



# middle notes

The Newsletter of Middle Collegiate Church

JANUARY 2018

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

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

**JANUARY 7**

**Epiphany**

“Transformation  
from the Inside Out”  
Rob Stephens, preacher  
Romans 12:1-8  
In-the-Middle Choir  
Communion

**JANUARY 14**

**Rev. Dr. Martin Luther  
King Jr Day:**

**Complete the Dream**  
“The Stuff of God’s Dream”  
Jacqui Lewis, preacher  
John 1:43-51  
Middle Church Choir  
Jerriese Johnson  
Gospel Choir



**Ruby Sales**

**“Redeem  
the Soul  
of America”**

**King Sunday  
January 14  
3:00-4:30 PM**

**Reserve at  
[bit.ly/Redeem\\_MCC](http://bit.ly/Redeem_MCC)**

**JANUARY 21**

“Place Your Life Before God”  
Christina Fleming, preacher  
Traditional Gospel Ensemble  
Village Chorus for Children  
and Youth

**JANUARY 28**

“Hook, Line, and Sinker”  
Jacqui Lewis, preacher  
Mark 1:14-20  
Middle Church Choir

## Redeeming the Soul of a Nation

I was on a field trip to a nature center outside of Chicago on that April day. My fourth-grade class at Gresham Elementary School had escaped our urban neighborhood of dark, red brick bungaloes set on little patches of green and gone to a nature center in the suburbs. We saw flowers blooming and learned how to speak about them in Latin.

Mr. Smith, our teacher, was a dreamy, chocolatey brown man who smiled all the time, a smile as bright as his highly shined shoes. Even when scolding rowdy tweens, his eyes kept the smile going. So when his face was crumpled, his eyes swollen, we knew something was wrong before he spoke to us.

On April 4, 1968, at about 6:00p, Mr. Smith gathered us together just before we boarded the bus home and said, “Children, I have terrible news for you. Dr. Martin Luther King has been shot. He was standing on the balcony of his motel with his friends when a gunman took his life.” Dr. King was dead, our teacher was weeping, and we were stunned into grief.

That night, Chicago was on fire. Even our pleasant South Side neighborhood erupted in violence. We could hear people shouting in the streets; some were shooting guns. My sister and I hid under our beds for a while, and I imagined, one month before my 9th birthday, that since Dr. King was dead, I was going to have to pick up his mantle and do his work. This was the beginning of my sense of call. I knew I’d join him in being a drum major for peace, that I’d work so that no matter the color of one’s skin, one could be loved, celebrated, and have enough.

Now, 50 years later, I am the Senior Minister of the church of my dreams, the church of Dr. King’s dream, the church of God’s dreams. In all of our ethnic and cultural diversity, in all of our sexual orientations and genders, in the wide breadth of our ages and the ways we see God through diverse eyes—I am so in love with us, so very called to the work we are doing to heal the nation, to redeem her soul.

And, 50 years after Dr. King’s death, I have a new friend, colleague, and partner in the move-

ment for love and justice. Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee alumna, Civil Rights activist and public theologian Ruby Nell Sales is coming to Middle Church. She will make her home here! Together, her non-profit SpiritHouse Project and Middle Church will form the The Center for Social and Spiritual Restoration. The center will be a national project that offers a common space where people of different social locations come together to address the spiritual and social impediments that stand in the way of up-building a beloved community and a more realized democracy that is both transformative and sustainable.

A few weeks ago, I was with Ruby in Charlottesville, listening to the way she speaks to people of all ethnicities. She calls them to action in her gentle voice, her brilliant insights pouring out of her like ginger tea. Strong, brewed with love. Meant for healing people. Meant for redeeming the soul of our nation.

Ruby has a wonderful spirituality, a deep religious soul, that she calls “black folk religion.” In a conversation with Krista Tippet, Ruby described an experience of realizing that God is always present, healing her, redeeming her soul:

“I was riding down the road one day in Washington, D.C. after having been at a demonstration against the war in Iraq. And suddenly, out of nowhere, I started crying, and I realized that God had been with me even when I hadn’t been with myself. And those moments made me really begin to seek, to go back to really think deeply about black folk religion and to really want to develop, in a very intentional way, an inner life that had to do with how I lived in the world.”

Ruby and I will offer our annual Martin Luther King, Jr. teach-in on January 14, 2017, at 3:00p. We will talk about black folk religion, about completing God’s dream, and about redeeming the soul of America. You won’t want to miss it.

*Toward the Love Revolution, and a healed world,  
Jacqui*

# Revolutionary Love in Action

## Responding to Puerto Rico

Middle Church congregants Edna Benitez and Michael Wiener traveled to Puerto Rico with a group from Fort Washington Collegiate Church in early December. Edna, Michael, and many Middle congregants have family in Puerto Rico still affected by the destruction of Hurricane Maria. The team distributed groceries and the supplies you donated in Miraflores, a poor, isolated rural town. Power continues to be out across most of the island. People in Miraflores DEEPLY appreciated the solar lamps and chargers. Michael returned the following week, with solar energy kits from Resilient Power Puerto Rico and personally installed one system at a church in Miraflores and one in Saltos. The church in Saltos feeds the community and provides supplies and medical care. Both Edna and Michael paid for their own travel so all of your donations would support the recovery efforts.



