

middle church

JUST LOVE

CONGREGATIONAL

MEETING

MAY 2, 2021

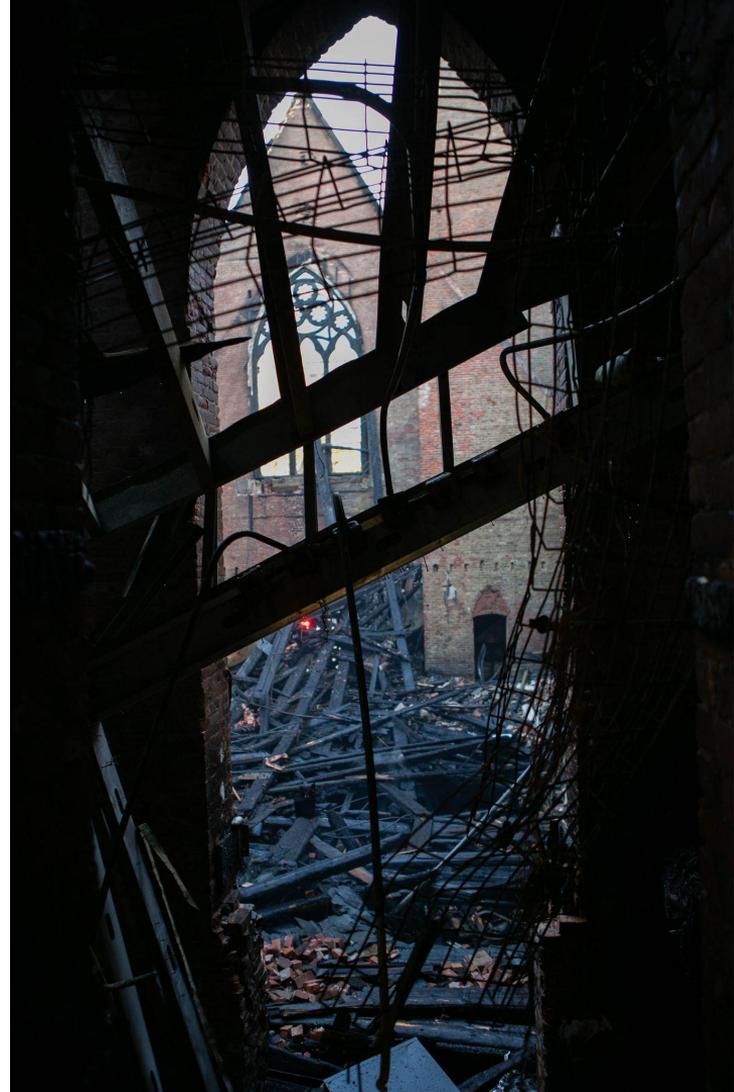
AGENDA

- ❑ **FIRE UPDATE**
- ❑ **MIDDLE RISING / VISION PLAN 2025**
- ❑ **FISCAL YEAR HIGHLIGHTS**
- ❑ **A LOOK AHEAD TO FY 2022**

UPDATE FROM THE FIRE



December 5, 2020



SOCIAL HALL

The windows and sanctuary wall have now been enclosed and sealed off.



WHAT REMAINS

- The Liberty Bell, which will be moved to the New-York Historical Society this spring to be displayed until its future return to Middle
- The Senior Minister portraits, including Gordon Dragt and Jacqui Lewis
- The majority of paintings, including Elder Jerriese Johnson, and the paintings from the studios by Mary Jo Lombardo
- The marble Communion Table and the marble Pulpit
- Frog + Toad!





“No fire can stop
Revolutionary Love”
- Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis

DREAM WITH US

Vision Statement



Middle Collegiate Church is a multicultural, multi-ethnic, inter-generational movement of Spirit and justice, powered by Revolutionary Love, with room for all. Following in the Way of Jesus' radical love, and inspired by the prophets, Middle Church is called by God to do a bold new thing on the earth. We aim to heal the soul and the world by dismantling racist, classist, sexist, and homophobic systems of oppression.

