



middle notes

The Newsletter of Middle Collegiate Church

MAY 2014

Visit middlechurch.org
for live worship webcasts

[Sunday Morning
Worship at 11:15 AM](#)

MAY 4

VISION SUNDAY

“Open Our Eyes”

Jacqui Lewis, preacher

Family Worship

Middle Church Choir

Communion

MAY 11

“Bread Enough”

Adriene Thorne, preacher

Middle Church Choir

MCJJ Gospel Choir

MAY 18

“The Tao of Jesus”

Chad Tanaka Pack,

preacher

Middle Church Choir

MCJJ Gospel Choir

Welcoming New Members

MAY 25

“Worshippers of an

Unknown God”

Chad Tanaka Pack,

preacher

Middle Church Choir

[Art & Soul Sunday
Worship at 6:00 PM](#)

MAY 4

“Doubting Like Thomas”

Jim Kast-Keat, preacher

Allison Mickelson & the

Middle Community Chorus

Communion

MAY 11

“That’s Some CRAZY

Faith!”

Jacqui Lewis, preacher

Cassandra Kellam, Dionne

McClain-Freeney, & the

Middle Community Chorus

MAY 18

“Believe Me”

Adriene Thorne, preacher

Cassandra Kellam, Dionne

McClain-Freeney, & the

Middle Community Chorus

Welcoming New Members

MAY 25

“An Unknown God”

Jim Kast-Keat, preacher

Dionne McClain-Freeney

& the Middle Community

Chorus

Dream a Little Dream with Me...

“Without a vision, the people perish.” This is what the writer of Proverbs wrote. Or so I thought. A better translation is “Without prophetic vision, the people run wild, and cast off restraint.”

Oh how I dream of visions that make us run wild. I want us to go crazy with visions of a healed world. I want us wild with imagination that we can heal what is broken in our culture, that we can cure our own stories, that we can partner to transform the world with the power of the Holy.

Can you see hundreds of children and youth learning, dancing, singing, and growing at the place where art and justice meet—in our new space—mentored by loving adults? Can you see the Freedom School helping them come home to themselves?

Can you see artists and activists, poets and prophets, educators and entrepreneurs in a learning community for leaders, taking courses about life and Spirit, supporting each other as they work for change?

Can you see our dynamic, creative worship healing our souls and inspiring us to heal the world? Can you see enough space for all of us to gather so we can encounter the Holy? Can you see it broadcast to the queer teen in Idaho who does not believe they are beloved by God and to the preacher in the Netherlands who needs refreshment for her soul?

Can you see the Soul Food Truck passing out hot meals when it is cold outside, and can you see the Butterfly meals delivered to the parks in the warmth? Can you see clergy and lay people working to rebuild Sandy damage, standing in for a living wage and paid sick leave, and working to make sure that everyone has enough?

Can you see us marching down Fifth Avenue for Pride, and can you see us working for marriage equality for the whole nation? Can you see 200 people attending our conference in April to work toward a multiracial future freed of racism?

Can you see our congregation, full of joyful people, laughing, hugging, passing the peace? Can you see us comforting each other in the tough times, in the turbulent times, praying for each

other and holding up each other? Can you see us having faith enough for each other, encouraging each other, supporting each other, bearing burdens together and celebrating our successes?

Can you see a church full of volunteers, all with gifts to use to grow the Reign of God, teaching, leading worship, caring for children, making sandwiches, serving food, making art, calling on the sick, working for justice, making it happen?

This is what we do, right now. These are the plans we have laid out for our immediate future. We make this happen, together, with our time and our talents and our treasure.

I wonder what other dreams God is planting in our souls?

Sunday, May 4, is Vision and Volunteer Sunday. After our morning worship celebration and during Encore! at Art & Soul, we will share visions, dream dreams, and celebrate the work our volunteers do day in and day out to make Middle Church what it is. If you are a volunteer, please plan to be here. If you are a dreamer, bring your imagination with you.

I hope our visions are prophetic and aspirational. I pray our dreams are wild and unrestrained. I imagine the plans we will make together blessed by Holy, fueled by love-in-action.

Oh how blessed we are with gifts to use to heal our souls and the world. Come Sunday, and dream a little dream with me.

*I love you!
Jacqui*



Jacqui Lewis is Senior Minister at Middle Collegiate Church.

