## 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 enriches us in this time of celebration together~

#### **Prelude**

**Words of Gathering** 

**Candy Adams & Deb Gallion** 

In God's house, we can be joyful.

We can be grateful.

We can be hopeful.

In God's house, we can be weary.

We can be anxious.

We can be grieving.

In God's house, we can be honest—

inspired or tired,

delighted or doubtful,

connected or curious,

and everything in between.

This is God's house.

You are welcome exactly as you are.

Let us worship our loving God.

[revsaraharespeed]

Please stand as you are able in body or in spirit at the \* asterisks.

\*Gathering Hymn

People, Look East

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\*Sharing the Light of Community

**Candy Adams** 

How does a weary world hope?

By telling stories of hope, by lighting candles in the night,

and planting seeds in the winter that

will bloom in the spring.

By praying for children as they grow, and picking up trash on the sidewalk,

by insisting that small acts can make a difference.

There are a million ways to practice hope. So today we light the candle of hope as a

reminder and a charge.

With God's help,

may we bring hope into a weary world.

[revsaraharespeed]

The Candle of Hope 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.

\*Music of Response One Candle is Lit (vs 1)

Come surely, Lord Jesus, as dawn follows night, our hearts long to greet you, as roses, the light.

Salvation, draw near us, our vision engage.

One candle is lit for the hope of the age.

\*Passing of the Peace

**Deb Gallion** 

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Over time, wind and water will sand down the edges of a stone.

Stay here long enough and pieces of you will be pressed upon

For humans, our wind and water is the grief of the world.

by life's never-ending stream.

It's enough to make you weary.

It's enough to make you question.

It's enough to make you quiet.

And yet, the stream continues.

So do not be afraid to stand in that water.

Wade in.

Soak the hem of your jeans.

Drip wet footprints through every room in your house.

Let the water stains tell your story.

And when your body grows weary of swimming,

name the stream.

Acknowledge your weariness.

For eventually, you will pick flowers from the opposite bank.

And over and over again, we'll tell this story.

And over and over again,

a weary world will rejoice.

[revsaraharespeed]

May the hope of this season be with you,

and also with you.

You are invited to share this ancient greeting with those seated near you. We are mindful each of us are at different levels of comfort, please honor those around you as you share peace. You are invited to turn to the camera and say hello to all worshipping with us online!

Life of the Church Rev. Jenn Simmons



You are invited to sign in via check-in. 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 Sacred Story** 

From the Psalms Chapter 80 And the Gospel According to Luke Chapter 1

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

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

**Prayers of the Community** 

Silence

Gracious God,

You carry us through our days.

You know every word on our tongue, every hair on our head.

You know the dreams in our hearts and the weight of our bones.

You also know the weariness we bring with us into the morning and into this space.

So with honesty we come before you,

both with hearts full of gratitude

and with prayer requests on our lips.

Holy God,

we thank you for the gifts of this life that give energy.

For birthday candles and sunrises,

for handwritten cards and jobs that we are passionate about.

For stories that can make us laugh until we cry,

and for friends that feel like family.

For all these gifts, thank you.

In addition to these prayers of gratitude,

loving God,

we also bring you the things that weigh heavy on our hearts.

For gun violence, for family and friends in chemotherapy,

for seasons of transition and grief that won't let us go-

we ask for your attention.

We ask for your love and care.

Take this yoke from us.

Relieve some of the burden on our backs,

and wrap your arms around places where we feel most tender.

And as we enter into this new Advent season—

a season marked with joy, hope and light—

we ask that you would remind us that our

full humanity is welcome here.

There is room for both joy and grief.

There is room for weariness and awe.

There is room for faith and doubt, for nothing is too big

or too far gone for your love to reach it.

So with hope in our hearts,

we unite our voices once more to pray...

Our Mother, Our Father,

author of all life,

holy is your presence.

May your story replace our own,

the story of this world becomes the story of the unfolding of heaven.

Give us this moment, moment by moment.

Forgive us completely

and make us completely forgiving of ourselves and others.

Save us from the weakness of our will,

and keep us from doing injustice.

For all Being is yours; all power is yours; all glory is yours;

In this moment in eternity. Amen.

