



New Ark

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

ISSUE 12 | December 2023

“Children”



Image Description: Photo of a nativity scene with toy figurines: Deanna Troi as Mary, Cmdr. Riker as Joseph, 3 Darth Vaders as the wise men, Batman on the roof as an angel, T-Rex figurine, and assorted other characters.

The theme of Advent 2023 is “Children,” especially that they are individuals in their own right—not as an extension of their parents or society, but with their own hopes, fears, dreams, and needs. Who knew that more than Joseph and Mary?

Wherever there is instability, conflict, and violence, children suffer the most. We speak of children being the future, but what future is there if we do not provide safety, stability, acceptance, and

wholeness today? Each Sunday we will light Advent candles of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love as prayer that the birth of every child is a holy thing.

Here is the schedule of events for December. All worship services are hybrid.

- **Sunday, December 3:** First Sunday in Advent. Worship with Communion and Blue Advent elements, 9:30 a.m. Advent Party, Cookie Exchange, and Christmas Pop-Up Sale, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. in Wells Hall.
- **Wednesday, Dec. 6:** Wisdom Wednesday, 7:00 p.m. on Zoom. Topic: Inclusionary Zoning for Affordable Housing.
- **Sunday, Dec. 10:** Second Sunday in Advent. Worship at 9:30 a.m.
- **Saturday, Dec. 16:** Christmas Party at the home of Jim and Ellen Pletz, 1:00 – 6:00 p.m.
- **Sunday, Dec. 17:** Third Sunday in Advent. Worship at 9:30 a.m. Possible Christmas Play.
- **Tuesday, Dec. 19:** Beer and Carols, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Grain on Main, Newark, DE. We'll

eat dinner at 7:00 p.m., carol singing begins at 8:00 p.m.

- **Sunday, Dec. 24:** Fourth Sunday in Advent. Worship at 9:30 a.m.
- **Christmas Eve:** Soup and Sharing, 5:30 p.m. Worship with candlelight and carols, 7:00 p.m.
- **Sunday, Dec. 31:** New Year's Eve. Lessons and Carols, 9:30 a.m.

“Who would think that what was needed
To transform
and save the earth
Might not be a plan or army
Proud in purpose,
proved in worth?
Who would think,
despite derision,
That a child should
lead the way?
God surprises earth
with heaven,
Coming here
on Christmas Day.”

Merry Christmas, Church!

Cynthia

NEW ARK UCC

A Just Peace, Open & Affirming,
Earthwise Congregation

Rev. Cynthia Robinson, Pastor



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CONVENER'S CORNER

Gloria Noel, Convener

It is my wish that the joys of the Christmas season be with you today and always. As I celebrate the birth of Jesus I am in awe of the many ways our church reaches out to others with acts of kindness and generosity. Sundays in Advent are exceptionally special to me. I find them to be a time of prayer and reflection. Advent also provides me with additional times for community and church fellowship that renew my spirits and energies.

This year, on the first Sunday in Advent, December 3, we will have our traditional church Advent Party. This is the time we celebrate with our youth and adults. We will have a light lunch, decorate our tree, make Christmas crafts and have a cookie exchange. Plus, throughout the Advent period, our congregation will have additional times for fellowship and share their generosity with others in our community and church.



TOGETHER WOMEN RISE

Three December Projects:

Children of Vietnam, *Growth Through Learning*, and *Girls Education: Girls Health and Safety*

**Triple Your Money,
Triple Your Impact**

Because our usual 4th Friday meetings fall on holiday weekends in November and December, we will have a **combined November/December meeting on Friday, December 8**. All are welcome to join us for lunch at 12:30 p.m. followed by an abbreviated discussion of three projects.

In Vietnam, the **Children of Vietnam** has a project entitled "Empowering Foundations for Women and their Children" (EFWC). The mission of Children of Vietnam is to change the lives of impoverished, homeless and handicapped children in Vietnam by addressing the root causes of poverty for vulnerable populations including

impoverished single mothers with dependent children. EFWC is a special initiative to promote income sustainability for struggling single mothers. Together Women Rise will support 200 women and 12,000 girls through EFWC that will work to develop personal empowerment plans to lift families out of poverty via training, microloans, healthcare, and improved housing.

In Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, **Growth Through Learning** (GTL) provides educational scholarships for the girls and young women of East Africa, many of whom are orphans. The average cost to provide a scholarship is \$600/year. This amount keeps a young girl in school by funding school fees, uniforms, food, books, and supplies. A girl learns how to read and write in both English and her native language and obtains the skills necessary to teach her own children how to add and subtract, under-

stand ideas, and strive for a better future.

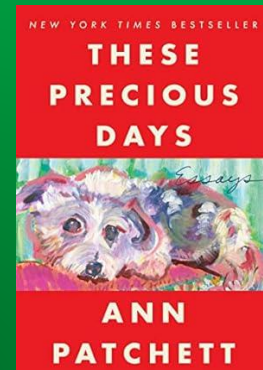
In Bangladesh, we learn about **Girls Education (GEP): Girls Health and Safety**, a program of Speak Up for the Poor, www.speakupforthepeer.org.



The Girls Education Program helps girls from impoverished families who are vulnerable to child marriage and child trafficking to stay in school all the way through college graduation. This both changes the trajectory of those girls' and young women's lives, and also elevates the status of girls and women in the culture as, for the first time, people see examples of girls and women who are staying in school through higher education, and becoming educated professionals.

BOOK GROUP

The NAUCC Book Group will meet at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 14 (note the change of date), at the home of Connie Cox. Brenda Toomey will be leading us in a discussion of the book, *These Precious Days* by Ann Patchett.



A FRIENDLY RE-MINDER from the PCRC



Monday is Pastor Cynthia's day off.

LECTIONARY READINGS

■ **December 3**

Isaiah 64:1-9
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
I Corinthians 1:3-9
Mark 13:24-37

■ **December 10**

Isaiah 40:1-11
Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
II Peter 3:8-15a
Mark 1:1-8

■ **December 17**

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
Psalm 126
I Thessalonians 5:16-24
John 1:6-8, 19-28

■ **December 24**

II Samuel 7:1-11, 16
Luke 1:46b-55
Romans 16:25-27
Luke 1:26-38

■ **December 31**

Isaiah 61:10—62:3
Psalm 148
Galatians 4:4-7
Luke 2:22-40



INCLUSIONARY ZONING

Join us on Wednesday, December 6, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom to learn more about **Inclusionary Zoning**. What is it? How would it assist the problem of affordable housing in Newark? Why is Newark's interfaith clergy group asking for support? Where has it worked? What is the opposition? Join us to learn more and find out how to take action.

ANNUAL REPORTS

It's the time of year again when we need to turn our attention toward preparing for our Annual Meeting which will take place in January 2024. With that in mind, each chairperson is requested to submit a report summarizing the activities conducted by their respective committee or task force during 2023. (If it would be helpful to see a previous Annual Report as you prepare this year's report, please email the church office at new-arkucc@verizon.net). Please note that the deadline to turn in annual reports is **noon on Friday, December 29, 2023**. Submitting your committee's report on or before the deadline will help to ensure the report is completed on time. The finished Annual Report will be distributed approximately two weeks before the Annual Meeting.



Below are suggestions to follow to help place our "**Old Crusty Earth**" onto a more positive, healthy track:

- Recycle all possible products
- Minimize use of paper products
- Use environmentally friendly paper towels, toilet paper, and facial tissues
- Use cloth bags at grocery stores and all other applicable stores
- Ban the use of single-use plastic bags from your lifestyle
- Use electric heat whenever possible
- Properly insulate your home—attic, walls, windows, etc.
- Buy an electric/hybrid/electric-hybrid-type vehicle when it is time for another car
- Install solar panels and have a carbon-neutral home
- Minimize driving, by planning/consolidating trips.

The above suggestions were shared in the December 2022 Newsletter and it seemed they were worthy of repeating as year-ending thoughts! May we all be a little more **GREEN** around this Christmas.

Have yourselves a **MERRY, MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!**





SHARING THE JOY!

*“Joy shared is doubled;
pain shared is halved.”*



Throughout the holidays during fellowship time after the service we will have information and someone from the Social Justice committee available to answer any questions you may have and accept any donations you want to share. We will be receiving donations until **Sunday, December 10**.

Let's **SHARE** the joy of gift-giving with those less fortunate than us during the Christmas holiday season.

