

## ***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**

**Jeff & Anissa Barber**

If you need good news,  
**settle into this space.**

**We have good news to share.**

If you need a word of hope,  
**then trust us when we say,  
there is hope enough to go around.**

If you need a glimmer of joy,  
**then you're in luck!**

**We have resilient joy abounding.**

If you need to feel God's presence in your midst,

**then know that this is God's house.**

**This is the good news of the gospel.**

God is here.

Love is real.

Joy is on the move.

**Let us worship our with-us God!**

[sanctifiedart]

#### **\*Gathering Hymn**

***Be Thou My Vision***

**#595**

#### **\*Lighting the Community Candle**

Blessed are you who live here,  
this space between simple categories and easy answers.

You who wonder why this is your life,

why you got this diagnosis,

or why you still struggle with infertility,

or why you haven't found your birth parents,

or why you can't kick the addiction

or why your kids haven't come home.

Blessed are you who build a home on uneasy ground,

who, despite your trying, your asking, you're searching,

haven't found the satisfying feeling of discovery.

And blessed are you who never will.

This is not an easy place to live.

Outside of certainty, outside of knowing, outside of the truth.

**But blessed are you who realize that love and beauty  
and courage and meaning live here too.**

Amid the unease and the frustration and the sleepless nights.

In the way love and courage show up through people,

through presence, through laughter.

May you be surprised by your capacity for ambiguity,

for the way it makes you a great listener and a good friend,

for you are someone who knows how to feel your way around in the

dark and squint for the stars.

I wish it were easier, dear one.

I wish I could hand you the answers you seek.

**But for now,**

**may you find comfort in the fact that you are not alone.**

**We are all learning to live in the uncertainty in the unknowing.**

**So blessed are we who live here together.**

[katebowler]

***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**

Everyone has a job.

I wash the potatoes, filling the sink with slivers of potato peel.

You brine the turkey, hovering by the oven all afternoon.

Someone sets the table, taking care to fill a vase with asters and marigolds, sprigs of holly and shoots of evergreen.

We play music while we prepare,

“What The World Needs Now is Love” comes on.

We can't get it out of our heads.

We whistle along to Dionne all afternoon.

And eventually, the doorbell rings.

You've invited the neighbors, the grad student who sits on the second row at church, the widower in the choir. We add seats to the table.

We go around the room and share one thing we're grateful for.

Eyes well as we create a laundry list of beauty.

The kids get squirmy, but we're grateful for that too. And then we eat!

We scoop whipped potatoes and crisp green beans with fresh garlic.

We pass the bread basket, leaving crumbs all over the table.

They are tiny reminders of communion in our midst.

And at the end of the night, when we walk our guests to the car and

carry sleeping children to their car seats, our neighbors say,

What a holy moment it all was.

Surely this must be what heaven feels like.

Surely we can create it together.

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.*

#### **Storykeepers**

***Hear oh Israel***

**Directed by Bev Rohlf**

#### **Reflecting on the Sacred Story**

***from the Gospel According to Mark 6:32-44; Ephesians 3:20-21***

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 and equipping God,

many years ago, on a hillside in Galilee,

you looked at your disciples and said,

**“You give them something to eat.”**

We read these ancient words again

and are struck with the realization that

from the very beginning, you have seen good in us.

From the very beginning,

you have known that we are capable of great love.

From the very beginning,

you have believed that we could make a difference.

**Calling God, help us to see that truth in ourselves.**

Help us to see your fingerprints in our lives.

**Help us to see the ways you have equipped us to serve.**

Help us to see the ways that we are capable,

instead of only seeing the ways we stumble and get in our own way.

God, we long to see ourselves as you do because we know that like that day in the Galilee, there is still work to do.

Like that day on the hillside,

this world is full of people who are hungry.

We are hungry for justice, hungry for companionship,

hungry for reasons to hope.

Like that day on the hillside, this world is full of people who need

healing. We need healing for our

bodies, healing for our minds, healing for broken relationships.

