



New Ark

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

ISSUE 4 | April 2024

“New Life and Sabbath”



Image Description: The image is of a cloudy sky with rainbow-colored sunbeams streaming from a heart-shaped break in the clouds.

I am amazed at how quickly three months flew by! My time with you as your sabbatical pastor was both memorable and delightful. Su and I want to thank you sincerely for your warm embrace of us into your church family, including the prayerful affection you displayed for Su and me during the weeks in January when she had cataract surgery on both eyes and,

most recently, for my mother as she transitioned into hospice care.

I carry with me many fond memories of worship, fellowship, laughter, meeting and sharing together with you. I will carry especially fond memories of relating with your enthusiastic and energetic children. It always warms my soul when I witness children happy in church! Most of all I have been blessed by New Ark’s commitment to progressive mission and theology that is not afraid to go against the grain of Christian tradition which is increasingly out of step with our times.

As I think of the New Ark welcoming Cynthia back from sabbatical, my mind drifts to the first creation story in Genesis. After creating humans on the sixth day, on the seventh day God rests, and blesses it as Sabbath (The Hebrew word for Sabbath—*shabbat*—is derived from the word for rest—*shavat*). Think about it, the first day of humanity’s life was resting with God. The shape and scope of what their life together would

become unfolded from their Sabbath rest. In that first *shavat* the seed of their new life together took root and germinated, before the humans began any work or mission on their part.

In that sense, the New Ark United Church of Christ—congregation and pastor—began a new life on January 1 this year with the commencement of the sabbatical. What will unfold in the weeks, months, and years ahead has already begun in this sacred time of *shavat* in God. Consequently, this is a time of challenge to look forward more than you look backward; to envision the way things can be more than the way things have been.

I wish you wisdom, joy, grace, and strength for the journey ahead unfolding the new life that you now have together. Thank you, for inviting me to be a part of your sabbatical time!

Peace,

Doug

NEW ARK UCC

A Just Peace, Open & Affirming,
Earthwise Congregation

Rev. Cynthia Robinson, Pastor



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CONVENER'S CORNER

Jenny Greenzweig, Convener

Spring ... I can't help smiling. The changing of seasons, early spring and fall, are my favorite times of the year. It's hard to believe that, as you read this newsletter, we will have celebrated our time with Pastor Doug and Su and will have welcomed back Pastor Cynthia. I look forward to hearing more about Cynthia's travels and her physical and spiritual renewal during her Sabbatical.

As we move forward into spring, our Christian Education program has had a revival, and volunteers are meeting with the children on the second and fourth Sundays of each month. Grocery card sales continue to be an easy way to donate five percent to the church, so please make a renewed effort to purchase these. Workdays have been scheduled—and rescheduled—for inside and outside the building. March certainly did not leave us like a lamb! So much rain!

I hope to see as many of you as can make it to our next Quarterly Meeting on April 28!

HELP US CELEBRATE on JUNE 23



On **Sunday, June 23**, the New Ark United Church of Christ will celebrate its 45th anniversary! We are planning a special service followed by a potluck lunch. (We realize that the actual anniversary is at the beginning of July, but we didn't want to compete with people's 4th of July travel.) Watch for further details in the May and June newsletters.



April 26, 2024 at 12:30 p.m.

April Project: Girls in Conservation

"Girls in Conservation" is a project in Rwanda of the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund. The Girls in Conservation program tackles education inequalities in Rwanda, gives girls opportunities outside the classroom, and promotes careers in conservation. This initiative selects aspiring female students in the secondary schools and provides them with life skills and practical conservation lessons; a female mentor living and working around Volcanoes National Park (VNP) in Rwanda; and a scholarship to continue their advanced level education in government-awarded boarding schools around Rwanda.



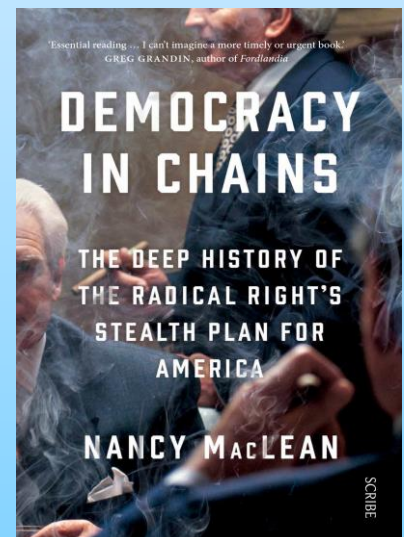
The goal of this program is to increase school attendance, educational attainment, and paid opportunities for post-secondary school.