There are 2 families in our congregation who are facing significant financial need these days. Up until **December 10**, we will be accepting financial donations to enable us to purchase gift cards to stores that these folks can get to and shop at. The gift cards will be purchased through our church's gift card program which also helps out our church budget.

We may also be getting some requests for several children who live at Exceptional Care for Children. These children have challenging disabilities so they cannot live at home. Some of them may not have family who visit them and share gifts. We can fill in and make sure these children get a gift that they would like on Christmas.

Visit us during Fellowship time after church services for more information or to donate. You can also contact Kathy Hyde at 302-367-3701 or thehydes99@gmail.com for information or to arrange a pick-up.

POP-UP SALE VENDORS

Vendors for the December 3 Pop-Up Christmas Sale are as follows:

- Jordan Sequin will have art and crocheted items.
- Emma Dressler will have pottery.
- Sarah Dressler will have her art and fabric items.
- John Micklos will have books he has authored.
- Frank Lum will have home-made jams and jellies.
- John Micklos will also be selling gift cards to grocery stores and other venues, proceeds to benefit the church.



CHRISTMAS FUND

Offering date: December 24, 2023

The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees. United Church of Christ congregations and members have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need. Thank you!



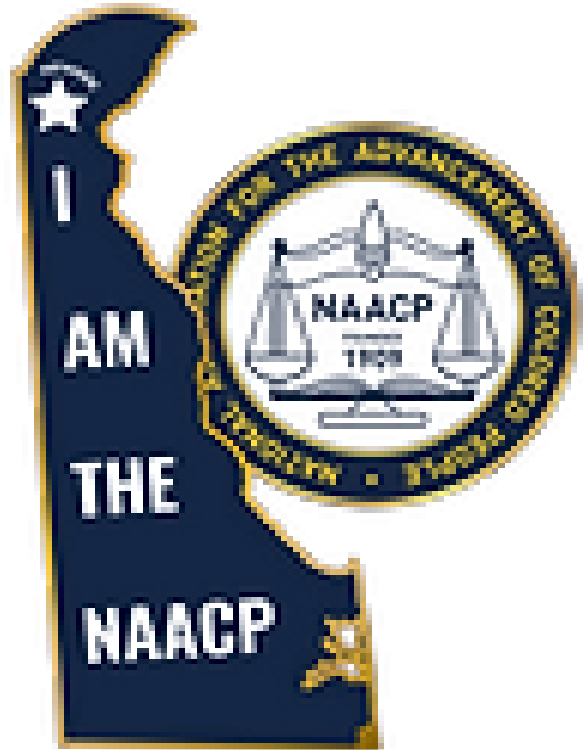
2023 BENEVOLENCE RECIPIENT: SCHOLARSHIP DONATIONS

This is the sixth in a series of articles to inform the congregation about each of the benevolence recipients that the Social Justice Committee has chosen for fiscal year 2023.

Three of the 2023 benevolence donations made in the name of the New Ark went to the **Newark NAACP Scholarship Fund, the Lenni Lenape Scholarship Fund, and the Nanticoke Scholarship Fund.** These marginalized groups were each given \$500 for their scholarship funds enabling youth to continue educational goals.

Nationally, the UCC and our local Central Atlantic Conference have passed numerous resolutions calling for a variety of “reparations.” While this particular word is a hot button word for many, we must wrestle with what it means to the New Ark in our environment. The Social Justice Committee has chosen to provide these scholarship funds as a way of assisting young citizens of these underrepresented groups.

Last year’s initial contributions from our Capital Fund Drive were able to be \$3,000 each. While this year’s contribution must be less, our hope is to continue our relationships with these groups as we move forward.



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

**January 2024
NEWSLETTER
DEADLINE
12:00 noon
on Friday,
December 22, 2023**

- 01 Meg Marcozzi
- 02 Gail Pasteris
- 03 Doug Hill
- 04 Asia Bhatti
- 05 Justin Bitter
- 06 Don Crary
- 07 John Tobin
- 11 Frank Huppe
- 12 Jon Cooper
- 13 Teresa Edge
- 13 Leslie Apple
- 17 Matthew Cox
- 20 Hannah Cooper
- 21 Cynthia A. Robinson
- 23 Linda Brasel
- 23 Nila Hill
- 27 Jim Bitter
- 27 Michael Cox
- 27 Rory Bell



If we've missed your special day, please contact the church office at (302) 737-4711 or email newarkucc@verizon.net.

