

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 *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* **Jeff Nall, Trumpet**

Song of Gathering **Justin & Ashley Fleming**

In this weary world,

we sing of joy.

In this fragile world,

we lift each other up.

In this beautiful world,

we look for God.

In this tender world,

we hold onto hope.

This is the invitation of faith.

So in this time of worship,

may we sing, lift up, look for,

and hold onto our with-us God.

With hope in our hearts, amen!

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

***Gathering Hymn** *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

O Come, O come Emmanuel

make true the stories prophets tell –

so all those chained by fear find release,

and, war forgotten, bring a world of peace.

Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel

is come to birth where all God's children dwell.

O Come, Love's-season, to our lonely days,

and guide us in our words and ways

to be the ones whose Advent begins

with healing earth and all that live within.

Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel

is come to birth where all God's children dwell.

O come, Desire of Nations, bind

all peoples in one heart and mind;

Make envy, strife, and quarrels cease;

fill the whole world with heaven's peace.

Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel

is come to birth where all God's children dwell.

[marentirabassi]

***Lighting the Advent Candle: Love**

Justin Fleming

In a weary and worn world,

how do we begin again?

Where do we start?

Let us begin with tenderness.

Let us begin with our hearts on our sleeve.

Let us begin from a place of vulnerability and hope.

Let us begin with love.

Yes, let us start with love.

Today we light the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love.

May the warmth of these lights be our cornerstone.

May the truth in these lights help us begin again.

May it be so!

Amen.

The Advent Candles are 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.

Song of Response *One Candle is Lit* **128 vs 4**

Come, wander where lion and lamb gently play,

Where evil is banished and faith takes the day,

A babe in a manger to fool the world's eyes.

One candle is lit for the Christ-birthday here.

***Passing of the Peace** **Ashley Fleming**

In out of the way places you revolutionary women meet,

not to plan campaigns or plot a disturbance,

but to do what revolutionary women do:

give life, celebrate each other, enact hope.

You tend generations (the womb's work is only the beginning).

You seek the company of those who know,

who honor the womb of the heart.

You flock with others who cherish the sacred,

who harbor joy even in harsh winter.

Your hope is not approaching from over a horizon

but growing within you, already real.

There is something holy in you

that leaps at the nearness of the holy.

Blessed is she who believes there will be fulfillment

of what Love has promised:

that you shall bear blessing into the world.

Blessed are you and the fruit of your heart,

for it is this love that overcomes the world. [stevegarnaas-holmes]

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.

Reflecting on the Sacred Story

From the Gospel according to Luke 1:46-55

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

Tina Stillwell

Holy God,

We come to you today feeling tenderhearted.

We are tenderhearted because life is *hard*.

**Our spirits are bruised from the ups and downs,
from the onslaught of disappointment, fear, and grief.**

In the midst of this tenderness, how do we risk hope?

How do we hold onto you?

With honesty on our tongues,

we come to you today, God, to ask for your help.

Show us how to hope.

Draw near to the most vulnerable places in our lives,

to the places where hope feels out of reach.

Draw near to our depression and anxiety,

to our addictions and sorrows.

Invitation to Silence and Breath

Draw near to the problems that feel impossibly big.

Draw close to the places where hope seems out of reach.

And as you do, show us how to dream a better dream.

When the night feels long, point us to the candles.

When the world feels empty, fill us with bread from this Table.

When grief threatens to capsize our boat, allow us to laugh.

When we feel alone in our loss, surround us with community.

In the ups and downs of this tenderhearted world,

show us how to hope.

Show us how to live like Mary and Joseph,

for they were courageous enough to believe the angel's words.

They were courageous enough to believe that change could come.

Give us the courage, the vulnerability,

and the wisdom to risk the same.

With all the tenderhearted hope we can muster,

we join our voices together to pray the words your son

taught us to pray, saying. . .

Our Mother, Our Father, author of all life,

holy is your presence.