The Collegiate Church donated an initial \$10,000 to support Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Two \$4,000 water systems were purchased through Operation Oasis, and \$2,000 bought water filtration kits through Waves for Water. In a system-wide campaign in November, we raised \$5,000 at Fort Washington Church; \$4,000 at Intersections International; \$6,339 at Marble Church; \$22,423 at Middle Church; \$2,600 at West End Church. Then, the Outreach Committee of the Collegiate Church released \$15,000 in matching funds: \$5,000 for The Maria Fund and \$10,000 for Matria, an organization doing extensive work for the people of Miraflores. Visit our website for updates on our response efforts. Thank you for your love in action for Puerto Rico!

## Standing for LGBTQ Rights

Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis spoke outside of the Supreme Court as justices heard the oral arguments in *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission*. The case is about a baker who would not bake a wedding cake for a gay couple. Jacqui was a part of a coalition of human rights activists, clergy, and senators speaking out for LGBT rights. The decision of this case will have far-reaching consequences about whether businesses can discriminate based on religion.

"If religious freedom means we say no to our neighbor based on sexuality, race, or gender, that's not free. That actually costs something. And what it costs is humanity, it costs equality, it costs joy, it costs dignity and it costs a way of life. It costs our Constitu-



tion and the sum total of that cost is bigotry. So let's be honest, refusing someone a cake based on their sexuality is discrimination and religious bigotry. It's not religious freedom." Dr. Lewis said. "It's going to start with a cake for a gay couple and it's going to go to Muslims not being able to be served at a funeral home, or Jews not being able to be served at a nail salon." The ruling from the Supreme Court is expected in spring 2018. #OpentoAll

## Pageant Celebrates Our Diverse Community

Our children put a new twist on a Christmas pageant. Middle member Pam Edgar and staff Marte Samuelstuen wrote a script that cast the nativity characters based on who the children really are, not how they look. There were no rehearsals—the children we cast right on the spot, based on their unique personalities.

Marte asked which kids could be "vocal" and they were cast as angels who yelled, "DON'T BE AFRAID" whenever any character was afraid. The child who wanted to express joy became Mary. The child who always knew to do the right thing took the role of Joseph. The stage filled with shepherds (kids who could be scared and excited at the same time), animals, and a sparkling star. People of all ages on stage and in the pews wore crowns to claim their role as wise people. And we were all reminded—repeatedly!—not to be afraid. After all, God is with us!



**KING SUNDAY TEACH-IN:  
"Redeem the Soul of America" with Ruby Sales**  
**Sunday, January 14, 2018 • 3:00–4:30 PM**  
**FREE! Reserve at [bit.ly/Redeem\\_MCC](http://bit.ly/Redeem_MCC)**

## College-Age Students Get-Together

**Thursday, January 4 • 4:00 PM • Offsite**

Contact Marte Samuelstuen at [msamuelstuen@middlechurch.org](mailto:msamuelstuen@middlechurch.org) to learn more about a special January break get-together.

## Move Your Prayers

**Wednesday, January 10, 24 • 7:00–8:30 PM • Community Rm**

Nurture your body, mind, and spirit at a yoga class for all levels followed by a session of Praying Dangerously. **Please bring a yoga mat.** RSVP to Christina at [cleming@middlechurch.org](mailto:cleming@middlechurch.org).

## New Adventures

**Thursday, January 18 • 2:00–3:30 PM • Parlor**

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](mailto:rstephens@middlechurch.org).

## Middle Literary Magazine Needs You!

Submit your writing and/or art to our 7th annual Literary Magazine! The theme will be "Complete the Dream: Finish and Start." 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 January 14.**

## Spiritual Sounds of the East Village

**Sunday, January 28 • 5:00–7:00 PM • Sanctuary**

The Jerriese Johnson Gospel Choir will represent Middle Church at the annual Spiritual Sounds worship with our local Interfaith partners. Join the radically diverse faith traditions in our neighborhood for a collective celebration and worship. **FREE.**

## Revolutionary Love: Complete the Dream

**Friday, April 6–Sunday, April 8 at Middle Church**

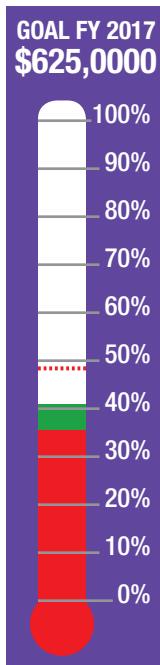
Join us as we strategize across generations at our annual conference, "Revolutionary Love: Complete the Dream." Confirmed speakers include Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, Valarie Kaur, Brian McLaren, Rev. Dr. Otis Moss III, and Ruby Sales.

