays beginning April 23 • 9:00 AM, 10:00 AM, and 12:30 PM

Every Sunday before worship, from April 23 through November, a team of dedicated volunteers gather to make bag lunches. After worship, team members venture to local parks to distribute the lunch bags to anyone who is hungry for one. **To join the team, contact Cheryl Cochran at ccochran@middlechurch.org.**



Interfaith Playdate More than 60 children and 40 adults from our neighborhood mosque as well as synagogues, churches, and temples filled our 3rd and 4th floors with music, crafts, and getting-to-know-you games. Middle Church was thrilled to host Muslim, Jewish, Hari Krishna, and Christian children for our interfaith playdate on March 19. This lively gathering lives out your vision of Love.Period. Thank you, Middle Church!

Ushers & Greeters Appreciation & Training

Sunday, April 2 • 12:45–2:30 PM • 4th Floor Classroom

Many thanks to all who offer welcome to our Middle congregation and visitors. **YOU** know that first impressions matter! If you are a current usher or greeter, or if you would like to become an usher at Middle Church, please attend a highly informative usher and greeter appreciation and training with Lynn Min and Jacqui Lewis. We'll celebrate your good work and learn new protocols to share Middle's signature hospitality. **Please RSVP to Lynn Min at lmin@middlechurch.org.**

Soul Care = Yoga + Praying Dangerously

Wednesday, April 5 • 7:00–9:00 PM • Community Room

In these times, it is important to nurture our spirit, body, and mind with self-care and spiritual practices. A Middle member has gifted our community with an evening of a free yoga class and then a session of praying dangerously. Yoga will be offered by Claudia Debs of Sacred Vessel Yoga in the first hour. This class is open to all levels. After moving together in a form of physical prayer, we will conclude with a session of Praying Dangerously, led by Christina Fleming. **Please bring a yoga mat. Please RSVP to bit.ly/YogaAndPrayer or cleming@middlechurch.org.**

Just Faith: A Pentecost Bible Study

Wednesdays, April 19–May 31 • 6:30–8:00 PM • Parlor

The Acts of the Apostles is the genesis story of the Church and the Jesus movement. This is a tale with drama, personality clashes, cliques, political lines and theological debates—a little like communities today! It is also an organizer's handbook for building social movements. In this seven-week series on Wednesday evenings, we will ask and engage questions like: How did the first generation of Jesus followers live out the Good News, engage contradictions, build relationships and community across difference? Come learn, pray, and question with Rob Stephens to discover what fresh truths the ancient Book of Acts might hold for us today in our lives, work, families and faith journeys. A light supper will be served. **Please RSVP at bit.ly/JustFaithBible or rstephens@middlechurch.org.**



Peter Calderon

REVOLUTIONARY LOVE

Disruptive Ethics to Dismantle Racism

Now is the time for leaders—ethical leaders—to lead. Leaders who feel called and equipped to make America well, to make America just, to make America safe for all of those who are on the margins. Leaders impassioned to work for a healed and whole nation that is a faithful global neighbor. Join us as we strategize across generations at Middle Church in NYC, April 28–30, 2017. Speakers include:

- **William J. Barber II**, architect of the Moral Mondays Movement, and President of Repairers of the Breach, Inc.
- **Bill Moyers**, Emmy award-winning broadcast journalist for more than four decades and producer of the new documentary, *RIKERS*.
- **Valarie Kaur**, civil rights lawyer, Sikh activist, and filmmaker who uses storytelling for social change.
- **Brian D. McLaren**, activist and networker among innovative faith leaders, and author of *A New Kind of Christianity*, *A Generous Orthodoxy*, and *The Great Spiritual Migration*.
- **Zainab Salbi**, an Iraqi American author, activist, media commentator, and the founder and former CEO of Washington-based Women for Women International.
- **Miguel De La Torre**, author of *Liberating Sexuality: Justice Between the Sheets* and *The U.S. Immigration Crisis: Toward an Ethics of Place*.
- **Traci Blackmon**, a pastor near Ferguson, Missouri, acting executive director of UCC Justice and Witness Ministries, and prominent voice for social change.

For complete schedule and list of speakers, visit

<http://revolutionaryloveconference.com/>

Register at bit.ly/RevLove17

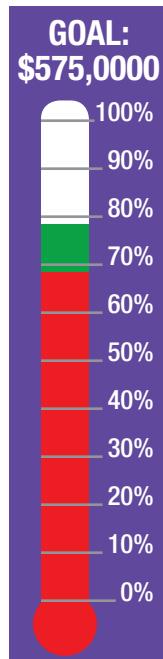
Partnership Update

You are so power-full, Middle Family. The events in this newsletter? YOU made them happen! Please continue to support our programs with your body, soul, and funds!

Our congregational budget reflects God's dream for racial, LGBTQ, and economic justice. We have from now until June 30 to raise the remaining funds to meet our \$575,000 goal. Will you help us complete the dream? At this writing, **we have raised \$389,307**—68% of our goal—and **we have pledges for 9% more**.

- **Donate now—visit bit.ly/power-love**
- **Make your pledge to Revolutionary Love—visit bit.ly/RevLovePledge**

Your may also send your donation in the envelope provided. Please consider a pledge today.



April

Check middlechurch.org for full details of all events.

