



middle notes

The Newsletter of Middle Collegiate Church

APRIL 2016

Celebration! Worship
Sundays at 11:15 AM

Watch live on middlechurch.org

APRIL 3

"God, From A to Z"

Revelation 1.4-8

Adriene Thorne, preacher
In-the-Middle Choir
Communion

APRIL 10

"Who Are You??"

Acts 9.1-6

Jim Kast-Keat, preacher
Middle Church Choir
Middle Church Jerriese
Johnson Gospel Choir

APRIL 17

**Revolutionary Love
Conference Sunday**

9:30 AM & 11:15 AM

"Do YOU Want
a Revolution?"

Revelation 7.9-17

Jacqui Lewis, preacher
Middle Church Choir
Middle Church Jerriese
Johnson Gospel Choir
Rod Rodgers Dance
Company

APRIL 24

"Then I Remembered
Something New"

Acts 11.1-18

Rob Stephens, guest
preacher
Middle Church Choir

Special Worship

**Art & Soul Worship
April 17 at 5:00 PM**

**Revolutionary Love
Conference Sunday**

Bishop Yvette Flunder,
preacher

Music from pop rock band
BETTY (Alyson Palmer,
Amy Ziff, and Elizabeth Ziff)

Revolutionary Love

Valarie Kaur and I have been talking about Revolutionary Love. She is married to a wonderful man named Sharat and has a boy named Kavi. Kavi is the most lovely little boy—full of light and peace. Valarie's starting place for Revolutionary Love is in her heart for her family. Out of that heart overflows healing love that inspires her filmmaking, her activism, and her speaking.

I don't have a child, as you know. And for a long time that child-less space really ached to be filled in a way that I thought nothing else could. I grieved the emptiness, and questioned my choices. Should I have tried to make a child sooner? Should I have changed the pace of my life to make more room?

I can't tell you the day or time, but there has been a huge healing and that space no longer feels empty. It is filled now with so much goodness. The love of the children in my life—R.J., Rio, and the children at Middle. The love I have for my younger adult friends, my sibs, and my parents. The love I have for the work I am blessed to do. This love has been revolutionary for me; it has changed me.

Revolutionary Love is a powerful force. To heal wounds, to reconcile brokenness. One source of it in my life is John. When we married almost 11 years ago, John wrote this wedding poem for me. In his love, I feel safe to dream my highest dreams. I am at once comforted, encouraged, and challenged. I am seen, held, known, and heard. Therefore I risk, I trust, I try. I fall. I get up. Revolutionary Love is the petri dish in which I grow.

You are loved, Middle Family. By the clergy and staff here at Middle Church. We are imperfect and might fail you. But if we do, we will want a fresh start to hold you, hug you, and pray with you. You are loved, Middle Family, in a revolutionary way, by a God who will never leave you, never forsake you. Who loves you just as you are, and from whom you need never hide.

May the Revolutionary Love of our God be the petri dish in which you grow fully to be you. To love you. To love others. This kind of love can change the world.

*Mwah—Big Kiss—
Jacqui*



Wedding Poem –

To Jacqui, my love and joy.

No resting on plateaus for us,
not while the unknown awaits.
Spreading wings, spirit wind lifts us
in silhouette against the sky.
We are giddy as children, barefoot,
innocent, laughter the only sound drifting
on the air, echoes off city walls.
It is as though God has stepped out
in broad daylight to play with us.

We make jazz together, our two
journeys converged improbably,
crisscrossing the landscape, to make
new music that fills the canyons
of lost time and draws the angels
out of hiding. Our improvisation
makes them smile and they tap their
wings to the beat and we pass the plate.

Fugitive Love now leaps the borders
and changes everything. We are witnesses
to its reckless rampaging and we don't
hide ourselves in subtleties even if we could.
Traversing the hard ground of emptiness, love
on the lam will stay with us for as long as it takes.
And malevolent ghosts, cowards in the face of faith,
scatter when they see us coming. We break the rules.
Doubters step aside and let believers state their hopes.

John Janka, Copyright © 2005

Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis is Senior Minister at Middle Collegiate Church.

