



middle notes

The Newsletter of Middle Collegiate Church

DECEMBER 2017

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

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

DECEMBER 3

First Sunday of Advent
"Waiting for the Very Good
News"

Lisa Sharon Harper, preacher
Genesis 1:26-31
Middle Church Choir
Communion
Lighting the Candle of Hope

DECEMBER 10

Second Sunday of Advent
"One Day, When the Glory
Comes"
Jacqui Lewis, preacher
Isaiah 40:1-11
Jerriese Johnson
Gospel Choir
Lighting the Candle of Peace

DECEMBER 17

Third Sunday of Advent
Gift to Bring Sunday
"The Flesh Became Word"
Jacqui Lewis, preacher
John 1:1-8
In-the-Middle Choir
Village Chorus for Children
and Youth
Lighting the Candle of Love

DECEMBER 24

Fourth Sunday of Advent
"When You Believe"
Sermon Dance
Isaiah 9:2-7; Luke 2:1-20
Special Music
Lighting the Candle of Joy

DECEMBER 31

Michael Piazza, preacher
Special Music

CHRISTMAS EVE
Sunday, December 24

7:00 PM
A CLASSICAL CHRISTMAS
Middle Church Choir
The Manhattan Brass

9:00 PM
A GOSPEL CHRISTMAS
JJ Gospel Choir

11:00 PM
**A GOSPEL MIDNIGHT
CHRISTMAS**

Photo of Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis

The Dream Made Flesh

The Life-Light

*The Word was first,
the Word present to God,
God present to the Word.
The Word was God,
in readiness for God from day one.*

*Everything was created through him;
nothing—not one thing!—
came into being without him.*

*What came into existence was Life,
and the Life was Light to live by.
The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness;
the darkness couldn't put it out.*

*The Word became flesh and blood,
and moved into the neighborhood.
We saw the glory with our own eyes,
the one-of-a-kind glory,
like Father, like Son,
Generous inside and out,
true from start to finish.*

John 1:1-5, 14

I absolutely love the poem/hymn that begins John's gospel. The version in Gene Peterson's *The Message* Bible is particularly lovely. Read these strophes, aloud if you can, and hear the beauty.



By *the Word*, of course, John means, Jesus—Rabbi Yeshua, whom we call the Christ; the Messiah. The anointed one—that's what *Christ* and *Messiah* mean. The one anointed to bring light into the world, light so stunning that the shadowy things—like violence, lies, and the abuse of power—can't snuff out the Light. The Life-Light that shows us the heart of God, that models for us the very best of humanity.

John has no baby Jesus in his gospel, no manger, no angels singing, no shepherds in awe. He just says Word is Light is Life.

I believe *The Word* is God's Dream, articulated in a particular life. The last will be first. Women matter. Those on the margins matter. Those with broken hearts will be blessed and healed. Those blind to God at work in the world will have their eyes opened. People will have enough; captives will be released. Little children teach us what the Reign of God is like. We can make heaven on earth; that is more than a prayer.

During Advent, we will sing, pray, dance, and preach about God's Dream, and how Jesus is Dream-Made-Flesh. We will reflect on how each of us is called to put flesh on God's Dream, because we are God's hands, feet, and heartbeat.

Middle Family, we are Dream Weavers. And we are Light.

You are Loved SO much,
Jacqui



Thank you to all the Middle members who traveled to the Unity March for Puerto Rico in Washington DC! Support the effort by asking Congress to Rescind the Jones-Shafroth Act, Cancel Puerto Rico's Immoral Debt, and Approve Federal Resources to Rebuild Puerto Rico—sign the petition at bit.ly/JusticePR.



Fundraising for Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands continues. The Collegiate Church of New York made an initial donation of \$10,000 for water filtration in Puerto Rico, and pledged to match each dollar Middle Church raised up to an additional \$15,000. Thanks to your generosity and efforts like our MOSAIC concert, we have surpassed our goal for a total of \$20,517.54, bringing the overall total in matched and raised funds to \$45,517.54. We will continue to collect donations until December 3.

