



middle notes

The Newsletter of Middle Collegiate Church

DECEMBER 2014

Watch live on middlechurch.org

Celebration! Worship
at 11:15 AM

DECEMBER 7

“The Crowd” by
Charles Randolph-Wright
Middle Church Choir
Advent Dance
Communion

DECEMBER 14

“Good News from
the Fringe”
Adriene Thorne, preacher
Middle Church Choir
MCJJ Gospel Choir
Advent Dance

DECEMBER 21

Gift to Bring Sunday

“Impossible Things Are
Happening Every Day”
Jacqui Lewis, preacher
Middle Church Choir
Advent Dance

DECEMBER 28

“Xmas: It’s About a Baby”
Adriene Thorne, preacher
Middle Church Choir

Art & Soul Worship
at 6:00 PM

DECEMBER 7

“Get Ready, Cuz Here
He Comes!”

Jacqui Lewis, preacher
Alex and Jeremy Bertrand-
Price and the Middle
Community Chorus
Advent Candles
Communion

DECEMBER 14

“Bring, Bind, Proclaim,
Comfort, and Provide”
Jim Kast-Keat and
Jacqui Lewis, preachers
Middle Community Chorus
Advent Candles

DECEMBER 21

Gift to Bring Sunday

“Mission: Impossible?”
Jacqui Lewis, preacher
MCJJ Gospel Choir
Advent Candles

DECEMBER 28

“Bedazzled”
Chad Tanaka Pack, preacher
Middle Community Chorus

Christmas Eve Worship
at 7 PM and 10 PM!

Watch live on middlechurch.org

10 Amazing Things

I am about to do a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert. — Isaiah 43.19

I told a story in a November sermon that continues to reverberate in our community, and in my soul. My accountant, Frank, is a Vietnam veteran who served as a medic, who trampled across muddy battlefields to revive fallen comrades and collect those who did not survive. His courage was sometimes liquid—a cocktail of ethyl alcohol and Tang in his canteen—and he became hooked.

Once home, sober, divorced, and armed with an accounting degree, Frank found himself in a bank on the worst day of his life, the day that would have been his tenth wedding anniversary. While standing in line with his eyes leaking tears, Frank heard a loud crash. A man had fallen and cracked his skull. First to reach him, Frank beat the man’s chest for an inordinate amount of time as he watched the man turn from blue to black. Frank did not give up, not until he revived this fallen comrade.

“What had been the worst day of my life became the best,” he said. “So now, every morning, as my feet hit the ground, I pray that I will experience 10 amazing things, and I ask help to see the first one.”

Adriene shared this prayer with her lovely four year old daughter, Petal, who is now praying that prayer with Mommy every morning. Petal says, “Am I your first amazing thing today, Mommy?” This question makes Adriene giggle and say, “That little girl is not lacking in esteem!”

When I asked Frank if I could share his story in a sermon, he was delighted, but had no idea how his story would ripple in our community, that it would make its way into a four-year-old’s prayer life; that it would touch us so deeply and remind us to be thankful.

Our stories matter. They shape us, they ground us, they mold us. When we share our stories together, we are changed by what we hear;

our view of the other shifts. We are transformed in the sharing of stories. We develop empathy, compassion, and understanding.

During Advent, we are going to focus on story-sharing. Our adult education program, shaped by what happens in worship, will create space in which we can have conversations in small groups of 3-5 people each week. We hope this will deepen our connections to each other in this season of hope, joy, light, and love. We hope knowing more about our stories will transform us into an even more powerful community of empathic, generous, loving people who are called to heal souls and the world.

In addition to this Advent connection plan, the clergy will be joining Ruchi in offering office hours on Sundays during Advent for you to connect with us. While Ruchi offers support in the Care Corner, we will offer Prayer Corner. If you would like to meet with us for a 30-minute time of sharing and praying, we would be honored to hear your story, to pray with you, and to be even more deeply connected to you. Write to us directly to set up times at the email addresses on the back of the newsletter.