In the Footsteps of Heroes

BY CHRISTINA FLEMING

On the 51st anniversary of Bloody Sunday in early March, 18 Middle Church congregants and staff embarked on a three-day tour of historic Civil Rights sites in Atlanta, Georgia; and Montgomery and Selma, Alabama.

"The entire experience was extraordinary—being in Georgia and Alabama, reliving familiar scenes from the past, seeing the real places that I've only seen in pictures—it's hard to describe such a total experience. Without even closing my eyes I am suddenly back on the Edmund Pettus Bridge or in a pew at Ebenezer Baptist Church, or watching the events unfold on the bus with Rosa Parks. Pure heightened reality." —Beth Ellor

"Selma and the Edmund Pettus Bridge caused me to pause and reflect on the history of Bloody Sunday. It was such an important part of Civil Rights history, yet most of the people there live below poverty level. What impacted me most was how willing the local residents were to share their food, hearts and stories." —Joey Morelli

"In so many ways it was gut wrenching—to be reminded of the despicable incidents and attitudes lived through and internalized as a youth; to revisit the swell of hope and inspiration in seeing and hearing the voices of the renowned leaders hell-bent on bringing change into our world; to release the tears of pain in remembering the loss of great minds and courageous beings. And then there was the uplift watching the faces and hearing the reflections of our young adult participants, which turned heartache into smiles of comfort as they 'got it,' and one could look forward to handing over the baton to twirl on their terms, to make their difference." —Danita Branam



"The Civil Rights Tour was truly an AMAZING experience! I thought I knew a lot of this history but I learned a great deal and seeing the places in person truly made what I did know much more real. The museums were really interesting and we had docents that were not only knowledgeable but shared personal stories and were so passionate about what they were telling us that you couldn't help but be moved! At the risk of sounding cliché, I do feel changed by what we saw and heard. It's a trip I don't think Jonah or I will ever forget—and I feel so blessed to have been able to experience it with my son." —Kelly Smith

It was a multigenerational family affair as we visited the

King Center in downtown Atlanta, including the neighborhood of MLK's childhood home and church, the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church. In Montgomery, a city where slaves were sold on the main street and the bus boycott ignited the Civil Rights movement, we relived Rosa Parks courage, as we visited the Rosa Parks Museum. We honored the lives risked and lost at the Civil Rights Museum and the Freedom Rides Museum. Some congregants toured

the Dexter Ave. Baptist Church, where King served—just blocks from Wallace, and the state capitol—and the Dexter Ave. Baptist Church Parsonage, the house where the King family lived. On our final day, we visited the Brown Chapel AME Church, the Edmund Pettus Bridge, the Memorial for Viola Liuzzo and the City of St. Jude. And we Skyped from the National Voting Rights Interpretive Center in Lowndes County, Alabama to offer the Prayer of Thanksgiving during Sunday morning worship at Middle Church. *Watch for announcements about our next trip!*

Christina Fleming is Director of Outreach and Communications at Middle Collegiate Church.

Marianne Williamson at Middle Church. Every. Week.

New York Times bestselling author, Marianne Williamson, brings her weekly lecture series to Middle Church beginning Wednesday, April 27 at 7:30 PM. Her teachings are based on *A Course in Miracles*. The cost is \$20 at the door. The lectures will be livestreamed from our sanctuary. For livestreaming and other details, visit Marianne.com.



Marianne Williamson

Marianne Williamson is an internationally acclaimed spiritual author and lecturer. Marianne has been a popular guest on programs such as *Just Faith*, *Oprah*, and *Charlie Rose*. Six of her 11 published books have been *New York Times* Best Sellers. Her book *A Return to Love* is a classic. We are ecstatic to host Marianne Williamson at Middle Church every week.

Partnership Update

As of March 25, we are at 73% of our program year, which ends June 30. Together we have raised 60% of our offering goal--\$342,464.30 toward \$575,000.

Friends, Middle Church is powered by God, by Love and by You! Together we can power our programs and ministry. Please help us make our goal by setting up a recurring donation in the "donate" section of middlechurch.org. **If 200 of us enroll in recurring donations of \$20 a week, that would raise, \$212,000 a year. Won't you give \$12, \$20, \$60, \$100, or \$500?**

Thank you for your generous support of our welcoming, artistic, inclusive and bold ministry. Love.Period. is what Middle Church it is all about.

