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

Words of Gathering Melisabeth Johnston & Ashley Fleming

Jeremiah said, "I am only a boy."

Moses said, "Who am I to do this work?"

Mary said, "How can this be?"

We often say, "But God, I am afraid."

Even when we are afraid, God invites us closer.

So may we trust the Inviter.

May we heed God's invitation.

May we summon our courage and sing God's praise.

Let us worship our courageous, inviting, calling God. Amen!

*Gathering Hymn O Come, Take Heart (insert)
melody: O Come, O Come, Emanuel #119

*Lighting the Christ Candle

In a world full of fear,

where do you see glimmers of joy?

We see glimmers of joy in birthday candles

and homemade cards.

We see joy in the laughter of children and the delight of grandparents.

We see joy in meals around the table and in the singing of Christmas songs.

You are right.

Even in a fearful world, joy is all around us.

Today we light the candle of joy

as a reminder of this good news.

May this flicker of light help us remember that even in a fearful world, joy is here.

Joy is real.

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 3

Come, festively sing while awaiting the birth, join angels in dancing from heaven to earth.

Wave banners of good news, lift high thankful praise.

One candle is lit for the joy of these days.

*Passing of the Peace

Watch any parent. It starts with the first step.

They kneel down. They smile with anticipation.

They reach for their baby, calling and cooing them forward.

And then before they know it, they're running behind a bike.

They're yelling,

"Keep pedaling! You got it! I'm right here!"

And they're jumping up and down,

because that little red helmet passed the mailbox.

And then, just like that, they're driving circles in the church parking lot.

They're giving instructions about easing on and off the pedal.

They're having conversations about curfew and heartbreak. And then, before they know it, they're standing in a hospital room.

Their heart is bursting. And they say, "Put her head right here.

Rock her gently. Do you remember the nursery rhymes?

You were born for this."

The first step is always the hardest,

but you, beloved, were born for this.

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.

Infant Dedication

Harriet June Myers

Hopes of the Family

Each of us knows the need for support and care as we share in the journey of faith. As Hattie's family has gathered in this place that symbolizes belonging and love, let us, as a community of faith, promise our care for Andrew, Tabitha, and Hattie.

We are grateful to share in this day with you

and to witness the commitment you have made.

We rejoice with you and give thanks for the gift of Hattie.

We promise, with hope and faith,

to share in Hattie's nurture and well-being, as she grows in grace and love.

We light a candle as a reminder of the light that Hattie. brings to the world,

the light of hope and possibility that shines in each of us.

(light a candle)

We pray together...

Each day and night, may God's light

and love surround and enfold you,

Light and love in growing and learning,

Light and love in joy and sorrow,

Light and love in friendship and community, Light and love in beginnings and endings, On this day, and all your days ahead. May it be so.

Reflecting on the Sacred Story

from the Hebrew Bible Jeremiah 1:4-10 from the Gospel According to Luke 1:26-39

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

Calling God, if you tapped on my shoulder today,

would my knees shake?

Would my mind race?

Would my voice waver?

Or, knowing the stories of all the faithful folks you've called before,

would I be ready?

Would I be brave enough to follow?

Would I hear your call for what it is?

Would I reply, "Let it be with me according to your will"?

It's hard to know.

But what I do trust is that you are a God who calls.

You called Mary and Moses, Jeremiah and Peter.

You have called ordinary people throughout all of time.

You have called artists and activists, poets and prophets, teachers and healers—young and old alike.

So as we move through this world,

open our ears to hear your voice.

As we move through this world,

open our hearts to the invitations,

the inspiration, and the nudges you place in our lives.

As we move through this world, God,

allow us to hear whatever call you

have in store for us in this season. For no matter how big or how small,

we trust that you are a calling, inviting, nudging,

inspiring God who sees us in the best light.

With hope we lean forward, we listen for your word,

and we pray together the words your son taught us to pray,

even if our voices shake, saying. . .

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.

[sanctifiedart]

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 My Soul Gives Glory to My God #130, v. 1-3

Reflection Part of the Process Rev. Simmons

Musical Song of Mary López
CHANCEL CHOIR with KIRSTEN WEISS, VIOLIN

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 Ave Maria GOUNOD JENNIFER FORNI, SOLO

*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!

Born is the King of Israel.

Prayer of Gratitude

Jeff Barber

Invitation to the Table & Sharing the Lord's Supper with Rev. Simmons & Ashley Quinn, Elders & Deacons

Friends, often in life, when we make mistakes,

we want to keep those mistakes to ourselves.

We don't want to advertise our blunders.

We don't want to highlight our failings.

We can be tempted to brush those things under the rug and move on.

But when it comes to God,

there is nothing we need to brush under the rug.

God welcomes and loves our full, honest, messy selves—

blunders and all.

So let us go before God in prayer,

trusting that there is nothing we need to hide from our Creator.

Courageous God,

you invite us to live into our call.

You invite us to act, to serve, and to trust.

Instead of responding with a resounding "yes,"

we often hide our faces.

We dig our heels in.

We look for someone else to volunteer.

Spark courage in us.

Remind us that every person is capable of making a difference.

Remind us that even when we're scared, we are not alone.

You invite us forward.

With baby steps we hope.

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

Rev. Dr. Peter Browning

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 Angels From the Realms of Glory #149, v. 1,4

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 communications@nationalavenuecc.com 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

Rev. Dr. Peter Browning, Jeff & Anissa Barber, Elders Matt Ensley, Barb & Greg Harrell Deacons

National Avenue Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)



To Sentification @sanctifiedart | sanctifiedart.org

Advent Week Three: What Do You Fear? even in our fear, we are called forward 14 December 2025



O Come, Take Heart

VENI EMMANUEL 8.8.8.8 with refrain



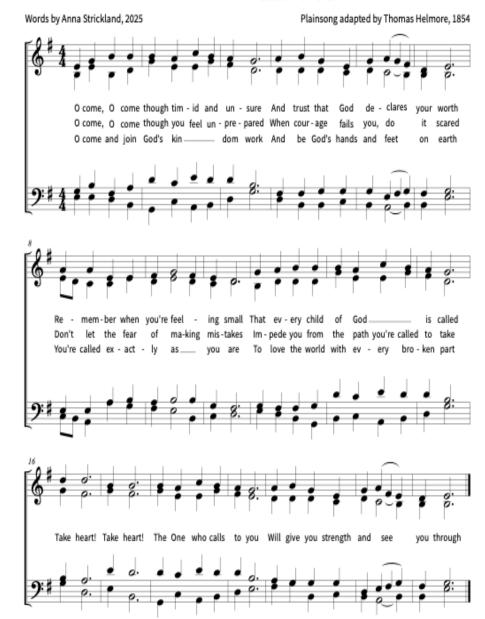
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O Come, Take Heart

VENI EMMANUEL 8.8.8.8 with refrain



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O Come, Take Heart

VENI EMMANUEL 8.8.8.8 with refrain



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