Join us for lunch at 12:30 followed by information shared by Lynn Boulter about this project empowering Rwandan girls.

BOOK GROUP

The NAUCC Book Group will meet at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 18, at the home of Mary Jo Williams. A discussion of the book, *Democracy in Chains*, by Nancy MacLean, will be led by Brenda Toomey.



**A FRIENDLY
REMINDER
from the PCRC**



**Monday is
Pastor Cynthia's
day off.
Kindly be respectful!**

**LECTIONARY
READINGS**

■ **April 7**

Acts 4:32-35
Psalm 133
I John 1:1—2:2
John 20:19-31

■ **April 14**

Acts 3:12-19
Psalm 4
I John 3:1-7
Luke 24:36b-48

■ **April 21**

Acts 4:5-12
Psalm 23
I John 3:16-24
John 10:11-18

■ **April 28**

Acts 8:26-40
Psalm 22:25-31
I John 4:7-21
John 15:1-8



April 3, 7:00 p.m.

We will look at clips from a webinar entitled **“The WHITE in White Christian Nationalism”** featuring Dr. Jemar Tisby and Dr. Randall Balmer whose research is in this area. At the most recent Central Atlantic Conference meeting, our Conference Minister, Rev. Freeman Palmer, stated that one of our greatest challenges is combatting Christian Nationalism.

Join us to learn more at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/857182260381?pwd=Sm5ORlhSZHI2dnRk->

**THANK YOU from
Newark Area Welfare
Committee**



Thank you for your generous donations to the Newark Area Welfare Committee (NAWC). We appreciate your support, and your donation directly enables our organization to assist Newark families in crisis.

Our all-volunteer organization has been actively assisting needy families for more than 90 years. Your assistance and interest in NAWC are deeply appreciated. Thanks to donations like yours, we can join together to put our motto, “Neighbors Helping Neighbors,” into action.

**BENEVOLENCE
RECIPIENTS NEEDED**

Each year, the Social Justice Committee chooses small, local organizations to whom our NAUCC benevolence funds could make a difference. We try to distribute our \$6000 among those who work for peace and justice, hunger, housing, and the environment. We also try to balance those who work to alleviate immediate needs and those who work for systemic change.

If you are aware of a 501c3 or other non-profit group that you would like to have considered as a benevolence recipient, please contact any member of the Social Justice Committee (Lynn Boulter, Don Crary, Peggy Dillner, Pat Eber, Ron Hartman, Kathy Hyde, Jean Kutcher, Mike Lonergan, Bob Pasteris, and Gail Pasteris). We will be making our decisions during May and June.

EmPOWER MARYLAND

EmPOWER Maryland, MD State’s energy efficiency program, has been tremendously successful in increasing efficiency, reducing energy use and generation, and lowering utility bills. For a second year in a row, a bill to strengthen EmPOWER has passed the House of Delegates. Now HB 864, EmPOWER Maryland Energy Efficiency Act of 2024, is in the Maryland Senate and your Senators need to hear from you now.

[Ask your Maryland State Senator to update and improve EmPOWER Maryland to conserve more energy, lower energy bills, and reduce pollution that harms our health and planet!](#) Learn more [here](#).

—Chesapeake Assn. News Digest



HUMAN COMPOSTING

A bill allowing human composting in Delaware now waits on Gov. John Carney's desk after the Delaware Senate gave final approval for the alternative funeral practice.

House Bill 162, an effort to allow human composting in the First State, received near-unanimous approval in the state House when it passed with a vote of 37-2 on January 23. From there, it awaited consideration in the Senate until it was granted a passing vote of 14-7 on March 21.

What is House Bill 162?

House Bill 162 was introduced by Rep. Sean Lynn, a Democrat in District 31 in Dover, and seeks to add Delaware to the growing list of states offering human composting, also known as natural or organic reduction, as a funerary practice.

What is Human Composting?

Burial or cremation are the common ways human remains are disposed of. Human composting offers an alternative by allowing the human body to decompose in a "gentle, respectful process that accelerates the decomposition of human remains to soil," according to a bill summary on the Delaware General Assembly website.

