

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

John Mihalevich & Deb Gallion

God loves the field mouse.

God loves the crows that take flight when church bells ring.

God loves the baby, cooing in the back pew.

God loves the child who rocks and claps.

God loves the one with wrinkled hands and soft eyes.

God loves the bumblebees and the tabby cats.

God loves those who walk, crawl, and roll.

God loves the giant oaks and the evergreens, standing strong over all of us.

God loves the young, the impressionable, and the earnest.

There is no bit of creation that God does not love.

So let us worship this good-news God!

Amen.

[sanctifiedart]

***Gathering Hymn**

Jesus Loves Me

Jesus loves me this I know,

As a child of God, I grow.

Sacred love, it soothes my soul,

Spreading joy, may it be so!

Chorus: Yes, Jesus loves me!

Yes, Jesus loves me!

Yes, Jesus loves me!

My sacred place to go.

Churches tried to take away,

Love I thought was here to stay.

They were wrong, and now I know,

Jesus loves me, heart and soul. [Chorus]

All God's children need to know,

Jesus loves them heart and soul,

We go forth to sing this song,

Jesus loved you all along. [Chorus]

[words by John Scroggins]

***Lighting the Community Candle**

Holy One, sometimes the simplest of your commands

are the hardest for us to hear.

You say, “**Love your enemy.**”

“**Turn the other cheek.**”

“**Care for the widow and the orphan.**”

And we want to know: How? When? Where?

Today as we turn to your light,

open up space in us to simply hear your truth for what it is.

Open up space in our hearts to dream new dreams,

to imagine new realities,

to draw closer to you and closer to love.

With hope for a better tomorrow,

we listen, we pray.

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**

We have this unwritten agreement,

us members of humanity.

When the toddler at the coffee shop runs round the corner,

when her mom, at the register, looks up in panic,

we, the adults in the room, will pledge,

with quick smiles and silent head nods, to keep watch.

We will lean out of our seats.

We will put down our phones.

We will stand at the ready

to scoop up,

to offer words of comfort,

to make silly faces,

to keep an eye on the door.

And we will do this, because we cannot ignore the instinct to care.

We will do this, because we cannot ignore the child right in front of us.

We will do this, because love always includes the least of these.

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

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 Gospel According Matthew 19:13-15;

Deuteronomy 24:17-22

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

Miles Pearson

Jesus of Nazareth, you loved without abandon.

You loved your disciples,

with their questions and their bumbling mistakes.

You loved the children, with their runny noses and their easy joy.

You loved the widows and the immigrants,

with their heartbreak and their dreams for a better tomorrow.

You loved the tax collectors and the outcasts,

with their hands open to their neighbors.

You loved like it was easy.

And my goodness, do we wish that we were more like that.

So today, we lift up the vulnerable in our community

—the ones you loved so quickly.

We are invited to say the names of dear ones, to speak the brokenness around us, to celebrate generosity, deep love, and joy today, whether that is speaking aloud, dropping in the comments online, or holding in the silent tenderness of your heart...

Today we pray for the immigrants in our land—for those running from fear, longing to give their children a better life.

Today we pray for single parents, who stretch themselves thin to be all things for the little ones they love.

Today we pray for those living below the poverty line, for those who are unsure where their next meal will come from.

Today we pray for those who live in fear due to the color of their skin, the way that they dress, or the person that they love.

Today we pray for those who are bent over by the weight of depression, anxiety, or addiction.

We could go on and on, God, but we know that you see each of us.

So draw near to your children.

Wrap your arms around the vulnerable, the weary, the grief-filled.

Comfort, O comfort your people.

Wrap your arms around us.

And as you do, we ask that we might be transformed.

As you do, we ask that we might bend toward love

and move toward compassion.

As you do, we ask that you might soften our hearts.

Until your promised day,

when all are cared for and seen, this will be our prayer.

In hope, we now join our voices together to pray the words your son

taught us to pray, 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 *See the Precious Children* BEACH SPRING

Reflection *What We Choose To Believe* Steve Flower

Music to Reflect *Song for Justice* ARNESEN
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 *Refuge* CHRISTOPHER
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 Rev. Candy Adams

Invitation to the Table & Sharing the Lord's Supper
with Rev. Candy Adams, Steve Flower & Doug Steere & Deacons
Children learn important things best when they are shown.

