



# middle notes

The Newsletter of Middle Collegiate Church

APRIL 2013

Visit [middlechurch.org](http://middlechurch.org)  
for live worship webcasts

Sunday Morning  
Worship at 11:15 AM

**APRIL 7**  
FAMILY WORSHIP  
“Growing into My Shoes”  
Adriene Thorne, preacher  
Middle Church Choir  
Communion

**APRIL 14**  
CONFERENCE SUNDAY  
“Just Do It”  
Jacqui Lewis, preacher  
Middle Church Choir  
MCJJ Gospel Choir

**APRIL 21**  
VOLUNTEER  
APPRECIATION  
“I Have All I Need”  
Adriene Thorne, preacher  
Middle Church Choir

**APRIL 28**  
EARTH DAY  
“Celebrating Mother Earth”  
Jacqui Lewis and Adriene  
Thorne, worship leaders  
Middle Church Choir  
MCJJ Gospel Choir

Sunday Evening  
Worship at 6:00 PM

**APRIL 7**  
“And All that Jazz”  
Jacqui Lewis, preacher  
Marty Ehrlich Quartet, art

**APRIL 14**  
“Welcome!”  
Tricia Sheffield, preacher  
Dionne McClain-Freeneey  
and friends, art

**APRIL 21**  
“Had I Wings Like a Dove”  
Chad Tanaka Pack,  
preacher  
Andrew Bemkey, art

**APRIL 28**  
“The Home of God”  
Christina Fleming,  
preacher  
Allison Mickelson and  
friends, art

## When Everyone Is Saved

Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

1 John 4:11–12

It was the summer of 1975, Earth, Wind, & Fire were always on the radio, and I had just turned fourteen years old. Our youth group was at Camp Saugatuck in Michigan, and our hormones were raging. The older girls had fully-developed bodies; my friend Linda and I had only kissed boys while playing spin the bottle. While the older kids necked by the dying fire every night, we would wander back to our cabin and read by flashlight until curfew.

It was Friday night, and we were leaving the next day. The older boys had brought a suitcase full of drugs and booze. A plan to stay up all night, get high and watch the sunrise was hatched. Only Linda and I went back to our cabin, sneaking in so as not to draw attention to the too-few footsteps and door creaks.

Linda’s mom was our chaperone. Like all parents, she had sonar, so, of course, she heard us. Mrs. Robinson interrogated us, but we did not, could not, tell about the suitcase. We did not, could not, tell about the necking and petting and the plan to watch stars give way to sunrise.

Those kids stayed out all night. Linda and I stayed up all night, too. We sat on the top bunk with our backs against the cinder block wall and waited for them with Mrs. Robinson.

While the sky turned from black to purple to lavender to pink, we sat up while Mrs. Robinson rocked in a wicker chair and lectured us. It was not good enough to keep the curfew, not good enough to keep the law. It was our responsibility to bring the others back with us, to make sure they did the right thing, too. We were punished for coming home without them, for leaving them out there in the dark cold night.

We were, she said, our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers. Loving God meant loving each other,

looking out for each other. It was not enough to keep curfew, no. We should have brought them with us. That is what it means to love your neighbor as yourself, she said.



Mrs. Robinson was planting seeds in my theological mind about what it means to be good, to be faithful. My life of faith was not just about me. Linda and I were inextricably connected to those other kids. For Mrs. Robinson, if we had stayed out longer and brought everyone back, it would have been better. It would have been better to make sure everyone was safe and sound, that everyone got a good night’s sleep in the warm cabin. It is not enough to get it right all by ourselves. Love means caring for others, even at the risk of your own self.

I was hearing a call to ministry that summer, and Mrs. Robinson was shifting my understanding of what God required of me. It was not just about God and me. We are, in fact, each other’s keepers. It would be decades before I would say it this way, but Mrs. Robinson was teaching me that we not saved until everyone is saved.

Fifty years ago, The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said in his famous “I Have a Dream” speech that white people in America “...have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone.”

Whatever our ethnicity or age, our gender or sexual orientation, our religiosity or politics—our destinies are connected, our fate is intertwined. It is true that injustice anywhere is injustice everywhere. If we are to know justice, and to know peace, we must find our way to freedom together.

Mrs. Robinson taught me that the call to love our neighbor means dragging them in out of the cold night. I have since come to know that we are free when everyone is free. We are full when all bellies are full. We have enough when everyone has enough. We are saved when everyone is saved.