And like that day on the hillside, there is surely enough to go around,

but we doubt and deny that truth.

So call us again, loving God.

Say our names.

Hand us the baskets of bread and fish. Tell us it's our turn.

Help us see ourselves the way you see us,

for we know that together the impossible is possible.

Until your promised day when all are fed,

all are healed, and hunger is no more,

we will continue to pray. In hope, we will weave our voices together to

pray the words your son taught us, saying. . .

**Good caring presence within us, around us, and above us;**

**Hold us in a sense of mystery and wonder.**

**Let the fullness of your goodness be within us and around us;**

**Let all the world know your ways of caring and generosity.**

**May we find we have all we need**

**to meet each day without undue anxiety.**

**Overlook our many stupidities, and help us**

**to release everyone from their stupidities.**

**May we all know that we are accepted.**

**Strengthen us that we will reach out**

**to the best, always with the faith**

**to rise above the ugly realities of our existence.**

**And we celebrate the gifts you have given us –**

the rich kingdom of life's possibilities  
the power to do good and the triumphs of good  
and the moments when we have seen the glory  
and wonder of everything.  
You are life's richness. You are life's power.  
You are life's ultimate meaning –Amen. [Francis Macnab]

**Reflecting in Song** *Human Minds Just Can't Imagine*  
AUSTRIAN HYMN

Human minds just can't imagine all that God can bring to bear  
Through our small and separate beings, even when we join to share  
Still we follow where Christ leads us, many pieces of one whole  
That we might allow our dreaming to transform our broken world

God, expand our dreams and vision when we think our gifts too small  
Help us trust your great provision and to answer when you call  
You who gave us time and talents will uphold and see us through  
As we join together in the work you've given us to do

Like the grains of wheat are gathered from the vast and rolling fields  
Like the grapes from viny branches whose small fruit the wine will yield  
We re-member as one body, each of us a crucial part  
In the global church professing: we belong to God's own heart

**Reflection** *Jesus' Overactive Imagination* **Rev. Simmons**

**Music to Reflect** *Draw the Circle Wide* **MILLER**  
CHANCEL CHOIR

**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** *The Power of Many* **DRUM**  
CHANCEL QUARTET

**\* 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** **Jeff Barber**

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

We remember that on the night of his arrest—  
a time of confusion and betrayal—  
Jesus gathered with his friends. He knew they would need each other.  
He took the bread, and after blessing it, he broke it,  
and gave it to them, saying:  
"Take and eat; this is my body, broken for you."  
Do this in remembrance of me."

The breaking of the bread reminds us that when we feel broken,  
isolated, or unsure of our path,  
Good news waits to surprise us here.  
Then, after supper, he took the cup,  
and after giving thanks, he gave it to them, saying:  
"This cup is the new covenant in my love."  
Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me."

The cup is a sign of a new way of living—  
a covenant of radical, disruptive love.  
It is the promise that the way of justice, courage, and love, is possible,  
but not alone.  
We need each other to build and strengthen that world.  
This is the table where everyone is seen, valued, and supported.  
Let us remember, let us connect, and let us be nourished.

**Prayer at the Table** **Claudia Brown-Jackson**

**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** *Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee* **#2**

**Words for the Journey**

As you leave this place, when you meet anger, speak with love.  
When you meet fear, speak with hope.  
When you meet pain, speak with gentleness.  
But no matter what, speak this good news.  
For the good news of the gospel is love and justice for all.  
It is joy that surprises, and nonviolence that transforms.  
The good news of the gospel is alive in the world, so go forth speaking.  
For if you won't, then who will?  
Thanks be to God for this good, good news.  
May it be so.  
May we make it so.

**National Avenue Christian Church**  
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**Ashley Quinn**, Pastor for Public Theology & Justice  
**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

# National Avenue Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)



Color in the story of Jesus bringing people together to feed them. | Illustration by Rev. Anna Strickland

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**Lent: The Good News...**  
**Together the impossible is**  
**possible**  
**8 March 2026**