



middle notes

The Newsletter of Middle Collegiate Church

JULY / AUGUST 2014

Visit middlechurch.org
for live worship webcasts

**Sunday Morning
Worship at 11:15 AM**

JULY 6

Jim Kast-Keat, preacher
Summer Choir •
Communion

JULY 13

Jacqui Lewis, preacher
• Summer Choir • MCJJ
Gospel Choir

JULY 20

Adriene Thorne, preacher
• Summer Choir

JULY 27

Chad Tanaka Pack,
preacher • Summer Choir
• MCJJ Gospel Choir •
New Members

AUGUST 3

Alisa Joyce, preacher
• Summer Choir •
Communion

AUGUST 10

Adriene Thorne, preacher
• Summer Choir

AUGUST 17

Chad Tanaka Pack,
preacher • Summer Choir

AUGUST 24

Jim Kast-Keat, preacher •
Summer Choir

AUGUST 31

Adriene Thorne, preacher
• Summer Choir

**Art & Soul Sunday
Worship at 6:00 PM**

JULY 6

Jim Kast-Keat, preacher •
Dionne McClain-Freney •
Communion

JULY 13

Jacqui Lewis, preacher •
Tituss Burgess

JULY 20

Jim Kast-Keat, preacher
• Kelly Bales and Braden
Bradley

JULY 27

Jim Kast-Keat and
Adriene Thorne, preachers
• Cassandra Kellam • New
Members

**AUGUST • Join us at
middlechurch.org on
Sundays at 6 PM for an Art
& Soul rebroadcast.**

We Are the Ones

I love these long summer days. Today, walking between meetings, the air smelled like fresh honeysuckle, wafting on the breeze along with New York scents: hotdogs cooking, the morning-showered smells of passersby, and the smell of exhaust as taxis swirl around corners.

Out of doors, I feel connected to the earth. Out of doors, I feel a slowing down. I can hear my own thoughts without rush. I am walking toward the church, but I am also asking: where am I going? Where is Middle Church going?

I came upon this message from the Hopi Elders of Oraibi, Arizona:

You have been telling people that this is the Eleventh Hour. Now you must go back and tell the people that it is the Hour. And there are things to be considered:

Where are you living?
What are you doing?
What are your relationships?
Are you in right relations?
Where is your water?

Know your garden.
It is time to speak your Truth.
Create your community.
Be good to each other.
And do not look outside yourself for the leader.

Then he clasped his hands together, smiled and said, "This could be a good time! The river is flowing now very fast. It is so great and swift that there are those who will be afraid. They will try to hold on to the shore. They will know they are being torn apart and will suffer greatly.

Know the river has its destination. The elders say that we must let go of the shore, push off into the middle of the river, keep our eyes open and heads above the water.

And I say, see who is in there with you and celebrate. At this time in history, we are to take



nothing personally. Least of all, ourselves. For the moment that we do, our spiritual growth and journey comes to halt.

The time of the lone wolf is over.
Gather yourselves!

Banish the word "struggle" from your attitude and vocabulary. All that we do now must be done in a sacred manner and in celebration.

We are the ones we've been waiting for.

Many of us will scatter this summer, to visit family and friends. To go to the country or to the beach. Many of us will stay here in town, and get out of doors into the long summer days and warm nights. While we are out and about, we can stay connected by sharing live worship webcasts at middlechurch.org. Then, we will return to each other. We will gather together once again, and we will celebrate our reunion.

While resting and working, while sleeping and playing, while meditating or praying, remember this: We are the ones we have been waiting for to heal our souls and the world.

And remember this as well: You are so good, and you are so loved!

Jacqui

Jacqui Lewis is Senior Minister at Middle Collegiate Church.

art & soul in July

July 6 “What’s on Your Shoulders” Jim Kast-Keat, preacher. Music from Cassandra Kellam and Dionne McClain-Freene. Communion.

July 13 “Now Push!” Jacqui Lewis, preacher. Music from Tituss Burgess and the Middle Community Chorus.

