

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

Jeff & Anissa Barber

Oh God,
the thought of trying for a new and improved me makes me tired.
I am barely getting anywhere,
so draw me closer to a different vision,
one that sees that I don't need perfection-
I need love.

Free me from the expectation that life should always be better.

From the everyday stressors-
the bills, the pressure, the dependents,
the existential fears about the future and the worries of right now.
I am threadbare.

Blessed are we, remembering

that the world is not ours to shoulder alone.

Help us put one foot in front of the other as best we can.

Oh God, today,

give us enough to go on,

give us hope to see a future,

give us joy to see a present lit up by your love.

P.S. And give me only enough humility to be reminded that I look terrible in hats.

I mean, truly, unphotographable.

[Kate Bowler]

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

***Gathering Hymn**

Colorful Creator

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***Lighting the Community Candle**

Jeff Barber

INHALE: God is alive.

EXHALE: And God's breath is freedom.

INHALE: Liberation comes in a body.

EXHALE: I will honor mine.

INHALE: God is alive.

EXHALE: And God's breath is freedom.

INHALE: Liberation comes in a body.

EXHALE: I will honor mine.

[ColeArthurRiley]

The Candle of Christ is lit.

In this light,

**we point to this moment burning in our midst to claim
a hope leading us onward.**

May we go with courage.

***Passing of the Peace**

Anissa Barber

This world.

Impossible.

Unthinkable.

We are brought to our knees.

God, today, there is no true north.

And when I last checked, the sun did not rise at all.

Today, the innocent still suffer, buildings still fall, families still grieve.

A world has ended without any reasonable fanfare.

This is the way of tragedy,

how it breaks in and robs us while we sleep

Help us to know what to feel, what to do, how to grieve-together.

Blessed are we

who try to see things clearly, though the truth of it all feels
unimaginable.

Blessed are we

who ask and wait, and ask again, for answers that may not come,
for hope that seems hard to find, for comfort that is not easily offered.

Along the way

show us how to live when we've lost the things

we cannot get back.

Remind us that you, oh God, are our home and our refuge.

When life's unthinkable fragility is too difficult to hold, take our hands.

May the peace that surpasses all understanding be with you,

and also with you.

[Kate Bowler/adapted]

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

Rev. Jenn Simmons

From the 1st Letter of John 3:16-24

A reading to ground us in our tradition,

and spark our imaginations as co-creators

Amen.

Prayer of the Community

Rev. Jody Furnas-Wright

Silence

God, our maker,

We honor the sacred multitude that resides in you.

May the guardian in you protect us.

May the child in you delight in us.

May the friend in you challenge us.

May your ashes resurrect us.

May your sky shelter us.

May the mystery of you liberate us.

Provide abundance and healing in all forms

to those who need it today,

And deliver us from shame, hatred, and the chains that bind us.

For you have made us — glory — and we are still being made.

Amen.

[ColeArthurRiley]

Music of Slowing Down

Covenant Prayer
CHANCEL CHOIR

MARROLLI

Reflection

Will You Pray With Me?

Ashley Quinn

Music of Response

Community of Christ

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Offering of Ourselves, Our Tithes & 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. 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

Dreamers & Doubters
CHANCEL CHOIR

MARTIN

***Doxology**

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God, all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia!

Praise God, the source of all our gifts!

Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!

Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Prayer of Gratitude

John Mihalevich

Communion Meditation

Rev. Jenn Simmons

Sharing the Lord's Supper

Elders & Deacons

with Ashley Quinn, Revs. Jody Furnas-Wright and Jenn Simmons

Community of saints,

beloveds of God,

we are invited to come and gather at the table of love and liberation,

to feast on the dreams of God,

to be nourished by but a taste of what God desires to do among us.

God calls us from institutional halls of power,

from shelters and the streets;

God calls us from classrooms and pulpits,

Gay bars and prison cells.

Factory floors & hotel laundries,

picket lines and gig work.

God calls us as we are, from wherever we are,

to come and be in solidarity with Christ,

who lives and loves on the margins.

God whispers "come"

and live abundantly,

turning from all that claims blessings
flow from money, power, or control.
Come, and
love relentlessly;
following Christ on paths of uncertainty,
taking risks for one another,
calling down unjust power from its throne
and lifting up the lowly,
the impoverished,
the burdened.

To answer the call of Christ is to find ourselves
no matter our social location,
choosing to align ourselves with the causes
of the marginalized, the oppressed,
the outcast, and the isolated,
with the faith that together,
we might enlesh new possibilities
of healing,
of connection,
of freedom from all that destroys.

**When these are the desires of our hearts,
we open ourselves to God.**

Blessed are those, Jesus said,
who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
And so let us come to the table,
expectant,
eager,
open

to tasting the rich blessings of heaven
born from unexpected places, and people, and experiences.
In this meal,
we remember the life, death, and resurrection of
the One who still takes on flesh among us today.

On the night he would be arrested,
Jesus gathered his friends and companions.
In the midst of a tense and dangerous time,
they found each other at table,
connecting over the story of God-enfleshed among them.
And as they did so, Jesus took bread, gave thanks to God, broke the
bread and shared it with his disciples saying,
“Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in
remembrance of me.”

