

### **The Gathering of a People of God**

*National Avenue Christian Church 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 both enriches us and this time of celebration together~*

#### **Prelude**

#### **Words of Gathering**

**Debora Biggs & Tina Stillwell**

Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them.

#### **Each one of us is beloved**

Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country

#### **Each life—worthy of community, nourishment, and safety**

and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?

#### **Every system that degrades life—worthy of undoing**

Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep!

#### **The Holy seeks us with Her care. Thanks be to God.**

Restorying God—expand the stories we tell to ourselves about this moment in time:

Turn our faces from despair **towards courageous possibility**

Connect us to the wisdom of our liberating ancestors

Sooth our nervous systems **towards the embodiment of peace**

Practice with us the daily-making of hope

Restorying God—expand the stories we tell to ourselves about this

moment in time. **Amen.** [enfleshed]

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

**\*Gathering Hymn** *O God of Vision* **288**

#### **\*Sharing the Light of Community**

**Debora Biggs**

Seek the Holy wherever They may be found;

#### **call on Them when they feel far away.**

Opressors, forsake your ways!

#### **Mean-spirited and greedy ones, forsake your thoughts!**

Let us all turn to Expansive Love who is always available;

#### **She will school us in reparations and compassion.**

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts,

**neither are your ways my ways,” says God.**

We seek the Holy wherever They may be found;

**We call on Them, turning towards the life-giving.** [enfleshed]

#### *The Candle of Christ is lit.*

We have searched for the light.

Dear ones, we need not search any further.

**We are light.** [jsimmons]

#### **\*Passing of the Peace**

**Tina Stillwell**

Bring forth song and celebration;

**so that the Spirit of Justice will be alive among us.**

Let the Spirit flourish and grow;

#### **so that we will never tire of the struggle.**

Let us remember those who have died for justice;

#### **for they have given us life.**

Help us love even those who hate us;

#### **So we can change the world.**

May the peace rooted in justice and deep welcome 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**



**Ashley Quinn**  
*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.*

#### **Moment of Pause:**

**Ashley Quinn**

Inhale: **Liberation is ours.**

Exhale: **God, teach me the sound of freedom.**

[Cole Arthur Riley]

#### **Reading the Sacred Story**

**Debora Biggs & Tina Stillwell**

*From the Holy Hebrew Scriptures Esther 7-8*

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**

Bury Me in a Free Land by Frances Ellen Watkins Harper 1825 – 1911

Make me a grave where'er you will,

In a lowly plain, or a lofty hill;

Make it among earth's humblest graves,

But not in a land where men are slaves.

I could not rest if around my grave

I heard the steps of a trembling slave;

His shadow above my silent tomb

Would make it a place of fearful gloom.

I could not rest if I heard the tread

Of a coffle gang to the shambles led,

And the mother's shriek of wild despair

Rise like a curse on the trembling air.

I could not sleep if I saw the lash

Drinking her blood at each fearful gash,

And I saw her babes torn from her breast,

Like trembling doves from their parent nest.

I'd shudder and start if I heard the bay

Of bloodhounds seizing their human prey,

And I heard the captive plead in vain

As they bound afresh his galling chain.

If I saw young girls from their mother's arms

Bartered and sold for their youthful charms,

My eye would flash with a mournful flame,

My death-paled cheek grow red with shame.

I would sleep, dear friends, where bloated might

Can rob no man of his dearest right;

My rest shall be calm in any grave

Where none can call his brother a slave.

I ask no monument, proud and high,

To arrest the gaze of the passers-by;

All that my yearning spirit craves,

Is bury me not in a land of slaves.