The process uses large vessels to hold human remains together with wood chips, straw, or other natural materials for about 30 days, during which the human remains and organic materials are mixed with warm air and periodically turned. This results in the body breaking down until only a soil material remains, which can then be given to the deceased's family.

According to the bill proposal, natural organic reduction is considered to be more eco-friendly than cremation, as the practice does not use formaldehyde or release carbon dioxide and mercury into the atmosphere and uses one-eighth of the energy of cremation.

HB 162 passed with an amendment stating that there are restrictions on any remains from a person who had or is suspected of having a viral or other health risk that the Delaware Division of Public Health determines may not be eliminated during the human composting process. The bill also states that remains cannot be accepted for the practice if a person died due to a radiological incident or if their body contains radioactive implants.

Human Composting is Not New

Lynn, along with the bill's other sponsors, worked with the framework provided by the other seven states allowing human composting to ensure Delaware's allowance of natural organic reduction would be as safe and successful as possible.

Part of the team guiding Delaware's plans for human composting is Haley Morris of Earth Funeral, a licensed natural

organic reduction provider in Washington State, the first state to legalize human composting in 2019.

Morris previously told Delaware Online/The News Journal that she believes human composting will continue to gain interest across the country as more people reflect on how they can be more sustainable, even beyond the end of their lives.

"This doesn't have to be the option for everyone; it just needs to be available for everyone," she said. "I just think there's also this growing interest, and potentially even movement, in this option to return your body to the earth and your final act on earth doing good for the earth, and I think this resonates for a lot of people."

What is Next for HB 162?

After a passing vote in the Delaware House, Senate Health & Social Services Committee and Senate, HB 162 is ready for governor action and waits on Carney's desk for his final signature.

The bill will take effect upon being signed into law, after which state officials have one year to develop Delaware's human composting regulations.

If signed by Carney, Delaware would become the eighth state in the nation to allow human composting, joining Washington, Colorado, Oregon, Vermont, California, New York, and Nevada.

—*Wilmington News Journal*



APRIL BIRTHDAYS

**MAY 2024
NEWSLETTER
DEADLINE**

12:00 noon
on Monday,
April 22, 2024

- 07 Heather Suchanec-Cooper
- 14 Erik Dressler
- 18 Doug Chase
- 24 Ellen Pletz
- 25 Gloria Noel
- 27 Emma Dressler
- 27 Marcia Rahn
- 27 Terri Hamm Harrison



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



VAISAKHI INVITATION

Several DE state legislators have volunteered to actively expand their cultural horizons on April 14 by performing a traditional Indian dance called Bhangra. Their participation will help mark Vaisakhi, one of the most important religious and cultural days for the 30 million Sikhs worldwide. Bhangra and Bollywood dance teams will perform on the stage from 3:00-5:00 p.m., and the legislators' performance will be close to 4:30 p.m. It should be a lively and fun event.

Bhangra is an exciting dance form from the Punjab region of India featuring spirited movements, fast rhythms and colorful costumes. Legislators making their debut include Senate Majority Leader Bryan Townsend, Representative Sophie Phillips, Senate Majority Whip Elizabeth "Tizzy" Lockman, Senator Stephanie Hansen, Senator Laura Sturgeon, Representative Sherry Dorsey Walker, and Representative Paul Baumbach. A Legislative Aide, Emy Diaz, will also be part of their team.

This year's celebration will start with religious ceremonies in the morning at the Sikh Center of Delaware located at 1107 S. Dupont Hwy., New Castle, DE 19720, followed by Langar (a free Indian vegetarian meal for everyone) at 1:00 p.m. Free sweets, snacks, and tea will be offered all day.

For a sample of Bhangra, see the link below.

Performance starts at 0:59)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KOD16_KyOUk (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KOD16_KyOUk).



Brain-WISE: **Brain Wellness, Information, Support, and Empowerment**

Brain-WISE sessions will take place on six consecutive Mondays in April and May—04/01/24 through 05/06/24, from 9:30-11:00 a.m. at the Newark Senior Center, Classrooms 1 and 2.

About 40 percent of cases of dementia could be delayed or prevented by reducing modifiable risk factors and living a brain-healthy lifestyle. Unfortunately, there is a lot of "snake oil" marketed to older adults and it is difficult to discern what is backed by scientific evidence.

