

CHAPEL CHATTER

To make disciples of Jesus Christ and impact

the community through faith through faith in action.



Pastor's Note

Warm greetings in the Name of our Risen Savior!

This month of April begins right in the middle of the Holy Week where we remember Jesus' last moments on Maundy Thursday with His disciples, on the last night before His betrayal, abandonment and arrest. We remember the darkness of the first Good Friday— the eeriness of that day when the earth trembled and shook and the disciples were hiding. On the first Easter, the only place to begin is in the early morning darkness with Mary Magdalene, weeping beside an empty tomb. For her, it was certainly “a ghastly time to be alive!”

“This is certainly a ghastly time to be alive.” It's the opening sentence in a sermon [Harry Emerson Fosdick](#) (1878-1969) preached at [The Riverside Church](#) in New York City during World War II. In one surprisingly honest sentence, he connected with the deepest feelings of the people who listened to his words in the congregation and across the nation. The words of Fosdick reverberate today given our sobering current realities— ongoing war in the Middle East, high price of commodities, violence and racism, threat of AI, economic injustice and the groaning of creation. Many people would say this is “a ghastly time to be alive.”

But as Easter people, Good Friday was not the end of the story! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Easter is coming! The end of the story is Christ's victory over death, evil, hatred and prejudice. The Bible affirms, *"You have been born anew into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."* (1 Peter 1:3) The same power of God that raised Jesus Christ from the grave empowers otherwise ordinary people to live in an extraordinary way with extraordinary hope for the future. In other words, with Christ's resurrection, it was "a great time to be alive!"

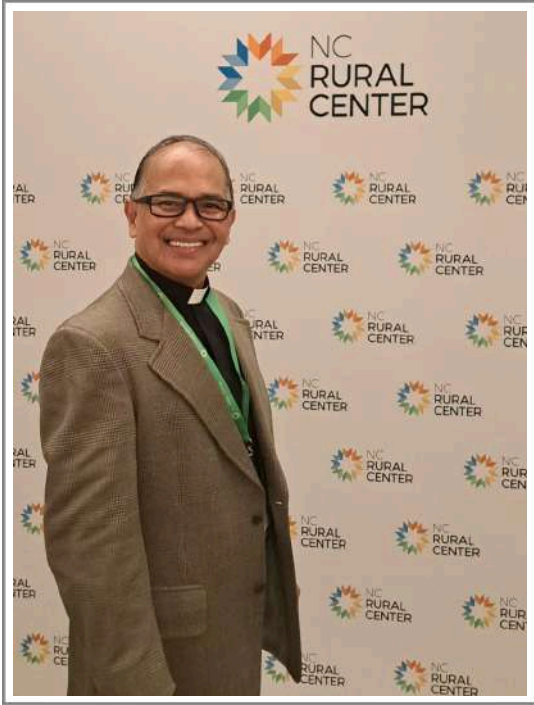
Fosdick didn't leave his listeners where he found them. He went on to declare, "Nevertheless, this is a great time to be alive, and alike the personal and the public issues of it depend on whether we see that." Those words became the title of his widely read book, "A Great Time to Be Alive". He concluded: *"This is a great time for spiritual adequacy, for wisdom and courage to face and create momentous change, for realistic appraisal of our false relances, and for profound conviction about God and [people] and the kingdom of righteousness on earth."*

Therefore, Easter season challenges us not to fall into the trap of putting aside the message of Christ's resurrection until next spring. There's a tendency to view Easter as a one-time special event. As one preacher says, "the resurrection will fade into the white noise of our lives, making no discernible impact." Easter is not something we not just remember as a one-time event. It is not even a commemorative anniversary of a past event. Rather, Easter is an ongoing experience. As one theologian says, "Easter is something we live and breathe." It is the most joyous and celebrative season of the Christian year and "a great time to be alive."

In the midst of "a ghastly time to be alive" moments, may we be energized and be hopeful with the conviction that with Christ's resurrection it is "a great time to be alive" and the way the Risen Christ continues to show up among us! In the weeks ahead, let's journey together through the Holy Week and Easter, beginning with Mary's tears at the empty tomb and Thomas' doubt, moving toward the grand finale of the Ascension and the invasion of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

Let us pray: Risen Savior, You conquered the grave, and we are singing for Your glory. Bless us with resurrection rampage— a rampage that summons us to shout yes to the birth of new creation in our midst. May we experience the birth quakes of new life in our lives, in our church, and in our communities. The Son is up! And we are up with the Son, despite all those things that seek to pull us down to despair. We are Your Easter people. Amen

NC Rural Summit 2026





STRONGER TOGETHER"
EXERCISE CLASS

"Stronger Together" Exercise Class meets every Monday & Thursday @ 6:00-7:00pm. Open to everyone. For more information, please contact Debra Newman @ 252-915-7005.