As we prepare to share this meal, let us declare what we believe:

At this table, everyone is welcome

At this table, everyone is seen

At this table, everybody matters

No one falls between

At this table, everything's forgiven

At this table, there's enough for everyone

At this table, there will be no judgment

At this table, mercy has a seat

At this table, we're all sons and daughters and siblings

There's no place we'd rather be

So come as you are – broken, beloved, and beautiful

Remember, the invitation's always open

Yes, come as you are

The perfect gift that we bring here is our heart

So come - please - come as you are! [Idina Menzel & Jonas Myrin]

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 Doug Steere

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 *There's A Wideness in God's Mercy* 73 v. 1,3,4

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

417.869.9176 communications@nationalavenuecc.com

www.nationalavenuecc.com

Rev. Jenn Simmons, Lead Pastor |

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

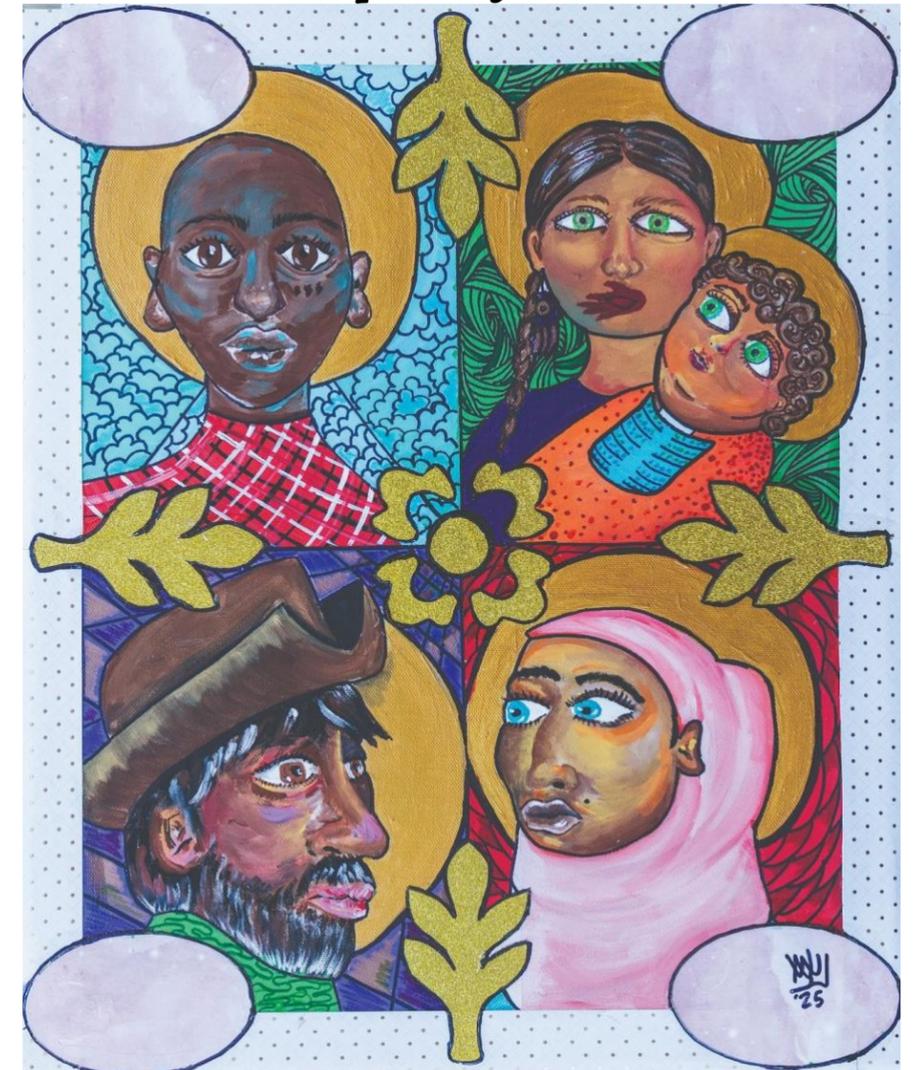
Kylie Robertson & Claudia Brown-Jackson, UNO & Storykeepers Team

John Scroggins, Board Moderator

Rev. Candy Adams, Deb Gallion, John Mihalevich, Doug Steere, Elders

Lexi Amos, Chris Brown, Miles Pearson, Deacon

National Avenue Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)



*Lent: The Good News...
protection & care for
the vulnerable
15 March 2026*

See the Precious Children

BEACH SPRING 8.7.8.7 D ("As We Gather at Your Table")

Words: Anna Strickland (2025)

Music: B. F. White (1844)



See the pre-cious chil-dren seat - ed on the lap of Christ our Lord
See the pre-cious wi-dowed wo - men glean-ing har-vests from the field
See the pre-cious for - eign stran - gers as they car - ry all they own
See the pre-cious dis - poss - essed ones ask - ing for some food to eat
See the pre-cious world im - pov - erished by our ma - lice and our greed



Called the great - est in the king-dom, held so gent - ly and a - dored They
Then re - turn - ing to their kit - chen to pre - pare their dai - ly meal They
To a land that's full of dan - gers for the pow - er - less and prone They
Sleep - ing un - der star - ry heav - ens, dai - ly liv - ing on the streets They
Hu - mans, a - ni - mals, and pla - net cry - ing out for some re - lief We're



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are pre-cious in the sight of God who holds their bro - ken hearts In their
are pre-cious in the sight of God who made their home-land, too In their
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all pre-cious in the sight of God who made each ho - ly thing In our



weak-ness they're held by love as each day they learn and grow
sor - row they're held by love that re - deems each fra - gile part
jour - ney they're held by love as they start each day a - new
hun - ger they're held by love as they guard their hu - man pride
liv - ing we're held by love as we care for ev - ery being

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