

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 **Debora Biggs & Brad Wadle**
I am...
Brave.
Worried.
Anxious.
Calm.
Sad.
Hyper.
Still.
Peaceful.
Steady.
Full of rage.
Cool, calm, and collected.
A Hot Mess Express.
Some days, I am all of these things and more.
What would you add?
(Seriously, let’s say them out loud!)

God, you are.
You meet us wherever, however we are.
You call us good.
As we strive to believe and live out of our goodness,
help us to listen well to ourselves
as we name and claim, I am together.

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

***Gathering Hymn** **Healer of Our Ev’ry Ill** **506**

***Lighting the Christ Candle**
Truth does not get lost.
Do not turn away from what you know is right, no matter the cost,
because what you value in the Spirit is more precious than anything
power or money can buy.
It is your integrity.
Be wise and be alert,
for the practice of integrity is not as easy as it sounds.
Some people will believe whatever they hear.
Others will hear only what they believe.
Some will say anything to get what they want.
Some will want what you have no matter what you say.
Some will deny what you can see so clearly for yourself.
Some will distract you with a card trick of the truth.
But remember, the truth does not get lost;
it gets hidden. [stevencharleston]

The Christ Candle is lit.

We gather around this light.
A force that centers us.
A force that plays in the shadows.
A force that reminds us of what light can do.
On this day, may the fourth be with you.

***Passing of the Peace**
Praise be the protectors, organizers, educators, and conservationists.
Praise be the healers, death doulas, midwives, and caregivers.
Praise be the artists, writers, singers, and visionaries.
Praise, praise, praise be the children, the playful, the open-hearted,
those who school us in present-moment living.

Holy Spirit, guide us towards what is ours to do today.
Root us in spiritual practices,
that we may be grounded in our work.
Remind us that we are part of a web of interdependence;
that collective thriving requires
both steadfast devotion and soulful rest. [enfleshedliturgy]

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. Jenn Simmons**
You are invited to sign in via check-in. The QR 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 Bible, 1 Corinthians 12

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. Jody Furnas-Wright**
Prayer of “The Seven Directions” as recorded by Sister José Hobday
**Each turn is a quarter to your right*
Begin facing EAST.
This is where the sun comes up, and so the direction of new beginnings,
hope, promise, and potential.
Pray that you may be open to receiving these gifts this day.
Turn SOUTH.
This is the direction of warmth, growth, fertility,
also known as creativity and productivity.
In addition, this direction represents faith, trust,
and faithfulness in relationships. Pray for these things this day.
Turn WEST.

This is the direction where the sun goes down.
Thus, it is the direction of rest, of our dream lives,
and of closure and endings that need to take place in order for there to
be new beginnings. Pray for these things this day.
Turn NORTH.
This is the direction of the cold, of winds, of strength, courage,
fortitude, might, singlemindedness, focus, clarity, and purpose.
Pray for these things this day.
Turn back to the EAST – and turn UPWARD.
For Native Americans this is the direction of Father Sky.
Pray that your heart, mind, soul, and spirit will not forget to look
upward this day, to the One who is so much greater than we are.
Turn DOWNWARD – and touch our Mother, the earth.
Pray that everything you do this day will be in honor
and reverence of our Mother Earth.
Turn INWARD.
Place your hand on your heart and pray that all that you do this day
will be true to the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit
who dwells within you.

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 in Song **Here I Am** **654**

Reflection **Finding Direction** **Rev. Simmons**

Musical Reflection **Dreamers and Doubters**
CHANCEL CHOIR

Offering of Ourselves **Connie Condict**
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 **Never Ending Story**
CHANCEL CHOIR

* **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 **Lucinda Wadle**

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 **Dena Lantz**

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 *When, In Awe of God’s Creation* **688**

Words for Our Journey
Grace sends us to be brave!
Not to live perfectly but to live earnestly our beliefs.
Striving to take care of each other.
Committing to repair when we do harm.
Seeking to ever deepen into the embrace of love and liberation.
Let us spend our lives in this holy practice
and know that God is near. [enfleshedliturgy]
May we make it so.

Postlude

National Avenue Christian Church
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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
Debora Biggs, Dena Lantz, Lucinda and Brad Wadle, Elders
Sylvia Clark, Marcia Morrisett, Todd Steere, Jill Wait, Deacons

National Avenue Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)



I Am.
Eastertide
4 May 2025