

***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**                      **Daniel Guion & Matt Ensley**  
Please join with me in the words of gathering...  
**Do not lose heart!**

There are a thousand ways to begin again  
and the ancestors cheer on every liberation,  
no matter how small.

**Do not lose heart!**  
We celebrate all that we have done to make it this far  
and we owe it to the dead to fight for the living.  
**Do not lose heart!**  
Possibilities brim forth in the collective—  
those tending the path of solidarity do not lose their souls—  
Thanks be to the Liberating, loving God!                      [enfleshed]

**\*Gathering Hymn**    ***God, We Spend a Lifetime Growing***  
**HYMN TO JOY**

God, we spend a lifetime growing, learning of your love and care,  
Planting seeds you give for sowing, working for the fruit they'll bear.  
Now we honor faithful servants who, with joy, look back and see  
Years of growing in your presence, lives of fruitful ministry.

Thank you, Lord, for ones who teach us what has brought  
them to this place!  
May their faith-filled witness reach us;  
may we glimpse in them your grace.  
Strong in you, their strength uplifts us from our birth until life's end;  
Spirit-filled, they give us gifts, as prophet, mentor, guide and friend.

Christ our Lord, you walk beside us, giving daily work to do;  
Years go by and still you guide us as we seek to follow you.  
If our sight fails, weak hands tremble,  
minds forget the things we've known,  
Lord, we trust that you remember, hold us close, and see us home.

**\*Lighting the Christ Candle**                      **Matt Ensley**  
Within our bodies,  
we carry histories of both love and shame,  
we carry within us all that our ancestors did to survive.  
There is nothing new under the sun—  
empire’s slimy hands have pulled up beauty by the roots for millenia,  
folks have felt hopeful or hopeless every time the world turns.  
Apocalypses unfurl around us and still—  
we doggedly tend the Ways of Life.  
**We are part and parcel of the cosmic web of becoming**

**and undoing—**  
**made of the implosion and creation of stars.**  
Bless our practices of Hope,  
Unwieldy and Surprising God.  
Keep us stubborn in the Ways of Love.  
Amen.    [enfleshedliturgy]

***The Christ Candle is lit.***

May this light center us and remind us  
**We are light.**  
**We are meant to shine.**

**\*Passing of the Peace**                                      **Daniel Guion**  
Hear these wise words by the poet, Rainer Maria Rilke:  
"Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart  
and try to love the questions themselves,  
like locked rooms and like books  
that are now written in a very foreign tongue.  
Do not now seek the answers,  
which cannot be given to you because  
you would not be able to live them.  
And the point is,  
to live everything.  
Live the questions now.  
Perhaps you will then gradually,  
without noticing it,  
live along some distant day into the answer.”  
**May we learn to walk with each other**  
**as we learn to live the questions.**

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 poetry of the Psalms Chapter 85 and Isaiah 48***

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**  
If you are on the journey of healing,  
I want you to know that I have hope that things will get better.  
I have seen enough people heal from unimaginable traumas,  
that I have hope, limitless and unshakable hope,

that you too can recover  
and that something new can grow in the space occupied by the injury.  
You can peel back the layers of stories  
you have carried like loads on your back  
and find again under it all  
what was always true of you before you ever learned otherwise.  
If you find it hard to hope,  
you can borrow mine.  
Or know that I'm carrying yours for you until you can carry it yourself.  
[hilarymcbride]

*Listening to our bodies*

God, I’m haunted by the shadows of the old me.  
The one who’s tried every promised elixir, every five-step plan,  
every guru’s solution to what ails me.  
But nothing seems to stick.  
I’m the same me with the same problems and the same quiet hopes.  
Is it my lack of discipline?  
Or am I just a lost cause?  
What new beginnings are possible?  
**Blessed are we, the incomplete,**  
**standing at the edge of what could be,**  
**in this perpetual season of waiting and looking**  
**and longing for the fulfillment of hope.**  
**Blessed are we, the restless, grieving what’s over,**  
**but isn’t done, what is gone, but isn’t finished.**  
**Blessed are we, in our midnight struggle with past and future,**  
**while the present has already arrived outside our door**  
**like flat-packed furniture with missing parts.**  
God, what can we do with what we have now?  
And who we are?  
And who might we become?  
Blessed are we in the place where desire  
and will are beginning a conversation about what this day,  
this moment is for, and for whose glory.  
Blessed are we who suddenly find that while we weren’t looking,  
the Lord appeared saying,  
“Peace, be still.”  
This is the clearing where the light shines through,  
where the new can begin.  
Never doubt it.  
God is writing you into the story of the world’s healing.  
And your own.  
**May it be so.**    [KateBowler]

**Reflecting in Song**                                      ***Healer of Our Every Ill***                                      **506**

**Reflection**                                      ***By Our Hands***                                      **Rev. Simmons**

**Musical Reflection**

**Offering of Ourselves**

*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**

**\* Pentecost Doxology**  
Praise God whose breath fills all the earth  
Whose love reveals our sacred worth  
Whose Spirit forms one family  
Whose grace brings peace and harmony. Amen. [rogerlyn]  
**Prayer of Gratitude** **Rev. Candy Adams**

**Sharing the Lord’s Supper**  
**with Revs. Jody Furnas-Wright, Jenn Simmons, Elders & Deacons**  
Beloveds. Beloveds. Beloveds.  
We come to this Table because we are claimed in covenant.  
**Because we are still learning what covenant and togetherness means, how it looks and moves and feels.**  
Because we long for liberation.  
**Because we thirst for justice.**  
Because we know the need—fierce and urgent—  
for grace and freedom and nourishment in our flesh and our bones.  
Because this is not a table of one church,  
this is Christ’s table.  
You are invited to bring your whole lives  
and all are welcome here. Period.  
Because we remember:  
On the night he was arrested while the powers and principalities  
of Empire, and supremacy, and dominance raged,  
Jesus—a brown skinned, radical, healer, community organizer,  
insurrectionist—  
gathered people, invited their fears and longings,  
invited people into radical solidarity,  
justice-love-in-action,  
healing of and in the world,  
to which, for which, he gave his life over and over and over.  
Jesus took bread,  
broke it, shared it, and said:  
**Take and eat: this is my body. The bread of new life.**  
**Share this, and remember.**  
Then Jesus took the cup  
blessed it, gave thanks for it, and said:  
Take and drink:  
**this is the power of my life-blood. The salve of salvation.**  
**The cup blessing.**  
**Share this, and remember.**  
And so, we do.  
We remember. We offer. We receive.  
And we share in this nourishing feast.  
Because we know how to nourish each other in ordinary and  
extraordinary ways.

Because we need each other  
and we need this sacrament,  
this visible sign of life-giving grace,  
flowing and overflowing.  
So, come. Come. Come.  
**Prayer at the Table** **Dr. Etta Madden**  
  
**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** *Help Us Accept Each Other* **487**  
  
**Words for Our Journey**  
Go forth practicing Hope.  
For there are children to be cared for  
and ancestors at our backs.  
Go forth practicing Hope  
for wilder and wiser than despair  
are the Ways of Love.

**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  
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**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, Dr. Etta Madden**, Elders  
**Barb & Greg Harrell, Karen Lance, Jill Wait**, Deacons

*National Avenue  
Christian Church  
(Disciples of Christ)*



*Mending & Meaning  
A Healing Path  
27 July 2025*