Because our God is still speaking in many languages, we work in inter-religious partnerships to uproot injustice, eradicate poverty, care for the brokenhearted, and build the Reign of God on earth. This activism is fueled by our faith; our faith is expressed in art; our art is an active prayer connecting us with the Holy Spirit. Middle Church affirms the transformative power of moral imagination, reclaiming and re-framing Christianity inside our walls, on the street, and in virtual spaces around the globe.

MIDDLE RISING

We have begun work on a comprehensive study with New York-based firm, Koszyn & Company, to determine how ambitious we can be in our fundraising to **i)** rebuild a sacred site; **ii)** build capacity in staff and systems; **iii)** support the expanded operations of a new building once it's built; and **iv)** maintain and enhance our in-person and digital ministries for local, national and global impact.

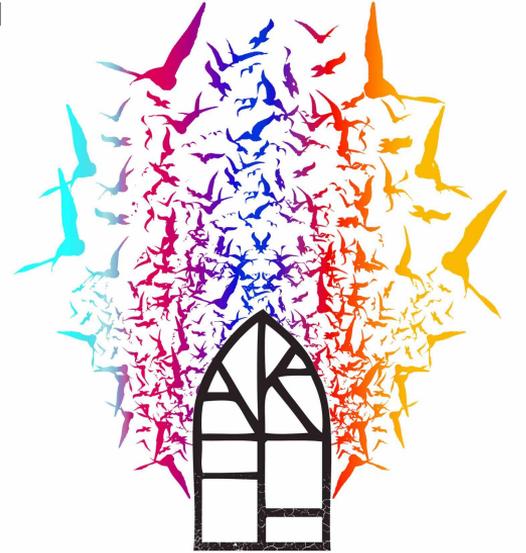
Once we kick it off officially, Middle Rising will be a three-year blended campaign for building the building (“bricks and mortar”), facilitating our physical and digital ministry, and supporting our annual budgets for programs, staff and operations.

Programming is the heart and soul of the future of Middle, and we have a special “bucket “ for our *Freedom Lab*, comprehensive programming that includes reparations, social and economic justice, and education/trainings for all generations.

If anyone would like to take an active leadership role in this multi-year effort, please contact us!

Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis, Senior Minister -- jlewis@middlechurch.org

Devon Mosley, Director of Development -- dmosley@middlechurch.org



middle rising



Tamika Mallory



Ellie Kemper



Norah Jones



Chelsea Clinton



Marianne Williamson



Heather Headley



Gabby Bernstein



Daniel Breaker



Elizabeth Stanley



Michelle Hurd



Paula Stone Williams



Aunjanue Ellis

Hosted by Tituss Burgess & Bevy Smith

**A LIVE Benefit Concert
for Middle Church
& Bevy Smith**

middle rising

3.25.21 | Thurs. | 7 p.m. ET | bit.ly/help-us-rise



Emily King



Jacqui Lewis



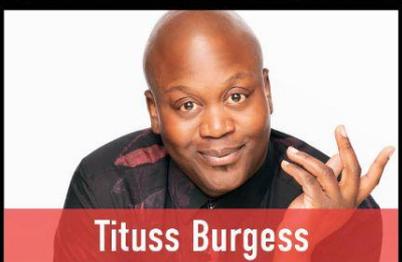
Linda Sarsour



Branch Woodman



Bevy Smith



Tituss Burgess



V (formerly Eve Ensler)



Melissa Harris-Perry

HELP MIDDLE RISE!

No fire can stop Revolutionary Love!

middlechurch.org/rising

or text 'RISE' to 917.924.4666



POLL

- 1. How often do you attend worship now?**
 - **Weekly, Bi-Weekly, Monthly, Less often than that**
- 2. Would you plan to attend Middle worship in person when we reopen in a temporary space?**
 - **Likely, Unlikely, No, I'm Virtual Only**
 - **How often? Weekly, Bi-weekly, Monthly, I'm Virtual Only**
- 3. How important is it to you that Middle Church stays in the East Village?**
 - **Absolutely, Not Important, I'm Indifferent**
- 4. How do you like to receive news from us?**
 - **Monthly Mailed Newsletter or Digital only?**
 - **Weekly digital newsletter?**

