

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

A Variety of Selections

Fiona Simmons & Kirsten Weiss, Violins

Words of Gathering

Deb Gallion & John Mihalevich

We hear the call and the invitations...

Step into wonder.

Let awe take you over.

Practice compassion.

Practice joy.

Rest is resistance.

Listen with the eyes of your heart.

Share and receive the stories of our lives.

Dance with the voices of our ancestors.

Let the way of love lead us.

Love is the ground.

As we discern the work of spirituality, of building connection, to our inner world, to creation, to one another, may we trust the way of love.

[jsimmons]

***Gathering Hymn**

Be Thou My Vision

595 (vs 1-3)

***Lighting the Community Candle**

In the moments that have moved us to tears from the beauty of it all-

to the places of deepest despair,

as we have watched the world on fire.

In the places of deep stillness and quiet-

to the spaces filled with belly laughter.

We gather.

We gather.

We bring our lives, stories, questions, hopes, anguish, grief, faith, laughter, struggles, wonderings...

Trusting that when we show up,

as we notice and pay attention,

we are free to meet the love that has been here all along.

God's love.

The love of creation, connection and mystery is here.

It has been here all along.

[jsimmons]

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**

God, I'm fumbling around for answers, reasons, meaning.

I can't find any purpose in this pain.

Why me?

Why them?

Why now?

I don't know when this is going to get better.

Or if I will ever feel relief.

Blessed are we who need to be reminded

that there are some things we can fix

...and some things we can't.

Blessed are we who can say:

my life isn't always getting better.

Right in the midst of the pain and fear and uncertainty,

may we hunt for beauty and meaning and truth... together.

Not to erase the pain or solve the pain,

(though surely that would be nice),

but to remind us that beauty and sorrow coexist.

And that doesn't mean we're broken or have been forgotten.

In our hope.

In our disappointment.

In our joy.

In our pain.

God is here and we are never—

were never and will be never—alone.

[katebowler]

May the peace that comes in community 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!

Welcome to NACC

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 I Corinthians 12, Matthew 8:24, John 4:6, Mark 6:31

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

As we enter this time of prayer,

we are mindful of the many things we bring to this space.

From end of school years, to grief, to joy,

we take a moment of silence, of pause, to acknowledge what is stirring

in our bodies.

Silence

God, who meets us where we are,

we know the church can't just sit still.

It has to breathe and shift, just like we do,

to make room for everyone—

from the ones who remember the old stories

to the ones just starting to tell their own.

Spirituality?

It's not about checking a box for the Divine.

If we are honest, God,

we know you do not need our help,

we see, we know, we need each other.

We are the hands and feet in this messy, beautiful world.

We come together not because we want to earn some gold star

or a seat in a far-off heaven.

We show up and love each other,

because we are the church,

we are community.

We pour ourselves out for the sake of the neighborhood,

for and with each other,

because that's where Love lives.

Reflecting in Song

Melody of Joy

BURROUGHS

CHANCEL BELL CHOIR WITH KIRSTEN WEISS VIOLIN

Reflection

The Ebbs & Flows of Spirituality

Voices from Spirituality Collaborative

Music to Reflect

He Leadeth Me

BRADBERRY

CHANCEL BELL CHOIR

Offering of Ourselves

Elders

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

Rest

CHANCEL CHOIR

***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

Susan Mihalevich

Invitation to the Table & Sharing the Lord's Supper

with Rev. Jenn Simmons, Ashley Quinn, Elders & Deacons

I want a story big enough to hold all our stories.

Big enough to hold the deepest despair and unspeakable joy.

Big enough to drown out all the fear mongering.

Big enough to birth hope irrepressible.

Big enough to move us toward our neighbor's need.

Big enough to change the world.

I want a table big enough to feed the world.

Big enough to fill the emptiness
not just in our bellies but also the hunger of our hearts.
 Big enough to hold us in community,
Big enough to end our endless greed for more power and prestige.
 Big enough to overflow with gratitude and generosity.
Big enough to change the world.
 I want a love big enough to save us from ourselves.
Big enough to end our self-destructive misuse of the planet.
 Big enough to reveal the way to liberation.
Big enough to free us from the need to judge others.
 Big enough to teach us acceptance of one another.
Big enough to change the world.
 We gather in this story.
 At this table.
 With this love.

On the night of his arrest, Jesus shared a meal with his companions.
 He took bread, blessed it, broke it, gave it to his disciples and said:
“This is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.”
 After the meal, he took the cup, blessed it, and shared it saying:
“This cup that is poured out is the new covenant.”
 Here we remember his story, his table, his love.
And we give thanks that big or not,
we are enough to change the world.