Cont'd on p. 6

JOHNSON v. GRANTS PASS

On April 22nd 2024, the Supreme Court of the United States will hear the case of Johnson v. Grants Pass. This sets the stage for the most significant Supreme Court case about the rights of homeless people in decades. At its core, this case will decide whether cities are allowed to punish people for things like sleeping outside with a pillow or blanket, even when there are no safe shelter options.

Johnson v. Grants Pass is a court case originally filed in 2018 that determined it is cruel and unusual punishment to arrest or ticket people for sleeping outside when they have no other safe place to go. The case started in Grants Pass, Oregon when the city began issuing tickets to people sleeping in public, even when there were not enough safe, accessible shelter beds.

Grants Pass, like many cities in America, is thousands of housing units short of what is needed. That shortfall will not be solved by putting more people in jail or issuing more tickets. The solution to homelessness is safe, decent, and affordable housing for everybody.

The National Homeless Law Center which leads the Housing Not Handcuffs Campaign is asking housing advocates within a 3-hour radius of DC to come to Washington clarifying for the legislators that discrimination against people who are sitting, lying down, and/or standing in public space has no place in the

United States. They are asking people to fill out this questionnaire to let them know how many people need the bus: <https://actnow.io/bCzIHnY>.

In addition, they are asking us to please sign their petition to affirm the right to shelter as opposed to criminalization. Petition link: https://actionnetwork.org/forms/sign-the-petition-to-the-supreme-court-affirm-the-right-to-adequate-shelter?source=direct_link&referrer=group-national-coalition-for-the-homeless".

If you would like additional information as it is received, please email Mike Lonergan at pastormikelonergan@gmail.com.

DAY for HOUSING

The Housing Alliance Delaware **Day for Housing** (May 9) is coming up and needs our support. Day for Housing is an opportunity to be a visible witness by meeting with legislators and advocating for solutions to the affordable housing crisis in Delaware.

Why is our witness needed in Dover?

- According to the Delaware State Housing Authority, we are short about 20,000 units for low-income renters.
- The largest rising group of homeless are people over the age of 65
- One fourth of homeless folk in DE are under the age of 18.

To help in the planning HAD is asking those attending to register and attend one-hour webinars on May 2 (12:0 to 1:00)

and May 7 (11:00 to 12:00). Each registrant will receive a free Food Truck Meal during the event. If you are interested in attending, you can register here: <https://www.housingalliance.org/about-5>.

Brain-WISE, *cont'd from p. 5*

Furthermore, changing health behaviors is difficult and requires counseling and support. The Brain Wellness Information, Support, and Empowerment (Brain-WISE) program is a 6-module, group-based "boot camp" to teach older adults about brain health and help them make a plan to improve and sustain brain health in aging. To read an article about the program, click [HERE](#).

Because this is a relatively new program, we want to make sure that it is accomplishing its goals and that participants are satisfied with it. We will ask participants:

- to complete brief health questionnaires before the program, immediately after the program, and again three months later.
- to complete brief satisfaction surveys after each session.
- for permission to use de-identified questionnaire data for research purposes (optional).

To ask questions and to RSVP for the program, email Kimberly Van Buren at kvan@udel.edu.





3rd Annual Presidential
**SYMPOSIUM AND TEACH-IN ON
SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

April 16, 6-8:30 PM. REGISTER 

Trabant Student Center, Multipurpose Room C, University of Delaware, Garage Parking at 17 W Main St, Newark, DE 19716



Featuring Panel Discussions about the Natural Environment...



Dr. Doug Tallamy
UD Entomology
Author of "Bringing Nature Home"



Collin O'Mara
President and CEO
National Wildlife Federal



Alan Horowitz
VP of Sustainability
Aramark Corporation
Food and Dining



Nora Lucas
Masters Student, UD
Water, Environmental
Justice, and Political
Ecology