FISCAL YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

MIDDLE AT A GLANCE:

2020-2021 Growth

NEW MEMBERS: 346 (March 2020 - March 2021)

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP: 1,768

States Represented:

Alabama; Alaska; Arizona; Arkansas; California; Colorado; Connecticut; Delaware; Florida; Georgia; Idaho; Illinois; Indiana; Iowa; Kansas; Kentucky; Louisiana; Maine; Maryland; Massachusetts; Michigan; Minnesota; Mississippi; Missouri; Nebraska; Nevada; New Hampshire; New Jersey; New Mexico; New York; North Carolina; North Dakota; Ohio; Oklahoma; Oregon; Pennsylvania; Rhode Island; South Carolina; Tennessee; Texas; Utah; Vermont; Virginia; Washington; West Virginia; Wisconsin; as well as Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico.

Countries Represented:

Austria; Australia; Canada; China; Germany; Egypt; France; Great Britain; Japan; Korea; Mexico; New Zealand; Nigeria and South Africa



MIDDLE AT A GLANCE: WORSHIP + ARTS

Along with the Deacons and Ushers that greet you virtually, each week ten Middle Staff work behind the scenes to innovate, dream and produce our cutting-edge virtual worship experience -- from **dance** to **lay-led sermons**, to **readings** and **prayers**, to **virtual choir compilations** featuring our three choirs and special guests.

We welcome an average of 1,281 unique viewing households each Sunday; up to 4,500 by week's end!*

Our Worship team has created “**Before We Enter**” mini-sermons and reimagined what **Communion** looks like. We've also created a weekly "**Prayer Line**" portal, among so many other things to uplift our congregation and nurture our communities in these difficult times, and allowing more and more people around the world to help lead.

Fun fact: **Our virtual music ministry engagement has increased nearly 15%** and now welcomes folx across the globe zooming in for rehearsals and voice part submissions from places like **Japan, Las Vegas, Portugal, California, England** and **Maine**, to name a few.



*(*across MiddleChurch.org; Facebook and YouTube)*

MIDDLE AT A GLANCE:

JUSTICE

Strengthened our relationships with Multi-faith partners including our work with:

- The Circle Up (Post Election Day event, Iftar, Passover Seder)
- Faith Communities United for Just ReEntry (routinely lobby for just policies to elected officials)
- New Sanctuary Coalition (lifting up opportunities for members to engage virtually around just immigration policies and practice)
- Co-sponsored and led effort for a Multifaith Forum for NYC Mayor, and for Manhattan DA
- We fed people in partnership with the Girls Club, New Alternatives and the East Village Fridge
- Worked for a Just Democracy and Voter Reform (thousands of postcards, phone calls, TV appearances, op-eds written, town halls had; registered voters in front of Middle)
- Vaccinate the People - volunteers called every member of the congregation aged 75+ to offer support in getting a vaccine appointment; paid for taxi rides as needed

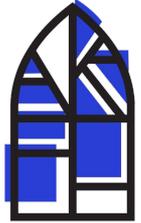
Freedom Labs - Anti-Racist Trainings and teach-ins

- Two freedom Labs in the fall around Census and Voting - large digital Census campaign
- Freedom Lab Town Hall in the Spring around COVID Vaccines
- Youth Lab in August around Voting
- Anti-Racism trainings - Spring and Fall; CASTE teach-in, Bystander Intervention Trainings to stop AAPI Hate



MIDDLE AT A GLANCE:

PRAYER + CARE



Groups & Gatherings for Grief / Mental Health / Emotional Health / Prayer

- Six consecutive Monday "Grief Gatherings" around COVID
- Launched Virtual Coffee program with clergy
- Congregation-wide "Holiday Grief" email for those who experienced significant loss
- Pre-election "Pray Vigil"
- Hablamos "Offrenda" (Day of the Dead)
- Intentional Space for Congregation to gather (After insurrection; three times after election; Pre-Inauguration; Day of the mass shooting in Atlanta of AAPI siblings)
- Regular prayer offering "Pray to Rise"
- Creation of weekly "Prayer Line" portal
- Sent parenting care packages
- Increased communications from Middle Deacons and congregants, including sending holiday ornaments and cards
- Covid education and support
- Offering a 5-Part Mental Health series (begins May 11th)

MIDDLE AT A GLANCE:

GENERATION & COHORT PROGRAMS

Our team has continued to serve families by reimagining beloved annual events in a virtual capacity, such as the **Children's Multicultural Book Fair** and **Youth Virtual Engagement Lab**. Engagement has doubled to roughly 30 young people on a weekly basis through our Kids Enrichment, Middle Youth, and Wee Care programming.

