

Health, growth, completion

Vision



New Apostolic Church USA

District News

www.nac-usa.org

Spring 2022

Dear brothers and sisters,

What a spectacular happening! The women, laden with concern about the large stone, are walking together to the tomb of Christ before sunrise. Suddenly, they are startled by an earthquake; they witness a radiant angel clothed in white descending from heaven! His brilliant countenance alone causes the guards of the tomb to faint. He rolls back the stone and sits on it, as if to say - *Job done!* The women must have felt great relief.

Looking at this experience on Easter morning, we can understand how the Almighty acted to care for the concern of those who wanted to serve Jesus; with the sending of one angel, He allayed all their worries. With this evidence of His omnipotent power, we begin to realize, He can solve all problems and resolve all our concerns and fears in ways unknown to us, because He can do whatever is necessary according to His will. *But our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases* (Psalm 115:3).

But let's look a little more closely, the story is just beginning, and now we may observe the real purpose of the angel. He says to the women, "*Come, see...*" Come, see what? There is nothing in the tomb! Yet, the women perceive in this emptiness what has really happened. Christ, who was in this place the day before, has risen! And they become the first ones to witness this earth-changing event and joyfully go and testify of it to the others.

Oft times, we also may be burdened with concern and uncertainty; we don't know what lies ahead. The Lord sees this and will act. He has the power to do anything; we know this. Sometimes He may work in a spectacular way and other times, He may have a different plan than ours, as with Paul and his infirmity (2 Corinthians 12: 7-9). Nevertheless, we trust Him, the omnipotent One, unconditionally.

However, as the women did, let us always look closer to perceive a deeper meaning behind our experiences. With a steadfast belief in Christ, we will become aware of the real miracle, *the real reason for the experience*, even though, outwardly, it may seem to others empty and without purpose.

The Risen One did not remain in the tomb to greet the women on Easter morning, He was already gone and active! **Today, the Risen one is also alive and working!** By sharing His victory and His life with us, He desires to advance us forward beyond earthly concerns to spiritual realities hidden to human reasoning. These truths serve to enlighten us far beyond temporal cares and transform us for our future with Him.

Come, dear ones, let us engage in His resurrection life and emerge in newness of Spirit as we move through Eastertide this year...wishing you exciting days of spiritual rejuvenation,

With love,



Mosaic

NATIONAL DEACON CONFERENCE

1-3 April 2022 • Chicago, IL

During the first weekend in April, 150 deacons gathered in Chicago for the first-ever National Deacon Conference of the New Apostolic Church USA. Over the course of the three days, they studied different aspects of Pastoral Care, Culture, and the Divine Service Experience.

Pastoral Care: *more deeply understanding the ways and methods to support our brothers and sisters through pastoral care, including benevolence and FaithArc*

Culture: *exploring foundational tenets of faith, the connection within a congregation possible through small group discussions, and the connection of the congregation to the community through a biblical understanding of diakonia*

Divine Service Experience: *understanding how to preach the word of God properly and You're home, the journey a guest takes to become a member of the New Apostolic Church*

They discussed and discovered various aspects of the deacon ministry, the new and expanded responsibilities of a deacon in the congregation, and how they can embrace their calling using the gifts that God has given each of them individually.

The weekend concluded with a divine service with the District Apostle, joined with the Chicago Metro congregation.



DIVINE SERVICE

Mark 11:13-14

And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. In response Jesus said to it, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again." And His disciples heard it.

How is this experience in the life of Christ relevant for us? We should consider ourselves to be the fig trees that Jesus surveys. At first, He sees the leaves, that which is apparent – our behavior, how we look and act at home, in church, in the community. But then He looks closer to see if there is something more – **some fruit!** Perhaps one may feel it is not important how I look, what I do – the Lord only looks on the inside. Yet, a tree needs both – leaves and fruit. Both elements must match – the content of our heart must match our behavior.

What is the fruit that Jesus looks for?

A deep, living faith: During Jesus' time, many experienced Him as a miracle worker; they believed that He should make their lives better. But Jesus is looking for a deeper faith, one that understands why He came to earth – for our salvation! How we apply the gospel in every part of our lives is the measurement of our faith.

...for it was not the season for figs... Curiously, Jesus still expected figs. Jesus is looking for a living faith, even if it seems "out of season" – because it is too hard to apply the gospel in this or that situation. Yet, the gospel always applies in every season. Forgiveness is always in season; God forgives us at all times when we repent, so we should also forgive others. Perhaps we think it's not the time for truth because it will cause a problem or be uncomfortable. However, it's always the season to speak the truth in love.

