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

Steve Flower and Rev. Candy Adams

I believe in love. And maybe that sounds too simple. And maybe it sounds like too much. I have known love in this place. Your hand has helped me to touch love. I have known love in this church. Your song has carried me, when I did not think I could sing again. Love comes alive around the tables we share. Your story and your willingness to hear my story has healed me. Maybe you haven't known love in this way yet. Maybe your heart isn't ready. The Spirit of Love is here with us. May we be open and have experiences that heal, transform, and show us great care. [jsimmons] Please stand as you are able in body or in spirit at the * asterisks.

Come and Find the Quiet Center *Gathering Hymn

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*Lighting the Christ Candle

Mark Yaconelli writes, "We are relational beings.

We need others in order to become ourselves.

We need relationship to access the deepest gifts of our humanity. We need relationships to live lives that are productive, loving, and meaningful. Sharing stories is how we make a home

within ourselves and one another.

Story is how we put together the broken pieces. Story is how we identify and heal the suffering within and among us. The practice of storytelling, particularly when sharing the real stories from our own living, tethers us to what matters mostour families, our friends, nature, the hearts we carry, the wondrous mystery of life itself." In sharing our stories, we bring and become light to one another.

The Christ Candle 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

Mark Yaconelli also writes, "In all my careful listening, I've observed how speaking our stories can liberate us individually and collectivelyat times transforming residents into neighbors, enemies into friends, and towns into communities. In doing this work, it has become apparent to me that the power of story is the power of relationships. In other words, giving testament to our experience generates meaning when it connects us to people, the earth, the sacred, our pasts, our own inner gifts and wounds. Through this work I've come to believe that all human divisions, both within and between us, can begin to be healed through listening and sharing stories." Peace comes when we listen, deeply. Peace comes when we risk sharing our lives.

May the heart of peace 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. Jody Furnas-Wright

You are invited to sign in via check-in. The OR code/link is in the pews. 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.

Reflecting on the Sacred Story From the Hebrew Bible, Exodus Chapter 3

We tell stories to learn, to grow, to spark more questions. Today we offer the longings of our heart. We join with the voices rising, from the past and from today. We join the story.

Prayers of the Community

Rev. Candy Adams A story is a handful of breadcrumbs leading to home. A story is a divining rod and we the subterranean river. A story is a map and we the mapmakers plotting the landscapes of our lives. We need a story to locate ourselves in the world. Without a true story, told from the ground of our own lives, we can often feel lost or, worse, imprisoned by the stories others have constructed for us.

This is how stories can save us. We step into the reality of another person's existence and instead of judgment feel kinship. When we say, "Tell me your story," we're really asking, "

Can I relive your experience with you? Can I try and see as you have seen, feel as you have felt, know the world as you have known it?" The honest listening and telling of personal experiences naturally endears us to one another. The practice of storytelling, particularly when sharing the real stories from our own living, tethers us to what matters most-our families, our friends, nature, the hearts we carry, the wondrous mystery of life itself. [Mark Yaconelli] Invitation to Silence As we seek practices to help us listen, to slow down. to discover and trust our stories, we center ourselves in the Jesus' invitation. 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.

Amen. [Margaret Rolfe]

Reflecting

Conversati

Musical Re

You are invited to bring forth the signs and longings of your heart! Hold them high as you come forward and lay them down. 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.

Musical Gift

* Doxology **Prayer of Gratitude**

in Song	Here I Am	654
ion	Reed Bisso w/Rev. Jody Furnas-Wright	
eflection	<i>Here Comes the Sun</i> WOMEN'S CHOIR	

Offering of Ourselves

John Scroggins

Wildflowers WOMEN'S CHOIR

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! Mark Biggs Sharing the Lord's Supper with Revs. Jody Furnas-Wright & Steve Flower, Elders & Deacons I want a story big enough to hold all our stories. Big enough to hold the deepest despair and unspeakable joy. Big enough to drown out all the fear mongering. Big enough to birth hope irrepressible. Big enough to move us toward our neighbor's need. Big enough to change the world. I want a table big enough to feed the world. Big enough to fill the emptiness not just in our bellies but also the hunger of our hearts. Big enough to hold us in community, Big enough to end our endless greed for more power and prestige. Big enough to overflow with gratitude and generosity. Big enough to change the world. I want a love big enough to save us from ourselves. Big enough to end our self-destructive misuse of the planet. Big enough to reveal the way to liberation. Big enough to free us from the need to judge others. Big enough to teach us acceptance of one another. Big enough to change the world. We gather in this story. At this table. With this love.

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."** Here we remember his story, his table, his love. **And we give thanks that big or not,** we are enough to change the world.

Prayer at the Table

Tina Stillwell

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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.

Sending Song We Are Not Our Own

Words for Our Journey

Dear ones,

we don't have to keep telling the same old stories.

The ones that leave us weeping and unsatisfied.

The ones written by those who have all they need and more.

There are other stories to tell.

Other mysteries to seek. Other patterns to weave between us God, the Source of Radical Imagination, does not fear change as we do. They accompany us from this space toward every opening that leads to lands of flourishing in body, spirit, and mind. **May we make it so.**

Postlude

[enfleshedliturgy]

National Avenue Christian Church

417.869.9176 natlave@sbcglobal.net www.nationalavenuecc.com Rev. Jenn Simmons, Lead Pastor | Ashley Quinn, Pastor for Public Theology Rev. Jody Furnas-Wright, Adjunct Pastor for Faith Formation with Families Rev. Dr. John White, Theologian in Residence Jonathan Raney, Music Director | Jennifer Forni, Music Assistant Alex Bates, Sound Technician |Sarah Cybulski, Finance Coordinator Hayley Norton, Communication Coordinator | Nicholas & Olivia Villaroel, Sextons Greta Allen & Aydia Lancaster, Nursery Caregivers Kylie Robertson & Claudia Brown-Jackson, UNO Team John Scroggins, Board Moderator Rev. Candy, Adams, Mark Biggs, Steve Flower, Tina Stillwell, Elders Hilary Dempsey, Melisabeth Johnston, Karen Lance, Deacons

National Avenue Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)





