Bly Lines

News, Notes and Revelations from St. John's Blymire's United Church of Christ

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From the Pastor's Desk



Jeremiah wrote the following words of comfort to those who were exiled in Babylonia. "For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm to give you a future with hope." (Jeremiah 29:11). Those words have been a comfort for centuries for those who place their faith and hope in the Lord. As we continue our interim ministry here at St. John's Blymire's UCC, I urge you to remember those words that God has plans for our welfare and wants to give us a future of hope. Does that mean that we will get all that we want and plan for? Not necessarily! But we proceed with faith and hope because being born again by the Spirit of God means that we draw from God's deep well and that there is always a freshness in thinking, talking, and living – stemming from our close relationship with God, who is always full of surprises. Jesus prayed "that they may be one just as We are one." (John17:22). Let us remember that we want to draw strength for our individual and congregational lives from no source other than God. As we enter the second month of the year 2023 and the sixth month of our interim period, and as we continue to discern what God's plans for our future are, let's keep in mind that being born again of the Spirit gives us new vision and keeps us absolutely fresh for everything.

I place my hope in that reality, as I know you do, too. Once again, I thank you for your continued faithfulness to God and service to our church. Your sense of commitment and fellowship is strong, and I thank you so much for that. We want to maintain that deep commitment and fellowship to God and to each other as we continue to make plans during this interim period for our beloved church.

I know that some of you have accepted the commitment of the "Disciples' Challenges" I issued on January 22: Setting aside 15 minutes a day in quiet time with God, and showing at least one person each week that our Christian faith is an impetus for our words and actions.

You will hear more about our interim plans in the next month or two. Several of you are already engaged with these plans. We will be asking others of you to help out with them, as well.

We have an enthusiastic core group that is looking into the possibility of us starting a Messy Church program here, using demographic information of our area from MissionInsite, a resource provided to us from UCC Penn Central Conference.

We will hear about and do some hands-on exercises about inclusion and diversity in the church on February 19, led by recently retired educator Val Dennis. That experience will lead into each of us filling out a Diversity Survey for our church. Another part of our outreach emphasis in the next couple of months is to find a new home for Emmanuel's Closet, a wonderful ministry that was started by Blymire's Church many years ago and which continues to meet the needs of many in our area. A third aspect of our outreach is to continue to work with Stage Masters to set up livestreaming for our worship services.

We are also forming a group to revise our church's constitution and by-laws. This administrative task doesn't sound terribly exciting. But structuring ourselves for the present and future so that we can continue to be a vital part of the body of Christ is very important. Another administrative task is to continue to go through our membership list and determine who wants to remain on our affiliated list (we will need to send out letters of inquiry) and who is on our active, participating list.

Finally, we are discerning what a part-time (half-time, probably) pastorate here at our church looks like and will mean for our future. We are approaching this not as a negative, but as something that has exciting and fresh possibilities.

Our plan now is to have representatives from each of these interim tasks comprise the Profile Committee. That committee will put together our congregational profile, which is a necessary step to obtain our next settled pastor.

As I have stated before, we will continue to use all of our gifts to build up our church and to answer the all-important questions: Who are we as St. John's Blymire's United Church of Christ? Who are our neighbors? Who is God calling us to become as we journey into God's future? What is our unique niche here in Dallastown?

I will see you around the month of February.

God's continued blessings on you, Pastor Rick

Hot Cocoa Prayer 1. Measure two tablespoons of cocoa powder. Taste it (it's bitter). Pray for some of the things that are bitter in your life and a little hard to take on their own. 2. Measure and add 1–2 tablespoons of sugar or sweetener. Taste it (it's sweet). Offer a prayer of thanks for all the things that are sweet in your life and are perhaps best in small doses. 3. Add a pinch of salt. Taste it (it's salty). Offer a prayer for moments of grace and clarity, experiences that bring out the flavor of life. 4. Warm some milk (or milk beverage) while reflecting on when you have experienced the Holy in the past day or week. What has warmed your heart?

5. Mix warmed milk beverage with hot chocolate mixture. Taste it (it's yummy). Give thanks to God and enjoy.



SPECIAL SERVICES in FEBRUARY

Feb. 5 - FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Scripture: Matthew 5:13-20

Message: "How Bright Can Our Little Lights Shine?"

