

***National Avenue Christian Church  
Online Worship Guide***



*Image by: Fabian Oelkers*

***Working through the Weeds  
22 May 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 worshiping 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!).*
- *Before worship, you are invited to share your prayers [here](#).*
- *Check-in [here](#) and say hello so we can greet one another as we come to worship!*
- *Breathe and savor the Spirit gathering in this space.*

### Prelude

#### Words of Gathering

**Amy Danford & Candy Adams**

We come together from many different places.

We come bringing our aches,

our pains,

our joys,

our celebrations,

our longings,

our dreams.

We gather as this body,

united in our hope

for what community through Jesus can become.

We gather with the memory of those who have shaped the church,

as we hold fast to hope about what the church can become,

and claim together,

**we are the church, right now.**

As we evolve,

as we shift and grow,  
we long to be the kind of people,  
who take risks,  
who believe the words, life, and actions of Jesus the Christ-  
they matter.

They shape, form, and give us hope.

**We seek to be wise enough to dream.**

**We seek to be bold enough to claim hope,  
even when it seems hope is gone.**

**We seek to be wild enough  
to claim the life, new life, life from death,  
we know in Jesus the Christ.**

\*Gathering Hymn

*Come Now, O Wisdom*

SLANE

Come now, O Wisdom, we need your clear voice;  
Speak and awaken our hearts to rejoice.  
Gracious Creator of more than we know,  
In your own image may we ever grow.

Come now, O Wisdom, abide in our souls;  
Stir in us visions of life free and whole.  
Wisdom, our pathway to justice and peace,  
With you our dreams find their fullest release.

Wisdom, more precious than rubies or gold,  
With you our graces forever unfold.  
No fame or fortune with you can compare;  
Pour out your blessings, so rich and so rare.  
Wisdom your grace joins all heaven and earth;  
With you we labor new life to give birth.  
Come now, O Wisdom, our Midwife and Friend,  
Open our hearts to your world without end.

[jannaldredgeclanton]

\*Easter Light

This light which bathes the world,  
pours from a source so close,  
so near  
and yet we cannot touch it  
or fence it in that it be lost.

This light which shatters darkness  
is pieced together, flame by flame,  
shining from a thousand sources  
but is diminished by the loss of one.

This light which fills the furthest corner  
brings with it warmth  
to fill billions of hearts  
and bind them with its common truth.

This light which pulls us toward tomorrow  
is carried deep within each of our hearts  
and lit by you and me and him and her  
and all who live upon this earth.

This light which is yours and mine to carry  
burns only in the hope-filled heart,  
the source of all our inspiration  
and all the beauty that will ever come to be.  
Let it shine.

[grettavosper]

*The Christ Candle is lit.*

We ignite this light,  
bravely claiming it.  
**Your light, our light,  
in our midst.**

## Passing of the Peace

When the way is convoluted  
and confusing,  
when the choice is not clear  
and uncertainty presses close,  
may there be those through whom  
God's longing speaks,  
and, in speaking, shows us a way.

[jr]

This morning, may the peace of God be with you.

**And also with you.**

*You are invited to share this ancient greeting in the chat! Please drop a note of peace to one another!*

## Life of the Church

**Rev. Jenn Simmons**



*Please let us know you are with us here by filling out this form and greeting one another in the chat. 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 Matthew Chapter 25**

Let us bring our questions and wrestling.

**Our questions are holy.**

## Prayers of the Community

**Rev. Simmons**

*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>.*

*Silence*

*Prayers of the community.*

O God of Light and Knowledge,  
**we pray that darkness, fear  
and ignorance about serious mental illnesses  
might be dispelled by the light of knowledge.**  
We pray for Peace and Wholeness,  
**for those with troubled minds and hearts,  
that broken lives and relationships might be mended.**  
We ask for Understanding,  
**that the walls of stigma, labels, exclusion  
and marginalization might be broken down  
through education and advocacy**  
We pray for Healing,  
**for all living with mental illness,  
for better treatment,  
for steadier recovery,  
for greater opportunity to work and serve.**  
We ask for Faith and Hope,  
**for those who feel no one cares.  
Dispel their despair through a cup of cold water,  
an outstretched arm,  
a listening ear, a committed advocate.**  
We offer our Thanks,  
**for new discoveries in medical research,  
for faithful caregivers,  
for dedicated mental health professionals  
and persistent researchers.**  
Most of all, O God of Steadfast Love,

we thank you for your Love,  
**that sustains the weary, that defends the weak,**  
**that sets the lonely in families,**  
that brings beauty out of ashes,  
that brings a song in the night;  
**that inspires courage to hope,**  
**to watch, to work for a new and brighter Day.**

As people committed to this way, we pray:

**Loving God,**

**within and around us, we revere you.**

**We seek to live life as you would want us to do:**

**with love and respect for all people**

**and all things in the universe.**

**May we find each day sufficient for our needs.**

**And find forgiveness when we do wrong,**

**just as we forgive those who do wrong to us.**

**In times of trouble, may we center our lives in you.**

**For your being is love,**

**which comes with strength and with beauty.**

**Throughout eternity.**

[margaretrolfe]

**May it be so for us.**

Music of Centering

*Hand in Hand* MILLER & FERGUSON  
CHANCEL CHOIR

Reflection

*“To Hell with Hell”*

Rev. Simmons

Music of Response

*O for a World*

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Our Offering: Sharing in Ministry

Candy Adams



*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

*How Can I Keep From Singing*  
CHANCEL CHOIR

TULLOCK

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Tina Stillwell

Communion Meditation

Stephanie Scott-Huffman

Communion Hymn

*O God of Vision*

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Sharing at our Tables

On the night of his arrest,  
Jesus shared a meal with his companions.  
He took bread,  
blessed it, broke it, gave it to his disciples and said:  
**“This is my body which is given for you.**  
Do this in remembrance of me.”  
After the meal,  
he took the cup, blessed it, and shared it saying:  
**“This cup that is poured out is the new covenant.”**  
In remembrance of the love that saves us,  
we proclaim the mystery of our faith:  
**Christ was birthed among us.**  
**Christ was executed among us.**  
**Christ rises again among us.**  
May the Spirit come and settle upon these gifts,  
making this bread and this cup be for us a Holy Encounter,  
reminding us that Christ is with us.  
We are invited to be a part of the Resurrection story.  
That the Kingdom is always closer than we can imagine.  
May we be nourished,

that we might nourish others.

[enfleshedliturgy]

Prayer of Thanksgiving

**Tom Boone**

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 for the Journey

*Your Love, O God*

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Words for the Journey

May our time together be a place of support  
and encouragement,  
and give us courage for the road ahead.

We go forth to discover the ways the gospel,  
the good news might become good for us and our world.

**We trust the questions will guide our way.**

May it be so.

Postlude

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**Rev. Jenn Simmons, Lead Pastor,**

**Rev. Michelle Scott-Huffman, Adjunct Pastor for Preaching**

**Rev. Jody Furnas-Wright, Adjunct Pastor for Faith Formation with Families**

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**Rev. Dr. John White, Pastoral Care, Jonathan Raney, Music Director**