I was putting on my coat, preparing to leave his office, when Frank shared his story with me. Taking time to hear it was one of the 10 amazing things that happened to me that day. His story helped me to look for the other nine.

All of us yearn to be known and loved, and sharing our stories makes space for that to happen. My prayer for you this Advent Season, dear ones, is that God graces you with insight so that no matter where you find yourself on any given day, you will feel the Presence of the One who came all the way down to be close to us, to know us and understand our human story.

And, I pray each day you find 10 amazing things for which to be grateful. This prayer and praxis might be our best holiday gift.

Merry Christmas to you, beloved.

Jacqui



Jacqui Lewis is Senior Minister at Middle Collegiate Church.

Children Helping Children

Sundays, November 30; December 7, 14, 21

Advent is a season of light, generosity and hope. This Advent season, our children's education program, The Ark, is invited to partner with the Parent's Pantry Program at Ronald McDonald's House New York to collect non-perishable food and other household staples in order to alleviate the pressures parents and guardians are faced with every day while their child undergoes cancer treatment. For more information and a list of items to donate, contact Jim at jimkastkeat@middlechurch.org or visit the information table. Items will be collected in the large box, decorated by our children, in the Social Hall.

Middle Literary Magazine Needs You!

Submit your writing and/or art to our annual Literary Magazine! In keeping with the Leading Edge 2015 conference, the theme is "Courage, Commitment, and Creating the World We Want." 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 February 8, 2015.

Advent Quiet Spaces

Sundays, November 30; December 7, 14, 21 • 10:00 AM

Advent is a season of peace. During the season of Advent you are invited to join a group for yoga and mediation led by Jocelyn Perry. We will gather at in the 5th floor parlor to center ourselves and prepare for worship. For more information on Quiet Spaces, contact Jim at jimkastkeat@middlechurch.org.

Advent Small Groups: The Gift of Community

Sundays, November 30; December 7, 14, 21 • 1:15 PM

Advent is a time for us to explore more closely the love, liberty, and healing in the household of God. Give a gift to yourself—a gift of community. Every Advent Sunday you are invited to gather with 3–5 members of the Middle Community for a deep conversation about how the preached word, the scripture, and the music enhance our understanding of God with us. For more information, contact Jim at jimkastkeat@middlechurch.org.

The Ark

Sundays • 11:30 AM–12:30 PM • 3rd Floor Studio

Children in grades K–6 explore the Bible through the arts—singing, acting, dancing, drawing, or drumming—except for first Sundays of the month. On first Sundays, families are encouraged to worship together in the Sanctuary. For information, contact Jim at jimkastkeat@middlechurch.org.

Village Chorus for Children and Youth

Sundays • 1:00–2:30 PM • Community Room

This musical and performance workshop for ages 6–14 offers basic elements of vocal production, singing in various languages, and music that teaches and transforms. *Don't miss the Village Chorus Holiday Concert on December 14!* For more information, contact John at jdelcueto@middlechurch.org.



Standing with Ferguson On Wednesday, November 19, special guest Joan Baez joined Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis and the Middle Church Jerriese Johnson Gospel Choir, Rev. Billy and the Stop Shopping Choir, and the Lower East Side Girls Club Choir, to raise money for youth activists in Ferguson. At press time for the newsletter, the country was awaiting the Grand Jury's decision of whether or not to criminally charge police officer Darren Wilson for the killing of Michael Brown.

The Opening Act

Sundays • 4:30 PM • Conference Room

Gather every week before Art & Soul to explore various themes about faith, life, and spirituality in creative and engaging ways.

New Member Orientation

Sunday, December 7 • 10:00 AM OR 5:00 PM

Part 1: Welcome and Connect — Information and conversation for those who joined the Middle Movement this month.

Usher and Greeter Training

Sunday, December 7 • 10:00–10:45 AM

Are you an usher or greeter? Or interested in becoming one? Please come to our usher training to discuss what it means to be the face of welcome at Middle Church. During the holidays, more visitors and members come home, so we need your help to share our hospitality and our love. Please RSVP to Alisa at ajoyce@middlechurch.org if you plan to attend or would like more information about becoming an usher.