ADVENT BIBLE IN THE MIDDLE

**From Ashes to Garlands,
from Mourning to Gladness,
from Faint Spirits to Shouts of Praise**

Sundays, December 3, 10, 17, 24 • 10:50–11:40 AM • Parlor

Jesus loved it. The New Testament is chock full of quotations from it. Shouldn't you get to know the Book of *Isaiah*? *Isaiah* has shaped our understanding of the meaning of Jesus' birth and ministry, and its prophetic words gave hope to the Israelites who yearned for justice: "Behold," *Isaiah* cries, "The spirit of God is upon me! God has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners."

Our Bible in the Middle Advent Series will focus mostly on this ancient prophetic book from the Hebrew Scriptures. We will consider the meaning for ourselves today of its ancient cries against injustice, its proclamations of God's imminent salvation, and its call for our participation in society's redemption as well as our own. Led by Catherine Torpey.



Our Children's Multicultural Book Fair gathered many from our East Village Interfaith Group for an afternoon of fun. Children and their families shared activities, enjoyed readings, and sampled many books featuring the diverse cultures of our city.



Béatrice de Séa

Reserve your spot for **REVOLUTIONARY LOVE!** We hope to see to you at our conference, **Revolutionary Love: Complete the Dream**, April 6–8, 2018 at Middle Church. Speakers include Ruby Sales, William Barber, Valarie Kaur, Brian McLaren, Jacqui Lewis, and others. **Register at 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.**

Bereavement Group

Sundays, December 3, 10, 17, 24 • 11:45 AM–1:00 PM • Parlor

For Advent, Middle will offer a four-week Bereavement Group for those in our community who have experienced the death of a loved one in the past few years. The group will meet weekly and be facilitated by seminarian Amo Ngoepe, a student in Psychology and Religion at Union Theological Seminary, with support by therapists and counselors at Middle Church. The group will be advised by Middle member Lynn Preston, MA, MS, LP, a focusing-oriented relational psychoanalyst, teacher, and supervisor. For more info, contact Rob at rstephens@middlechurch.org.

Sermon Talkbacks for Advent

Sundays, December 3, 17, 24 • 1:15–2:15 PM • Social Hall

Watch for a series of sermon talkbacks this month after the 11:45 worship celebration. The series begins on December 3 with guest preacher Lisa Sharon Harper sharing thoughts on Advent and justice.

Winter Coat and Sock Drive

Sunday, December 10 • 10:45–11:30 AM, 1:00–1:30 PM

Please bring a winter coat and new socks for Middle's Winter Coat and Sock Drive to the Social Hall on Sunday, December 10! We are accepting coats that are either new or dry-cleaned, and new socks to distribute later in the month. Larger sizes—both male and female—are the most in-demand. To volunteer to sort donations, please contact Rob at rstephens@middlechurch.org.

Security and Violence Prevention Training

Sunday, December 10 • 1:00–2:00 PM • Sanctuary

Ushers, greeters, congregational leaders, and Consistory members are invited to attend this important security training as we prepare to welcome many holiday visitors.

Advent New Member Orientation

Sundays, December 10, 17 • 10:50–11:40 AM • Conference Rm

Whether you worship at 9:30 or 11:45, join Jacqui and Rob for a special two-part New Member Orientation between the two morning worship celebrations. New members will be welcomed at both worship celebrations on December 17. For more info and to RSVP, contact Rachel at rhippert@middlechurch.org.

Move Your Prayers

Wednesday, December 13 • 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.

New Adventures

Thursday, December 21 • 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.

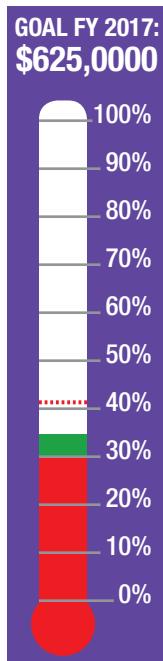
Middle Literary Magazine Needs You!

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 by January 14.**

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 \$186,245.81**—29.8% of our goal at 42% of the program year—and **we have pledges for 5% more.**

Donate now—visit bit.ly/power-love. For convenience, consider a recurring donation.