Theme: We are the presence of Christ in the world; that is a choice of ours; and no matter what our circumstances, our light will spread further than we can imagine. Sunday School: Archeology of the Bible, Jeri Jones, teaching

Feb. 12 - SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY, UCC Racial Justice Sunday, UCC Science and Technology Sunday, St. Valentine's Day Sunday

Scripture: Matthew 5:21-37

Message: "What's the First Step to Reconciliation?"

Theme: It's hard to admit our mistakes, but can it put us on the right path? Jesus encourages completely honesty about sin, which leads to reconciliation with people around us.

Sunday School: Archeology of the Bible, Jeri Jones, teaching

Feb. 19 - TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY

Scripture: TBA

Message: Valerie Dennis, retired public school staff person, an expert and experienced in inclusion and diversity for our world today, will preach on diversity and inclusion from the Christian perspective.

Following worship, during Sunday School time, Val will lead us in fun and interactive activities regarding diversity and inclusion. This will prepare us to fill out Diversity Surveys, results of which will be summarized in our church profile.

Feb. 22- ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE OF MESSAGE, MUSIC, AND SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION – 7:00 PM

Scripture: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Message: "Tattoo For The Heart"

Theme: Are we pretending righteousness to be recognized by others? Making a "show" of our religion vs. sharing our faith: What's engraved on our hearts?

Feb. 26- FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT -- SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION UCC Seminary and Church Vocations Sunday

Scripture: Matthew 4:1-11

Message: "What Do Our Times of Testing Show Us?"

Theme: What's worth sacrificing for? Who are we, really? What is our true purpose?

Sunday School: Archeology of the Bible, Jeri Jones, teaching

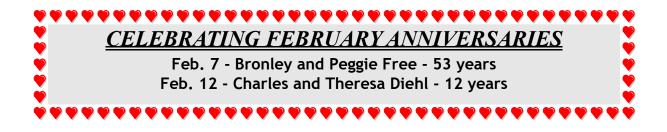
<u>FEBRUARY</u> <u>BIRTHDAYS</u>



- 1. Jamie Luckenbaugh
- 3. Marlene Matthews
- 4. Gerry Geesey
- 6. Beth Herbst
- 7. Bryan Adams
- 10. Bryan Barley
- 12. Landan McKenzie James Klyeman
- 13. Mark Morton
- 15. Trent Hake
- 20. Allie McKinsey Madelynne Shisler Kolton Knickel Amber Sipe
- 22. Kathy Rayhart
- 24. Donna Hartley
- 27. Jamie Reid
- 28. Sandra Ness
- 29. Donna Busch Linda Rost Emma Boyd

May God Bless You on Your

Bírthday!



FINANCIAL REPORT

Undesignated General Fund			Red Brick	c Chapel	Cemetery		
Month-2022	Income	Expense	Income	Expense	Income	Expense	
January	\$9,995.00	\$10,580.71	\$0.46	\$254.37	\$915.03	\$0.00	
February	\$8,570.74	\$11,555.09	\$1,000.48	\$390.39	\$0.23	\$294.90	
March	\$96,036.48	\$15,958.44	\$0.41	\$563.73	\$0.19	\$845.18	
April	\$9,517.87	\$14,766.40	\$1,000.35	\$16,785.27	\$200.20	\$2,370.60	
Мау	\$13,730.24	\$11,108.47	\$808.06	\$153.57	\$818.22	\$2,683.03	
June	\$7,499.35	\$14,787.98	\$250.07	\$362.50	\$900.09	\$3,277.10	
July	\$8,468.00	\$5,755.87	\$1000.07	\$132.08	\$7.20	\$2,188.88	
August	\$10,506.24	\$7,061.85	\$1000.10	\$169.56	\$900.18	\$2,836.40	
September	\$8,270.00	\$10,713.23	\$0.11	\$365.24	\$0.18	\$2,624.63	
October	\$10,592.90	\$7,525.39	\$125.12	\$108.38	\$750.12	\$2,601.65	
November	\$9,103.28	\$7,361.44	\$0.17	\$134.96	\$500.11	\$1,268.88	
December	\$12,959.22	\$13,871.51	\$0.32	\$481.40	\$0.15	\$846.23	
Total	\$205,249.32	\$131,046.38	\$5,185.72	\$19,901.45	\$4,992.90	\$21,847.48	