May your story replace our own,

the story of this world becomes

the story of the unfolding of heaven.

Give us this moment, moment by moment.

Forgive us completely

and make us completely forgiving of ourselves and others.

Save us from the weakness of our will,

and keep us from doing injustice.

For all Being is yours; all power is yours; all glory is yours;

In this moment in eternity. Amen. [steveholmesgaranas]

Music of Centering *Appalachian Carol* Jeff Nall, Trumpet

Reflection *Singing & Writing: Love* Rev. Jenn Simmons

Music to Reflect *Joy to the World* PARKER
JEFF NALL, TRUMPET & CHANCEL CHOIR

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.

Musical Invitation *Amen! Tell it on the Mountain!* MCDONALD
CHANCEL CHOIR

*Advent Doxology THE FIRST NOEL

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God, above ye heavenly host;
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost.
Noel, noel, noel, noel!
Born is the King of Israel.

Prayer of Gratitude Debora Biggs

Communion Meditation & Sharing the Lord's Supper
with Rev. Jody Furnas-Wright, Jenn Simmons, Elders & Deacons

Friends, Advent is a season of waiting.
We wait for Christ to be born.

We wait for the feeling that love is near.

We wait for God's promised day.

Advent is a season of waiting.

And while we humans are good at many things,
waiting is not high on that list.

We are an impatient and anxious bunch,
eager for the hope of what comes next.

Maybe that's why this Table is such a gift.

For when we come to this Table, for just a moment, the waiting stops.

When we come to this Table, for just a moment,

we get a glimpse of God's promised day.

We get a glimpse of a world where all are fed and all are welcomed.

And for just a moment we can believe the angels when they say,

"Be not afraid."

For just a moment, Mary's words tumble through our minds—

words of justice and hope, words like, **"the hungry have been filled"**

and **"the humble have been lifted."**

So come to this Table.

Come catch a glimpse of what could be.

Come end your waiting, for love is here.

This is what it's all about.

God is all around us.

So come. This good news is for you. All are welcome here.

We share the bread of life and remember Jesus' life.

We hear an invitation to newness and practice love.

**We share the cup of life remembering
relationships around the table.**

We hear an invitation to share love, always.

Prayer at the Table

Mark Biggs

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 *My Soul Give Glory to My God* 130

Words for Our Journey

As you leave this place,
may you have the wisdom to lean on one another.

**May you have the courage to hold onto hope,
the compassion to do the good that is yours to do,
and the confidence to trust that God sees you as a blessing.**

For in a world full of dead ends,

Advent invites us to begin again. So start here. Start now.

Start with love and begin again.

In the name of Christ, our new beginning,

go in peace.

Postlude

National Avenue Christian Church

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

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

Rev. Dr. John White, Theologian in Residence

Jonathan Raney, Music Director | Jennifer Forni, Music Assistant

Alex Bates, Sound Technician | Tech Support

Sarah Cybulski, Finance Coordinator

Hayley Norton, Communication Coordinator | Nicholas & Olivia Villaroel, Sextons

Greta Allen & Aydia Lancaster, Nursery Caregivers

Kylie Robertson & Claudia Brown-Jackson, UNO Team

John Scroggins, Board Moderator

Mark & Debora Biggs, Tina Stillwell, Elders

Lexi Amos, Hilary Dempsey, Justin & Ashley Fleming,

Melisabeth Johnston, Miles Pearson, Deacons

National Avenue Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

"Go, Tell It on the Mountain"
by John W. Work, Jr.

**Refrain: Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills, and ev'rywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born.**

**1 While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light. [Refrain]**

**2 The shepherds feared and trembled
when lo, above the earth
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Savior's birth. [Refrain]**

**3 Down in a lowly manger
the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation
that blessed Christmas morn. [Refrain]**

Sing & Write a New Song!
Advent Week Four: Love

22 December 2024