True love: Jesus looks for deep, enduring love that serves. The measurement of our love? We serve only out of love, not for our own interests or reward. We might think, *I have no money, I have no time – it's not the season to offer or serve.* But we must realize, Jesus already gave everything on the cross. He loved us first. Thus, there is always a good reason for serving Christ as a response to the greatest love that He has shown us, not as a means for blessing or increase.

Oneness: Jesus said: *I wanted to gather them...but they would not.* He prayed to His Father – *make them one, as We are one.* We can measure our unity by asking -what am I willing to sacrifice for unity? Do I suffer when another suffers? Or rejoice when another is rejoicing? Jesus wants all; it is in season to love all, despite our differences and diversity.

Newness: Jesus looks for development, evolution, newness – *that something is changing in us.* He has given us the gift of the Holy Spirit – have we allowed Him to transform us? The measurement is simply – am I the same way I was a year ago, five years ago? Empowered with the rebirth of water and Spirit, even through difficult days, it is the season to grow into the mind of Christ and be new.

Jesus looks for fruit – *true faith and love, unity, and transformation* – in our Christian behavior and living... - LRK





Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it?

Isaiah 43:19

Salvation is eternal fellowship with the triune God. The possibility of this lofty completion was opened by the life, sacrifice, and resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Yet, as humans, we are prisoners of sin. To save us, God makes things new:

- the incarnate Son of God is the **new Adam**, a man in every respect consistent with God's will;
- He establishes a **new covenant** with mankind, no longer based on the Law of Moses and circumcision, but on faith in Jesus Christ and mutual love (John 13:34-35);
- He gives us a **new goal** - it is no longer a matter of a peaceful existence on this earth, but of eternal fellowship with Him in His kingdom;
- Through the rebirth of water and the Spirit, He has made us a **new creature** in Christ. The Holy Spirit is working to make us into the image of Christ, the new Adam;
- God is creating a **new people**, made up of believers, living and dead, from all peoples and all walks of life.

Renewal in Christ is essential for entering into fellowship with Him. Like Jesus' contemporaries, we must abandon old conceptions to follow Christ - *And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine bursts the wineskins, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins* (Mark 2:22).

Let's look at a few of these old notions:

- *Salvation is a reward for good works.*
 - This is not true! **Salvation is a grace** that no one can earn, as the Lord showed in the parable of the workers in the vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16).
- *God's blessing is measured by earthly well-being.*
 - This is not true! **Blessing is about our relationship with God.** His blessing allows us to remain united with God no matter what happens.
- *Salvation is reserved for a chosen few, the others are condemned.*
 - No! **We are chosen to serve God**, called to contribute to the salvation of all mankind.
- *Unity implies uniformity.*
 - No! We will always be different from one another, but **Christ's love allows us to overcome our differences.** Where this love is absent, differences breed division.
- *God's perfection can be measured by human standards.*
 - No, it cannot! Jesus Christ fulfilled His work on earth when mankind thought He had lost everything. **God's power is fulfilled in weakness** (2 Corinthians 12:9). Let us trust Him!

God is making new things, do you notice?

Let us not allow human imperfections to cloud the great things accomplished by God in the Church. May we always recognize the high value in that by forgiving our sins, God allows us to make a new start. *What a grace!* By forgiving and reconciling with love, God shows us a new way to get closer to others. The Holy Spirit continually gives us fresh impulses and access to new knowledge. Let us never reject what does not suit our way of thinking. Let's first check whether what is shown to us is according to the truth of the gospel.

Changes brought about by the Spirit help to bring us closer to Christ - *let us embrace them!*