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.

A Call to Faithful Action

Sending Song *Sometimes God Begins a Project* **507**

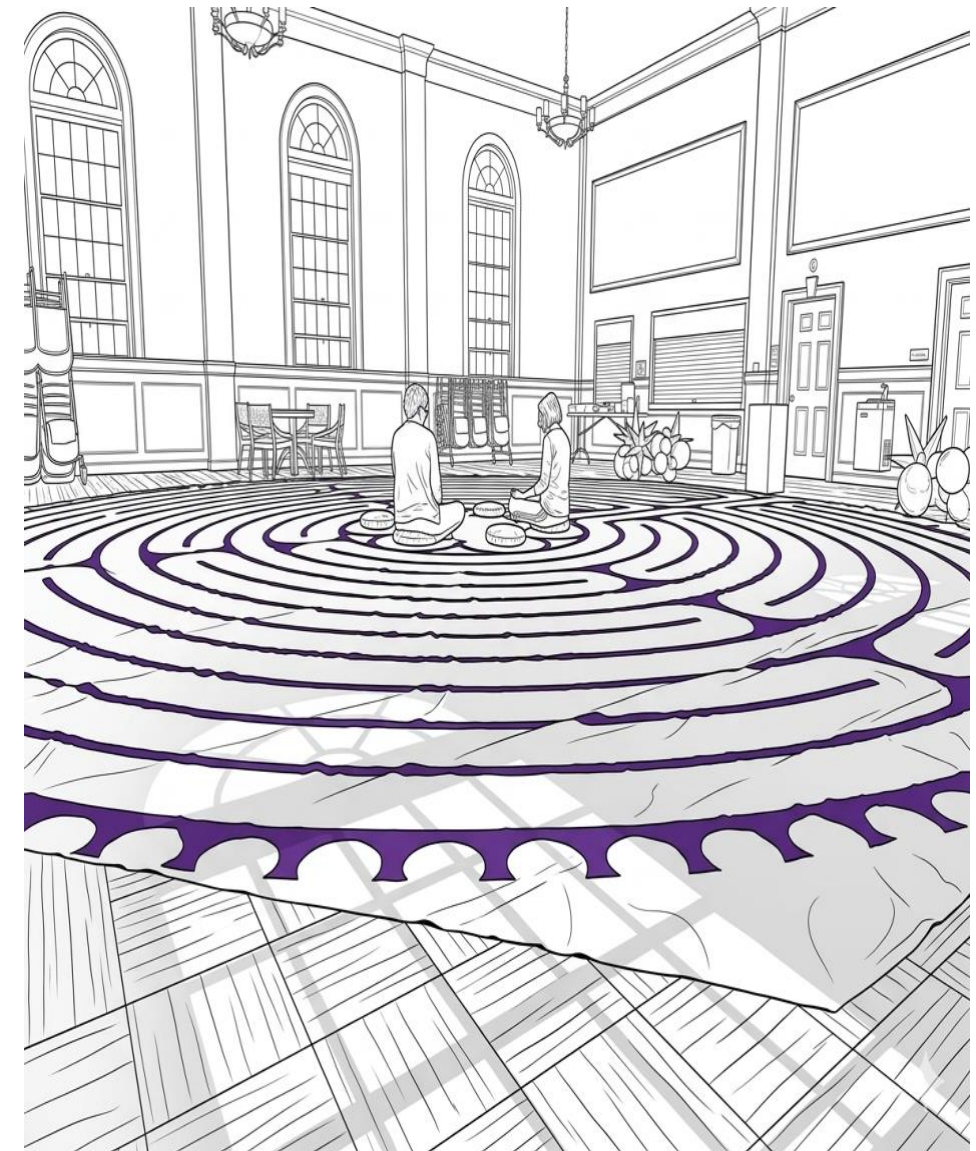
Words for the Journey

When we cannot see it,
 when we cannot feel it,
 may we find the ground of love.
 May this love,
 always waiting, always accessible,
 the love Jesus lived, taught, practiced, and shared,
 guide us on our way.
May it be so.

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Greta Allen, Donna Kearney, Ela Stark, Nursery Caregivers
Claudia Brown-Jackson, Storykeepers Team
John Scroggins, Board Moderator
Deb Gallion, John & Susan Mihalevich, Doug Steere, Elders
Lexi Amos, Miles Pearson, Chris Brown, Deacons

National Avenue Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)



Eastertide:
We are the church!
Spirituality
17 May 2026