

**National Avenue Christian Church  
Online Worship Guide**



*Image by John Cameron*

***Epiphany:  
The Pulse of Compassion  
16 January 2022***

## ***The Gathering of a People of God***

*National Avenue is a brave place for all people. We celebrate our diversity of race, creed, religion, cultural backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions. We extend a warm welcome to all this morning, especially those who are worshipping at National Avenue for the first time. Your presence both enriches us and this time of celebration together~*

As you gather for worship...

- *Bring a candle (and lighter) and communion elements (coffee, juice, bread, bagels, whatever you have!).*
- *During the Passing of the Peace you will be invited to wave and say hi in the comments!*
- *Before worship, you are invited to share your prayers here:  
<https://forms.gle/G1V6Hh37pmiv5D5q7>*
- *Breathe and savor the Spirit gathering in this space.*

### Welcome to Worship

#### Words of Gathering

**Tom Boone & John Cottle**

Come, all who need room to breathe.

Come, all who seek hope.

Come, all who are filled with great joy.

Come, all who are weary.

Gather here in this sacred space.

We bring questions, doubts, mysteries, discoveries  
and let them mingle with the sacredness of each individual.

We bring the stuff of our lives,  
trusting that together we will be church.

**In this time together,  
may we nurture and be nurtured;  
may we fill and be filled**

**with the Spirit ready to meet us at this moment.**

\*Gathering Hymn

*Epiphany Carol*

**BEACH SPRING**

Every Nation sees the glory of a star that pierced the night.  
As we tell the wondrous story, we are bathed in radiant light.  
Star sent forth from highest heaven, dancing light of God's design,  
shine upon us on the gift that's given: Word of flesh now born in time.

Every tongue shall sing the praises of your birth in deepest night.  
You are healing for the ages; you are Christ, our God's delight.  
You proclaim within your being all our hopes, our great desires.  
You shall live to rise, redeeming all who follow with their lives.

Once again may we discover Word made flesh sent from above.  
In our neighbor, sister, brother, in the lonely and unloved.  
May we touch you, may we hold you, may we cradle you with care  
as we learn to love each other, bringing hope out of despair.

Gather, God, the world together in the brightness of your day.  
Fill our hearts with joy forever: help us walk the holy way.  
May your justice rule the nations; may all people live as one.  
Now we see our true salvation in the glory of this One. [adapted/franciso'brien]

Lighting the Christ Candle

**Tom Boone**

When a star in the sky marked where  
the new 'King of the Jews' had been born,  
wise ones came to Jerusalem looking for him.  
Like the wise ones we ask,  
**where can we find you, Lord?**

They brought to the child, with his mother Mary,  
their most precious gifts and worshipped him.  
We have no treasure to offer, nor any star to guide us.

We bring our hunger to know more and we bring our care.  
Like the wise ones we ask,  
**where can we find you, Lord?**

Do we look for someone who is rich and powerful,  
living in a five-star hotel,  
or for the One who had nowhere to lay their head?  
Like the wise ones we ask,  
**where can we find you, Lord?**

You were in the world but they did not know you.  
You came to your own and they did not receive you.  
There was no room for you at the inn.  
Is there any room for you in our lives?  
Like the wise ones we ask,  
**where can we find you, Lord?**

[Iona Community]

*The Christ Candle is lit.*

As we celebrate the Epiphany season,  
we celebrate that the light is here.

**The light is here.**

May it burn brightly in this space  
and even brighter in our hearts.

Amen.

Passing of the Peace

**John Cottle**

Frank Rogers Jr writes,

“Jesus’ spiritual path,  
at its essence,

entails the cultivation of compassion.

It invites us to become ever more grounded in God’s expansive compassion,  
ever more restored in a self-compassion that tames our chaotic interior lives,

and ever more fully an agent of care,  
a beacon of compassion within our bruised and battered world.”

As we discover ways to be this presence in our world,  
may the peace of God be with you.

**And also with you.**

*As we share peace today, we invite you to share this ancient  
greeting with those gathered. Share a hello or peace sign in the chat!*

Life of the Church

**Rev. Jenn Simmons**

*Please let us know you are with us here by filling out this form. If you would like  
to receive our weekly update by email or would like to schedule a time for coffee  
with our pastor, please provide that information on the form.*



Reading the Stories of our Tradition

*from Gospel according to Luke Chapter 4*

The words of compassion, for the people of God.

Prayers of the Community

**Rev. Michelle Scott-Huffman**

*As this community,  
we invite you to take a few moments to claim the Spirit,  
wherever you are today. We invite you to light your candles as we share prayers  
at the end of our silence. As we join in prayer, we invite you to share prayers  
here <https://forms.gle/G1V6Hh37pmiv5D5q7>.*

“Come and be still,” says the Holy.  
Linger in Love’s presence.  
Let striving cease.  
Accept what is,  
for what is.  
All is held in Sacred embrace.  
Here,  
your pain is honored.  
Your loss is acknowledged.  
Your struggle is neither dismissed nor inflated.  
It rests in the web of shared existence,  
cruel and beautiful.  
Eventually, love will ask more of you...  
Honesty.  
Change.  
Commitment.  
Compassion.  
But in this moment,  
feel the nearness of the Source of Life Itself,  
tender and fierce.  
Know that the Infinite embraces you  
in all the ways you are essential –  
and not.  
Let your chest rise and fall  
to the rhythm of eternity’s breath  
Slow.  
Gentle.  
Consistent.

