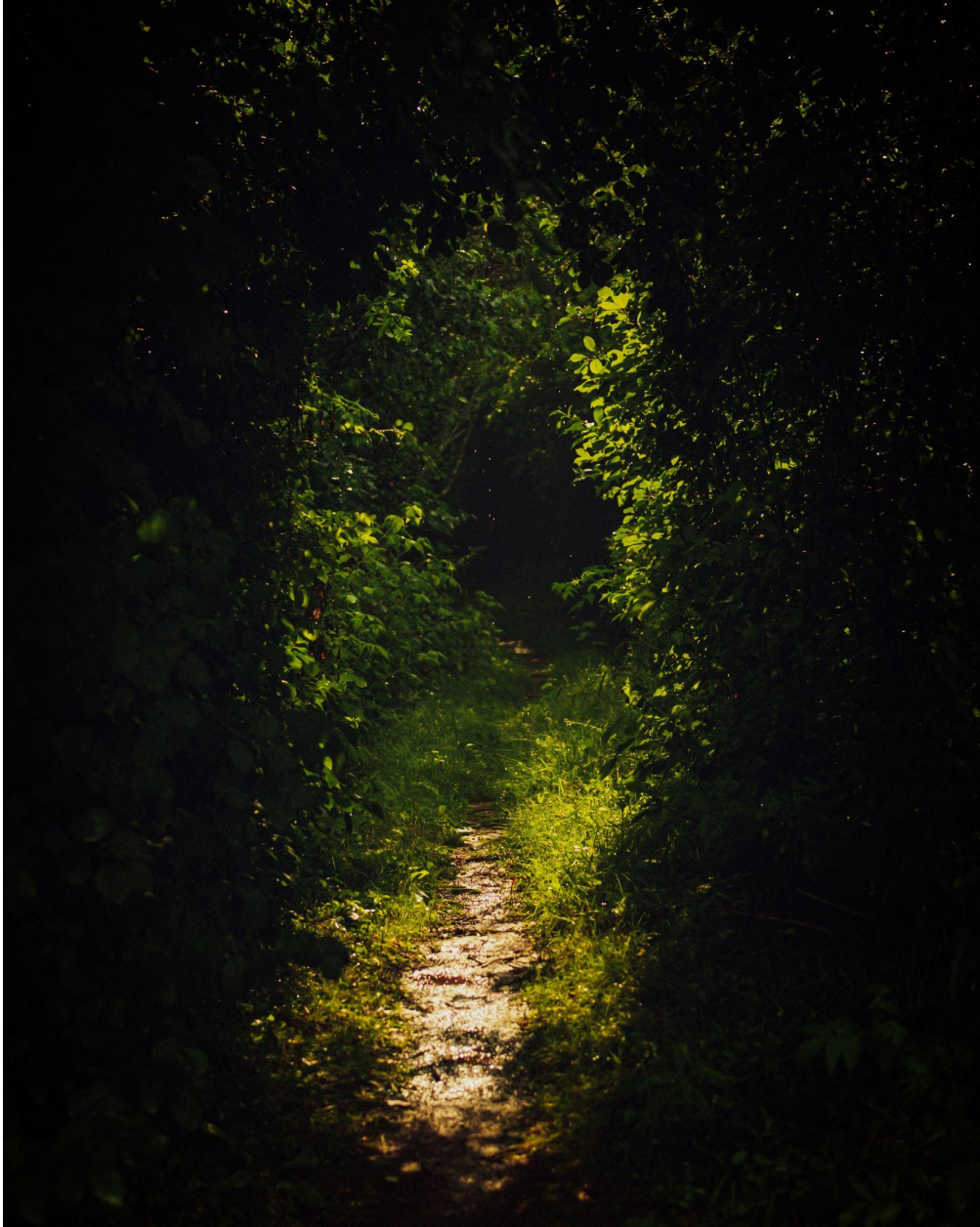


***National Avenue Christian Church  
Online Worship Guide***



TIM FOSTER

***Faith After Doubt***

***29 January 2023***

## ***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

**Connie Condict & Amy Danford**

Paul Tillich wrote,

“Doubt isn’t the opposite of faith;  
it is an element of faith...