Balance of Undesignated General Fund @ January 1, 2023

Balance of Red Brick Chapel Fund @ January 1, 2023 (Includes \$55,169.25 Endowment)

Balance of Cemetery Fund @ January 1, 2023 (Includes \$797,180.71 CD's, Trusts, UCC Foundation)

Financial Assistance Given through Hand of Hope Fund - 2022

	# Families		Total	Monthly		Available Balance	
	rainines		\$\$\$	D	onations		alance
Beginning						\$	162.74
January				\$	80.00	\$	242.74
February	1	\$	25.00	\$	35.00	\$	252.74
March	1	\$	25.00	\$	11.00	\$	238.74
April				\$	59.00	\$	297.74
Мау				\$	35.20	\$	332.94
June	3	\$	75.00	\$	12.00	\$	269.94
July		\$	200.00	\$	1045.03	\$	1114.97
August				\$	12.00	\$	1126.97
September	1	\$	25.00	\$	21.25	\$	1123.22
October	1	\$	50.00	\$	8.00	\$	1081.22
November	1	\$	500.00	\$	25.60	\$	606.82
December	1	\$	25.00	\$	225.00	\$	806.82
Total	9	\$	925.00	\$	1569.08		

\$15,873.30

\$58,635.07

\$798,212.53

REMEMBER OUR SHUT-INS and those in need of PRAYER

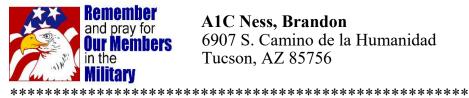
Peggy Luckenbaugh Room 704B Colonial Manor Nursing Home 970 Colonial Avenue York, PA 17403



Keeping in our prayers **Dolores Barley Jeanette Black Cindie McKinsey** Friends battling cancer **Covid 19 patients**

Linda Trone Room 604 **Colonial Manor Nursing Home** 970 Colonial Avenue York, PA 17403

Carolyn Innerst Room 123 Senior Commons@Powder Mill 1775 Powder Mill Road York, PA 17403



A1C Ness, Brandon 6907 S. Camino de la Humanidad Tucson, AZ 85756

EMMANUEL'S CLOSET We Need a New Home

St. Paul's UCC, which has generously housed Emmanuel's Closet for the past few years, is being sold. Therefore, we will have to move out of that location by the end of March. The last day that we will be open for service there will be March 25.

Because of this timeline we have moved up the dates for the Easter meal give-out. Food clients may pick up the extra holiday food bags and gift cards for perishable items on either March 18 or March 25.

We are in the process of looking for a new location in the Red Lion/ Dallastown area and hope to find one soon, but will remain closed from March 26 until we do. If anyone has any ideas as to where we can relocate, please see Sterling Boyd. We do not want to have to close permanently, since this is a vital ministry to our community.

We are hoping to be able to give out much of our current inventory before leaving St. Paul's. If you have already bought any food to donate, we will gladly take it, but we ask that you not purchase any new items or bring in any clothing or household goods until we find a new home. Thank you.

GIFT CARDS

Would you like to help our church without spending any extra money? For every card sold we Fundraiser



earn a profit from $1\frac{1}{2}\%$ all the way to 16%, depending on the merchant. You don't have to buy cards just to give as gifts. Buy them for yourself to use at stores or restaurants that you frequent and part of everything you spend will go to our church. For example, if you use a gift card purchased through this program to buy \$100 worth of groceries at Giant, \$96 will go to the store and \$4 will go to our church. It's that easy!!

To get your cards, just fill out an order form and attach a check or cash. Checks should be made payable to St. John's Blymire's UCC. You may drop the orders in the offering plate or place them on Wanda's desk in the office. Payment must be included with your order. Orders will be sent to the Great Lakes Scrip Center each Monday morning. You may pick up your gift cards from Sandy Innerst at church the following Sunday.

Last year we earned \$556 through this program, but there is the potential for much more!



MEN'S GROUP

All men and their spouses are invited to attend the



Men's Group meeting on February 14th at 7:00PM in Fellowship Hall. Being Valentine's Day we want to hear your story about how your relationship started. There will be prizes for everyone. There will be no gathering at Parma's in February.