December

Check 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** – DEC 17 – 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
- **New Member Orientation** – DEC 10, 17 – 10:50–11:40 AM • Conf Rm
- **BRUNCH in the Middle** – 10:50–11:40 AM • Social Hall
- **Advent 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
- **Winter Coat and Sock Drive** – DEC 10 – 10:50–11:40 AM • Social Hall
- **In-the-Middle Choir Rehearsal** – DEC 10 – 11:00–11:30 AM • Parlor
- **CELEBRATION! WORSHIP** – 11:45 AM–1:00 PM • Sanctuary
- **Bereavement Group** – DEC 3, 10, 17, 24 – 11:45 AM–1:00 PM • Parlor
- **Family Room** (Grades K–5) – 1:00–2:30 PM • 3rd Floor Studio
- **Winter Coat and Sock Drive** – DEC 10 – 1:00–1:30 PM • Social Hall
- **Security Training** – DEC 10 – 1:00–2:00 PM • Sanctuary
- **Sermon Talkback** – DEC 3, 17, 24 – 1:15–2:30 PM • Social Hall
- **Moms in the Middle** – DEC 3 – 1:15–2:30 PM • Parlor
- **Dads in the Middle** – DEC 3 – 1:15–2:30 PM • Conference Room
- **Young Adults Small Group** – DEC 3 – 1:15–2:30 PM • 4th Floor Studio
- **In-the-Middle Choir Rehearsal** – DEC 31 – 1:15–1:45 PM • Parlor
- **Money Talks** – DEC 17 – 1:15–2:30 PM • Community Room
- **Village Chorus for Children & Youth** (Ages 6–17) – 1:15–2:30 PM
- **Holiday Readings & Play** – DEC 3 – 2:30–4:30 PM • Sanctuary
- **MOSAIC Benefit Concert** – DEC 17 – 2:30–4:00 PM • Sanctuary
- **AA/Big Book Meeting** – 4:00–5:00 PM • 4th Floor Studio
- **CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP** – DEC 24 – 7:00–8:00 PM • Sanctuary
- **CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP** – DEC 24 – 9:00–10:00 PM • Sanctuary
- **CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP** – DEC 24 – 11:00–11:45 PM • Sanctuary
- **JAZZY NEW YEAR WORSHIP** – DEC 31 – 6:00–7:00 PM • Sanctuary

Mondays

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

Church Office will be closed December 25–26 for Christmas

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** – DEC 6 – 7:00–8:30 PM • 4th Floor Studio
- **Move Your Prayers** – DEC 13 – 7:00–8:30 PM • Community Room

Thursdays

- **New Adventures** – DEC 21 – 2:00–3:30 PM • Parlor
- **JJ Gospel Choir Rehearsal** – 7:00–8:30 PM • Community Room
- **AI-Anon** – 7:30–9:00 PM • 3rd Floor Studio

Fridays

- **World AIDS Day Prayer Time** – DEC 1 – 12:00–2:00 PM • Sanctuary
- **Shul of NY Shabbat Services** – DEC 1, 15 – 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

10TH ANNUAL SPIRITUAL RETREAT

Transformation: From the Inside Out

Friday, January 5–Sunday, January 7

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

Gift to Bring Sunday: Powered by Love

December 17, 2017

You are Revolutionary Love. You are powering love!
Your generosity will help us meet our mid-year goal
of \$312,500 (50%) by December 31.

Please consider making a year-end donation in worship
on December 17 or online by December 31.

middlechurch.org/connect/donate



Middle Collegiate Church

welcoming • artistic • inclusive • bold

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

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FOLLOW US! facebook.com/MiddleCollegiateChurch

twitter.com/middlechurch

youtube.com/MiddleNYC

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.



Middle Collegiate Church

welcoming • artistic • inclusive • bold

December 2017

Beloved,

Team Middle thanks YOU for your incredible generosity in powering #RevolutionaryLove this year. YOU are what gives Middle life—you are the heartbeat.

Here's just one story from a member of our Middle family:

Since 2001 I have called Middle Collegiate Church my home. My wife, Heidi, and I attended a "Peace Vigil" shortly after 9/11. We were surprised to discover a truly diverse congregation steeped in the Arts, but we were also captivated by Middle's commitment to community service and social justice. My involvement and engagement was a slow progression.