Freedom School: Everyone Belongs

Sunday, December 7 • 2:00–5:30 PM • 3rd Floor Studio

The Middle Project Freedom School invites students in grades K–12 to learn about the theme of belonging as we explore acting and the performing arts. Students will work in groups based on their grades for developmentally appropriate experiences. The day will culminate at 5:00 PM with a reception and showcase of their work. For more information or to join the Freedom School planning team, contact Jim at jimkastkeat@middlechurch.org.

Gift to Bring Sunday • Sunday, December 21

Creative Writing Workshop

Thursdays • 6:30–8:30 PM • 3rd Floor Studio

Participants meet weekly in a supportive, creative, and fun environment where ideas move from head to paper. Coordinated by writer and Middle member Harold Slazer.

Pub Theology

Tuesday, December 9 • 7:00–8:30 PM • Jimmy's No. 43
43 East 7th Street between Second and Third Avenues

Gather for drinks and conversation about God, life, and everything in between. RSVP to Jim at jimkastkeat@middlechurch.org.

Upper Room Prayer Group

Thursday, December 18 • 6:30–8:00 PM • Parlor

This monthly opportunity to pray in community uses *The Upper Room* prayer devotional as its guide. Middle member Judith Brown-Leigh leads this group to deeper and higher places.

Greening the Sanctuary

Sunday, December 14 • 12:30–1:30 PM

You are invited to join us as we decorate the sanctuary for the holiday season. Whether you enjoy strategically placing ornaments on the tree, hanging garland on the wall, or eating Christmas cookies, there will be something fun for everyone.

Village Chorus Holiday Concert

Sunday, December 14 • 1:30–2:00 PM

Join us for the Village Chorus for Children and Youth annual holiday concert. Begin your holidays at Middle Church!

Third Sundays Being Groups

Sunday, December 21 (Third Sundays) • 1:15–2:30 PM

Along with our Advent Small Groups, our Third Sunday Being Groups meet on December 21.

- **Erasing Racism** – Go deeper and get real about erasing racism, using art and literature to spark the conversation.
- **Middle Business Network** – Business professionals meet to discuss faith, ethics, and the corporate workplace.
- **Mothers & Spirituality** – Deepen connection and grow spiritually by focusing on parenting and its intersection with faith.
- **Praying Dangerously** – Join this group as they discuss the poem *Praying Dangerously* and pray for one another.
- **Something with Jim** – Grades 7–12 are invited to join Jim Kast-Keat and Jé Hooper for something. Yes, it sounds mysterious, but it will be awesome..

SPECIAL WORSHIP – DECEMBER 14 AT 3:00 PM

*The Reverend Classis of New York
Reformed Church in America*

Ordination of

Jim Kast-Keat

to the Office of Minister of Word and Sacrament

December

Check middlechurch.org for full details of all events.

Sunday Mornings

- **Butterfly Prep** – 9:00 & 10:00 AM • 122 2nd
- **Care Corner with Ruchi Amin** – 10:00 AM–4:00 PM • Room 2-10
- **Wee Care** (under age 4) – 9:30 AM–2:30 PM • 3rd Floor Wee Care
- **DEC 7, 14, 21 – Advent Quiet Spaces** – 10:00–11:00 AM • Parlor
- **DEC 7 – New Member Orientation Part 1** – 10:00–11:00 AM
- **DEC 7 – Usher and Greeter Training** – 10:00–10:45 AM
- **DEC 21 – Freedom School Planning** – 9:30–11:00 AM

Celebration! Sunday Morning Worship at 11:15 AM

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

- **DEC 7 – Second Sunday of Advent** “The Crowd” by Charles Randolph-Wright • Middle Church Choir • Advent Dance • Communion • Family Worship • New Members
- **DEC 14 – Third Sunday of Advent** “Good News from the Fringe” Adriene Thorne, preacher • Middle Church Choir • MCJJ Gospel Choir • Advent Dance
- **DEC 21 – Fourth Sunday of Advent: Gift to Bring Sunday** “Impossible Things Are Happening Every Day” • Jacqui Lewis, preacher • Middle Church Choir • Advent Dance
- **DEC 28** – “Xmas: It's About a Baby” Adriene Thorne, preacher • Middle Church Choir