Sending you Love! —Jacqui

Jacqui Lewis is Senior Minister at Middle Collegiate Church.

# Art & Soul Revival

Recently Middle Consistory members have been discussing Art & Soul Sunday Evening Worship and are envisioning ways to reach a wider audience. Here are some of their thoughts:

Darren Troup-Major

I'm extremely excited that we are looking for way to improve Art & Soul. The worship celebration has tremendous potential to connect people who may not have a desire to attend "church" but want to connect to a supportive and socially conscience community.

In its current form, there hasn't been a consistent personality. It's kind of like a stew that hasn't cooked long enough for all the flavors to really mix together. The congregation has not attached itself to the concept due to uncertainty of programming. Attendance is directly related to the marketing efforts of the featured artist or the personality/preaching of the minister.

My vision would be to build the program around the core attributes of:

- **Congregational inclusive worship music rather than watching a performance.** I come to worship to deal with stuff and also celebrate. There is power in collective song.
- **Consistent ministerial presence.** The worship needs a consistent voice to give it life. It's a great feeling to experience worship that empowers.

Deacon Darren Troup-Major and Elder Shanta Thake are members of the Middle Church Consistory.

- **Foster a more social atmosphere.** Two of my joys of 11:15 worship celebrations are the Passing the Peace and the mingling time after church. Art & Soul feels rushed at times and doesn't reflect a more relaxed and non-traditional environment. I hope for more community moments.

Shanta Thake

It is no secret that I love music. I am fortunate enough to work in music and I have spent my life believing in God using music as a testament. When I am listening to a great song on my headphones, I am reminded of beauty in the world. When I am at a packed concert, I am reminded of the community I find necessary to survive. When I am at Middle Church, the focus on Arts draws me immediately in to the presence of Holy and that continues to inspire me throughout my week.

What I dream for Art & Soul is that there will be a new congregation at 6:00 PM in our sanctuary who find their way to God in the same way I have, through exhilarating leadership and through music that courses through their veins. I envision a renewed Art & Soul as continuing to nurture a more informal atmosphere but with a consistent style and approach that can create an invested and connected new community. I see this community as being a natural outgrowth of what has been so beautifully formed at 11:15 and as a dusk revival that will usher more light and song into our streets.

## Children and Worship at Middle Church

BY ADRIENE THORNE

Middle Church Volunteers are among the best that I have served with, and leading the pack is our dedicated team of educators for children: Pamela Edgar, Tina Owens, Harold Slazer, and Kelly Smith. These three have faithfully shouldered the shifts and changes to scheduling and space brought on by construction, and have loved and shared the Bible with our Middle Church children through it all. We are grateful for their support as we make continuing improvements that encourage parents and children to grow together in faith.

Because classroom and meeting space is limited during our ongoing construction project, all education happens after our worship celebration. While this mostly works for Middle Church teens and adults, it makes for a very long day for our children. We have heard the concerns of families with little ones and are shifting the schedule to address the challenge of a long day.

Beginning Sunday, April 14th, Children's Worship and Children's Sunday School will blend together and happen from the time children are dismissed from the sanctuary until the worship celebration ends. This time will focus on the identical scripture text used in the 11:15 worship celebration. We intend this change to have two benefits:

1. It will shorten the day for families with children by having the children's Sunday program end simultaneously with the 11:15 worship celebration. (Children's Chorus will occur from 1:00-2:00 PM for participating children.)
2. It will support parents in their at home faith conversations. When parents and children learn about the same scripture text, faith dialogues will more easily occur at home and will reinforce learning for the entire family.



Clergy staff will lead the blended children's Sunday program with support from MCJJ Gospel Choir Director John Del Cueto, Ministry Coordinator Alisa Joyce, lay leaders, and Middle teens. We will explore scripture musically, creatively, bodily, and boldly. If you are interested in offering your creative gifts or the gift of your presence to this important ministry, please contact Alisa Joyce at [ajoyce@middlechurch.org](mailto:ajoyce@middlechurch.org).

The children's Sunday program runs through, Sunday, June 30th. All God's children worship together in the sanctuary for the months of July and August.

Adriene Thorne is an Associate Minister at Middle Collegiate Church.