I'm amazed how quickly Middle Church springs into action during times of crisis. In the catastrophic aftermath of Hurricane Maria, Middle responded immediately. Witnessing the destruction in Puerto Rico and nearby islands compelled me to join the Relief Fund Task Force. Middle's initial response focused on a basic need, providing life-saving clean water filtering units. In addition, since only 10% of children are currently able to attend school we assembled 60 care packages with inspirational notes written by the children to their peers in Puerto Rico. We also traveled to DC, partnering with the Unity March for Puerto Rico, where we urged Congress to repeal the Jones-Shafroth Act which has restrained the island's economic progress for decades.

Early this month, I will be travelling to Puerto Rico with four other Collegiate Church representatives. Besides carrying supplies, the task force's goal is to reassure our congregations that 100% of the funds donated to the relief effort is supporting communities across the island.

In order to help sustain all of the important services that Middle offers, I've enrolled in the recurring online donation system. I know that my donations support social justice initiatives, crucial humanitarian efforts, and community projects that are the cornerstones of my faith. I volunteer and give monetarily but receive so much more than I give. I'm fortunate to have joined the movement at Middle Church and found a home. —Edna, Middle Church Deacon

Every year, Americans spend \$450 billion on Christmas gifts. This Christmas, won't you celebrate in a different way? Give something of the greatest value—yourself. Please give your time, talent, and treasure to complete God's dream for everyone to have enough. Enough clean water. Enough supplies to learn. Enough food to eat. Enough love to worship fully. Enough justice, policies, and resources to live, learn, and love.

This Gift to Bring season, will you follow in the WAY of Rabbi Jesus whom we call the Christ and bring your whole self? We are asking everyone to:

- **Sign up for a weekly online recurring gift.** Visit bit.ly/power-love AND
- **Join a ministry**—a doing or being group, become an usher, volunteer to feed the hungry, join a task force, or participate in a leadership lab. Find a ministry and make a difference.
- **Pray for Middle Church and the powerful work we are seeking to do**, and include in those prayers your own part of this miracle we call Middle.

Friend, YOU are the gift to this Christmas season. Thank you for being the vibrant beating heart of our movement for love and justice.

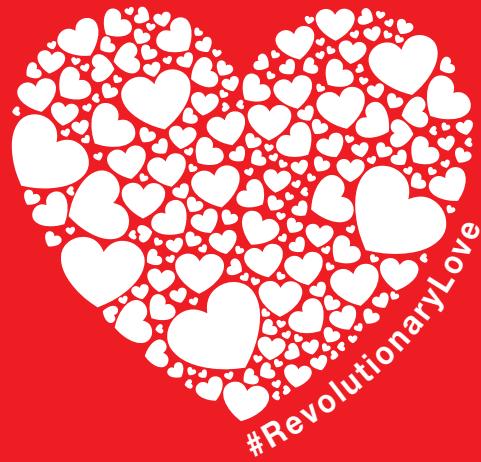
In #RevolutionaryLove,

Rev. Dr. Jacqueline Lewis
Senior Minister

P.S. Make a hassle-free recurring weekly gift online by Gift to Bring Sunday on December 17, 2017. Simply visit bit.ly/power-love

P.P.S. Get involved—visit middlechurch.org/connect. Learn more about our relief efforts in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands at bit.ly/help-PR.

Advent at Middle Church



FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT – Sunday, December 3

- **Celebration! Sunday Morning Worship at 9:30 AM and 11:45 AM** “Waiting for the Very Good News” • Lisa Sharon Harper, preacher Genesis 1:26-31 • Middle Church Choir • Communion • Lighting the Advent Candle of Hope
- **Advent BIBLE in the Middle (Adult Education) at 10:50–11:40 AM** “From Ashes to Garlands, from Mourning to Gladness, from Faint Spirits to Shouts of Praise” A study of the Book of *Isaiah*.
- **Sermon Talkback for Advent at 1:15–2:30 PM**
A series of sermon talkbacks after the 11:45 worship celebration. Today: guest preacher Lisa Sharon Harper
- **Holiday Readings and Play at 2:30–4:30 PM**
Middle Players & Writers cordially invite you to our holiday readings and original play. Enjoy the creative fruits of our writing and acting classes, with some holiday spice! Readings 2:30 PM; Play 3:30 PM.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT – Sunday, December 10