Help us meet our goal!

60%

Concert to Feed the Hungry

Saturday, April 9, 2016 at 7:00 PM

Grammy-nominated pianist and composer Fred Hersch, percussionist Rogério Boccato, singer/songwriter Becca Stevens, and the Colombian folkloric ensemble La Cumbiamba eNeYé will headline the fifth annual Concert to Feed the Hungry at Middle Church. Funds raised from the concert will support the Buddhist Global Relief, which combats hunger worldwide in regions ranging from Cambodia to Ethiopia to New York City. Ten percent of the funds raised will go to support Middle Church's feeding programs—Food Pantry (free groceries) and Butterfly (free brown-bag lunches for people in local parks). Tickets are \$25 or \$15 with a student ID. For tickets, visit www.concerttofeedthehungry.org.

Young Adults

Sunday, April 24, 2016 at 1:00–4:00 PM

Young adults (age 20–40ish) and alums of the Middle Project Leadership Initiative for Young Adults are invited to gather with Jacqui Lewis, John Janka, and Christina Fleming. We will share lunch and deepen relationships. RSVP to Christina at cfleming@middlechurch.org and the location of the event will be emailed to you a few days before.

Middle-in-the-World

Middle family, here are all the ways you share Love.Period.

- The Village Chorus for Children and Youth performed with Hugh Jackman at a private event at Joe's Pub.
- The Jerriese Johnson Gospel Choir performed at Carnegie Hall during the Christmas holidays.
- Upworthy's "Love Conquers All—Even Candidates with Swoopy Hair who Call People Names" celebrated the online love letter to Muslims co-written by Jacqui Lewis and signed online by our congregation and thousands of people of faith.
- *French Morning's* "Seven Churches without Tourists for Listening to Gospel in New York" still draws French tourists to Sunday worship: "Middle Church is string of surprises: lyrical choir, organ, singer with a soprano or ballerina in half-classical half-contemporary choreography. The rainbow gospel choir has 40 people, guided by an enraptured conductor."
- Blogs "Revolutionary Love: Dismantling Hierarchy and Pushing Boundaries" in *Patheos* and "Confessing Jesus' Name Means Confessing Revolutionary Love" by Jacqui Lewis were featured in *Sojourners* Magazine's blogs at sojo.net. *Patheos* shared "Dismantling Racism: A Q&A with Jacqui Lewis."
- BroadwayWorld.com covered our Women's History Month cabaret, "Everything I Need to Know I Learned from a Woman" with Branch Woodman and Allison Mickelson.
- Middle Church launched "That'll Preach," a weekly podcast discussing upcoming sermons in the blogs section of middlechurch.com—curated and produced by Jim Kast-Keat.
- *Just Faith*, the MSNBC.com show on social justice and spirituality hosted by Jacqui Lewis, is on hiatus. Follow Middle Church and Jacqui Lewis on Facebook and Twitter for the latest updates.

April

Check middlechurch.org for full details of all events.

Sundays

- **Butterfly Meal Preparation** – 9:00 & 10:00 AM • *Social Hall*
- **Wee Care** (under age 4) – 9:30 AM–2:30 PM • *3rd Floor Wee Care*
- **The Breakfast Club** (Gr. 7–12) – 10:00–11:00 AM • *4th Floor Studio*
- **Family Breakfast** – APR 3 – 10:00–11:00 AM • *4th Floor Studio*
- **In-the-Middle Choir** – APR 3 – 10:00–10:45 AM • *3rd Floor Studio*
- **CELEBRATION! WORSHIP: Revolutionary Love Conference** – APR 17 – 9:30 AM • *Sanctuary* – Come at 9:30 to avoid the 11:15 crowds!
- **CELEBRATION! WORSHIP** – 11:15 AM–12:30 PM • *Sanctuary*
- **The Ark** (Gr. K–6) – on hiatus — resumes May 1
- **Chat & Chew** – 12:30 PM • *Social Hall*
- **Butterfly Meal Distribution** – 12:30 PM • *Meet at Social Hall*
- **Village Chorus** (Ages 6–14) – 1:00–2:30 PM • *3rd Floor Studio*
- **Adult Ed: Reading the Bible from the Middle** – APR 3, 10, 24 – 1:15–2:30 PM • *Sanctuary*
- **Adult Ed: Third Sunday Being Groups** – APR 17 – 1:15–2:30 PM • Watch conference session in *Social Hall*
- **Clothing Boutique** – APR 3, 17 – 1:30–4:00 PM • *Community Room*
- **Food Pantry** – APR 10, 24 – 1:30–3:00 PM • *Community Room*
- **Young Adult Gathering** – APR 24 – 1:00–3:00 PM • See Christina!
- **Memorial for Fred Holland** – APR 10 – 3:30–5:00 PM • *Sanctuary*
- **ART & SOUL WORSHIP: Revolutionary Love Conference** – APR 17 – 5:00–6:00 PM • *Sanctuary*
- **AA/Big Book Meeting** – 7:00–8:00 PM • *4th Floor Studio*