## Easter Joy and Sad News

As bursting with joy as we are for this season of new life, we received incredibly sad news on Easter. Heidi Schwartz told us that her husband Richard Schwartz—our social worker and staff to Open Doors—passed away on Saturday, March 30. Our hearts are broken at this shocking and sudden news. Many staff attended his small funeral with Jacqui Lewis officiating. We will set a time in April to celebrate Richard's life and will share the date as soon as the information is available. Open Doors will be on hiatus as we seek ways to staff this program. If you have any concerns during this time, please contact the pastoral care line at 212-477-0666 ext 318. Only Middle pastors have access to this voicemail-box. Adriene, Chad, Jacqui, and Trish welcome your calls.

## Middle Literary Magazine on Sale Now!

The second issue of *Sunday: A Magazine of the Arts at Middle Collegiate Church* is now available! Themes of Peace, Justice and Liberation grace the art and words found therein. Copies are available from editor Carol Wierzbicki and at the church office (\$5), or by download from <http://www.middlechurch.org/about/news/sunday-a-magazine-of-the-arts-at-middle-collegiate-church>. All proceeds go to benefit our programs, so get your copy today!

## Adult Education in April

*"If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you."* — Gospel of Thomas Logion 70

We've been through 40 days of Lent, had the joy of resurrection on Easter Sunday, and it's only April. You may have heard the story of "doubting Thomas," who asked to touch the wounds in Jesus' hands and side, before he would believe that Jesus was alive. You may, however, not be as familiar with the gospel that is attributed to this same disciple. This month we will study The Gospel of Thomas. This gospel is a non-canonical text, written around the same time as The Gospel of John, late 1st–early 2nd century. Come be part of an exciting group study and experience in the wake of resurrection!

## Pride Planning Meeting

**Wednesday, April 17 • 7:00 PM**

You're invited to help us plan all things PRIDE as we plan for our annual June events. All are welcome—LGBT and straight allies.

## Family Table—Affordable Food for All

**Saturday, April 27 • 122 2nd Ave**

Middle Church has partnered with Family Table Food Ministries to provide families and individuals with affordable food. Family Table assembles a menu each month designed to feed a family of four for a week, or a single individual for nearly a month. The food box is available at a deeply discounted price of \$36. Everyone is eligible—there are no qualifications. For more information and to order, visit <https://familytablefoodministries.com/home>. If you prefer to submit a paper application, forms are available in the sanctuary.

# April

Check [middlechurch.org](http://middlechurch.org) for full details of all events.

## Sundays Before the Worship Celebration

- **Wee Care** (under age 4) – 10:00 AM • 122 2nd
- **Butterfly Prep** – 9:00 AM, 10:00 AM • 122 2nd
- **APR 7 – Hurricane Sandy Strategy Meeting** – 10:00 AM – 122 2nd

## Sunday Morning Worship Celebrations at 11:15 AM

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- **APR 7 – FAMILY WORSHIP** • "Growing into My Shoes" • Adriene Thorne, preacher • Middle Church Choir • Communion
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- **APR 21 – VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION** • "I Have All I Need" • Adriene Thorne, preacher • Middle Church Choir
- **APR 28 – EARTH DAY** • "Celebrating Mother Earth" • Jacqui Lewis and Adriene Thorne, worship leaders • Middle Church Choir • MCJJ Gospel Choir

## Sundays After the Worship Celebration

- **Children's Sunday Program** (ages 4–12) – 11:45 AM • 122 2nd
- **Chat & Chew** – 12:30 PM • Narthex
- **Butterfly Distribution** – 12:30 PM • 122 2nd
- **Adult Education** – 1:00 PM • 122 2nd
- **Children's Chorus Rehearsal** – 1:00–2:00 PM • 122 2nd
- **APR 7 – Children's Church School** (ages 4–12) – 12:30 PM • 122 2nd
- **APR 7 – Passage** (ages 8–12) – 12:30 PM • 122 2nd
- **APR 7 – Journey** (ages 12–18) – 12:30 PM • 122 2nd
- **APR 7 – Children's Chorus Rehearsal** – 1:30–2:45 PM • 122 2nd
- **APR 21 – Volunteer Appreciation Brunch** – 12:30 PM – TBD
- **APR 21 – Young Adult Brunch** – 1:00 PM – TBD
- **APR 28 – Praying Dangerously** – 1:30 PM – 122 2nd