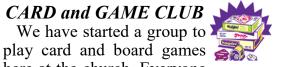
Daffodil Days

Our church will once again be participating in the American Cancer Society's Daffodil Days. Order forms are located on the Welcome Table in the Gathering Room. You

may drop the completed form, along with your check made payable to the American **Cancer Society**, in the offering plate or give it to Marti Leader, our church coordinator. Deadline for orders is February 19. The flowers will be delivered March 26.



CARD and GAME CLUB We have started a group to



here at the church. Everyone is welcome, and if you don't know how to play certain games, there will be someone who can teach you. You can bring lunch or order in.

We will meet the second Wednesday of each month starting at 11:00 AM and playing until people are ready to stop. Our next meeting will be February 8.

If you have any questions, please call Janie Montgomery at (717) 891-3607 or Diana Myers at (717) 855-4752.

Pastor Rick's Bible study has now resumed at 10:00 AM on Tuesday mornings. We are studying the book of



Matthew. Anyone who is interested is invited to join.

During the Sunday School hour Jeri Jones is now teaching a series on the archeology of the Bible. All are welcome.

Book Club has returned! We get **BOOK** together on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 11:00 AM in Fellowship Hall. Each person will tell about a book they have read or are currently reading. It is also a time of

fellowship and support. Lunch will be ordered in. Come join us and bring a friend! Questions? Text or call Ginny Weber at (202) 549-4358.

SOUP SALE

The Fun Team is now taking orders for homemade hamburger vegetable soup. The cost is \$9.00 per quart. There is a sign up sheet for orders in the



Gathering Room or you may call the church office. The deadline to order is Sunday, March 5, and pick up will be Saturday, March 18, from 9:00 AM-noon here at the church.

CHAIR YOGA

Looking for some gentle, easy exercise? Come check out our Chair Yoga classes! These classes are especially good for beginners. No equipment is necessary. Yoga is one of the most highly recommended forms of exercise for seniors! You can come occasionally, once a week, or twice a week. Just come and give it a try! It's easy! Men, this is not for women only! Classes are Mondays and Wednesdays from 10-11 am here at the church. There is a \$10 fee for each class. Hope to see you there!



No matter what your circumstances may be, you can find joy in My presence. On some days, joy is generously strewn along your life path, glistening in the sunlight. On days like that, being content is as simple as breathing the next breath or taking the next step. Other days are overcast and gloomy; you feel the strain of the journey, which seems endless. Dull, grey rocks greet your gaze and cause your feet to ache. Yet joy is still attainable. Search for it as if for hidden treasure.

Begin by remembering that I have created this day; it is not a chance occurrence. Recall that I am present with you, whether or not you sense My presence. Then, start talking with Me about whatever is on your mind. Rejoice in the fact that I understand you perfectly, and I know exactly what you are experiencing.

As you continue communicating with Me, your mood will gradually lighten. Awareness of My marvelous companionship can infuse joy into the grayest day.

From Jesus Calling



WE LIVE ON A BLUE PLANET THAT CIRCLES AROUND A BALL OF FIRE NEXT TO A MOON THAT MOVES THE SEA, AND YOU DON'T BELIEVE IN MIRACLES?



HIS NEVER ENDING LOVE

God will not let you go. The big news of the Bible is not that you love God, but that God loves you! He tattooed your name on the palm of his hand. His thoughts of you outnumber the sand on the shore. You never leave his mind, escape his sight, or flee his thoughts. You need not win his love. You already have it.

He sees the worst of you and loves you still. Your sins of tomorrow and failings of the future will not surprise him; he sees them now. Every day and deed of your life has passed before his eyes and been calculated in his decision. He knows you better than you know you and has reached this verdict: he loves you still. No discovery will disillusion him. No rebellion will dissuade him. He loves you with an everlasting love. God's love never failing, never ending.

Max Lucado

No matter how long the winter, spring is sure to follow!