July 20 “Where Can I Go?” Jim Kast-Keat, preacher. Music from Kelly Bales and Braden Bradley.

July 27 “Theology 101” Jim Kast-Keat and Adriene Thorne, preachers. Music from Cassandra Kellam and Dionne McClain-Freene.



August—on hiatus—join us at middlechurch.org on Sundays at 6:00 pm for a rebroadcast of favorite Art & Soul celebrations.

A Story to Tell

BY KEVIN SCOTT HALL

On June 3, I had the privilege of launching my new book, the memoir *A Quarter Inch from My Heart*, at my home-away-from-home for 15 years, Middle Church. On that humid evening, about 60 people showed up to help me celebrate.

This book is very much fully from my heart, and it’s a story in which Middle Church plays a central role. Anyone who was here from 2005–2008 may know part of the story: I took in a near-stranger named Maurice after he arrived on my doorstep a month or so after Hurricane Katrina. While I invited him to stay with me until he “got back on his feet,” that never happened and he remained my roommate and friend until a late-coming AIDS diagnosis took him from this world in early 2008.

It turned out that whatever Maurice may have experienced during Hurricane Katrina was just the beginning of his problems. And taking him in was the beginning of a lot of life lessons for me as well. While I felt led to do such a thing by my faith (even many faith-based people would say it was a pretty crazy thing to do!), the road to his and my spiritual recovering during that time was anything but easy. And yet, I never felt so engaged with my faith, so keyed in to what love and “radical welcome” really meant.

I was thrilled that Jacqui Lewis was able to interview me as part of the book launch. She was an integral, strong presence in helping me navigate the troubled—but also healing—waters with Maurice. Jacqui, having been there, was able to ask relevant and probing questions about the aftermath of the time with Maurice, and the creation of the book.

In fact, the entire Middle family wrapped its arms around me during that time, and also helped Maurice discover and display the beautiful heart within him before he passed away.

“Radical welcome” perhaps does not require us to do what I did in this case, something that was very much for my own benefit as well as his. It does require us to be sensitive to those around us and extend a smile, a handshake, or a hug, without preconditions.

We all have a story to tell. I am thankful that Middle has been such a big part of mine, and that Middle helped me to tell it in such a beautiful, meaningful way.

Kevin Scott Hall is an Elder at Middle Collegiate Church.

Pride Month Celebrated

BY CHRISTINA FLEMING

Gay or straight, single or partnered, families or teenagers, we marched. Our feet strode down Fifth Avenue with a little dance in our step as our gospel choir sang Pharrell Williams’ “Happy” and “Let Your Little Light Shine” from our float to the ecstatic crowds lining the parade route of New York City’s annual Heritage of Pride March. Through your volunteering and resources, Middle Church reminded our city that each of us are made in God’s image. The theology of “Love. Period.” drove into our streets offering a message that has the potential to heal and transform others.

At Middle Church we organize, preach, and march for LGBT justice all through the year. But during June, there is a bit more glitter near our eyes and joy in our step. In addition to the March, our congregation marked Pride with the following events:

- Chad Tanaka Pack and Alisa Joyce attended a rally for LGBT Homeless Youth held by The National Coalition for the Homeless and the Ali Forney Center in New York City on June 2.
- Middle Member and Broadway choreographer Mark Dendy created a dance to Pharrell Williams’ “Happy” that was performed in worship on June 8. An intergenerational group of Middle congregants danced on our pews and pulpit. Video of the dance was seen more than 1,000 times on YouTube. Relive it here: <http://bit.ly/MiCCHappy>
- Senior Minister Jacqui Lewis spoke on a panel at Jim Wallis’ *Sojourners* Summit on June 20 in Washington, D.C. about why the church must work for LGBT justice.
- Minister Chad Tanaka Pack testified at the New York State Senate and Assembly Public Forum on legislation to ban mental health professionals from “conversion therapy” for gay minors.
- We partnered with Intersections’ Believe Out Loud for our worship celebration with Bob Chase, Fred Johnson, Jacqui Lewis and the Middle Church Choir on June 22. And we collaborated with our sister Collegiate congregations for city-wide events celebrating Pride.