PLANK CHAPEL UMC
CHOIR

The Choir is getting ready for Lenten season! Choir Practice is every Wednesday, 7:00pm. If you are musically inclined and willing to offer your gifts and talents, we would love to have you join the choir! Please contact Janet Bobbitt if you are interested.

NEW BOOK CLUB

Plank Chapel UMC is birthing a New Book Club. We meet every third Sunday of the month. Our next meeting will be on April 19th, 4:15pm in the Fellowship Hall. We will study together "Twelve Extraordinary Women" by Rev. John MacArthur. All who are interested are welcome to join.



Explore Hospitality Through Rooted in Love

March 16, 2026



Rooted in Love
Rural Church Gatherings



Our churches long to welcome new people. But sometimes we are not sure how to do that. Are we trying too hard—pushing them away with our eagerness? Are we ignoring new guests—too focused on our own conversations with friends after Sunday worship? How do we find a middle ground that helps people find their way *back* to our church so we can nestle them into our community? And how can we truly show hospitality to potential friends we may overlook—the people we serve in ministry and those we meet outside our church?

While not everyone will end up in our church home, we are called to welcome any and all strangers. When we are aware, we find opportunities for true Christian hospitality that are peppered throughout our day-to-day lives. Being a welcoming presence is the first step in building relationships, a starting point for our evangelism and discipleship efforts.

PROJECT BE A BLESSING

"Project Be A Blessing" is a new outreach ministry of Plank Chapel UMC with the main goal of being the hands and feet of Christ to foster children in the community and church members who are in nursing homes and homebound. Currently, there are more than 10,000 children and teenagers in the foster care system in North Carolina. To support this ministry, please make your check payable to Plank Chapel UMC and note: "Project Be A Blessing". For more info, please contact Peggy Hernandez (Lay Leader) @ (252) 204-3045.

CHANGE BUCKET

Change Bucket for April 2026 has been designated for Hinton Rural Center (#731372)-- a retreat and mission outreach agency of the Southeastern Jurisdiction that offers lodging and conference facilities for personal and family renewal and group retreats. Hinton also serves the community with the support of mission teams and local volunteers through its Safe & Healthy Home Repair and firewood ministries. For more information, please contact info@hintoncenter.org or visit its website: hintoncenter.org.

Rooted in Love. a Duke Endowment-funded program run by the Center for Leadership Excellence, equipped nineteen rural churches throughout the conference with new hospitality tools. Rooted in Love blends practical hospitality and spiritually grounded ways to connect with others. Church leaders took the insights from the presenters and then brainstormed new ideas for their churches, contextualizing the concepts for their needs. Mini grants helped turn new ideas into reality.

Hear from a participant of Rooted in Love...

"One new insight our church gained from Rooted in Love was the gift of seeing ourselves and our community through an outsider's eyes. It challenged us to step beyond our familiar routines and reimagine how we build relationships, not from a place of assumption, but with intentionality, curiosity, and love. In doing so, we began to notice things we had overlooked: the ways our hospitality, or lack thereof, was showing up not just in our words, but in our physical space, our relationships, our systems, and even in our materials. We realized that participation wasn't always easy or accessible, and that true welcome requires attention to both the seen and unseen barriers. Rooted in Love helped us begin the sacred work of making room physically, spiritually, and relationally for others to belong."



AWAKENINGS

Renew, refresh and revive your spirit as we worship our Awesome God at "Awakenings" every Sunday, 8:00am-9:00am (except third Sunday of the month). "Awakenings" offers contemporary music, come-as-you-are setting, relevant Bible-based conversation and a good cup of coffee! The "Awakenings" will meet on April 12th & 26th.