Sunday Afternoons

- **The Ark** (Grades K–6) – 11:30–12:30 PM • 3rd Floor Studio
- **Chat & Chew** – 12:30 PM • Sanctuary
- **Butterfly Distribution** – 12:30 PM • local parks
- **Adult Education: Advent Small Groups** – 1:15–2:30 PM • Sanctuary
- **Village Chorus for Children and Youth** – 1:00–2:30 PM
- **The Opening Act** – 4:30–5:30 PM • Conference Room
- **DEC 7 – Freedom School Event** – 2:00–5:30 PM • 3rd Floor Studio
- **DEC 7 – New Member Orientation** – 5:00 PM • Community Room
- **DEC 7 – MP Young Adult Leadership Training** – 1:00–5:00 PM
- **DEC 7 – New Member Orientation Part 1** – 5:00 PM
- **DEC 14 – Greening the Sanctuary** – 12:30 PM • Sanctuary
- **DEC 14 – Village Chorus Holiday Concert** – 1:30 PM • Sanctuary
- **DEC 14 – Ordination of Jim Kast-Keat** – 3:00 PM • Sanctuary
- **DEC 21 – Third Sundays Being Groups** – 1:15–2:30 PM

Art & Soul Sunday Evening Worship at 6:00 PM

- **DEC 7 – Second Sunday of Advent** “Get Ready, Cuz Here He Comes!” Jacqui Lewis, preacher • Middle Community Chorus • Advent Candles • Communion • New Members
- **DEC 14 – Third Sunday of Advent** “Bring, Bind, Proclaim, Comfort, and Provide” • Jim Kast-Keat and Jacqui Lewis, preachers • Middle Community Chorus • Advent Candles
- **DEC 21 – Fourth Sunday of Advent: Gift to Bring Sunday** “Mission: Impossible?” Jacqui Lewis, preacher • MCJJ Gospel Choir • Advent Candles
- **DEC 28** – “Bedazzled” Chad Tanaka Pack, preacher • Middle Community Chorus

Weekdays This Month **Church Office Closed December 25–27**

Tuesdays

- **DEC 9 – Pub Theology** – 7:00–8:30 PM • Jimmy's No. 43, 43 E. 7th St.

Wednesdays

- **DEC 24 – Christmas Eve Worship** – 7:00 PM, 10:00 PM • See insert!
- **DEC 31 – Jazzy New Year's Eve** – 6:00 PM • Sanctuary

Thursdays

- **Creative Writing** – 6:30–8:00 PM • Conference Room
- **MCJJ Gospel Choir Rehearsal** – 7:00 PM • Community Room
- **DEC 18 – Upper Room Prayer Group** – 6:30–8:00 PM • Parlor

Fraturdays

- **Care Corner with Ruchi Amin** – 10:00 AM–4:00 PM • Room 2-10



Advent at Middle Church

There is love, liberty, and healing in God's Household.

Love.
Period.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT – Sunday, December 7

- **Celebration! Sunday Morning Worship at 11:15 AM**
“The Crowd” by Charles Randolph-Wright • Middle Church Choir • Advent Dance • Communion • Family Worship • New Members
- **Adult Education: Advent Small Groups at 1:15 PM**
Connecting with your Middle community
- **Art & Soul Sunday Evening Worship at 6:00 PM**
“Get Ready, Cuz Here He Comes!” Jacqui Lewis, preacher • Advent Candle Lighting • Middle Community Chorus • Communion • New Members

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT – Sunday, December 14

- **Celebration! Sunday Morning Worship at 11:15 AM**
“Good News from the Fringe” Adriene Thorne, preacher • Middle Church Choir • MCJJ Gospel Choir • Advent Dance
- **Adult Education: Advent Small Groups at 1:15 PM**
Connecting with your Middle community
- **Greening the Sanctuary Party at 12:30 PM**
Decorate the sanctuary for the holiday season.
- **Village Chorus for Children and Youth Holiday Concert at 1:30 PM**
Ring in the season with our youngest singers.
- **Art & Soul Sunday Evening Worship at 6:00 PM**
“Bring, Bind, Proclaim, Comfort, and Provide” • Jim Kast-Keat and Jacqui Lewis, preachers • Advent Candle Lighting • Middle Community Chorus