#### *Invitation to Silence and Breath*

#### **Eternal Spirit**

**Source of all that is and ever shall be,**

**Loving Parent in whom we discern heaven,**

**May knowledge of your holiness inspire all peoples.**

**And may your commonwealth of peace and freedom**

**flourish on earth, until all of humankind**

**heed your call to justice and compassion.**

**May we find the bread that we need for today.**

**And for the hurts we cause one another,**

**may we be forgiven in the same measure that we forgive.**

**In times of trial and temptation, help us to be strong;**

**When life seems overwhelming,**

**Help us to endure;**

**And thus from the yoke of control deliver us.**

**May you reign in the power of human love,**

**Now and forever.**

[Tom Hall]

#### **Music of Centering**

*I Believe*

**MILLER**

**Chancel Choir**

**Reflection** *The Spirit of Justice Breathes in Us Today* **Ashley Quinn**

#### **Music of Calling**

*Take My Gifts*

**381**

#### **Offering of Ourselves, Our Tithes and 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 Gift**

*Author of Justice*  
**Chancel Choir**

**LARSON**

**\*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**

**Sharing the Lord's Supper**

**Rev. Jenn Simmons & Jody Furnas-Wright, Ashley Quinn with Elders & Deacons**

*Please be seated.*

For you who have felt angered or wounded or excluded  
by the message of Jesus the Christ as you have heard it,  
I hope you sense an opening here,  
an affirmation, a welcome that you may have despaired of ever hearing.  
For you who have hoped to believe in God  
in a divinized world,  
and never been able to believe in the way belief is typically practiced-  
may the vision of Jesus the Christ help you see hope and love anew.  
For you who have loved Jesus-  
with great passion and protectiveness-  
may you see here, at this table,  
God transcends all labels and barriers we create.  
You are a child of God, and always will be,  
even when you don't believe it. [adapt/richardrohr]  
Look at us, God, our hands are empty,  
our hearts are hungry, and we realize,  
we are hungry for you, God our maker.  
We are hungry for a world where people are loved and affirmed,  
**we are hungry for the Spirit,**  
we are hungry for justice,  
**we are hungry for community,**  
we are hungry for celebration,  
**we are hungry for Jesus the Christ,**  
we are hungry for change.

**God of life, today we remember that you are hungry too;**

Jesus, your wilderness hunger has prepared this feast;  
your hunger for life drove you to make yourself  
into food for the life of the world.

**In our hearts we celebrate your life and death  
and life from death,**

**and we proclaim**

**this bread will be for us your life,**

**this cup will be for us our hope.**

So we do now what you did at the last feast,  
on the night you were betrayed.

Gathered with your friends, doubters, disciples,  
around a table, you took bread and wine;

you said they were your life poured out,  
a new relationship to God.

[jbaker]

**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. As we share in communion, please join in singing:*

**Sending Song**

*They'll Know We Are Christians* 494 (v1-3)

**Words for the Journey**

**Ashley Quinn**

The Gospel is indeed Good News  
**and God's story brings the powerful down from their thrones**  
and lifts up the lowly  
**and God's story is our story**  
and the story is still being written  
**and we are writing this story together.**

So come, Spirit. Come.

Convict us with curiosity.

Convert us from complacency.

Consecrate us with compassion.

Conspire with us, as we lean into the New Life emerging from the  
destruction around us. [Rev. Anna Blaedel]

May it be so.

**May we make it so.**

**Postlude**

**National Avenue Christian Church**

417.869.9176 | natlave@sbcglobal.net | www.nationalavenuecc.com  
Rev. Jenn Simmons, Lead Pastor | Ashley Quinn, Pastor of Public Theology & Justice  
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 | Matthew, Chris Brown 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 | Debora Biggs & Tina Stillwell, Liturgists  
Ashley & Justin Fleming, Karen Lance, Hilary Dempsey, Melisabeth Johnston, and  
Arthur, Deacons | Mark Biggs & Rev. Candy Adams, Elders

# National Avenue Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)



*Mural of Harriet Tubman painted by Michael Rosato*

**Lent Week 3**  
**Spirit of Justice: Anti-slavery**  
**23 March 2025**