GIVING FLOWERS IN HONOR OR IN MEMORY OF LOVED ONES

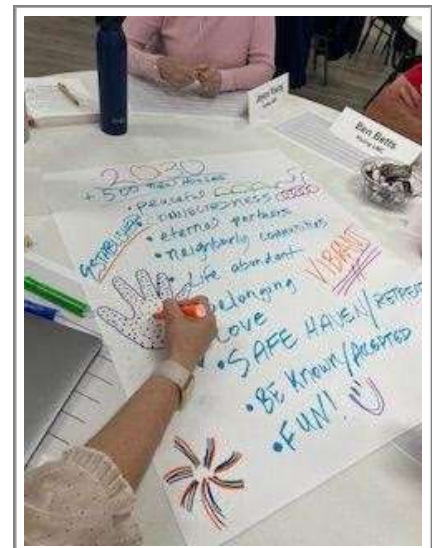
You are invited to generously give flowers on Sunday Worship Services for God's glory and in honor or in memory of your loved ones. Please contact Judy Wilson @ Judith9563@gmail.com or (252) 492-0624.

SENIOR CIRCLE

Senior Circle is a wonderful way to meet new friends, build relationships and have fun among fellow Christians! We meet every third Wednesday of the month with a program and light lunch @ Plank Chapel UMC Fellowship Hall. The next Senior Circle Fellowship will be held on Wednesday, April 15th, 10:00am in the Fellowship Hall. All are invited!

Rooted in Love churches brainstormed gift ideas for new guests. Some churches created resources to orient first time guests to the building and staff. Each participating church received a mini-grant to help pay for these new resources, signage, or whatever they needed to offer hospitality to guests and the community. From left to right: Four Oaks UMC created a guest guide with pictures of staff and key volunteers, along with ways to give and a map. Creedmoor UMC now gives prayer quilt squares to first-time guests and a welcome packet is offered to Rehoboth UMC guests to orient them to the worship service and ministries of the church.

If you have questions about *Rooted in Love*, email Leah Wiebe-Smith at lwiebesmith@nccumc.org or simply reply to this email.





Heritage District

North Carolina Conference

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Across the life of our connection, spring is often a season of holy discernment and transition. In the coming weeks, pastors and churches across our connection will begin to learn about new appointments that will take effect in July. For some congregations, this will mark the continuation of long and fruitful ministries. For others, it will signal the closing of one chapter and the beginning of another.

In seasons like this, it is common to talk about ending well or beginning well. Both of those are important. But perhaps the deeper calling for us is to continue well the ministries that God had already begun long before we arrived.

The mission of the church does not pause when appointments change. The calling to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world continues in every season. Worship continues. The proclamation of the Word continues. The care of neighbors continues. The work of grace in people's lives continues.

In the Wesleyan tradition, we understand the church as a connectional people. We do not serve Christ alone or in isolation, but together — clergy and laity, congregations and districts — bound by covenant and shared mission. The appointment system is one of the ways our connection seeks to steward the gifts of pastors and congregations for the sake of that mission.

Because of this, transitions are not interruptions in ministry; they are part of the way God continues the work of grace among us.

As appointments are announced, I encourage both pastors and congregations to keep their hearts centered on the mission God has entrusted to us. Give thanks for the ministry that has been shared. Bless the relationships that have been formed. And keep looking ahead to where the Holy Spirit is leading us next.

This season of transition also includes a personal transition for me. In July, I will be moving from the Heritage District to serve as the District Superintendent of the Capital District. In the coming months, the Heritage District will welcome a new superintendent, The Rev. Dr. Gloria Winston, who will walk alongside you in the next chapter of your shared ministry.

As I prepare for this transition, I find myself returning to the same calling I offer us: to continue well.

The work God is doing in the Heritage District is not dependent on any one leader. It is rooted in something much deeper — the love of Jesus Christ and the shared life we have together as the body of Christ. Long before any of us arrived in these communities, God was already at work. And long after we move into new roles and new places, that work will continue.

The foundation of our connection is the love of Christ that binds us together. As the Apostle Paul reminds us, we are “members one of another” (Romans 12:5). In the church, we are not merely colleagues or partners in ministry; we are sisters and brothers in Christ. Our shared life is grounded in grace, sustained by the Spirit, and directed toward God’s mission in the world.

For that reason, transitions in leadership do not break the connection — they remind us that the connection belongs to Christ.

I remain deeply grateful for the privilege of serving alongside each of you and our congregations of the Heritage District. The faithfulness, creativity, and commitment to mission that I have witnessed in this district continue to inspire me.

As we move through this season together, my prayer is simple: that we would keep Christ at the center of our life and ministry, trusting that the One who began a good work among us will continue it.

May we continue well in the love and mission of Jesus Christ.

UNITED METHODIST MEN

A hearty breakfast, a good cup of coffee and a wonderful fellowship! United Methodist Men Breakfast Fellowship will be held on Sunday, April 19th, 8:00am-9:00am. All men are invited!