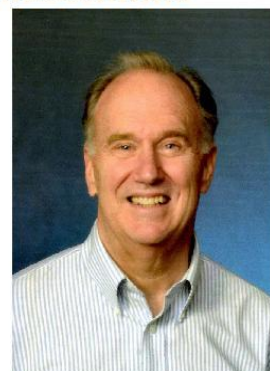
... and the Built Environment



Sarita Sen
UD Architect
Sustainable Design
Facilitator



Drew Slater
Executive Director
Energize Delaware

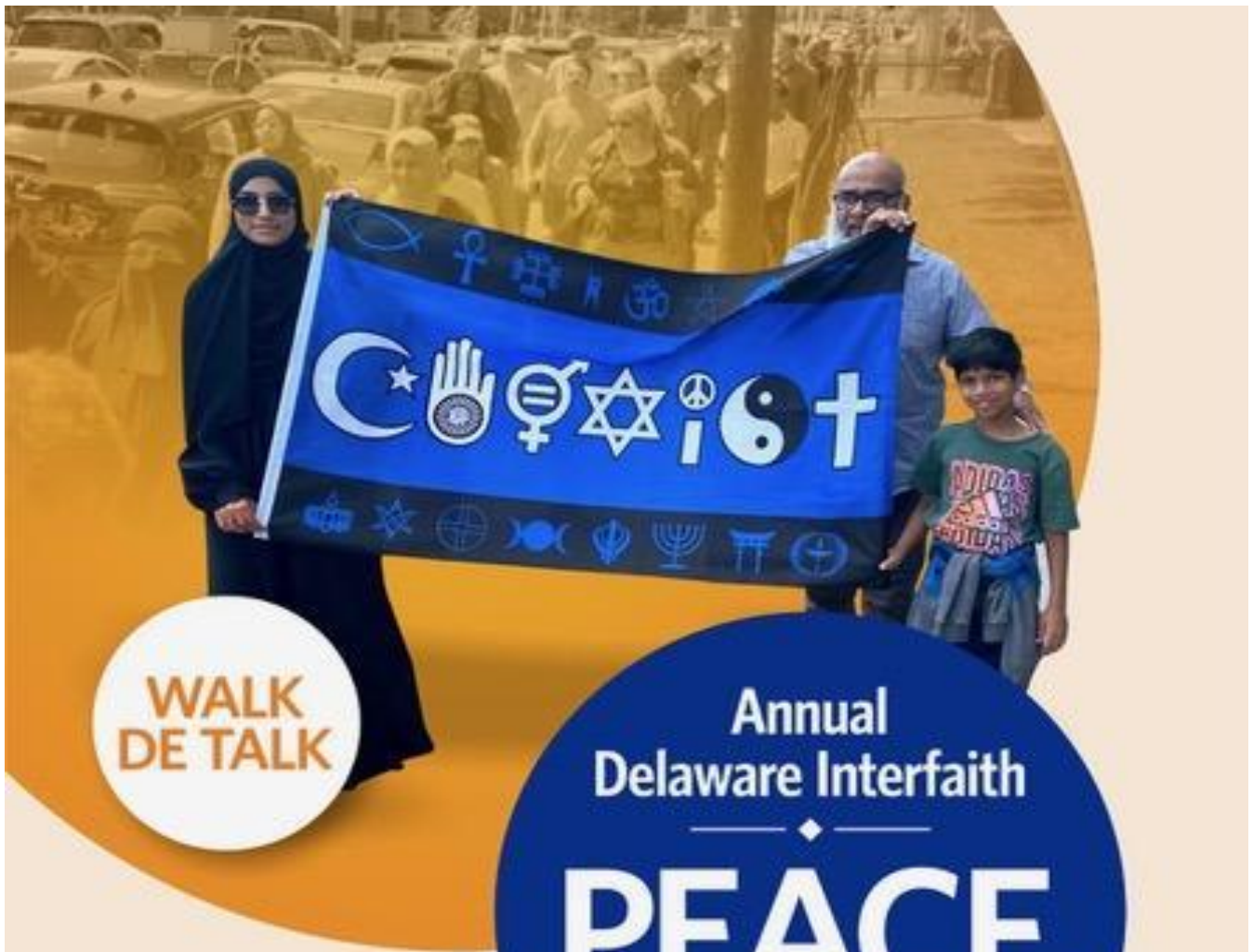


Jamie Kegerise
Member, Newark
Cohousing Organization



Bradie Crandall
PhD Candidate, UD
CO2, Climate Change, &
Engineering Solutions

SNACKS and educational tables from Aramark, New Castle County Sustainability, Newark Cohousing, Energize Delaware, Resilient and Sustainable Communities League, Newark Interfaith Green Team, and more...



**WALK
DE TALK**

Annual
Delaware Interfaith
**PEACE
WALK**

Sunday,
April 21, 2024
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Old College Entrance,
E. Main Street, Newark, DE



Register at:
ipw24.eventbrite.com



EASTER SUNDAY 2024



Thank you to those who contributed flowers and helped to create this year's cross.