**Register at [bit.ly/RevLove2018](http://bit.ly/RevLove2018).** Choose 1 General Admission ticket. Then, in the top right, click "Enter Promotional Code." **Enter the code Middle2018 to receive special discount rate of \$100 per ticket.**

## Partnership Update

Together, we are building a movement toward God's dream for a healed, whole, and just world. We have an offering goal of \$625,000 for July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018. **As of this writing, you have given \$221,558.27**—35.45% of our goal at 48% of the program year—and **we have pledges for 5% more.**

**Donate now—visit [bit.ly/power-love](http://bit.ly/power-love).** For your convenience, consider creating a recurring weekly donation.



# January

Check [middlechurch.org](http://middlechurch.org) for full details of all events.

### Sundays

- **Wee Care** (under age 4) – 8:30 AM–2:30 PM • *3rd Floor Nursery*
- **In-the-Middle Choir Rehearsal** – JAN 7 – 9:00–9:25 AM • *Sanctuary*
- **Family Room** (Grades K–5) – 8:30–9:30 AM • *3rd Floor Studio*
- **CELEBRATION! WORSHIP** – 9:30–10:45 AM • *Sanctuary*
- **BRUNCH in the Middle** – 10:50–11:40 AM • *Social Hall*
- **BIBLE in the Middle** (Adult Ed) – 10:50–11:40 AM • *4th Floor*
- **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 Fl. Classroom*
- **CELEBRATION! WORSHIP** – 11:45 AM–1:00 PM • *Sanctuary*
- **Family Room** (Grades K–5) – 1:00–2:30 PM • *3rd Floor Studio*
- **Middle Project Young Adult Leadership Lab** – JAN 28 – 1:00–5:00 PM
- **Moms in the Middle** – JAN 7 – 1:15–2:30 PM • *Parlor*
- **Dads in the Middle** – JAN 7 – 1:15–2:30 PM • *Conference Room*
- **Young Adults Small Group** – JAN 7 – 1:15–2:30 PM • *4th Floor Studio*
- **King Sunday Teach-in: "Redeem the Soul of America" with Ruby Sales** (Adult Ed) – 3:00–4:30 PM • *Sanctuary*
- **Village Chorus for Children & Youth** (Ages 6–17) – 1:15–2:30 PM
- **AA/Big Book Meeting** – 4:00–5:00 PM • *4th Floor Studio*
- **Spiritual Sounds of the East Village** – JAN 28 – 5:00–7:00 PM • *Sanctuary* — **FREE!**

### Mondays

- **Momentum Meal** – 5:30–6:00 PM • *Social Hall* • *Resumes JAN 8*
- **Acting Class** – 6:30–8:00 PM • *3rd Floor Studio* • *Resumes JAN 8*
- **NA/Village Spiritual Workshop** – 6:30–7:30 PM • *4th Floor Classroom* • *Resumes JAN 8*

**The Church Office will be closed January 1–2 for the New Year holiday.**

**The Church House will be open on the evening of January 2 for scheduled 12-step programs.**

### 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

- **Move Your Prayers** – JAN 10, 24 – 7:00–8:30 PM • *Community Room*

### Thursdays

- **New Adventures** – JAN 18 – 2:00–3:30 PM • *Parlor*
- **College-Age Students Get-Together** – JAN 4 – 4:00 PM • *Offsite*
- **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

- **Annual Spiritual Retreat: Transformation From the Inside Out** – JAN 5–7 – 6:00 PM – *Offsite* – Registered participants should meet at Sanctuary at 6:00 PM. The bus will depart promptly at 6:30 PM. The bus will return to Middle Church on Sunday, January 8 at about 5:00 PM.
- **Shul of NY Shabbat Services** – JAN 5, 19 – 6:30–8:30 PM • *Social Hall*
- **NA/It's About Change** – 6:30–8:00 PM • *3rd Floor Studio*
- **NA/Finally Found a Home** – 8:00–9:30 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*



# Middle Collegiate Church

50 East 7th Street • New York, NY 10003

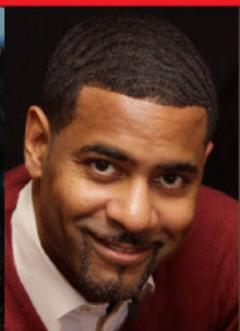
# REVOLUTIONARY LOVE



William Barber



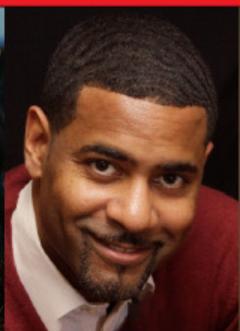
Jacqui Lewis



Brian McLaren



Valarie Kaur



Otis Moss III



Ruby Sales

Complete the Dream | April 6-8, 2018 (NYC)

Register at [bit.ly/RevLove2018](http://bit.ly/RevLove2018)



## 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, we affirm 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.