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

United Women in Faith are composed of women who are "powerful, fearless force" driven by God's love and united in sisterhood. With a focus on women, children and youth, we act for justice and transform communities. The United Women in Faith Sunday will be held on April 19th, 11:00am @ Plank Chapel UMC led by Darlene Ranes, President of United Women in Faith.

BLESSING BOX MINISTRY

Plank Chapel UMC saw a great need in the community for those vulnerable to have access to the food they cannot always afford. And so, we launched the Blessing Box Ministry in 2022 and encouraged church members as well as the community to help keep the box stocked with non-perishable food items for those in need. Also, please check your book shelves so that we can offer children and adult books as a lending library. We give thanks to God for your generous gifts and support for this outreach ministry.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Prayer Requests

Faye Moss, Bessie Newman, Fawn Westmoreland, Kerry Alexander, Debbie Fleming, James Satterwhite, Diane Del Conte, Karin & Dave Driver, Jay Fuller, Susie Beal, Angie Rowland, Marvin Daniel, Donna McDaniel, Arvelle Abbott, Mike Smith, Martha Rowland, Jeanette Weaver, Richard Roberts, Gavin & Pam Jackson, Family of Kay Deans, Kittrell community, our nation, peace in the Middle East and the world. Shut-Ins: Sammy Burgess, Frances Beckham, Tim Smith, John Rogers, Martha Rowland, Ben & Jackie Brown, Virgie Eaves, Freddie McGhee & Frances Roberts. (For prayer request, please call 919-418-0682 or email Pastor Edgar @ edejesus@nccumc.org.)

Prayer Warriors are invited to join the Wednesday Online Prayer Meeting every week from 7:00pm-7:30pm. We will meet on April 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd & 29th.

Please see the Zoom link below.



Edgar Raymund A. DeJesus is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://zoom.us/j/96731072214?](https://zoom.us/j/96731072214?pwd=z6O3HHRhaCw13h03XmuULTm0Y9A4RJ.1)

[pwd=z6O3HHRhaCw13h03XmuULTm0Y9A4RJ.1](https://zoom.us/j/96731072214?pwd=z6O3HHRhaCw13h03XmuULTm0Y9A4RJ.1)

Meeting ID: 967 3107 2214

Passcode: 1RL4uP



Fellow Bridge-Builders,

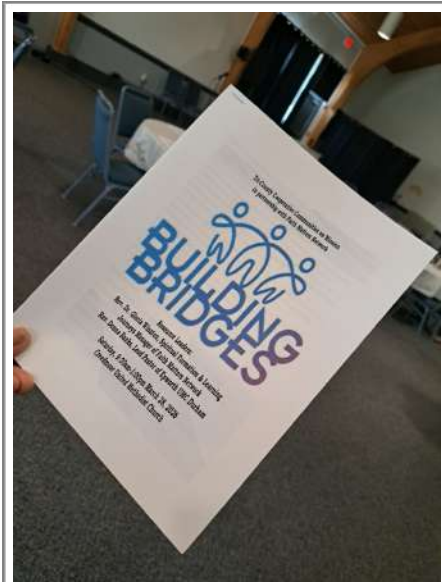
We're deeply grateful to everyone who joined us at today's Building Bridges Event. We had 18 leaders who attended representing Bethel UMC, Plank Chapel UMC & Creedmoor UMC, NC Conference Church Transformation Ministries and Faith Matters Network.

Special appreciation to Rev. Dr. Gloria Winston & Rev. Donna Banks for their powerful, life-giving and Spirit-filled presentations; Rev. Terry & Jane Williams who attended as representatives of NC Conference CTM; and our District Superintendent Rev. Dr. David Joyner for his constant presence and support. We are also grateful to Rev. Keith Sexton, Nancy Castle and Creedmoor UMC for their gracious hospitality and of course, Chef Netta for catering our delicious lunch. Most importantly, we give back all the praise and glory to God!

Please note on your calendar that the next Building Bridges Event will be held on Saturday, May 30th from 9:30am-1:00pm tentatively @ Plank Chapel UMC. We will send you more information.

Grace & Peace,

Rev. Edgar De Jesus
Pastor
Bethel UMC & Plank Chapel UMC





MARCH 2026 SENIOR CIRCLE



After Faye Woodlief welcomed everyone, Pastor Edgar De Jesus opened the March gathering with a devotion about the importance of faith as we approach Easter and how our belief in a loving, redeeming, forgiving God influences our lives as Christians both now and in eternity.