When the supper was over, he also took the cup, gave thanks to God,
and shared it with his disciples, saying,
“Drink from this, all of you; this is the cup of the new covenant.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

And so we pray,
**Come Holy Spirit,
Breath of God,
Renewer of life,**
settle on these gifts and all who gather here,

that we might be transformed in our remembrance
of your radical love,
your eternal embrace,
and your grace that makes all things new. [enfleshedliturgyadapted]

Prayer at the Table

Susan Mihalevich

Sharing of the Bread and Cup

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 pre-packaged communion, remain seated and we will bring one to you. All are welcome to share at the table set by Jesus.

Communion Music

Musical Meditation

Sending Song

I Am the Light of the World

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Words for the Journey

Rev. Jenn Simmons & Ashley Quinn

I don't know what the world has been to you.
I don't know those wicked things you've witnessed
in the light and in the dark...
But I can tell you, you are not foolish for hoping.
Don't let anyone make you feel ashamed for what fight remains in you.
And may what has been emptied in you be found in me.
I trust that when the time comes, you will hold my hope when I cannot.
Justice alone is not the destination.
Becoming human is.
This is liberation.
We want no need for gavels, no need for sit-ins or philanthropy.
No need for food drives or keys clenched between knuckles at night.
We want more for ourselves.
But until then, we speak.
We organize.
We create.
We hold hope for one another on the edge of despair,
our voices sustained in the collective.
Whether they listen or fail to listen, our mouth is ours.
There is meaning in that.
Demanding more for you, and for us all,
May it be so
May we make it so.

[ColeArthurRiley]

Postlude

National Avenue Christian Church

417.869.9176 natlave@sbcglobal.net www.nationalavenuecc.com
Rev. Jenn Simmons, Lead Pastor | Ashley Quinn, Pastoral Apprentice
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)

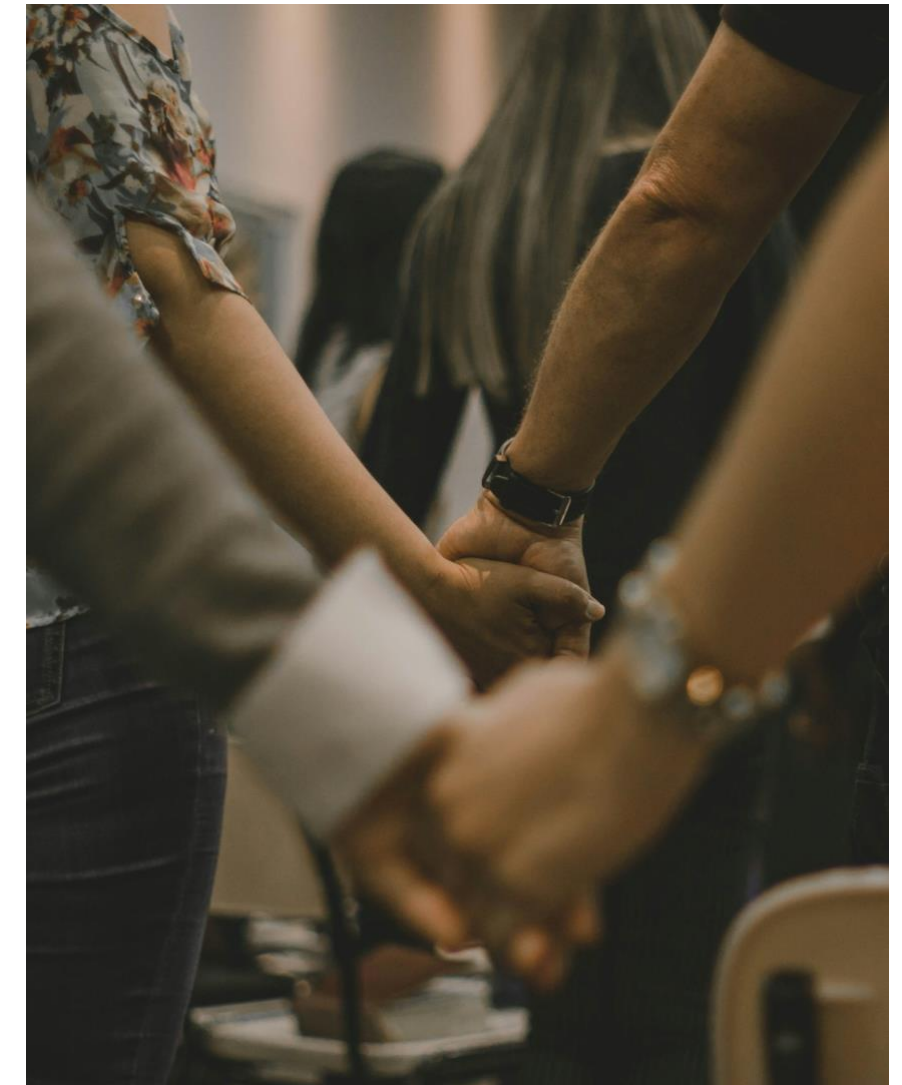


Photo by [Pedro Lima](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Unbelievable Will You Pray With Me? 21 April 2024