

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~

Prelude

Words of Gathering John Mihalevich and Rev. Kaitlin Koeller

Love is our beginning and our end.

It is love that has given birth to Earth and the human soul, and it is love that will make us well again.

God has loved us into being and longs for our well-being.

And this same love is deep in us for we are made of God.

Julian calls it the “love-longing” of the divine that knows no end.

Deep in our souls we long for the well-being of Earth and one another.

We may be tragically cut off from this love-longing, and we may have forgotten what will truly satisfy it,

but it is deep within us, waiting to rise again.

“The desire of the soul,” says Julian, “is the desire of God.”

Our deepest yearnings, both physical and spiritual, are for love.

[johnphilipnewell]

We gather seeking to hear stories of love.

We gather seeking to share our stories of love.

We gather seeking to tell and create new stories of love.

*Please stand as you are able in body or in spirit at the * asterisks.*

***Gathering Hymn Morning Has Broken 53**

***Lighting the Community Candle John Mihalevich**

Julian makes it clear that God did not say to her,

“You shall not be tormented,

you shall not be troubled,

you shall not be grieved.”

The words of promise are “you shall not be overcome.”

We will know pain in our lives, and there will be struggle and loss, but love will save us.

This is the meaning of Julian’s revelations.

And this is why we have been born, she says, to love.

So, whether we live or die,

whether we know sorrow or joy,

whether those dearest to us are suffering or in health,

whether we are in the beautiful wildness of nature

or in the decimated landscape of a city, love.

For love is our “beginning,” says Julian.

And love is our true “end.”

It is love that will make us well.” [johnphilipnewell]

The Candle of Christ is lit.

In this light,

we point to this moment burning in our midst to claim

a hope leading us onward.

May we go with courage.

***Passing of the Peace**

Rev. Koeller

“God is the essence of all life.

We are not simply made by God, says Julian, we are “made of God.”

Deep within us and the body of Earth, therefore,

is the wisdom of the divine,

deeper than the ignorance of what we have done.

Deep within us is the creativity of God,

deeper than any barrenness in our lives or world.

And deep within us and the natural world

are the healing energies of the divine

and the ability to come back into true relationship

with the source of well-being deep in all things.

How do we access these depths of healing

within ourselves and within the natural world?”. [johnphilipnewell]

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. 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.

Reading the Sacred Story

From stories of writings Mark Chapter 8

We tell stories to learn, to grow, to spark more questions.

In the listening and the telling may our hearts and minds

spark our imaginations as co-creators.

Amen.

Prayers of the Community

Rev. Jody Furnas-Wright

Jalaluddin Rumi is a messenger of love to us.

He invites us to rediscover it as the true essence of religion

and to rebuild our world as a sanctuary of love

in which to honor each other and find delight together.

When the grape skin of our ego breaks,

the rich wine of love flows in us again for Earth and one another.

(pause to listen for what Rumi’s wisdom stirs in us)

As a lover longs for the presence of her beloved

so my soul longs for the body of Earth

and the beauty of the human spirit that in thought

and word and deed each day.

In the costly name of love we may live

and move as one again in the place where the two worlds touch.

Our souls long to be present.

May we notice.

(pause to be aware)

As a creation longs for the presence of her creation

so our souls long to love.

[johnphilipnewell]

Our souls long to be present.

May we notice.

**Music of Centering For the Fruit of All Creation RODGERS
CHANCEL CHOIR**

Reflection Why are we seeking? Rev. Simmons

Music of Response Wind upon the Waters 247

Offering of Ourselves, Our Tithes & Our Gifts



You are invited to share offering via Paypal (using the QR code on the left) or in the plate as it is passed. 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.

**Music of Reflection Creation Sings LOVE
CHANCEL CHOIR**

***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 Christie Lancaster

**Sharing the Lord’s Supper Elders & Deacons
with Revs. Jenn Simmons and Jody Furnas-Wright**

Our Creator God is a gracious, abundant, and generous host.

This banquet, twenty million years in the making, has been spread out for our delight.

It is a banquet of rivers and lakes, of rain and sunshine,

of rich earth and amazing flowers,

of handsome trees, and dancing fish,

of contemplative animals and whistling winds,

of dry and wet seasons, of cold and hot climates...

This banquet has been declared very good, and so are we,

as blessed beings invited to share in the continuing co-creation of the feast at this banquet table.

Jesus invited all to this feast of peace and new life.

Jesus risked everything for compassion.

And Jesus promised to be known in the breaking of bread.

Jesus, lover of all creation,
took bread, broke it, blessed it,
and said,

**'Eat this bread
and remember me.'**

Jesus also took a cup,
filled it with the fruit of the vine,
blessed it and said,

**'Drink this and remember
my love for you.'**

God of all Creation,
we give thanks that we have
gathered together in this sacred place,
to be refreshed at this table.

We rejoice in the giftedness of each person here.

We are grateful for who we are for each other.

As we eat this bread and drink this cup,

may we be nourished

so that we are able to go forth

into the world bringing,

courage, peace,

hope, and wonder.

We pray this in the Way of Jesus the Christ.

Prayer at the Table

Jonathan Lancaster

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.

Communion Music

Sending Song

We Are Not Our Own

689

Words for Our Journey

T. S. Elliot wrote,

“we shall not cease from exploration
and the end of all our exploring
will be to arrive where we started
and know the place for the first time.”

And all shall be well and

All manner of things shall be well.

[johnphillipnewell]

May it be so.

Postlude

National Avenue Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)



colorbliss.com

National Avenue Christian Church

417.869.9176 natlave@sbcglobal.net www.nationalavenuecc.com

Rev. Jenn Simmons, Lead Pastor | **Ashley Quinn**, Pastoral Apprentice

Rev. Jody Furnas-Wright, Adjunct Pastor for Faith Formation with Families

Hayley Norton, Communication Coordinator,

Alex Bates, Sound Technician | **Sarah Cybulski**, Finance Coordinator,

Rev. Dr. John White, Theologian in Residence | **Jonathan Raney**, Music Director

The Great Search
15 September 2024