- **Celebration! Sunday Morning Worship at 9:30 AM and 11:45 AM** “One Day, When the Glory Comes” • Jacqui Lewis, preacher Isaiah 40:1-11 • Jerriese Johnson Gospel Choir • Lighting the Candle of Peace
- **Advent BIBLE in the Middle (Adult Education) at 10:50–11:40 AM** “From Ashes to Garlands, from Mourning to Gladness, from Faint Spirits to Shouts of Praise” A study of the Book of *Isaiah*.
- **Advent New Member Orientation - Part 1 at 10:50–11:40 AM**
Whether you worship at 9:30 or 11:45, you can join Jacqui and Rob for a special two-part New Member Orientation between the two Sunday morning worship celebrations.
- **Winter Coat and Sock Drive at 10:45–11:30 AM, 1:00–1:30 PM**
Bring new or dry-cleaned coats and new socks. To volunteer to sort donations, please contact Rob at rstephens@middlechurch.org.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT – Gift to Bring Sunday, December 17

- **Celebration! Sunday Morning Worship at 9:30 AM and 11:45 AM** “The Flesh Became Word” • Jacqui Lewis, preacher John 1:1–8 • In-the-Middle Choir • Village Chorus for Children and Youth • Lighting the Candle of Love • Christmas Pageant
- **Advent BIBLE in the Middle (Adult Education) at 10:50–11:40 AM** “From Ashes to Garlands, from Mourning to Gladness, from Faint Spirits to Shouts of Praise” A study of the Book of *Isaiah*.
- **Advent New Member Orientation - Part 2 at 10:50–11:40 AM**
Join Jacqui and Rob for Part 2 of a special New Member Orientation between the two Sunday morning worship celebrations.
- **Sermon Talkback for Advent at 1:15–2:30 PM**
A series of sermon talkbacks after the 11:45 worship celebration.
- **A MOSAIC CHRISTMAS at 2:30 PM**
Join Matthew Johnson Harris and friends for a musical afternoon to benefit the Muslim Community Network. • \$20 donation.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT – Sunday, December 24

- **Celebration! Sunday Morning Worship at 9:30 AM and 11:45 AM** “When You Believe” Sermon Dance • Isaiah 9:2–7; Luke 2:1–20 • Special Music Lighting the Candle of Joy
- **Advent BIBLE in the Middle (Adult Education) at 10:50–11:40 AM** “From Ashes to Garlands, from Mourning to Gladness, from Faint Spirits to Shouts of Praise” A study of the Book of *Isaiah*.
- **Sermon Talkback for Advent at 1:15–2:30 PM**
A series of sermon talkbacks after the 11:45 worship celebration.

If you can't be with us on Christmas Eve, watch the live webcast at 7:00 and 9:00 PM on middlechurch.org!

CHRISTMAS EVE – Sunday, December 24

- **A Brassy, Classy Christmas Candlelight Worship at 7:00 PM** Middle Church Choir • The Manhattan Brass • Jacqui Lewis, homily
- **Sing Joy! A Gospel Christmas Candlelight Worship at 9:00 PM** Jerriese Johnson Gospel Choir • Jacqui Lewis, homily
- **A Gospel Midnight Christmas Candlelight Worship at 11:00 PM** Music from Dionne McClain-Freeney • Jacqui Lewis, homily

The Church Office will be closed December 26–27.

NEW YEAR'S EVE DAY – Sunday, December 31

- **Celebration! Sunday Morning Worship at 9:30 AM and 11:45 AM** Michael Piazza, preacher • Special Music • Carol Sing
- **JAZZY NEW YEAR – Sunday, December 31 at 6:00 PM**
A jazzy tribute to ring in the year • Michael Piazza, homily • Music from Dionne McClain-Freeney

Order Memorial Poinsettias for the Sanctuary this Christmas Season

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

Deadline – Sunday, December 17, 2017

Purchase online at bit.ly/poinsettia-2017

Or mail your payment in the enclosed envelope