Doug Griffin and Su Frey



Thanking the Rev. Dr. Douglas Griffin for his service at the New Ark United Church of Christ

APRIL 2024 CALENDAR

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

Apr 2024 (Eastern Time - New York)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
8:45am - Choir Practice (B) 9:30am - Worship	9:30am - Heal in Community (H) 10am - Office Open 10am - STAR Foundation 7pm - AI-Anon (L)	9:30pm - Kinkajou - Martial Arts (M) 8:30pm - Membership Growth Com. 8:30pm - Social Justice (online)	10am - Office Open 10am - STAR Foundation 8:30pm - DE Zan (B) @ Sanctuary 7pm - New Ark Meet Up (online)	8:45pm - Min. of Repentance & Holiness	7am - System 4 Cleaning 10am - Office Open 10am - STAR Foundation 8:30pm - Newark OA (L)	8:30am - Kinkajou - Martial Arts (M) 12:30pm - LCWC (B)
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
8:45am - Choir Practice (B) 9:30am - Communion 9:30am - Worship 10:20am - Coffee Hour 2pm - Greater Grace (B) @ Sanctuary	9:30am - Heal in Community (H) 10am - Office Open 10am - STAR Foundation 7pm - AI-Anon (L)	9:30pm - Kinkajou - Martial Arts (M)	10am - Office Open 10am - STAR Foundation 8:30pm - DE Zan (B) @ Sanctuary 8:30pm - Worship Planning 7pm - New Ark Meet Up (online)	8:30pm - Finance C. (online) @ Lounge 8:45pm - Min. of Repentance & Holiness 7pm - Worship C. Mtg (online)	7am - System 4 Cleaning 10am - Office Open 10am - STAR Foundation 8:30pm - Newark OA (L)	8:30am - Kinkajou - Martial Arts (M) 1pm - Greater Grace (M)
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
8:45am - Choir Practice (B) 9:30am - Worship 10:30am - Virtual Fellowship 2pm - Greater Grace (B)	9:30am - Heal in Community (H) 10am - Office Open 10am - STAR Foundation 7pm - AI-Anon (L)	9:30pm - Kinkajou - Martial Arts (M) 8:30pm - Coord. Com.	10am - Office Open 10am - STAR Foundation 8:30pm - DE Zan (B) @ Sanctuary 7pm - New Ark Meet Up (online)	2pm - Book Group @ off site 8:45pm - Min. of Repentance & Holiness	7am - System 4 Cleaning 10am - Office Open 10am - STAR Foundation 11am - Hope Dining Room (offsite) 8pm - Couples for Christ (M, K) 8:30pm - Newark OA (L)	8:30am - Kinkajou - Martial Arts (M) 12:30pm - LCWC (B)
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
8:45am - Choir Practice (B) 9:30am - Worship 10:30am - Virtual Fellowship 1pm - Interfaith Peace Walk (Parking)	9:30am - Heal in Community (H) 10am - Office Open 10am - STAR Foundation 12pm - NL Deadline 7pm - AI-Anon (L)	9:30pm - Kinkajou - Martial Arts (M)	10am - Office Open 10am - STAR Foundation 8:30pm - DE Zan (B) @ Sanctuary 8:30pm - Worship Planning 7pm - New Ark Meet Up (online)	8:45pm - Min. of Repentance & Holiness	7am - System 4 Cleaning 10am - Office Open 10am - STAR Foundation 12:30pm - Together Women Rise (W) 8pm - Couples for Christ 8:30pm - Newark OA (L)	8:30am - Kinkajou - Martial Arts (M) 12:30pm - LCWC (B)
28	29	30	1	2	3	4
8:45am - Choir Practice (B) 9:30am - Worship 10:30am - Virtual Fellowship 2pm - Greater Grace (B)	9:30am - Heal in Community (H) 10am - Office Open 10am - STAR Foundation 7pm - AI-Anon (L)	9:30pm - Kinkajou - Martial Arts (M)	10am - Office Open 10am - STAR Foundation 8:30pm - DE Zan (B) @ Sanctuary 7pm - New Ark Meet Up (online)	8:45pm - Min. of Repentance & Holiness	7am - System 4 Cleaning 10am - Office Open 10am - STAR Foundation 8:30pm - Newark OA (L)	8:30am - Kinkajou - Martial Arts (M) 12:30pm - LCWC (B)