LOVE IS IN THE AIR

"I met my husband while I was working in a science library. He came in every week to read the latest journals and eventually decided to take out the librarian instead of the books. After a year and a half of dating, he showed up at the library and started rummaging through my desk. I asked what he was looking for, but he didn't answer. Finally he unearthed one of the rubber stamps I used to identify reference books. 'Since I couldn't find the right engagement ring,' he said, 'this will have to do,' and he firmly stamped my hand. Across my knuckles, in capital letters, it read NOT FOR CIRCULATION." Ruth E. Chodrow

About a year had passed since my amicable divorce, and I decided it was time to start dating again. Unsure how

to begin, I thought I'd scan the personals column of my local newspaper. I came across three men who seemed like they'd be promising candidates. A couple of days later, I was checking my answering machine and discovered a message from my ex-husband. 'I was over visiting the kids' he said. 'While I was there I happened to notice you had circled some ads in the paper. Don't bother calling the guy in the second column. I can tell you right now it won't work out. That guy is me.' Pat Patel

"During World War II my parents had planned a romantic Valentine's Day wedding. Suddenly my father, then stationed at Camp Edwards in Massachusetts, received orders to ship out, and all leaves were cancelled. Being a young man in love, he went AWOL. He and my mother were married 4 days earlier than originally planned. He returned to base to an angry sergeant. After the explanation, the sergeant understandingly replied, 'Okay, okay!' Then, as an afterthought: 'But don't let it happen again!'" Sandra L. Caron

GEORGE WASHINGTON LESSONS IN HUMILITY



The Heavy Log

Once upon a time a rider came across a few soldiers who were trying to move a heavy log of wood without success. The corporal was standing by just watching as the men struggled. The rider couldn't believe it. He finally asked the corporal why he wasn't helping.

The corporal replied: "I am the corporal. I give orders."

The rider said nothing in response. Instead he dismounted his horse. He went up and stood by the soldiers and as they tried to lift the wood, he helped them. With his help, the task was finally able to be carried out. Who was this kind rider?

The rider was George Washington, the Commander-in-chief. He quietly mounted his horse and went to the corporal and said, "The next time your men need help, send for the commander-in-chief."

The Broken Wall

Once George Washington was riding near Washington city with a group of friends and they came to a place where they had to leap over a wall. In the process one horse knocked off a number of the stones from the wall.

> Washington said, "We better replace them." His friends told, "Oh, let the farmer do it." But Washington didn't feel right about that.

When the riding party was over, he went back the way they came. He found the wall and dismounted. Then he carefully replaced each of the stones.

His riding companion saw what he did and said, "You're too big to do that." His only response was, "On the contrary, I am the right size."



judgment, to give without expecting and to love without reason! KINDNESS IS FREE SPRINKLE THAT STUFF EVERYWHERE

SO OVER WINTER?

By the end of January here, the winter has usually worn out its welcome. The cold has been around for what seems like forever, and below-freezing temperatures have kept us inside for far too long. I just want winter to end!

However, we still have at least another six weeks of winter ahead of us, and instead of dreading these final days, I'm trying on a new outlook. This winter,

I want to take this opportunity to recapture the wonder of winter and see the works of God that can only be seen in the midst of snow and ice!

<u>4 Concepts for Capturing the Wonder of Winter</u>

Death and Life As we move into winter, most plants become brown and dry, and then die. The landscape in winter is pretty bleak when no snow covers the ground. But God uses this time to let the earth rest and prepare for glorious new life and growth in the spring. This is also a wonderful time to draw parallels to the how God used Jesus' death to bring new life to all of us.

Slowing Down Our busy lives often prevent us from really taking the time to slow down and listen to God. We may fit in a quick devotion in the morning or a quick prayer before bedtime, but our minds are usually bouncing onto the next thing we need to do. Snow days may be an inconvenience, but being stuck at home is a wonderful reminder of the good slowing down does for our minds, our bodies, and our relationship with God.

Unique Design God's wonderful work as Creator is beautifully displayed in snowflakes. They may pile up and cause lots of headaches – and backaches from shoveling – but each individual snowflake is a unique, glorious work of art. I've seen the pictures a million times, but I still find the close-up photographs of snowflakes to be absolutely breathtaking. And no two snowflakes are exactly alike. If God has paid such attention to the detail in each tiny flake of snow, how much more does He pay attention to each human He has created in His own image

White as Snow What a joy to look out on the frozen ground, white with snow, and realize that is how God sees us. In His eyes, we have no stain, but are pure white. This is a glorious reminder for us when we feel as though we've made too many mistakes or can't be forgiven one more time.

Erin Mohring



Revelations for February from "Bly Mire" Mouse

Man! Can it really be the year 2023? Time goes by so fast, especially with us mice who have such short lives! We noticed a lot of changes around here in 2022, including Pastor Lou Ann's retirement and the start of Pastor Rick's interim. Speaking of changes, we were sad to see the Advent/Christmas/Epiphany

decorations come down. We enjoy looking at them so much! But we know it's time to move on with the year!