Because of your energy and your donations, our children will know God embraces each of us and celebrates our sexualities.

Christina Fleming is Director of Communications and Outreach.

All God's Children in Worship This Summer

For the months of July and August all of God's children, the big and the small, will enjoy Middle Church's worship celebration in the sanctuary. Come prepared for joyful, artistic worship that will inspire adults and keep children engaged. Bring your friends. Invite your neighbors.

Summer Choir Begins July 6 – Join Us!

Sundays • Rehearsal 10:00–11:00 AM • 122 2nd Ave.

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to sing with the Middle Church Choir? Here is your opportunity! For July and August and through Sunday, September 1, all are welcome to join the Summer Choir. Attend the 10:00 AM rehearsal at 122 Second Avenue on any Sunday, and then sing at the 11:15 AM worship celebration that same day. No auditions are necessary.

Adult Education This Summer

Sundays • 1:00 PM • Sanctuary (July 6 and 27 at 140 2nd)

July Explore stories about gender identity and view a film about racial equality, a powerful month that you won't want to miss.

- **July 6:** A Theology of Justice and Gender Identity – *Jim Kast-Keat, Denise Janssen, and Central College Interns*
- **July 13:** Film: *Freedom Summer* – *Jacqui Lewis*
- **July 20:** Film: *Freedom Summer* – *Jim Kast-Keat*
- **July 27:** Gender Identity – *Jim Kast-Keat and Denise Janssen*

August Grab a bag lunch and join the lively discussion at Chat & Chew Sermon Talk Backs with the preacher of the day.



Justice and Equality for All God's Children

In July, Jim Kast-Keat, Alisa Joyce, and Middle lay leaders will travel to Haley Farm in Clinton, Tennessee, the hub of the Children's Defense Fund. Over the course of a week, they will join other pastors, seminarians, child advocates, and educators who work for justice with and for children to prepare for the Middle Project Freedom School monthly events beginning this autumn at Middle Church.

Junior and Senior High School Mission Trip

Sunday, August 10–Sunday, August 17

Junior and Senior High School students from Middle Church are invited to join Alisa Joyce and the Collegiate family for a Summer Youth Mission Trip. Youth from all the Collegiate Churches will travel by van to Kentucky to help build a home. On the last day, the group will celebrate their hard work at a water park. The cost is \$250 per person. For more information or to register, please contact Alisa at ajoyce@middlechurch.org.

July/August

Check middlechurch.org for full details of all events.

★ *Indicates on hiatus in August!*

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
- **Wee Care** (under age 4) – 10:00 AM–2:30 PM • 122 2nd
- **JUL 27 – Freedom School Planning Meeting** – 9:30 AM • 122 2nd
- **Summer Choir Rehearsal** – 10:00 AM • 122 Second Ave.
- **JUL 6 – Junior High** (grades 7–8) – 10:00 AM • 122 2nd
- **JUL 20 – New Member Orientation 2** – 10:00 AM or 5:00 PM • 122 2nd
- **JUL 27 – New Member Orientation 1** – 10:00 AM or 5:00 PM • 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

- **JUL 6** – “What's on Your Shoulders” Jim Kast-Keat, preacher • Summer Choir • Communion
- **JUL 13** – “Now Push!” Jacqui Lewis, preacher • Summer Choir • MCJJ Gospel Choir
- **JUL 20** – “The House of God” Adriene Thorne, preacher • Summer Choir
- **JUL 27** – “In Search of Fine Pearls” Chad Tanaka Pack, preacher • Summer Choir • MCJJ Gospel Choir • New Members
- **AUG 3** – “Voices” Alisa Joyce, preacher • Summer Choir • Communion
- **AUG 10** – “Family Feud” Adriene Thorne, preacher • Summer Choir
- **AUG 17** – “Faithful Disobedience” Chad Tanaka Pack, preacher • Summer Choir
- **AUG 24** – “Conformed or Transformed” Jim Kast-Keat, preacher • Summer Choir
- **AUG 31** – “Remove Your Shoes” Adriene Thorne, preacher • Summer Choir