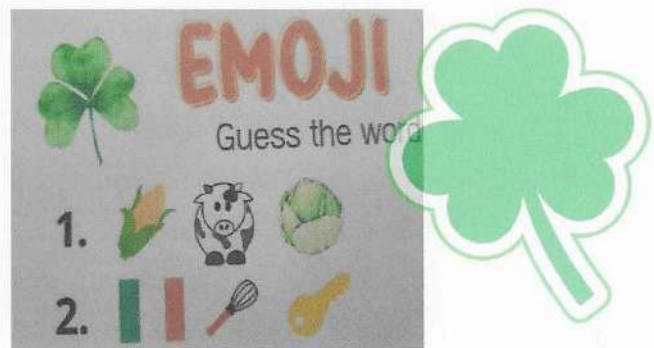
Following Pastor Edgar's message, Don Rose McGhee gave a program celebrating St. Patrick's Day. She began with a brief biography about St. Patrick, a fifth century Christian, who brought Christianity to Ireland. He came from a wealthy British family, but at sixteen was kidnapped by Irish raiders and worked as a slave after he was taken to the Gaelic countryside. He spent six years there as a shepherd and during this time he found God. He escaped to the coast and boarded a ship returning to his motherland where he went on to become a priest. Eventually he returned to the land of his captors and converted thousands of people. He spent years trying to save the people who captured and enslaved him.

St. Patrick's Day is celebrated with parades, the wearing of the green, banquets, parties and games in many countries. Don Rose made sure we had a lot of laughs leading us in the Irish Left /Right Game, where we passed green bags of treats to the left and right as we journeyed with a leprechaun looking for a pot of gold. As the story unfolded we traveled to the left of the sound of bagpipes and right through the enchanted forest, and after many right/left imaginative turns we finished the adventure and enjoyed opening our gift bags as Don Rose said, "May the luck of the Irish be with you, wherever you go to the left or the right. We played St. Patrick's Day Family Feud with trivia questions, Word Scrambles, and decoded Irish picture images. Everyone went home with a word search and although we never found the pot of gold, we appreciated our gift bags. Thank you, Don Rose.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY FUN AND GAMES



NAME SOMETHING PEOPLE THINK IS LUCKY			
Crossed Fingers	24	Knocking on Wood	4
Four Leaf Clover	17		
Rabbit's Foot	14		
Penny	12		



The program concluded with a delicious meal based on Irish favorites such as corned beef and cabbage, brussel sprouts and other tasty treats. Almost everyone wore green and nobody got pinched as far as we know.

With love, prayers, and best wishes,
Your Friends at Senior Circle





Field Trip Set for April 26

Journey Children and Youth Explore Key Holy Week Events

Journey Children and Youth gathered on Sunday, March 22, for an engaging, hands-on exploration of the major events of Holy Week, culminating in the resurrection of Jesus.

The children first learned about Palm Sunday, when Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey and was welcomed by crowds waving palm branches. Leadership team member Wayne Young shared how Jesus had performed many miracles, yet many still refused to believe He was the Messiah. He emphasized that Jesus was fulfilling prophecy as He entered the city for His final days.

The group then moved to the next room, where Team Leader Ron Gustafson guided them through the Last Supper. He explained how Jesus shared a final meal with His disciples, instituting what we now call Communion—partaking of bread and wine (representing His body and blood) in remembrance of Him.

A map of the location and a photo of the traditional Upper Room were displayed for the children.

Next, Journey leader Nancy Gustafson led the group through the story of the Crucifixion, helping them understand the significance of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross for the forgiveness of sins and the immeasurable gift of grace it offers to all believers.

In another room, Team Leader Lora Young shared the powerful story of the Resurrection. Using a model of the empty tomb with the stone rolled away, she reminded the children of the Scripture: "The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day for forgiveness of sins."

Each child was given a special keepsake—a stone with a cross painted on it—to remember Jesus' sacrifice. The session closed with the joyful truth that, as Christians, we celebrate Easter because Jesus rose from the dead.

The youth then joined Journey leader Shakita Huerta for a session on The Trinity. Using lighted candles, she beautifully illustrated how God is one Being in three distinct, co-equal, and co-eternal persons: the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit—three flames, yet one light.

The children enjoyed outdoor play while the youth session concluded, and everyone participated in a fun game of musical chairs. A dinner of chicken nuggets, macaroni and cheese, veggies with dip, cheese and crackers, and cookies and brownies for dessert rounded out the evening.