Sundays

- **EASTER SUNRISE WORSHIP – APR 16** – 7:00–7:45 AM • Sanctuary
- **Butterfly Meal Prep – APR 23, 30** – 9:00 & 10:00 AM • Social Hall
- **Wee Care** (under age 4) – 9:30 AM–2:30 PM • 3rd Floor Wee Care
- **Lenten Bible Study – APR 2, 9** – 9:30–10:45 AM • Parlor
- **CELEBRATION! WORSHIP – APR 16, 30** – 9:30 AM • Sanctuary – For Easter and Conference, come at 9:30 to avoid the 11:15 crowds!
- **The Breakfast Club** (Gr. 7–12) – 10:00–11:00 AM • Offsite
- **CELEBRATION! WORSHIP** – 11:15 AM–12:30 PM • Sanctuary
- **The Ark** (Gr. K–6) – 11:30–12:30 PM • 3rd Floor • except first Sundays
- **Chat & Chew** – 12:30 PM • Social Hall
- **Family Room** (All Ages) – 12:30–2:30 PM • 3rd Floor Studio
- **In-the-Middle Choir Rehearsal – APR 9** – 12:30–1:00 PM • Parlor
- **Usher & Greeter Appreciation & Training – APR 2** – 12:45–2:30 PM
- **Village Chorus** (Ages 6–14) – 1:00–2:30 PM • Community Room
- **Reading the Bible from the Middle** – 1:30–2:30 PM • Sanctuary
- **Erasing Racism – APR 2** – 1:30–2:30 PM • 4th Floor Studio
- **Money Talks – APR 23** – 1:30–2:30 PM • 4th Floor Studio
- **Moms in the Middle – APR 23** – 1:30–2:30 PM • Parlor
- **CONFERENCE CLOSING WORSHIP – APR 30** – 6:30–7:30 PM • Sanctuary
- **AA/Big Book Meeting** – 7:00–8:00 PM • 4th Floor Studio

Mondays Church Office Closed April 17 for Easter Monday

- **Momentum Meals** – 11:00 AM–1:00 PM • Lunch and Food Pantry / 4:00–6:30 PM • Dinner and Food Pantry • Social Hall
- **Acting Class** – 6:30–8:00 PM • 3rd Floor Studio
- **NA/Village Spiritual Workshop** – 6:30–7:30 PM • 4th Floor Classroom
- **Storicity – APR 3, 24** – 6:45–9:00 PM • Parlor

Tuesdays

- **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

- **Soul Care – APR 5** – 7:00–9:00 PM • Community Room
- **In-the-Middle Choir Rehearsal – APR 12** – 6:30–9:30 PM • Sanctuary
- **Just Faith: Bible Study – APR 19, 26** – 6:30–8:00 PM • Parlor
- **Pub Theology – APR 26** – 7:00–8:30 PM • Jimmy's No. 43, 43 E. 7th
- **Meditation on the Lower East Side** – 7:00–8:30 PM • Parlor
- **NA/Our Whole Lives Ahead of Us** – 7:30–8:45 PM • 4th Floor Studio

Thursdays

- **MAUNDY THURSDAY SEDER WORSHIP – APR 13** – 6:30–7:30 PM
- **Creative Writing – 6:30–8:00 PM** • 4th Floor Studio
- **JJ Gospel Choir Rehearsal** – 7:00–8:30 PM • Community Room
- **AI-Anon – 7:30–9:00 PM** • 3rd Floor Studio

Fridays

- **CONFERENCE 2016: Revolutionary Love Begins! – APR 28** – 1:00 PM
- **Shul of NY Shabbat Services – APR 7, 21** – 6:30–8:30 PM • Social Hall
- **NA/It's About Change** – 6:30–8:00 PM • 3rd Floor Studio
- **GOOD FRIDAY WORSHIP – APR 14** – 7:00–8:00 PM • Sanctuary
- **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

- **NA/Meat and Potatoes** – 6:30–8:00 PM • 4th Floor Classroom
- **HOLY SATURDAY VIGIL – APR 15** – 7:00–8:00 PM • Sanctuary
- **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



Middle Collegiate Church

50 East 7th Street • New York, NY 10003



Holy Week at Middle Church

APRIL 9 — Palm Sunday Celebration! Worship • 11:15 AM — “Palms and Passion” music from Middle Church Choir, Manhattan Brass, and readings by Middle clergy.

APRIL 13 — Maundy Thursday Interfaith Seder Worship • 6:30 PM — Join Rob Stephens, JJ Gospel Choir, and the Shul of New York for music and communion.

APRIL 14 — Good Friday: Seven Lessons and Laments • 7:00 PM — Homilies from Middle clergy and guest Derrick Harkins with music from the In-the-Middle Choir.

APRIL 15 — Holy Saturday Vigil • 7:00 PM — Reflections and readings created by lay leaders with Lynn Min and music from Allison Mickelson.

APRIL 16 — Easter Sunday Sunrise Worship • 7:00 AM — A contemplative worship to begin the day with preacher Jacqui Lewis and music from Mark Rehnstrom.

APRIL 16 — Easter Sunday Celebration! Worship • 9:30 and 11:15 AM — Jacqui Lewis preaches with music from Middle Church Choir and JJ Gospel Choir.

APRIL 16 — Easter Egg Hunt • 10:45 AM and 12:30 PM — All children are welcome to our egg hunts after the worship celebrations.



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 **212-477-0666 EXT 318** 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.