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~

Singing Bowl Chimes

Prelude

Words of Gathering **Emilia Stauffer & Christie Lancaster**

When we show up, we show up as ourselves.
It can be hard to be real.
To be honest.
To bring the hurts and frustrations.
To bring the longing for joy.
To bring our grief.
Then we hear the words of our traditions,
spoken through our ancestors and reminders to each other,
You are enough.
You are loved as you are.
When we show up as ourselves.
We are letting divinity come to fullness of life.
We are stewarding this wild and precious life.
Come, siblings,
bring yourself, just as you are, to this space. [jsimmons]

Gathering Hymn** ***Community of Christ ***#655***

***Lighting the Community Candle**

So bless you all in these beautiful, terrible contradictions.
You who serve others,
knowing it comes at a steep cost.
That time you'll never get back.
Those people who won't ever be as grateful as you hope.
The paycheck or PTO or benefits that will never add up to enough.
May you be reminded
that maybe you were called for such a time as this.
To pour out your great, great gifts for the sake of the other.
To work toward this beautiful, terrible interdependence.
(Even if community is much easier in theory than in practice.)
And on the days where you feel
like your work is just a drop in the ocean.
Or you want to throw in the towel
Because you are far beyond burnout.
May joy and delight be yours, my dears,
and may it fuel the hard, beautiful work you do.
And hey, if you are just beginning a move toward service,
may you have the eyes to see the needs in front of you,
the places where your gifts and passions and resources
meet your community's deep needs.
Or if you're just starting to ask for help yourself, bless you.
May your courage be met with kindness.
You are all my favorite kinds of people and I love you.
Bless you. [katebowler]

The Candle of Christ is lit.

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

***Passing of the Peace**

What if God is joy?
What if the Father is bliss and the Son is gratitude
and the Holy Spirit is gleeful wonder?
What if creating is God's play,
and the big bang was an outburst of happiness
and the galaxies are spun from pure delight?
What if gravity, that holds the universe together,
is simply the pleasure of harmony,
and every created thing's ecstatic desire for one another?
What if earth is God's great celebration,
spinning and dancing and making music and beauty
and inviting everyone in to feast and wonder?
What if being itself is such a miracle
that God gets endless enjoyment out of it?
What if God doesn't own a throne (most uncomfortable)
and has never handled a gavel,
but has a million musical instruments?
What if God goes to the places we call hell every weekend
with a load of tissues and listens to everybody
who's locked themselves up in there
until they've cried out all their sorrows,
and they come out laughing and dancing?
What if what it means to come to God
is to enter into God's joy?
What if the work of justice
is to enable everyone to truly know joy?
(And would that not mean that cruelty and injustice
are most heinously sinful?)
What if even in our grief and our despair
the root of our being is joy,
and resurrection means passing through our sorrow
into God's delight?
What if salvation means
being rescued from our inability to rejoice?
Why not? Why not? Do you think you can convince me
that God is all somber and serious?
What if even now, as you consider this,
and think it's kind of silly,
God is laughing… and waiting? [Steve Garnaas-Holmes]

May this joy 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 **Ashley Quinn**

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.

Moment of Pause

Reflecting on the Sacred Story
From Ecclesiastes Chapter 3

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.

Praying in Song ***Be Thou My Vision*** **#595**

Praying Together **Rev. Jenn Simmons**
Embodied Prayer/Meditation for Grief

We join our voices…
Weaver of Life, Ancient and Unfolding,
How sacred is your Presence!
We lean on your guidance.We seek your love.
We open to your transformation.
Provide us bread in body and spirit
to sustain us in faith and solidarity.
Companion us with grace
as we seek to live lives of forgiveness and compassion,
repair and accountability.
We remember those who have supported us
as we seek to support others
in all the mess and glory of this human journey.
Guard our minds and hearts from the temptations of domination
and turn our loyalty away from all systems of evil.
For the whole cosmos hums with your wisdom.
Everything that lives, returns to your care.
Our thanks and honor to you,
Gracious Web of Existence, Our Source and our Home.
May it be so.

Reflection ***A Time for Everything, Including the Ache***
Rev. Dr. Peter Browning

Music to Reflect ***Turn, Turn, Turn*** **SEEGER**
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 ***Passage of Time*** **NICHOLS**
CHORAL QUARTET

***A Doxology**

Praise God, who fills each cup and plate,
Whose table's wide and love is great.
From broken bread, may all be fed,
And justice rise where fear has spread. Amen.

Prayer of Gratitude **Jonathan Lancaster**

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

You belong here.
There is a seat saved for you.
Creator God, prayer has never been easy for us.
Our mind flutters with news updates and questions of faith—
our thoughts like a river that won't stop.
So today we take a deep breath—
Inhaling your name into the cobwebs of our lungs,
Willing your presence to wipe away the dust of self-doubt and fear.
And with that breath, We ask you that you would tell us again:
Tell us again how you moved over the waters.
Tell us again how you led them with a pillar of fire.
Tell us again of that still, small voice,
And then tell us of the prophets.
Tell us of Mary and Joseph and that angel chorus.
Tell us of the blind man, and the leper,
and the crowds that you healed.
Tell us what it was like to walk on water.
Tell us of the little children that ran to you.
Tell us of the justice you preached.
Tell us of the hosannas and the palm branches.
Tell us again of the love that changed the world.
Tell us again, because we are forgetful people.
It is part of our human nature;
That is why we long for this space week after week,
So that we might be reminded of who we are and whose we are.
So tell us again.
For our anxiety is loud. Our scarcity is loud.
Our fear is loud. Our anger is loud. Our shame is loud.
Our loneliness and self-doubt are loud.
Mental illness is loud. Doubt is loud,
So tell us again.
Tell us again how it all began.
Tell us of manna in the wilderness and the disciples around the table.
Tell us again of your love for this world.
Tell us again how it changed everything.
Tell us again, so that we have the strength to tell others.
And as you do, pour out your Spirit on this table.
Tether your Spirit to our fragile bones.
Be with us in these ordinary symbols of extraordinary love,
And give us the strength to remember your story anew.
On the night he was betrayed,
knowing the struggles and longings that would fill our lives,
Jesus took bread.
He blessed it, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying,
"Take, eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me."
After supper, he took the cup, and after giving thanks,
he gave it to them, saying,
"Drink from this, all of you; this cup is the new covenant.
Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me." [santifiedart]

Prayer at the Table **Rev. Kaitlin Koeller**

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 ***Called As Partners in Christ's Service*** **#453**

Words for the Journey
We cannot control our outcomes. Life happens.
Thank you, God; we can be honest.
We can show up together in the midst of the good,
the struggles, the chaos, and the mess.
We know when we build together,
You are there.
May we find courage to be real, to be vulnerable.
As we leave this space,
we are reminded that there is a time for everything.
May we comfort one another at all times.
In Your love.

Postlude

National Avenue Christian Church
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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
Claudia Brown-Jackson, Storykeepers Team
Michelle Creed, Board Moderator
Emila Stauffer, Christie & Jonathan Lancaster, Kaitlin Koeller, Elders
Connie Jenson, Louis Nowell, Jimmy Brooks, Amy Schultze, Deacons

National Avenue Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)



Joyful Anyway,
Telling the Truth
25 October 2026