

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~

Welcome to worship

Prelude *Jingle Bells Mash Up* **Kirsten Weiss & Fiona Simmons**
Angels From the Realms of Glory **John Scroggins**

Words of Gathering **Rev. Candy Adams & Carl Westlund**
Family of faith, God is at work!
God is healing and creating,
redeeming and dreaming,
calling and sending,
listening and loving.
Yes, indeed, God is at work!
So may we worship our God who never gives up.
May we worship our God who holds onto hope.
Amen.

***Gathering Hymn** *Awake, Awake and Greet the New Morn* **138**

***Lighting the Christ Candle**
In a world full of fear, where do you see glimmers of peace?
We see glimmers of peace in the quiet of early morning,
when people shake hands,
when loved ones say they’re sorry,
and when the church sings together.
You are right. Even in a fearful world,
peace is all around us.
Today we light the candle of peace as a reminder of this good news.
May this flicker of light help us remember
that even in a fearful world,
peace is present.
We only have to look for it.

[sanctifiedart]

The Advent Candle of Peace is lit.

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

Song of Response *One Candle is Lit* **128 vs 2**
Come quickly, shalom, teach us how to prepare
for a gift that compels us with justice to care
Our spirits are restless till sin and war cease.
One candle is lit for reign of God’s peace.

***Passing of the Peace**
A poem, *God in the Kitchen...*
I called home my first semester of college.
I told my mom I was fine,

but I was homesick.
She must have heard the truth in my voice.
The ache ate at me.
It was a long, slow song, a million tiny ants
slurping the juice from a peach.
I was tender and bruised,
in the doldrums of it all.
But she could hear all of that.
So three states away, she preheated the oven.
Three states away,
she tossed blueberries in a thin layer of flour.
Three states away,
she dusted a layer of streusel over the soft peaks
of a dozen warm muffins.
And three days later, I unboxed a package from home—
a dozen blueberry muffins, a love letter with my name on it,
a reminder that I was not alone.
If you’re running out of hope, count to three.
God is in the kitchen. She’s just waiting for yeast to rise.

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 Hebrew Bible Isaiah 43:19-21
from the Gospel According to Matthew 11:1-11

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
God of starlight,
there are days when beauty catches us by surprise.
There are days when joy bubbles up inside us,
when hope grows wings and soars beyond us,
when love is so big and so real that it is all we can see.
There are days when all seems right in the world,
but not every day.
There are other days, God, when, like John the Baptist,
we find ourselves wondering where we could possibly go from here.
We find ourselves wondering if we really did make a difference,
or if change was a lost cause all along.
You know the kind of days we speak of, God.

We lament days with ambulance sirens
and phone calls from the doctor.
Days of loneliness and haunting news reports.
Days spent at the cemetery or the jail.
Days when the suffering
and injustice of the world feels particularly close.
There are so many ways our hope can run dry.
[speak aloud our laments]

God of starlight,
when the weight of the world presses in on us,
when injustice and suffering feel like the dominant narrative,
when hope begins to slip through our hands, run toward us.
Remind us of the birds that sing in the morning.
Remind us of the flowers that push through thawing ground.
Remind us of the groups of people that have always made a difference.
Remind us of the work this church has done.
Remind us of the work our hands are capable of, and the love our heart already knows.
[speak aloud our joys]

And as you do,
we will continue to remind each other of your presence in our world.
As you do, we will continue to tell each other the stories
of the hungry being fed,
the sick being healed, the captives being released,
and the lion lying with the lamb.
And until that promised day,
we will continue to pray, saying. . . [sanctifiedart]
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]

Reflecting in Song *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* **BRYANT**
CHANCEL BELL CHOIR

Reflection *Running Out of Hope* **Rev. Simmons**

Musical *The Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy* **MEYERS**
CHANCEL BELL CHOIR
with KIRSTEN WEISS, VIOLIN, DES SIMMONS, CONGAS

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 *Healing Light* **JENKINS**
CHANCEL CHOIR

***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 **Claudia Brown-Jackson**

Invitation to the Table & Sharing the Lord’s Supper
with Rev. Simmons & Ashley Quinn, Elders & Deacons
Here at this Table,
there is enough room, enough food, enough love for everyone.
Here at this Table,
Jesus is standing up on his chair, waving his hands over his head,
saying to each of you,
“I saved you a seat!”
Here at this Table, you are wanted and welcomed.
You are safe and loved.
Here at this Table, you belong.
So my friends, there is no need for fear here, for this is a joyful feast.
And you are invited. Come. All are welcome.

With-us God,
We live in a fearful world.
If we’re honest,
we come to this Table today with the taste of fear on our tongues.
We come to this Table carrying our anxiety.
We come to this Table asking for guidance.
We come to this Table with all of life’s “what-ifs.”
But you do not disregard our fear.
You do not brush it under the rug or call us foolish.
You do not ignore the realities in front of us.
You do not dish out hurtful platitudes,
telling us to “toughen up” or “power through.”
Instead, you meet us here.
You listen to our fears.
You remind us that we are not alone.
You surround us with people who love us.
You show us where we are strong.
You walk beside us.
And you give us a new song to sing.

As we come to this Table, pour out your Spirit on this bread and cup.
Remind us that even in a fearful world, you are on the move.
Remind us that even in a fearful world, you are here,

inviting us to the Table,
nourishing our spirits,
reminding us that we belong,
calling us by name.
Instill that good news in us, for this is a joyful feast.
Fear is not the loudest voice today.
What a gift that is.

[sanctifiedart]

Prayer at the Table **Connie Condict**

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 *O Little Town of Bethlehem* **144**

Words for the Journey
In a fearful world,
may you look for God’s spirit.
May you reach for each other’s hands.
May you choose courage whenever you can.
And in all things, may you remember
that good news is louder than fear.
In the name of the one who calls,
the one who sends,
and the one who journeys with—
go in peace and
be not afraid.
Amen.

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. Dr. John White, Theologian in Residence | **Jonathan Raney**, Music Director
Alex Bates, Sound Technician | **Sarah Cybulski**, Finance Coordinator
Hayley Norton, Communication Coordinator | **Nicholas & Olivia Villaroel**, Sextons
Greta Allen, Donna Kearney, Ela Stark, Nursery Caregivers
Kylie Robertson & Claudia Brown-Jackson, UNO & Storykeepers Team
John Scroggins, Board Moderator
Claudia Brown-Jackson & Connie Condict, Elders
Kathy Pittman, Ann Schultz, Deacons

National Avenue Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)



 Sanctified Art @sanctifiedart | sanctifiedart.org

Advent Week Two:
What Do You Fear?
when we’re running out of hope, God is at work
7 December 2025