[enfleshedliturgy]

*Silence*

*Prayers of the community.*

Let us pray together:

**O Birther!**

**Father-Mother of the Cosmos**

**you create all that moves in light.  
Hear the one Sound that created all others,  
in this way the Name is hallowed in silence.  
Your rule springs into existence  
as our arms reach out to embrace all creation.  
Let all wills move together  
in your vortex, as stars and planets  
swirl through the sky.  
Grant what we need each day in bread and insight:  
subsistence for the call of growing life.  
Lighten our load of secret debts as  
we relieve others of their need to repay.  
Keep us from hoarding false wealth,  
and from the inner shame of  
help not given in time.**

[Matthew Fox]

May it be so.

**May it be so for us.**

Reflection

*The Pulse of Compassion*

**Rev. Scott-Huffman**

Music of Response

*Compassion Hymn*

**SINGERS: RANDALL BECRAFT, JENNIFER FORNI,  
PATRICK MULHERON AND COURTNEY WRIGHT  
VIOLIN: KIRSTEN WEISS**

Invitation to Offering

**John Cottle**

*Thank you for being church and for all the ways you support one another!  
To make a financial gift online visit: [here](#)*

Music of Response

*Be Not Afraid*

**SINGERS: RANDALL BECRAFT, JENNIFER FORNI,  
PATRICK MULHERON AND COURTNEY WRIGHT  
VIOLIN: KIRSTEN WEISS**

Sharing at our Tables

**Rev. Scott-Huffman & Rev. Simmons**

As we gather at the table this morning,  
we acknowledge the presence of God, our Eternal source of wisdom.

**We are grateful this morning for the light,  
new hope, and, most of all, new questions.**

Where God's light shines, possibility opens  
a way, a word, a child, a gift.

We find paths where before there were only walls.

We hear the call of God's claim on our lives.

We remember a child born with a promise  
that will transform hearts forever after.

**We accept the gifts that have been given,  
needing and receiving them over and over again.**

**What God brings to us in Epiphany is possibility,  
a threshold that we can step over into wholeness.**

What is revealed there may not be what we expected  
as surely as what the shepherds and the sages saw  
was unexpected and puzzling.

But the revelation of God's word made flesh  
is the answer to all of our deepest questions.

**We give thanks to God for the unexpected,  
for the light that opens us up, leads us on,  
and keeps us always seeking after God's call on our lives.**

Jesus invited all to the feast of peace and new life.

Jesus risked everything in compassion.

Jesus promised to make himself known in the breaking of the bread.

We give thanks for the wonderful gift of reflective awareness  
that allows us to recognize and name  
the presence of a Creative Spirit  
beyond all imagining, in our universe.



**We give thanks.**

And on this morning,  
we give thanks for the opportunity  
to share this meal together.

**So today, in this sacred place, around our table,  
we take this bread and we break it,  
remembering that you are manna for our souls.**

**We also take this cup and pour it,  
giving thanks that even now,  
you surround us with your love.**

Prayer of Thanksgiving

**Etta Madden**

Sharing of the Bread and Cup

*During this time, you are invited to eat and drink. We are connected by the tables  
of our lives. Across distance, we are united by sharing together. Our presence, in  
person or across digital space, brings the Table to life.*

Song of Blessing

*We Cannot Own the Sunlit Sky*

**684**

## We Cannot Own the Sunlit Sky

684

1. We can-not own the sun-lit sky, the moon, the wild-flow'rs grow-ing,  
 2. When bod-ies shiv-er in the night and, wea-ry, wait for morn-ing,  
 3. God calls hu-man-i-ty to join as part-ners in cre-at-ing

for we are part of all that is with-in life's riv-er flow-ing.  
 when chil-dren have no bread but tears, and war-horns sound their warn-ing,  
 a fu-ture free from want and fear, life's good-ness cel-e-brat-ing.

With o-pen hands re-ceive and share the gifts of God's cre-a-tion,  
 God calls hu-man-i-ty to wake, to join in com-mon la-bor,  
 That new world beck-ons from a-far, in-vites our shared en-deav-or,

that all may have a-bun-dant life in ev-'ry earth-ly na-tion.  
 that all may have a-bun-dant life in one-ness with their neigh-bor.  
 that all may have a-bun-dant life and peace en-dure for-ev-er.

WORDS: Ruth Duck, 1984, 1989  
 MUSIC: Robert Lowry, 1869, alt.

HOW CAN I KEEP FROM SINGING  
 87.87D

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### Words of Sending

Love sends us in our full humanity,  
 to encounter the full humanity of others,  
 as messy, real, complicated as it is.

That compassion may be our practice.  
That difference may be our teacher.  
That honesty and truth may guide us.  
God calls not the perfect, but the willing.  
With the assurance of the Spirit's companionship,  
go in peace.

[enfleshedliturgy]

Postlude

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