LRK – thoughts compiled from a recent Chief Apostle divine service



Apostle Ordinations for the USA

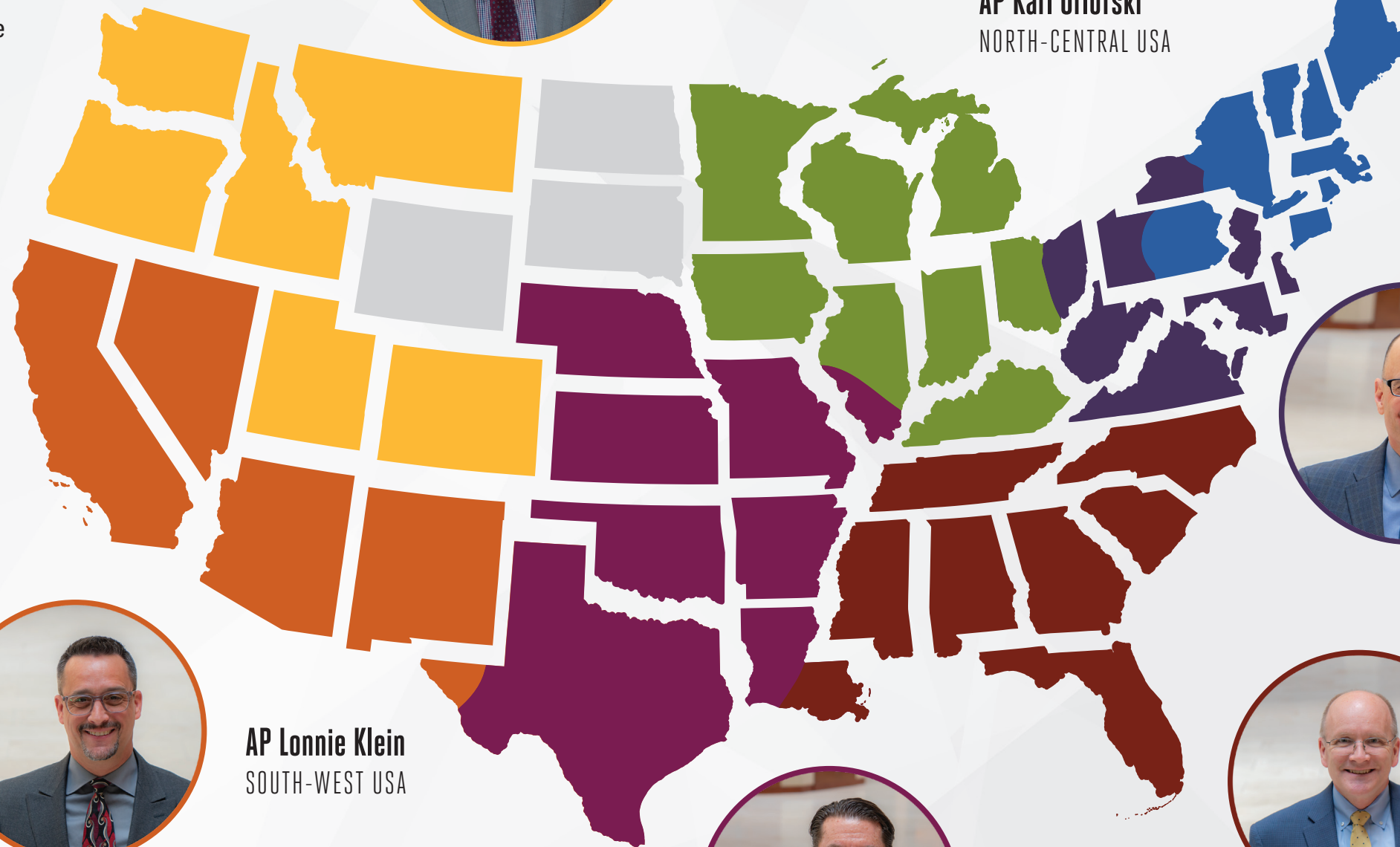
After the retirements of Apostle Earl Buehner and Bishop Manfredo Stegmann in December 2021, four new apostles could finally be ordained by the Chief Apostle in January during his visit to Calgary, Canada.

The responsibilities of these new apostles are, in the words of the Chief Apostle:

- **To proclaim;**
 - the gospel of Jesus Christ according to the testimony of the Bible;
 - the gospel through your preaching but also through your example;
 - the return of Jesus Christ.
- **Lead believers into the knowledge of Jesus Christ;** to know Him and understand Him more and more.
- **Allow the congregation to experience the presence, the love, and the grace of Jesus Christ through you.**
- **Be a pillar in the work of God;** remain steadfast.



The new working areas for the apostles are portrayed on the map with their regions.



AP Mark Fuerbach
NORTH-WEST USA



AP Karl Orlofski
NORTH-CENTRAL USA



DAH John Fendt
NORTH-EAST USA



AP John Schnabel
NORTH-EAST USA



AP Thomas Schmidt
GREAT LAKES USA
including some locations in
New Jersey, Virginia, New York



AP Lonnie Klein
SOUTH-WEST USA



AP Brett Steinbrueck
SOUTH-CENTRAL USA



AP Robert Ferguson
SOUTH-EAST USA

A PATH TO ORDINATION

As discussed in last year's Spring VISION newsletter, we moved our Sunday School, THRIVE youth discussions, and confirmation teaching and celebrations into seasons. Another important function of our church in the USA will follow suit – **ordinations** with a new process and preparation for to-be ministers.

The New Apostolic Church has understood itself as a church of ministry from its beginnings. It is our belief that Jesus Christ Himself set forth ministry in His church as shown in Ephesians 4:11-2 -

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ...

Thus, the church is led by Jesus Christ who sent the apostolate to proclaim the gospel and dispense the sacraments. All other ministries come forth out of the Apostle ministry. Concerning this, the Fifth Article of Faith states:

I believe that those designated by God for a ministry are ordained only by Apostles, and that authority, blessing, and sanctification for their ministration come forth out of the Apostle ministry.