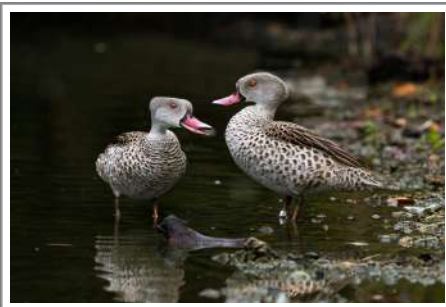
Field Trip – Sunday, April 26

The Journey Children and Youth group will be taking a field trip on Sunday, April 26, to Pre-registration is required by Thursday, April 10. Please contact Nancy and Ron Gustafson at 203-232-1145 or 203-641-2889 for more information and to register. This field trip will replace the regular April meeting at Plank Chapel.

Local children and youth, ages 5–18, are always welcome. There is no cost to participate, but registration is required for each meeting. Team Leader Scott Ritchey coordinates monthly registration.

If you would like to help by donating food, juice, or bottled water, please contact Lora Young at 336-504-7247.

Journey is a safe, caring environment where children and youth can experience the love of Christ through becoming, belonging, and believing. Monthly gatherings include storytelling, devotionals, games, music, and fellowship.



OPEN HOUSE 2026!
Sunday, April 19th
1-5pm

PONY RIDES
 ARCHERY
 HAYRIDE TO THE FARM
 MEET THE DIRECTORS
 CAMP TOURS
 CANOES
 ZIPLINE
 CAMPFIRE AND S'MORES

Free Event!

Fun for the Whole Family!

campchestnutridge.org/open-house

Happy Birthday!!

- Angie Rowland - April 3rd
- Janet Bobbitt - April 5th
- Jeanette Weaver - April 5th
- Judy Eaves - April 5th
- Tim Smith - April 6th
- DJ Pegram - April 6h
- Mike Ranes - April 13th
- John Paul's - April 14th
- Virgie Eaves - April 18th
- Kasey Denton - April 19th
- Kay Thompson - April 21st
- Megan Finch - April 21st
- John Abbott - April 23rd
- Susan Sears - April 24th
- Greg Hunt - April 24th

Happy Anniversary!!

- Haywood and Robin Bumpass - April 20th
- Jamie and Lorraine Abbott - April 22nd
- Tim and Midge Smith - April 28th
- Chris and Amy (Smith) Ward - April 28th

10:53 PM Wed Apr 1



☰ April ▲

Today

Schedule

Day

Week

Month



Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec 2027 Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
Awakenings	Pastor Edgar's Day Off	Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC		Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC		
Awakenings	Pastor Edgar's Day Off	Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC		Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC		
Sunday School	Stronger Together-Exerci		Coffee Corner	Maundy Thursday Service	Tenebrae Service	
4 more	Stronger Together-Exerci		3 more	3 more	Tenebrae Service	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Sunrise Service	Pastor Edgar's Day Off	Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC		Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC		
Sunrise Service	Pastor Edgar's Day Off	Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC		Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC		
Sunday School	Stronger Together-Exerci		Choir Rehearsal	Stronger Together-Exerci		
3 more	Stronger Together-Exerci		3 more	Stronger Together-Exerci		
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Awakenings	Pastor Edgar's Day Off	Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC		Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC		
Awakenings	Pastor Edgar's Day Off	Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC		Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC		
Sunday School	Stronger Together-Exerci		Senior Circle	Stronger Together-Exerci		
3 more	Stronger Together-Exerci		3 more	Stronger Together-Exerci		
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
UMM Breakfast Fellowshi	Pastor Edgar's Day Off	Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC		Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC		
UMM Breakfast Fellowshi	Pastor Edgar's Day Off	Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC		Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC		
Sunday School	Stronger Together-Exerci		Choir Rehearsal	Stronger Together-Exerci		
7 more	Stronger Together-Exerci		3 more	Stronger Together-Exerci		
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
Journey Field Trip - Bird P	Pastor Edgar's Day Off	Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC		Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC		
Awakenings	Pastor Edgar's Day Off	Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC		Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC		
Journey Field Trip - Bird P	Stronger Together-Exerci		Prayer Group Zoom Meeti	Stronger Together-Exerci		
6 more	Stronger Together-Exerci		Prayer Group Zoom Meeti	Stronger Together-Exerci		
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Awakenings	Pastor Edgar's Day Off	Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC		Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC		
Awakenings	Pastor Edgar's Day Off	Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC		Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC		
Sunday School	Stronger Together-Exerci		Coffee Corner	Stronger Together-Exerci		
3 more	Stronger Together-Exerci		3 more	Stronger Together-Exerci		