INSTALLATION SERVICE for COURT BUCHANAN

 **New Castle Presbytery,**
in partnership with
Elsmere Presbyterian Church,
Invite you to welcome and celebrate
the Pastoral Call of
Rev. Courtland Buchanan
Sunday, December 3, 2023, 3:00 p.m.
Elsmere Presbyterian Church
606 New Road, Wilmington, DE 19805
[RSVP your participation \(in-person or virtually\)](#)

Join the Elsmere Presbyterian Church Facebook livestream,
or connect via QR code



Reception to follow

To Pastor Cynthia and the New Ark UCC:

Things have been going well as I have begun serving as Pastor at Elsmere Presbyterian Church. We are planning to celebrate the start of my ministry and it would be very meaningful to have any able to attend our worship service on Sunday, December 3, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. All are welcome!

Blessings,
Court Buchanan



Annual Advent Party

In keeping up with our tradition, our Advent Party will begin after the morning service on **December 3**. We will decorate for the Christmas holiday, create holiday craft items, and join in other activities. As in prior years local vendors (see list of vendors on p. 4) will be invited to join us. Contact Gloria Noel gnoel425@aol.com for additional information if needed. To indicate you are planning to attend the Advent Party, please let us know on this form: <https://bit.ly/2023CookieSwapAdventParty>.

Cookie Exchange



The New Ark is blessed to have talented bakers in the congregation. Put those talents to good use in our upcoming Holiday Cookie Swap which will be held on Sunday, **December 3**. The number that are interested in participating will determine the number of cookies to make (see info on the Google doc). The cookies will be packaged by the bakers to reduce handling. Bake one type of cookies and take home a variety!

To indicate you are planning to participate in the Cookie Exchange, please let us know on this form: <https://bit.ly/2023CookieSwapAdventParty>. You may also contact Ellen Pletz to be added to the list.

New Ark Adult Holiday Party

Host and Hostess: Jim and Ellen Pletz, 121 Hitching Post Drive, Wilmington, DE 19803

We hope you can join us on **December 16, 1:00-6:00 p.m.**, for a holiday party at our home. Please use the following link to note your attendance as well as the food/beverage you will be bringing to share. Since parking is limited in our driveway and on our street, please plan to carpool with other attendees if possible.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1So0aebzXhkDEU-SfTuBgzO9UoN4OO4kKiqoQsEzz27Y/edit>

Christmas Eve Soup Supper

Our Christmas Eve Soup Supper, one of the many holiday traditions of the New Ark, will begin at 5:30 p.m. Make a pot of soup or bring some bread to church to have supper before the Christmas Eve service at 7:00 p.m. To let us know you are coming and what you are bringing, please sign up at the following link:

<https://bit.ly/2023ChristmasEveSoupSupper>. Bring your family and friends for this easy meal. Childcare will be available for the dinner and the 7:00 Christmas Eve service.



ON BEHALF OF FRIENDSHIP HOUSE

Thank You

FOR YOUR LOVING SUPPORT

Dear NewArk United Church of Christ,

Thank you so much for assembling and delivering Thanksgiving Baskets to members of our community! You put a smile on people's faces this holiday season and for that we are grateful. Your continued support means so much to us and we wish your congregation a happy holiday!

ps. thanks for coordinating
Peppit!

Best regards,
Kristen Reisor



*Wishing you
a beautiful
holiday
season!*

CODE PURPLE HAS BEGUN!

Newark's United Methodist Church hosted 14 guests on November 28 when the temperature dropped to the low 20's and the wind chill dropped to the low teens. Please help support this ministry by volunteering during the nights that our church will be hosting this winter.

A Code Purple night is called by the Newark Empowerment Center when outside air temperatures become life-threatening (fall below 20 degrees or a wind chill below 15 degrees). A group of five Newark churches take turns opening their doors to provide overnight shelter and a hot meal to the homeless in our community.