Sometimes I think it is my mission to bring faith to the faithless,  
and doubt to the faithful.”

Bring your doubt!

Bring your questions!

**Let us wrestle here.**

Out of God’s deepest imagining,

**Creation is here.**

We are called to bring our full selves,  
our questions, ideas, and struggles.

**This is holy work.**

**Let us share this work together, in this time.**

Sharing the Light of Community

Connie Condict

Brian McLaren urges us,  
“Doubt was a companion,  
every bit as resilient and persistent as faith,  
and she wasn’t going away.”

**Doubt is waiting to teach us.**

**Doubt invites us to learn and grow.**

Rachel Held Evans wrote,  
“I thought faith would say,  
‘I’ll take away the pain and discomfort,  
but what it ended up saying was,  
‘I’ll sit with you in it.’”

**As we gather around this light,  
we find illumination in the questions, doubt, and companionship here.**

*The Candle of Christ is lit.*

This light centers us.  
It is the blending of the memory of saints and dear ones.  
**This illumination reminds us that our questions,  
our creativity,  
our imagination,  
will guide us as we strive to live as followers of the way of Jesus.**

Passing of the Peace

Amy Danford

Some people tell me they never have doubts.  
Faith comes easy for them,  
they say, at least it has so far.  
But many, many, many of us do have doubts,  
and sometimes our doubts seem far more powerful than our beliefs.  
It’s hard enough having doubts;  
it’s impossibly hard to have them and feel you must pretend that you don’t.

**Let's grant one another permission to doubt.**

And let's see the doubt in ourselves and each other not as a fault or failure to be ashamed of, but as an inescapable dimension of having faith and being human, and more: as an opportunity for honesty, courage, virtue, and growth, including growth in faith itself. [McLaren, Brian D.. Faith After Doubt (p. xi)]

The peace of God be with you.

**May the deep peace and joy of God be felt in this place today.**

*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 the Hebrew Bible Genesis 32*

We bring our ideas, identities, and curiosity to the text.

**These words become holy as we bring our presence, questions, and whole selves.**

Prayers of the Community

*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.*

*Prayers of the community.*

*Silence*

May the love I am learning to practice  
not be so sentimental that it appears to lack direction.  
This love is moving with purpose –  
not toward a transcendent unity of rising above  
nor a god of come-together.

**But down into the depths of everything  
where power, pain, and possibility push and pull us  
toward or away from transformation.**

May there be no confusion that what I mean to say and do  
is love according to principles that set free.

Literally, learning to love in the direction of abolition.

And also, learning from love that unbinds  
those deep-down parts that cling fearfully to what deadens and destroys.

May the love I am learning to practice  
be tender, yes.

But also unafraid to bite.

May the sharp teeth of its determination  
cut through every layer and legacy of  
of all that has been done and undone in its name  
and fiercely declare its truth.

[enfleshedliturgy]

**May it be so.**

Music of Centering

*Through the Night of Doubt and Sorrow* LARSON

CHANCEL CHOIR

Reflection

*Permission to Doubt*

Rev. Simmons

Music of Response

*She Is the Spirit*

255 (vs 1 & 2)

Invitation to Offering

*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

*You Will Be Found*  
CHANCEL CHOIR

SNYDER

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Deb Gallion

Communion Meditation

Communion Song

*All Who Hunger, Gather Gladly*

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Words of Remembrance and Invitation

“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]

**We gather at this table we remember.**

Jesus gathered with his companions around tables.

They gathered as they were.

With questions.

With struggles.

With hope.

With fear.

So we bring our whole selves here.

We remember Jesus took the bread and broke it saying,

**“This is the bread of love for each one of you.”**

And after the meal he took the cup saying,

**“This is the cup of love for each one of you.”**

We gather at this table and we share.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

**Neil Guion**

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

*In the Bulb There Is a Flower*

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Words of Sending

There is faith after doubt.

and life after doubt,

and life with doubt.

If you thought life before doubt was good,

wait until you see where doubt can lead you

and what doubt can teach you. [McLaren, Brian, Faith After Doubt (p. xi)]

Postlude

“If there’s one thing I know for sure, it’s that serious doubt — the kind that leads to despair — begins not when we start asking God questions but when, out of fear, we stop.” Rachel Held Evans

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