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT – Sunday, December 21

Gift to Bring Sunday

- **Celebration! Sunday Morning Worship at 11:15 AM**
“Impossible Things Are Happening Every Day” • Jacqui Lewis, preacher • Middle Church Choir • Advent Dance
- **Adult Education: Advent and Third Sunday Being Groups at 1:15 PM**
Connecting with your Middle community
- **Art & Soul Sunday Evening Worship at 6:00 PM**
“Mission: Impossible?” Jacqui Lewis, preacher • Advent Candle Lighting • Gospel and Praise with Middle Church Jerriese Johnson Gospel Choir

If you can't be with us on Christmas Eve, watch the live webcast at 7:00 and 10:00 PM on middlechurch.org!

CHRISTMAS EVE – Tuesday, December 24

- **“Light and Gold” Candlelight Concert at 7:00 PM**
Middle Church Choir • Jacqui Lewis, preacher • Jim Kast-Keat and Alisa Joyce, worship leaders
- **“This One Child” Candlelight Concert at 10:00 PM**
Middle Church Jerriese Johnson Gospel Choir • Jacqui Lewis, preacher • Jim Kast-Keat and Alisa Joyce, worship leaders

The Church Office will be closed December 25–27.

WORSHIP CELEBRATIONS – Sunday, December 28

- **Celebration! Sunday Morning Worship at 11:15 AM**
“Xmas: It's About a Baby” Adriene Thorne, preacher • Middle Church Choir
- **Art & Soul Evening Worship at 6:00 PM**
“Bedazzled” Chad Tanaka Pack, preacher • Middle Community Chorus

JAZZY NEW YEAR – Wednesday, December 31 at 6:00 PM

- A jazzy tribute to ring in the year • Adriene Thorne, preacher
- Andrew Bemkey, Jazz Music

Order Memorial Poinsettias for the Sanctuary this Christmas Season

Cost: \$15 each – check or cash – No IOUs accepted.

Deadline – Sunday, December 14, 2014

Place this form and a check for full payment in the envelope enclosed and mail to:

Middle Collegiate Church
Attn: Poinsettia
50 East 7th Street
New York, NY 10003

PLEASE PRINT.

Given in honor of:

Ordered by:

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

Email

Phone

Annual Spiritual Retreat: “Shoes Off: Ready for Miracles”

Friday, January 2–Sunday, January 4, 2015 in Saugerties, New York

We hope you will join us for Middle Church’s seventh annual pilgrimage for your spirit—a time of restoration and renewal. Inspiring talks, soul-stirring music, optional yoga, and spiritual practices will begin your new year and encourage you to be a vessel for God’s miracles in 2015.

Thousands of years ago, Moses—a prophet in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam—was called to embody the presence of God and to be a vessel for God’s miracles. We will take Moses as our inspiration. His vulnerability and his courage to listen to God’s call—even when he didn’t know the directions it would take—is worth studying and celebrating. Moses was invited to take off his shoes because he was standing on holy ground. Wherever we are standing in life—either in our trials or in our celebrations—we are reminded that it is all holy ground.

The consistory and senior minister, Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis, invite you to remove your shoes and get ready for miracles. Rev. Adriene Thorne and Christina Fleming will offer tools to help you notice the presence of God in your daily rhythms.

We will depart on Friday, January 2 at 6:30 PM by chartered bus to Villa St. Joseph Retreat Center in Saugerties, New York, and return Sunday, January 4 by 5:00 PM.

The cost is \$225 for transportation, lodging, six meals, and all sessions. If you are ready for miracles, register and sponsor retreat scholarships for others at <http://bit.ly/1ykGEFD>.

All registrations and payments must be received by Monday, December 15.

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*

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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.