You guys have been so geared up with activities, we haven't had a chance to get the post-holiday doldrums. It's exciting to watch you all come and go with the chair yoga classes, the card and game club, the Bible study group, the book club, the Circle of Grace, and choir rehearsals. You don't give us mice much of a chance to rest around here! But it's all good!

Add to that the special presentations this month about Messy Church and Dementia Friends; your regular Trustees, PRT, and CMT meetings; people coming in and out of the office every day; and special meetings that we overhear, such as the one about Emmanuel's Closet.

Oh, if the walls could talk here! What sorts of things would they repeat that they've heard you say? Or for that matter, if we could talk understandably to you, what would we repeat that we've heard you say within these walls? lol

And, of course, we always get up early on Sunday mornings to watch all you awesome people come for worship and Sunday School – we get up earlier now that worship starts at 8:45! Then, it seems so quiet on Sunday afternoons around here after all the hubbub of the week and your wondrous voices of praise on Sunday mornings. And when nobody is around on Sunday afternoons, we scamper around feasting on any crumbs that may have fallen from your eating. The little ones, especially, have so much fun doing that!

On a more serious note, even we mice are going to take to heart the Disciples' Challenges that we heard about this month: Spending 15 minutes each day in quiet time with God, and showing at least one of our furry friends each week that our Christian faith is at the core of our words and actions.

We're looking forward to February's Valentine's Dance, Men's Group romantic evening with your spouses, and the Ash Wednesday service.

Happy Heart Month to you all!

Love, Bly and Mire and the always-growing and always-hungry little ones



February Humor:

The choir had come out of rehearsal.

"Am I to assume that you do a lot of singing at home?" Bill Garrison asked a fellow choir member, Roy Greene.

"Yes, I sing a lot. I use my voice to kill time," said Roy. Bill nodded, "You certainly have a fine weapon."

For husbands to ponder on Valentine's Day:

Don't judge your wife too harshly for her weaknesses. If she didn't have them, chances are she would never have married you.

Both humor comments are from The Best of the Good Clean Jokes, Bob Phillips, Harvest House Publishers, 1989



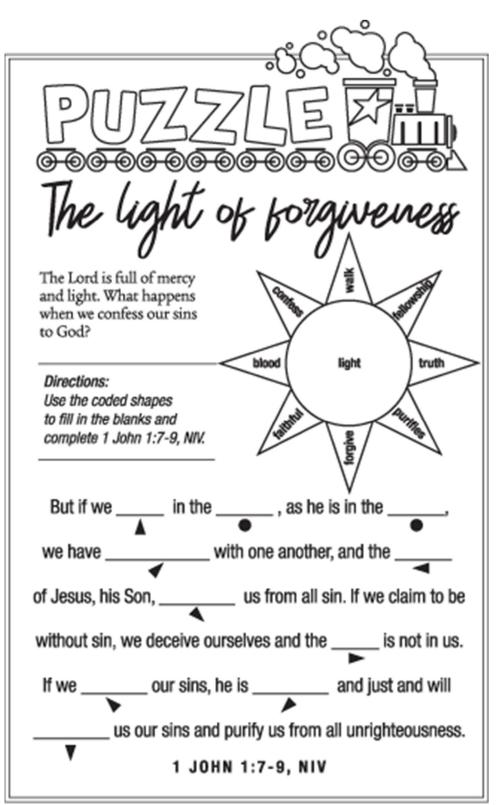
This craft celebrates that now we are light in the Lord (see Ephesians 5:8).

What you need:

- A gallon zip-top plastic bag
- Permanent markers (dark colors)
- Black construction paper
- White cardstock
- Scissors

What you do:

- Draw a self-portrait on the outside of the bag. Add details.
- Insert the black paper and set the bag flat on a table. It should be tough to see your picture now.
- On the white cardstock, draw a picture of a flashlight with a long beam of light coming out. Color the flashlight but leave the beam white.
- Cut out the flashlight and light beam. Place them in the bag, over the black paper. When the white beam covers the black background under your picture, you can see your self-portrait clearly.



Answer walk, light, light, fellowship, blood, purifies, truth, confess, faithful, forgive