Ordination is not a sacrament but rather an act of blessing; being designated for ministry is not based upon human will but upon divine will. Therefore, the person being ordained has been designated or called for the ministry by God, and the ordination is the investiture of a spiritual ministry. In this holy and humble act, the minister being ordained makes a vow before God, the Apostle, and the congregation to remain faithful to God,

to follow Christ in serving, and to promise obedience of faith.

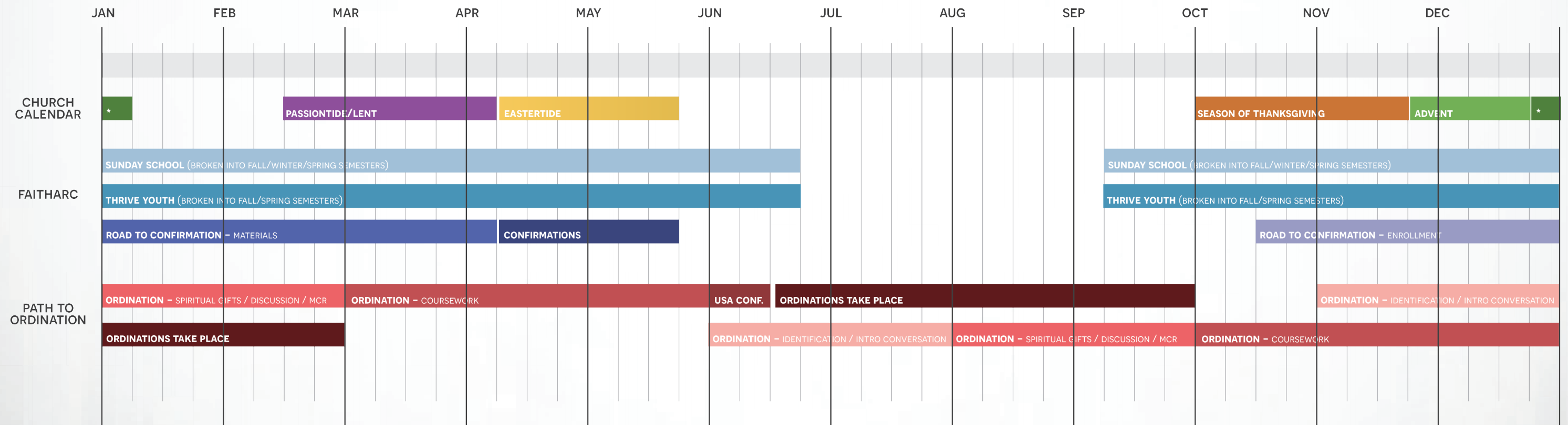
Due to the importance of ordained ministry and added emphasis due to the international church's Concept of Ministry, the following process has been established for ordinations. Today, by adopting a consistent and reliable process for potential ministers, we can create a clarity of expectations and transparency of the procedure. Additionally, a more structured approach to ordination, including appropriate training and examining prerequisites, will contribute to the confidence in our ministers and church.

This means that, except for rare cases, our church will be preparing members who feel called to ministry concurrently during a specific season. In preparation for ordination, candidates will discover their spiritual gifts, complete specified coursework relevant to their

ministry, and engage in discussion with their rector, district rector, and apostle to better understand the expectations of their ministry and build relationships of care and support with those they will serve beside.

While simplifying some of the administrative functions, this also builds in a certain communion with those preparing themselves for ordination – concluding in a National New Ministers conference annually in June.

This further then leads to specific seasons when those prepared will be ordained into their ministries. It is our intent that this process will provide the necessary information and teaching to better equip the new servants to edify the body of Christ. – LRK/KAH



* CHRISTMASTIDE & EPIPHANY



NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF THE
NEW APOSTOLIC CHURCH
3753 N. TROY STREET
CHICAGO, IL 60618-4594

NON PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE PAID
HICKSVILLE, NY
PERMIT NO. 658

SMALL GROUP UPDATES

NAC USA Catechism: coming at the end of May, a new curriculum that explores our Catechism, which will include printable guides and videos for each chapter. It's suggested that each group has at least one NAC USA Catechism or Catechism Q&A for reference (which can also be downloaded as an app!).

We believe: also available at the end of May, a reprint of our series on our Creed from 2020, now as a booklet. Great for guests or new members, or if you didn't have a chance to complete the series in 2020. The booklets can be ordered by emailing BookOrders@nac-usa.org

Website update for Small Group section: coming soon! The Small Group section of our NDI website will allow you to search through all of our materials by topic and number of sessions, and will also have a place where you can find our newest curriculum, as well as training materials and other resources.