Vision and Volunteer Sunday — May 4!

Called Out

The night before my ordination I went outside to be alone and pray, asking God to bless “imperfect me.” I also opened myself up to God, offering myself to God’s service and to take me wherever and however my gifts would be best be used. In this prayer, I felt something stir in me, something I could not name.

In the months that followed my ordination, this stirring grew stronger and I could start to feel its shape and to hear God’s Spirit. I have been in deep conversation with Jacqui and the consistory about this stirring, and it has been shown to me through long hours of prayer that God is calling me out of Middle Church, and to return to a place where my gifts for teaching and pastoral community organizing can be united.

I deeply love you, Middle Church, and am exceedingly grateful for you. I can think of no better congregation that seeks God’s justice, grace, and love in our world than you. And the same goes for my colleagues, some of the most outstanding and gifted people I know.

My last day of pastoral ministry at Middle Church will be on May 4, but God willing, I will be back to visit. I will pray for you—always—and I am assured by God that “the One who began a good work among you will bring it to completion...” (Philippians 1.6).

You are loved more than you could ever ask or imagine.

Trish

Trish Sheffield will be back on June 1, when the Consistory and staff celebrate her after the morning worship celebration.

Middle Members and Volunteering

Reflections BY SHARI LYNETTE CARPENTER

... So what you have to understand from the outset is I’ve always considered myself spiritual. Spiritual, not religious. But I had started to wonder what it might feel like to bring my spirituality into a community. But it’d have to be a very special community; kind of like a good homemade stew, with a little pinch of this, a little dollop of that but not too much of that other stuff. ...

And Middle Collegiate embodied that mix I thought I might be looking for. As it opened itself to me and I opened myself to it, I was constantly surprised by both of us. Surprised because I’d always thought or felt that pastors were somehow superior to the congregations they were leading. I found great comfort in and connection to the pastors at Middle who shared their humanity, their struggles, their personal stories, their innate human beingness. Giving us congregants permission, by example, to be o.k. with our own human beingness. Surprised because I decided to become a member and get involved.

I volunteered in the Clothing Closet and with Butterfly, the feeding ministry. But what I most wanted to do, craved to do was use my particular gifts, my creative voice, the most Shari thing about Shari to give to this community that was giving so much to me.

Directing the “We Are the Ones” music video was that perfect opportunity. It forced me out of my comfort zone in the background and into a position of leadership ... in a church ... say what? It allowed me to truly bring church into my life and my life into my church.

And Tituss’ beautiful song ... moves and inspires me. It is an anthem. It speaks not only to all the work Middle does in the world but to what we all are capable of doing when we use ourselves and our gifts in the world.

What You Do BY ROD OLSON

I must admit that I never really thought about my own time spent at Middle Church as “volunteering.” I grew up in a congregation that never used the word *volunteer* when it came to doing work for the church. We “just did” because “that is what you do.” I was raised with the sense of ownership of my church and that has carried with me to Middle.

I have a strong memory from my childhood that, once a month, the women of the church would rotate their time cleaning the church. I remember this because the mothers in the team would bring their children. The job of the kids—my job—was to dust the pews. We had a maintenance man who kept the church clean, but the women would do more detailed work. If they couldn’t attend, they ensured that someone went in their place. Sometimes I would hear that “too many showed up tonight.” The cleanings were also social events. The women took charge of keeping their church exceptionally clean: an ownership.

Our reality in New York is that we are all strapped for time. I suspect that we all want “to do,” to have “an ownership” of Middle Church, but we also have considerable time constraints. I travel a lot for my career. This prevents me from the type of involvement that I would like to have with Middle. As we say, “I am now between jobs” and with time on my hands, I contacted Ellen Matlach one day and asked if there was anything I could do. Turns out, there is an comprehensive list of Volunteer Opportunities in the sanctuary and on the website with needs. So, rather than depilling my sweaters again, I started contacting Rachel Hippert to let her know when I have time available for church work, and she lets me know what needs to be done, and when.

I have time now for this; maybe someday I won’t have as much time. But, I am taking care of Middle Church with the time I do have available. And, it is not a matter of big blocks of time: an hour here, an afternoon there. Each time I take on a project for Middle, I feel ownership.

And, I am “just doing” for my church, because “that is what you do.”