## Art & Soul Sunday Evening Worship at 6:00 PM

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## Weekdays This Month

**Open Doors will be on hiatus until further notice.**

Wednesdays

- **Creative Writing Wednesdays** – 6:30 PM • 122 2nd Ave.
- **APR 17 – Middle Consistory Meeting** – 6:30 PM • 122 2nd
- **APR 17 – Pride Planning Meeting** – 7:00 PM – 122 2nd

Thursdays

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

Fridays

- **Friday Night Live** (ages 12–18) – 6:30 PM • 122 2nd

Saturdays

- **APR 13 – The Leading Edge Conference 2013 Begins** – 1:00 PM • Sanctuary • Conference continues through Tuesday, April 16
- **APR 27 – Family Table Distribution** – 122 2nd

## Butterfly Needs Your Help

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

Join the team of dedicated volunteers! Gather to make bag lunches and/or distribute lunches in the neighborhood. Open to all ages.

# NOLA.....Still

BY DANITA BRANAM

Last October Middle Church was beginning plans for a mission trip to New Orleans, as part of our commitment to support the “just rebuild” for the long haul. Within days Superstorm Sandy hit our tri-state “backyard,” causing us to pause and evaluate whether to continue. Middle Church had sent a mission team to NOLA every year since the disaster of Hurricane Katrina.

Our original expectation for the NOLA 2013 mission was construction and community projects such as restoring parks, cemeteries, and historical sites to visiting nursing homes, youth centers and homeless shelters, assembling backpacks for the needy, or replanting marshlands. I must confess, with the aftermath of Sandy all around, I had difficulty being inspired to go to New Orleans.

Memories came rushing back to 2006 and 2007—the planning, developing of historical and cultural education, and organizing adult volunteers—to gut house interiors; to listen to nightmare experiences of those still alive; to organize the evacuees within newly formed “trailer camps” to tackle the transportation, security, and resource gathering issues that would bring some sanity back to their daily living.

I thought about the \$600 commitment to make the trip; that amount could spread so much further in our “backyard.” NOLA—what was going on there, seven years later? Are there lessons we can leverage for Sandy work? Can we be more effective in our backyard, and if so, how? I started researching online but found mixed messages—in many ways it seemed “Nawlins” was back; yet other information focused on what had not changed, particularly in what seemed to be the “desert of the Lower 9th Ward.”

Having led and participated in three Middle Church trips, the passion began to rekindle; I re-read our Social Justice Vision and was reminded that we had set a goal of sending an “eyewitness team” to assess the progress. A single pebble dropped in water creates a greater number of ripples than just its splash. Appointments were set up with organizations and contacts with which we had connected over the years as well as some new.

Pre-Katrina residents were predominately French-Caribbean, with multi-generational roots, but unfortunately located in the Lower 9th Ward. It is estimated Katrina reduced that population by 100,000 and only 10,000 are expected to trickle back. Collusion and corruption in handling disaster funding has discouraged and eliminated many potential returnees. Brad Pitt’s Make It Right ecological homes (solar panels, rainwater capture and filtration, etc.) have increased from 3 to 150—located primarily within the Lower 9th at price tags from \$150,000. A city housing project, although minimally damaged, was demolished and replaced with five square blocks of townhouses. The city focused on rebuilding downtown for tourism; the churches focus on the neighborhoods. Blight is often intermingled amongst restored homes; or when city acquired, often left to stand in shambles at the entrance to restored communities. The public school system was decimated and charter school management welcomed in—with mixed results depending on the stakeholders’ interest—education improvement or a return on investment. Vietnamese fishermen and farmers have transitioned to aquaponics—fish farming in tanks and vegetable farming in above ground grids.

Young people, who came from across the country, play a critical role in the rebuilding effort. Many have therefore decided to locate in NOLA which has ignited a significant level of gentrification. The cultural legacy is being diluted. Some faithful but struggling churches and communities reminded us of the complexities related to rebuilding this city. In the midst of great progress and hope in New Orleans, there are communities who wrestle with significant challenges and despair. Seven years later—the greatest needs appear to be jobs, support for mental health and education, and safety—NOLA is still #1 in crime and violence in the nation.

The ripples were greater than I could have imagined, and well worth every dollar to see it for myself—to be an eyewitness.

*Danita Branam is an Elder of the Collegiate Church and is the current Chair of Consistory at Intersections.*



## Middle Collegiate Church

welcoming • artistic • inclusive • bold

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

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[twitter.com/revdrjacqui](https://twitter.com/revdrjacqui)

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.

**after-hours care** For after-hours pastoral care emergencies, call the office at **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.