Mondays

- **Acting Class** – 6:30–8:00 PM • *3rd Floor Studio*
- **NA/Village Spiritual Workshop** – 6:30–7:30 PM • *4th Floor Classroom*
- **Gospel Choir Workshop** – APR 4 – 7:00–9:00 PM • *Community Room*
- **Meditation on the Lower East Side** – 7:00–8:30 PM • *Parlor*

Tuesdays

- **Middle Consistory Meeting** – APR 19 – 6:00–9:00 PM • *Parlor*
- **Alateen** – 7:00–8:00 PM • *4th Floor Classroom*
- **AA/Artists in Recovery** – 7:00–8:00 PM • *4th Floor Studio*
- **AA/Step Meeting** – 7:00–8:00 PM • *3rd Floor Studio*
- **Al-Anon** – 7:30–9:00 PM • *Community Room*
- **AA/Closed Discussion** – 8:30–9:30 PM • *4th Floor Studio*

Wednesdays

- **Marianne Williamson** – APR 27 – 7:30–9:00 PM • *Sanctuary* • \$20

Thursdays

- **Debtors Anonymous** – 12:30–1:30 PM • *4th Floor Classroom*
- **Creative Writing** – 6:30–8:00 PM • *4th Floor Studio*
- **MCJJ Gospel Choir Rehearsal** – 7:00–8:30 PM
- **Al-Anon** – 7:30–9:00 PM • *3rd Floor Studio*

Fridays

- **CONFERENCE 2016: Revolutionary Love Begins!** – APR 15 – 1:00 PM
- **Shul of NY Shabbat Services** – APR 1, 15 – 6:30–8:30 PM • *Social Hall*
- **NA/It's About Change** – 6:30–8:00 PM • *3rd Floor Studio*
- **AA/Young and Wise Group** – 8:00–9:00 PM • *Community Room*
- **NA/Finally Found a Home** – 8:30–9:30 PM • *4th Floor Studio*
- **Pub Theology** – APR 15 – 9:00–10:30 PM • *Jimmy's No. 43, 43 E. 7th*

Saturdays

- **NA/Meat and Potatoes** – 6:30–8:00 PM • *Community Room*
- **AA/Beginners** – 7:00–8:00 PM • *3rd Floor Studio*
- **AA/Open Discussion** – 7:00–8:00 PM • *4th Floor Studio*
- **CONCERT TO FEED THE HUNGRY** – APR 9 – 7:00 PM • *Sanctuary*
- **NA/SRA** – 8:00–9:30 PM • *5th Floor Parlor*
- **AA/Closed Discussion** – 8:30–9:30 PM • *4th Floor Studio*



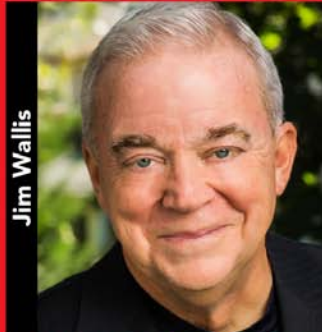
Middle Collegiate Church

50 East 7th Street • New York, NY 10003

REVOLUTIONARY LOVE



Jacqui Lewis



Jim Wallis



Melissa Harris-Perry



Miguel De La Torre

Tools, Tactics, and Truth-telling to Dismantle Racism

April 15–17, 2016 at Middle 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 **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.