#### 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~

"Today, as we gather on Easter Sunday, we celebrate themes of renewal and hope. Easter brings with it a sense of rebirth, of joy emerging from hardship, of light returning after darkness. Similarly, Raag Desh, which I will be performing today, is deeply tied to the monsoon rains in India — a time when nature experiences a kind of rebirth. The monsoon showers cleanse the earth, bringing a sense of freshness, renewal, and peace. In this Raag, you will hear these emotions reflected: the longing and hope of waiting for the rain, and the joy and peace that follow when the first drops fall. I invite you to listen not only with your ears, but with your heart, as the music carries the themes of resurrection, renewal, and optimism, much like the spirit of this sacred day." -Rohit Choudhary

#### Prelude Raag Desh Performed by Rohit Choudhary, Sitar

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark,

Mary Magdalene came to the tomb.—John 20:1

While it was still dark.

While it was still night.

While she could not see.

While she thought death held sway.

While she grieved.

While she wept.

While it was still dark, resurrection began.

[janrichardson]

#### **Words of Gathering**

Rev. Kaitlyn Koeller & Deb Gallion

The tomb is empty!

How can it be?

God's Love did not end at the hands of the empire!

The Resurrected One is alive—

moving ahead,

meeting us on the road,

leading us towards liberation.

Violence cannot threaten

nor can the power-hungry silence,

the workings of Radical Possibility.

Love is Resurrected!

The Holy is ever-present,

beckoning us towards collective flourishing.

Bloom new life, bloom!

[enfleshedliturgy]

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

#### \*Gathering Hymn Celebrate a New Day Dawning HYMN TO JOY

#### \*Lighting the Christ Candle

Jesus—ancestor of the Palestinian people, proclaimer of liberation in the face of tyranny, martyred one at the hands of empire—

what do you have to teach us about New Life today?

After your death,

women who witnessed your Enduring Presence were not believed;

#### open our hearts to the messages of those who offer hope.

Awaken our imaginations that we might

participate in beautiful possibility.

Ignite our courage, that in the face of fear,

we might cultivate Ways of Life.

#### Teach us Radical Love, oh Resurrected One.

Weave the lives of the martyred into our souls like a prayer shawl.

Tuck New Life in our pockets like seeds. [enfleshedliturgy]

The Christ Candle is lit.

Light is here.

Light is always here.

#### \*Passing of the Peace

Bless you, following where love has led—

to the foot of the cross, to stand with Mary and John,

a mother and a close friend,

overwhelmed that it should come to this: powerlessness and utter loss.

Bless you, witnessing how hope and healing,

laughter and feasting, miracles and promises

have come to this: untold suffering, a cruel death.

It is finished.

Blessed are you, as the darkness deepens,

and a figure moves cautiously,

hands reaching to ease His body down.

Blessed are you with the women, spices and linens in hand,

doing what's possible with grief so large, laying Him in a tomb.

Blessed are you, in the shadow's power,

Roman soldiers sealing the entrance, the finality pressing down.

And blessed are we, who remain here in wonder,

in the heavy silence of death, asking again:

"Is this how love wins?"

[katebowler]

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. 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.

#### An Invitation to Pause

#### Preparing to hold the sacred stories

Jesus didn't die so that we don't have to.

Jesus died so that we would know how to.

Jesus didn't die instead of us.

#### Jesus died ahead of us.

Jesus didn't rise so that we don't have to.

Jesus rose so that we would be able to.

Jesus didn't rise instead of us.

#### Jesus rose ahead of us.

Death and resurrection aren't about substitution, it's about participation. Substitution keeps people in a suspended state of spiritual adolescence. Participation liberates people to fully partake in the divine nature.

Jesus said, "Follow me."

### Reflecting on the Sacred Story From the Gospel of Luke 24

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**

**Rev. Jody Furnas-Wright** 

Invitation to Silence

From deep within our tombs we hear you call, O God:

#### Rise up! Rise up from death into new life.

We have found new life in the spring season,

in buds pushing out of the ground,

in each deep breath we breathe.

We have found new life in people's struggle

for just government throughout the world,

and in people who pray together

when the unspeakable occurs.