For a complete list of Volunteer Opportunities
at Middle Collegiate Church, visit our website listing:
<http://www.middlechurch.org/connect/volunteer>

Adult Education in May

Sundays • 1:00 PM • Ukrainian Restaurant, 140 2nd Ave.

Intercultural Skills Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "It is appalling that the most segregated hour of Christian America is eleven o'clock on Sunday morning." While Middle Church is an outlier to this statement, this fact is far too prevalent in our world today. Throughout the month of May we will move beyond black and white as we explore intercultural skills in a multicultural world and ways that community organizing can create social change.

- **May 4** Intercultural Skills: Creating the World We Want – Vision Sunday chat and breakout groups – *Middle Church staff*
- **May 11** Intercultural Skills: Multicultural World – Beyond Black and White – *Jim Kast-Keat*
- **May 18** Intercultural Skills: Community Organizing – *Christina Fleming, Anurag Gupta*

Credo "Credo" is the Latin word meaning "I believe." Once a year we will create space to explore and articulate our own personal credo, asking not only what you believe but why and how you believe it as well. This will be an interactive, engaging, and artistic education experience.

- **May 25** Credo – *Jim Kast-Keat*

Sunday Literary Magazine Now Available

The third issue of *Sunday*, Middle's very own literary and arts magazine, is now available for sale at the church. The editors, Carol Wierzbicki and Harold Slazer, thank all the writers and artists who contributed their wonderful work! Also check it out online at <http://www.middlechurch.org/about/news/sunday-a-magazine-of-the-arts-at-middle-collegiate-church>.

The Butterfly Meal Needs You!

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

Every Sunday before worship, from April through November, a team of dedicated volunteers gather to make bag lunches. After worship some team members venture to local parks to hand out the lunch bags to anyone who is hungry for one. The team needs more help as more bag lunches are needed. Open to all ages.

Pub Theology

**Tuesday, May 6 • 7:00–8:00 PM • Swift Hibernian Lounge
34 East 4th Street between Lafayette Street and Bowery**

Gather on the first Tuesday of each month to enjoy good drinks and good conversation about God, life, and everything in between. For more information or to RSVP, contact Jim Kast-Keat at jimkastkeat@middlechurch.org.

Young Adult Bible Study

Tuesdays, May 13 and 27 • 7:00 PM • offsite

Join a small group of young adults (ages 20–40) as we reflect on the Bible and our lives. Come prepared to share your thoughts and your story as we explore the Bible and pray together. For more information, the location, and to RSVP, contact Jim Kast-Keat at jimkastkeat@middlechurch.org.

May

Check middlechurch.org for full details of all events.

Sundays Before the Worship Celebration

- **Butterfly Prep** – 9:00 & 10:00 AM • 122 2nd
- **Care Corner with Social Worker** – 9:30 AM–3:00 PM • 122 2nd
- **MAY 18 – New Member Orientation** – 10:00 AM or 5:00 PM • 122 2nd
- **Wee Care** (under age 4) – 10:00 AM–2:30 PM • 122 2nd
- **Junior High** (grades 7–8) – 10:00 AM • 122 2nd

Sunday Morning Worship Celebrations at 11:15 AM

If you can't be here in person visit middlechurch.org for the live webcast

- **MAY 4 – VISION AND VOLUNTEER SUNDAY** • "Open Our Eyes" • Jacqui Lewis, preacher • Family Worship • Middle Church Choir • Communion
- **MAY 11** – "Bread Enough" • Adriene Thorne, preacher • Middle Church Choir • MCJJ Gospel Choir
- **MAY 18** – "The Tao of Jesus" • Chad Tanaka Pack, preacher • Middle Church Choir • MCJJ Gospel Choir • Welcoming New Members
- **MAY 25** – "Worshippers of an Unknown God" • Chad Tanaka Pack, preacher • Middle Church Choir

Sundays After the Worship Celebration

- **Children's Sunday School** (ages 2–Grade 6) – 11:30 AM • 122 2nd
- **Chat & Chew** – 12:30 PM • Ukrainian Restaurant, 140 2nd
- **Butterfly Distribution** – 12:30 PM • local parks
- **Adult Education** – 1:00 PM • 140 2nd
- **Village Chorus for Children and Youth** – 1:00 PM • 122 2nd
- **MAY 4 – Vision Sunday Breakout Sessions** – 1:00 PM • TBD
- **MAY 4 – High School** (Grades 9–12) – 1:00 PM • meet at 122 2nd
- **MAY 4 – Middle Young Adult Visioning** – 1:00 PM • meet in narthex
- **MAY 11 – Middle Business Network** – 1:00 PM • meet in narthex
- **MAY 11 – Praying Dangerously** – 1:00 PM • 122 2nd
- **MAY 18 – Mothers and Spirituality** – 1:00 PM • 122 2nd