[steveholmesgaranas]

[revsaraharespeed]

Centering Music Come, Light of Hope PAGE & SCHAFFERMAN CHANCEL CHOIR

The Language of the Weary Reflection

**Music of Response** O Come, O Come Emmanuel

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**Rev. Simmons** 

#### Offering of Ourselves, Our Tithes and Our Gifts



You are invited to share offering via Paypal (using the QR code on the left) or in the plate as it is passed. You are also invited to share your estimate of giving for 2024 using the QR code on the right. We invite you to share your offerings of time,



passion, energy, and resources. Thank you for investing in *Spirituality, Justice, and Community as it comes to life at NACC.* 

**Music of Reflection** 

The Advent Road CHANCEL CHOIR WAGNER

\*Advent Doxology

THE FIRST NOEL

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God, all creatures here below;

Praise God, above ye heavenly host; Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost.

Noel, noel, noel, noel!

Born is the King of Israel.

**Prayer of Gratitude** 

**Neil Guion** 

**Sharing the Lord's Supper** 

Rev. Jody Furnas-Wright, Rev. Jenn Simmons

with Elders & Deacons

**Prayer at the Table** 

In God, we have a constant source of hope.

Hope as a rainbow for a world in chaos.

Hope as bread for wanderers in the desert.

Hope as a land restored and renewed.

Hope as a baby born long ago.

Hope at a table set with symbols.

It is at this table we remember the child and the man.

A child born in poverty.

A man rich with grace.

The child, a promise of love and salvation.

The man, an invitation to practice forgiveness and grace.

In his last hours, as in his first, Jesus was surrounded by love.

He celebrated the meal

and shared a wonderful new birth of hope.

He said, eat every one of you of this bread.

For this is my body, which is given for you.

He said, drink every one of you of this cup.

For this is the cup of love.

This cup is a new covenant

that is being made new in each season with us.

A covenant of hope,

a covenant of peace,

a covenant of love,

a covenant of joy.

[adapt/lldubrevil]

### **Sharing of the Bread and Cup**

Etta Madden

This morning we will receive communion by intinction. You are invited to come forward and to take a piece of bread, dip it in the cup, eat, and leave your toothpick in the bowl. The bread is gluten, nut, and dairy free so all may share at the table. If you would prefer a prepackaged communion, remain seated and we will bring one to you. All are welcome to share at the table set by Jesus.

**Communion Music** 

Emmanuel, Emmanuel

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**Rev. Simmons** 

**Sending Song** 

Comfort, Comfort You My People

**Words for the Journey** 

So may we know the hope that is not just for someday

but for this day—

here, now, in this moment

that opens to us:

hope not made of wishes

but of substance.

hope made of sinew and muscle and bone,

hope that has breath and a beating heart,

hope that will not keep quiet and be polite,

hope that knows how to holler

when it is called for,

hope that knows how to sing

when there seems little cause,

hope that raises us from the dead—

not someday, but this day,

every day,

again and

again and

again.

**Postlude** 

[janrichardson]

### **National Avenue Christian Church**

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Rev. Jenn Simmons, Lead Pastor | Ashley Quinn

**Rev. Jody Furnas-Wright,** Adjunct Pastor for Faith Formation with Families Hayley Norton, Communication Coordinator,

Rohit Choudhary, Technical Director | Sarah Cybulski, Finance Coordinator, Rev. Dr. John White, Theologian in Residence | Jonathan Raney, Music Director

# National Avenue Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)

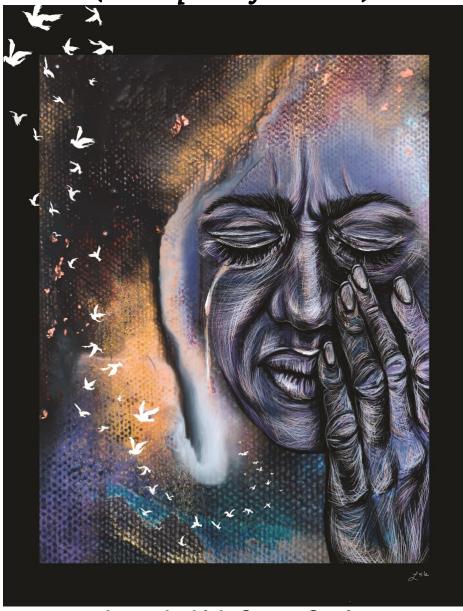


Image by Lisle Gwynn Garrity

How Does a Weary World Rejoice? Advent Week One: Hope

26 November 2023