From deep within our tombs we hear you call, O God:

#### Rise up! Rise up from death into new life.

We follow your voice in our hope to overcome

illness, grief, addiction, fear.

We follow your voice in our hope to heal your creation,

to make whole our connection to all that is.

From deep within our tombs we hear you call, O God:

#### Rise up! Rise up from death into new life.

Resurrecting God, you call us to follow the Christ,

to rise up from our tombs that hold us in death –

but you do not expect us to do so alone.

It is you who fills us with life beyond all our daily deaths.

It is you who strengthens us to bring life to others. It is you, Holy One, whom we hear call within our tombs:

Rise Up!

And so we do.

We have. We are here.

[enfleshedliturgy]

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Alleluia!

Reflection

**Reflecting in Song** 

Now the Green Blade Rises

Where Resurrection Begins

Ashley Quinn & Rev. Jenn Simmons

**Musical Reflection** 

All Things New

HAGENBERG

**CHANCEL CHOIR** 

IR

#### Offering of Ourselves, Blessing the Seedlings

You are invited to bring forth the signs and longings of your heart! Hold them high as you come forward and lay them down. 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 Hallelujah BEETHOVEN KIRSTEN WEISS, VIOLIN, EMILIA STAUFFER, CELLO 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**

John Mihalevich

## Sharing the Lord's Supper with Revs. Jody Furnas-Wright & Jenn Simmons, Elders & Deacons

Throughout history, O God,

we have struggled to claim the power you have given us.

Destructive forces within

and around us make us question your call upon our lives.

We turn ourselves over, in ways ordinary and remarkable, to what is. To what has been. To the familiar.

But you have created us for so much more.

In Jesus, we saw a life lived in all its potential. In all its Sacred power. Life that is abundant. Love that was creative, and fervent for justice.

We saw, too, the consequences of living as if the Kindom were close.

#### And so we wonder.

If we live with such courage, what will we lose?

In proclaiming truths that confront unjust power,

do we stand a chance of survival?

How will it go for us, if we are willing to risk everything for love?

You have never promised us safety,

but you have shown us what is possible.

#### The Spirit brings new life even to places of death.

Jesus, knowing the dangers ahead, still did not cave to the threats of power or give in to the temptations of the popular.

There was nothing he would trade for his love of the suffering and betrayed, not even his own life.

On the night of his arrest, he gathered around table with his companions. His friends. His beloveds in the struggle.

Even the one who would turn him over to the cross.

He took bread, blessed it, broke it, gave it to all of them and said,

"This is my body which is given for you.

#### Take, eat, and remember me."

After the supper, he did the same with the cup, saying,

"This is a symbol of the new covenant.

Drink in remembrance of me."

In remembering the life of Jesus,

we remember what he taught us about ourselves – about the power God has given us.

We remember that God enfleshed is Good News that feeds, that protects, that heals, and delivers. We remember the words he spoke:

## "whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these."

And so we pray, may we know your Spirit in this bread and this cup. Through these gifts, fill our hearts with courage to believe the Kindom is within us, to live boldly in pursuit of love that liberates, and to follow the Wisdom that leads from the margins.

Blessed be this meal of hope.

[enfleshed]

#### **Prayer at the Table**

Susan Mihalevich

#### **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

#### In the Bulb There is a Flower

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#### **Words for Our Journey**

You had not imagined that something so empty could fill you to overflowing, and now you carry the knowledge like an awful treasure or like a child that curls itself within your heart: how the emptiness will bear forth a new world you cannot fathom

but on whose edge you stand. So why do you linger?

You have seen and so you are already blessed.

You have been seen, and so you are the blessing.

There is no other word you need.

There is simply to go and tell.
There is simply to begin.

[ianrichardson]

#### **Postlude**

#### **National Avenue Christian Church**

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Rev. Jenn Simmons, Lead Pastor | Ashley Quinn, Pastor for Public Theology

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 | 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
John and Susan Mihalevich, Elders

Lexi Amos, Chris Brown, Miles Pearson, Jennifer Potts, Deacons

# National Avenue Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)



Easter
The Rising Spirit of Justice
20 April 2025