Our young adults cohort (ages 18-39) has engaged in conversations in communal solidarity through “zine” **reading and making; liberation theologies through music videos, articles, and Scriptural interrogation;** and have **fostered safe community by holding space together** through games and intentional check-ins. Our lay leaders hosted **writing and acting labs;** our gospel choir hosted picnics and socially distanced carolling; and a couple of Butterfly pop-ups served food to the community.

Along with our **Queer Black Men** program, we have engaged hundreds of LGBTQIA+ and queer-identified community members locally and globally through our quarterly **Queer Roundtable Discussions; Queer Faith event;** and **Queer Friendsgiving;** and studies such as **Black Trans Lives Matter in the Text Too** and **Queer Theology** through the collaboration of our Middle staff and other thought leaders like J Mase III. Attendance at these events regularly surpassed 50 folx, with a third to half of them being new faces in Middle's circles.

Our seniors (ages 60-90) in our **New Adventures** program have consistently met virtually each week throughout COVID, growing to a steady group of 12-14 folks who connect and encourage one another.



Revolutionary Love: The Courage To Imagine

VIRTUAL | APRIL 15 - 18, 2021

We hosted our 15th Annual Conference
with nearly 1,400 attendees!

SPEAKERS INCLUDE



MIDDLE AT A GLANCE:

PUBLIC THEOLOGY

We more than doubled the contacts in our email distribution list.

We currently have *13,900 email subscribers!*

We sold *1,392 tickets* to our annual **Revolutionary Love Conference** --- 50% of whom were first time attendees to a Middle Church event!

2,328 tickets were bought across our four **anti-racism trainings**.

We just launched a new podcast: Love. Period. featuring our Senior Minister and a wide array of leaders with the Center for Action and Contemplation. We're also excited to announce we'll be **launching a new website** this summer! The site will feature a special members portal that will help us grow virtual community with members around the country and globe, will be better optimized for search engines, and will have a more artistic look and feel to match the fabulous artistry of this community.



MIDDLE AT A GLANCE:

DIGITAL MINISTRY

During 2020-2021 we built up our digital church! We've created and reshaped touchpoints for digital ministry with a **Virtual Chat & Chew** after worship each week, and our Digi Minister is working with states around the nation to begin local gatherings. We rebranded our creative assets, and our **Social Media** grew by leaps and bounds!

MIDDLE CHURCH

5,620 Instagram followers

8,725 Twitter followers

12,918 Facebook followers

REV. DR. JACQUI LEWIS

10,800 Instagram followers

33,200 Twitter followers

14,000 Facebook followers

Our **Middle Church Store** offers a wide variety of retail items and training materials, including new Middle Rising collection.



MIDDLE AT A GLANCE:

Tithed Our Love



DONATIONS FOR THE MATTER OF BLACK LIVES

Equal Justice Initiative: **\$10,000**

Black Fem: **\$5,000**

Black Voters Matter Fund: **\$5,000**

DFW #BlackLivesMatter Relief: **\$5,000**

Fair Fight: **\$5,000**

Feed the People Texas: **\$5,000**

NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund: **\$5,000**

New Alternatives NYC: **\$5,000**

Partners Uplifting Our Daughters & Sons: **\$5,000**

She The People: **\$5,000**

We Act for Environmental Justice: **\$5,000**

Audre Lorde Project: **\$2,500**

Black Chef Movement: **\$2,500**

Crown Heights Mutual Aid: **\$2,500**

The Gathering for Justice: **\$2,500**

Greene County African American Museum: **\$2,500**

Loveland Foundation: **\$2,500**

Total of \$77,500

CANCEL RENT / DEACON'S FUNDS

-Distribution of Cancel Rent, Deacon Fund and Scholarships

\$31,920 since October

MIDDLE CHURCH - BY THE NUMBERS

FY21 Goal to raise from
YOUR offerings
\$900,000

RECURRING COMMITMENTS
& PLEDGES REMAINING
\$50,175

ANNUAL REVENUE

EARNED TO DATE
\$544,065.13

REMAINING
(\$305,759.87)