New Ark UCC will be one of five churches participating in Code Purple again this year. We will be second in rotation, our usual spot. UD will again provide the meals and we will be going back to the pre-Covid buffet style service with communal dining. NEC will have staff assigned from 6:00 p.m.-6:00 a.m. for check-in, check-out, and overnight monitoring, but we will need to provide one male and one female volunteer to be present as well. All guests will need to preregister with NEC to learn the location; locations will not be publicized and volunteers should not share the location with others. Laundry will be arranged by NEC, process TBD.

Please let me know if you would be willing to help out this year (December thru March). You will be volunteering for

specific shifts. The shifts and tasks that need to be staffed are as follows:

- **Set up; 5:00-6:00 p.m.**
This is prior to guest arrival and no guest contact is required. This is a one-hour time commitment on the NAUCC code purple night and involves setting up Wells Hall with mattresses and bedding, preparing the dining area, and making coffee.
- **Check-in and hospitality, 6:00-8:00 p.m.**
Assist the NEC staff person with guest check-in, set up the meal provided by UD, handle after diner clean-up, and provide hospitality.
- **Monitor Assistant (two shifts: after dinner from 8:00-11:59 p.m. and overnight from 12:00-6:00 a.m.)**
Church volunteer to aid NEC staff person as needed.

Please let me know if you are interested in participating in this mission, all the shifts you are willing to do this season, and whether you would be willing to do one or more of these shifts at another Code Purple church if they are in need of volunteers.

Volunteers will be notified when a Code Purple night is about to be declared, and asked to provide their availability for that specific night. Bob Pasteris and Connie Cox will be co-coordinators and will assemble that night's crew from those that responded. Most communication will be via email, so please provide an email address along with your phone number.

Thank you for your help and continued support in this

ministry. If you need more information about this ministry, please Bob Pasteris (bpasteris@comcast.net).

SUPPORT the CHURCH by BUYING GIFT CARDS

It's the holiday season, which means time for fun, food, and gifts. As you plan holiday meal prep, remember you can purchase grocery gift cards and the church will receive 5 percent of your purchase. We have grocery gift cards for Acme, Shop Rite, Giant, Food Lion, and Zingo's.

You can also do gift shopping through the Raise Right program. The church earns anywhere from 2 percent to 16 percent for selling gift cards to a wide variety of merchants—from clothing stores to restaurants to gas stations to home improvement stores. There are literally dozens of options. Here are just a few popular brands: **LL Bean**, 16 percent; **Wawa**, 2 percent; **Amazon**, 2 percent; **Home Depot** and **Lowe's**, 4 percent; **Outback**, 10 percent; **Applebee's**, 8 percent; **Royal Farms**, 4 percent, **Kohl's**, 7 percent; and **Starbucks**, 7 percent.

Explore the options here, <https://www.raiseright.com/brands>, or get in touch with John Micklos at 302-383-7698 or jjmj197@comcast.net to discuss possibilities. The plan is to place one big order through the church's account on Monday, December 4 so that cards can be brought to church on Sunday, December 11, in plenty of time for the holidays.

Thank you for supporting your church by eating and shopping!

DECEMBER 2023 CALENDAR

Church office, Central Atlantic Conference, NAUCC meetings/events, Other community Events, Rentals