Art & Soul Sunday Evening Worship at 6:00 PM

- **MAY 4** – "Doubting Like Thomas" • Jim Kast-Keat, preacher • Allison Mickelson & the Middle Community Chorus • Communion
- **MAY 11** – "That's Some CRAZY Faith!" • Jacqui Lewis, preacher • Cassandra Kellam, Dionne McClain-Freene, & the Middle Community Chorus
- **MAY 18** – "Believe Me" • Adriene Thorne, preacher • Cassandra Kellam, Dionne McClain-Freene, & the Middle Community Chorus • Welcoming New Members
- **MAY 25** – "An Unknown God" • Jim Kast-Keat, preacher • Alex and Jeremy Bertrand-Price & the Middle Community Chorus

Weekdays This Month **Church office closed Monday, May 26**

Mondays

No programming

Tuesdays

- **Writing Workshop with Chuck Wachtel** – 6:00 PM • 122 2nd
- **MAY 6 – Pub Theology** – 7:00 PM • Swift Hibernian, 34 E. 4th St.
- **MAY 13, 27 – Young Adult Bible Study** – 7:00 PM • offsite

Wednesdays

- **Creative Writing Wednesdays** – 6:30 PM • 122 2nd
- **MAY 14 – Middle Consistory Meeting** – 6:30 PM • 122 2nd

Thursdays

- **MCJJ Gospel Choir Rehearsal** – 7:00 PM • 122 2nd

Fridays

- **Care Corner with Social Worker** – 10:00 AM–4:00 PM • 122 2nd
- **MAY 9, 30 – Upper Room Prayer Group** – 6:30–7:30 PM • 122 2nd

Saturdays

- **MAY 3 – Teen Trip to Bronx Zoo** – 11:30 AM–3:30 PM • meet at zoo
- **MAY 10 – Second Avenue Street Fair** – 10:00 AM–4:00 PM • 2nd Ave.
- **MAY 17 – Rockaway Mission Trip** – 11:00–5:00 PM • offsite

Second Avenue Street Fair—Saturday, May 10—10–4 PM

The Second Avenue Street Fair is celebrating its 27th year with a circus theme. Join us for a day of fun appropriate for all ages. Middle Church began sponsoring this community event in 1987 as a way to connect people with city organizations responding to the HIV/AIDS crisis. Over time the focus shifted, and while we still invite community organizations to participate, they range from the Lower Eastside Girl's Club to local public schools and restaurants. Additionally, we now work to connect people with Middle Church and our social justice work in our Lower East Side neighborhood. Our sanctuary doors are open during the fair to anyone who'd like a look around and over the last few years we've emphasized our growing children and youth ministries. The day will offer a bouncy castle, cotton candy, popcorn, balloons, crafts,

and face painting. Though some things have shifted, some things remain the same from the 1980s:

- Middle Church neighborhood partners and Middle Church members are able to rent tables for a small fee to sell their art or promote events and causes.
- A stage provides live entertainment. This year the schedule includes the Middle Church Jerriese Johnson Gospel Choir, the Middle Community Chorus, and the Village Chorus for Children and Youth.
- Good times and good conversations with Middle Church clergy, staff, and members.

Interested in volunteering or renting a table? Contact Rachel Hippert at rhippert@middlechurch.org.

122 Second Avenue • New York, NY 10003

Middle Collegiate Church



Middle Collegiate Church

welcoming • artistic • inclusive • bold

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

SANCTUARY 112 Second Avenue (bet. 6th St. & 7th St.)
OFFICE 122 Second Avenue (bet. 7th St. & St. Mark's Pl.)
New York, NY 10003
TELEPHONE 212-477-0666
CARE LINE 917-439-9268
WEBSITE middlechurch.org
EMAIL middleinfo@middlechurch.org

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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 the Care Line at **917-439-9268** 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.