TOTAL DONORS: 2,259

TOTAL RECURRING DONORS: 345

MIDDLE RISING - BY THE NUMBERS

FIRE

DECEMBER 5, 2020

**RECURRING COMMITMENTS
& PLEDGES REMAINING**

\$86,131.39

REVENUE RECEIVED

AS OF TODAY

\$1,245,049.18

TOTAL DONORS: 371

TOTAL RECURRING DONORS: 91

POLL

- 1. Please rank, in order of importance, the elements important to you as part of Middle Church**
 - **Worship and the arts; Education + Trainings; Children's Programming; Cohort gatherings; Justice projects; All of the Above**
-
- 2. Would you be willing to become a recurring donor to our:**
 - **Rebuilding Efforts - Yes / No**
 - **Programming & Operations - Yes/No**

POWER THIS MOVEMENT



donate on:

middlechurch.org/donate

venmo @MiddleCollegiateChurch

facebook /MiddleCollegiateChurch

or Text 'GIVE' to 917.924.4666

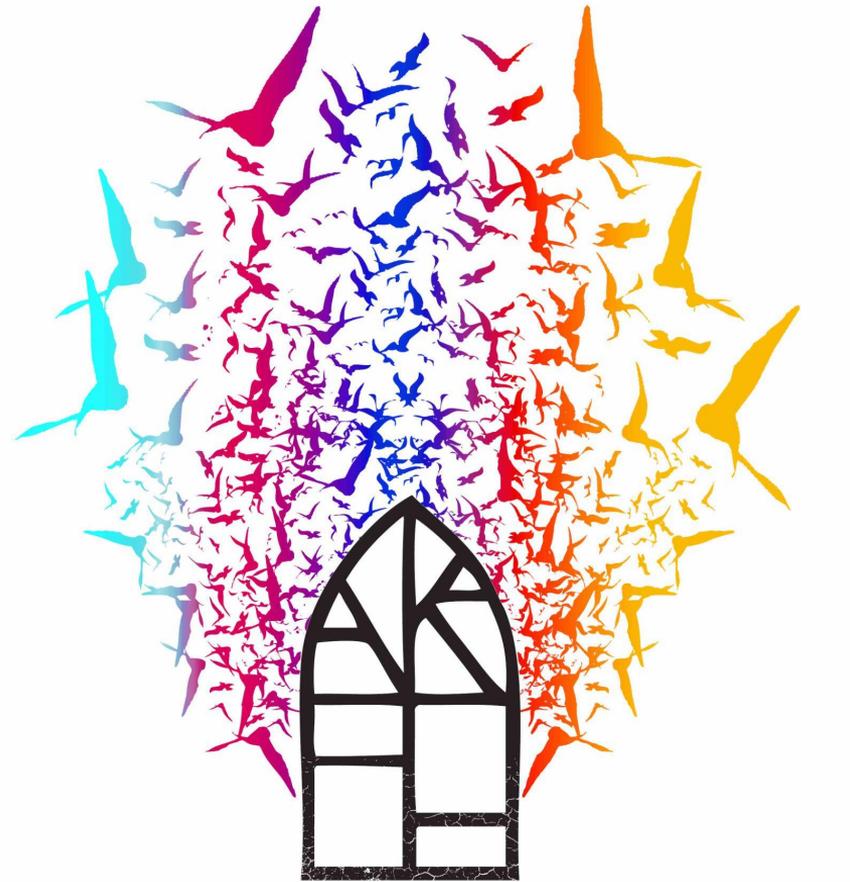


Visit Our Middle Church Store!

Just head to bit.ly/middle-store



**“Behold, I am doing a new thing,
now it is rising up” Isaiah 43:19**



middle rising