Dec 2023 (Eastern Time - New York)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26 8:45am - Choir Practice (B) 9:30am - Worship 2pm - Greater Grace (B)	27 PASSOVER'S DAY OFF 10am - Office Open 12pm - NL Deadline 7pm - AI-Anon (L)	28 9:30pm - Kinkajuli - Martial Arts (H) 8:30pm - Worship Planning	29 PASSOVER'S DAY OFF 10am - Office Open 12pm - Com. Office Hrs. (online) 3pm - Star Foundation (B,W) 6:30pm - DE Zen (S) @ Sanctuary 7pm - New Ark Meet Up (online)	30 5:45pm - Min. of Repentance & Holiness	1 7am - System 4 Cleaning 10am - Office Open 1:30pm - Roofing Quote (David K) 6:30pm - Newark OA (L)	2 8:30am - Kinkajuli - Martial Arts (H) 9pm - Grail of the Birch Moon (W)
3 8:45am - Choir Practice (B) 9:30am - Communion/Worship 10:30am - Coffee Hour 10:45am - Advent Party/Cookies 10:45am - Pop-Up Sale (W) 2pm - Greater Grace (B) @ Sanctuary	4 PASSOVER'S DAY OFF 10am - Office Open 7pm - AI-Anon (L)	5 9:30pm - Kinkajuli - Martial Arts (H) 8:30pm - Membership Growth Com. 8:30pm - Social Justice (online)	6 10am - Office Open 12pm - Com. Office Hrs. (online) 6:30pm - DE Zen (S) @ Sanctuary 7pm - Wisdom Wed. (online)	7 5:45pm - Min. of Repentance & Holiness	8 7am - System 4 Cleaning 10am - Office Open 12:30pm - Together Women Rise (W) 6:30pm - Newark OA (L)	9 8:30am - Kinkajuli - Martial Arts (H) 1pm - Greater Grace (W)
10 Wishes for Joy 8:45am - Choir Practice (B) 9:30am - Worship 10:30am - Virtual Fellowship 2pm - Greater Grace (B)	11 PASSOVER'S DAY OFF 10am - Office Open 7pm - AI-Anon (L)	12 9:30pm - Kinkajuli - Martial Arts (H) 8:30pm - Worship Planning	13 10am - Office Open 12pm - Com. Office Hrs. (online) 6:30pm - DE Zen (S) @ Sanctuary 7pm - New Ark Meet Up (online)	14 2pm - Book Group (offline) 5:30pm - Finance C. (online) @ Lounge 6:45pm - Min. of Repentance & Holiness 7pm - Worship C. Mtg (online)	15 7am - System 4 Cleaning 10am - Office Open 11am - Hope Dining Room (offline) 6:30pm - Newark OA (L)	16 8:30am - Kinkajuli - Martial Arts (H) 1pm - Adult Holiday Party (offline)
17 8:45am - Choir Practice (B) 9:30am - Worship 10:30am - Virtual Fellowship	18 PASSOVER'S DAY OFF 10am - Office Open 7pm - AI-Anon (L)	19 9:30pm - Kinkajuli - Martial Arts (H) 7pm - Beer & Carols (offline)	20 10am - Office Open 12pm - Com. Office Hrs. (online) 4:30pm - Grail's Friends 6:30pm - DE Zen (S) @ Sanctuary 7pm - New Ark Meet Up (online)	21 2pm - Book Group @ off site 5:45pm - Min. of Repentance & Holiness 6:30pm - Coord. Com.	22 7am - System 4 Cleaning 10am - Office Open 12pm - Jan. NL Deadline 6:30pm - Newark OA (L)	23 8:30am - Kinkajuli - Martial Arts (H)
24 8:45am - Choir Practice (B) 9:30am - Worship 10:30am - Virtual Fellowship 5:30pm - Soup Supper (W) 7pm - Christmas Eve Service	25 PASSOVER'S DAY OFF 10am - Office Open 12pm - NL Deadline 7pm - AI-Anon (L)	26 9:30pm - Kinkajuli - Martial Arts (H) 8:30pm - Worship Planning	27 10am - Office Open 12pm - Com. Office Hrs. (online) 6:30pm - DE Zen (S) @ Sanctuary 7pm - New Ark Meet Up (online)	28 5:45pm - Min. of Repentance & Holiness	29 7am - System 4 Cleaning 10am - Office Open 12pm - Annual Report Deadline 6:30pm - Newark OA (L)	30 8:30am - Kinkajuli - Martial Arts (H) 12:30pm - DE Zen Retreat Day (B)
31 8:45am - Choir Practice (B) 9:30am - Lessons & Carols	1 PASSOVER'S DAY OFF 10am - Office Open 7pm - AI-Anon (L)	2 9:30pm - Kinkajuli - Martial Arts (H) 8:30pm - Membership Growth Com. 8:30pm - Social Justice (online)	3 10am - Office Open 12pm - Com. Office Hrs. (online) 6:30pm - DE Zen (S) @ Sanctuary 7pm - New Ark Meet Up (online)	4 5:45pm - Min. of Repentance & Holiness	5 7am - System 4 Cleaning 10am - Office Open 6:30pm - Newark OA (L)	6 8:30am - Kinkajuli - Martial Arts (W) 12:30pm - CW Ministries (B)