Sundays After the Morning Worship Celebration

- **Chat & Chew** – 12:30 PM • Sanctuary; July 6 and 27 at 140 2nd
- **Butterfly Distribution** – 12:30 PM • local parks
- **Adult Education** – 1:00 PM • Sanctuary; July 6 and 27 at 140 2nd
- **JUL 6 – High School** (Grades 9–12) – 1:00 PM • meet at 122 2nd
- **JUL 13 – Mothers and Spirituality** – 1:00 PM • 122 2nd
- **JUL 20 – Middle Business Network** – 1:00 PM • meet in narthex

Art & Soul Sunday Evening Worship at 6:00 PM

- **JUL 6** – “What's on Your Shoulders” Jim Kast-Keat, preacher • Dionne McClain-Freney • Communion
- **JUL 13** – “Now Push!” Jacqui Lewis, preacher • Tituss Burgess and the Middle Community Chorus
- **JUL 20** – “Where Can I Go?” Jim Kast-Keat, preacher • Kelly Bales and Braden Bradley
- **JUL 27** – “Theology 101” Jim Kast-Keat and Adriene Thorne, preachers • Cassandra Kellam and the Middle Community Chorus • New Members
- **AUGUST** – *Rebroadcast at middlechurch.org on Sundays at 6:00 PM.*

Weekdays This Summer

Church Office Closed July 4 for Independence Day

- **AUG 10–17** – Collegiate Youth Mission Trip – *Offsite*

Tuesdays

- **JUL 1** – **Pub Theology** – 7:00 PM • *Swift Hibernian, 34 E. 4th St.*

Wednesdays

- **Creative Writing Wednesdays** – 6:30 PM • 122 2nd ★

Thursdays

- **MCJJ Gospel Choir Rehearsal** – 7:00 PM • 122 2nd ★
- **JUL 24 – Middle Young Adult Event** – 7:00 PM • TBD

Fridays

- **Care Corner with Social Worker** – 10:00 AM–4:00 PM • 122 2nd
- **JUL 25 – Upper Room Prayer Group** – 6:30–7:30 PM • 122 2nd

Summertime

Summertime is both about living easy and transitions. Weddings and graduations are happy transitions from one stage of life to the next. And, at the end of June, Middle Church, like many nonprofits, will transition into a new program year.

This summer we also hope to transition into our renovated space by mid-August! In order to be ready, the staff and I have been planning, budgeting, and shifting shape, so we can be nimble and responsive to the changing needs for program and care that we anticipate.

In October, we add a 9:30 AM worship celebration, so those who need to get to Sunday afternoon work or naps (!) can do so. This celebration will be about 50 minutes and have meaningful sermons, congregational singing, and great music and art. Our 11:15 AM celebration will remain the same, and we will continue our stunning Art & Soul at 6:00 PM.

In order to work effectively, Adriene Thorne transitions to Executive Minister for program and operations. Chad Tanaka Pack is Minister for stewardship and finance. Jim Kast-Keat is Associate Minister for education and young adults. Alisa Joyce is Assistant Minister for children, youth, and the Freedom School. I remain Senior Minister for Vision, Worship, and Arts. I handle Public Theology and Justice with Christina Fleming's help as Director of Outreach and Communications. Interim Property Manager, Joel Janka, will use his 20 years of construction experience to get us back in the building and settled in.

When we return to our building, it will feel familiar, yet transformed. One big change? We will have an elevator, so everyone can really come in the door exactly as they are. Your amazing support in time, talent, and treasure makes our ministry happen. Together, our partnership is transformational! We can't wait to see how God will use all of our gifts in the new program year. —Jacqui and the Consistory

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.