

Beacon of Light

January-March 2022 • Volume 5 • Issue 1

Pastor's Corner

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life." John 8:12



What Can We Give God for Lent?

“Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished.” (Luke 4:1-2)

We often think of Lent as a period for giving something up: giving up, perhaps, one of our favorite but most addictive foods. The celebration of “Mardi Gras,” which literally means “Fat Tuesday” in French, ends on the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, signaling that a new period of penitence and fasting is about to begin on the next day.

In the Christian Church, the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday is also referred to as “Shrove Tuesday.” This day was traditionally thought of as the last chance for a bit of food indulgences before beginning forty days of fasting. The annual ritual observance of Shrove Tuesday was also an occasion to use up any foods that couldn’t be eaten during Lent such as eggs, butter, and milk — which helps to explain the Shrove Tuesday custom of the Church Pancake Supper.

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Inspirational Thoughts and Encouragement

Grow in the Light of God's Word

Source: Daily Hope



On your dark days, you need the light of Jesus to change you for the better.

“I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.”—John 8:12

As a vegetable gardener, I can tell you that the more hours of light you have, the bigger your crops will grow. For more than 30 years, I've used a special light bulb for gardening called a grow light. It emits a certain kind of light that causes plants and trees to grow. You use it in areas where there isn't enough light for plants to survive. I planted young redwood trees on the shady side of my house and used the grow lights on them

until they got tall enough to get sunlight on their own. Today those trees are about 40 feet tall.

Light is the key to life. Every plant grows by photosynthesis, which is dependent upon light. Humans depend on light to see and for our body's systems to function normally. No light, no power. No light, no growth. You can't live without light.

What's true of light in the physical realm is also true in the spiritual realm. On your dark days, when the sun is hidden and you can't see the light, you need the light of Jesus to change you for the better.

There are two ways that you change: when you see the light and when you feel the heat. One of those ways is far less painful than the other. If you would just change when you see the light, then you wouldn't have to change when you feel the heat.

Do you want to know what your grow light is? It's God's Word. Studying God's Word will help you grow in your knowledge of God and love for him.

Ephesians 1:16-17 says, *“I pray for you constantly, asking God to . . . give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow”* (NLT). When you know God's Word, his light will flood your heart. Then you'll understand the wonderful future God has promised you. In the Bible, light and life go hand in hand: *“You are the giver of life. Your light lets us enjoy life”* (Psalm 36:9 NCV).

Life is meant to be enjoyed, not merely endured, not just at Christmas but all year long. The key is to live in God's light. That's why Jesus said, *“I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life”* (John 8:12 NLT).

Talk It Over

- What is one way the “heat” of life has changed you? Did you grow spiritually or any other way as a result?
- Why do you need to know the promises God has for you?
- Living in God's light requires staying in God's Word. What changes do you need to make so that you are consistently studying the Bible?



Ebenezer Remembers Those We Have Lost

Death is not a tragedy for those who have faith. There is a finer and much better place where peace, love and joy abide. Since the last newsletter, Ebenezer has lost four of its elder saints. They will be remembered for their faith in Jesus Christ and their faithfulness in participating in the ministries of this church.



Harold & Suella Woodward

Harold Harland Woodard

July 5, 1933—September 28, 2021

Suella Davis Woodard

March 11, 1955—October 13, 2021

A remembrance service was held on Friday, May 11, 2022, at Ebenezer for both Harold and Suella Woodard. They both joined Ebenezer under Rev. Conrad Parker in late 1980. Pastor Venson delivered the Eulogy, and he was assisted by Sis. Carolyn Winbush. A group of Ebenezer members were in attendance, family members, as well as members of Suella's former church, and a previous Choir Director of the Ebenezer Chancel Choir, Pastor Glenda Clay, who delivered musical selections. Bro. Schley Owens delivered a reading he wrote and Rev. Curtis Mitchell gave remarks on his relationship with the Woodards.

Harold Woodard was born in Detroit, Michigan, and raised in Ashville, North Carolina. Bro. Woodard attended A&T College in Greensboro, North Carolina. He served in the U.S. Army and was a member of the U.S. Army Band. He worked for the Prince George's County School System as a Music Instructor for many years and after retirement became a Substitute Teacher and many times working at Thomas Johnson Middle School teaching and keeping many of Ebenezer youths in line.

Bro. Woodard was a member of the Ebenezer Men's Ensemble, a Certified Lay Speaker, a member of the Ebenezer's United Methodist Men, and a Trustee. He served as the original and only Director of the Handbell Choir at Ebenezer. Additionally, he served as the Handbell Director at Lanham United Methodist Church.

Suella Woodard was born in Washington, D.C. Sis. Suella also attended A&T College where she met Harold. They were married for 64 years and died within two weeks of each other.

Sis. Suella taught in the Montgomery County School System for 35 years. After retirement, she returned to teaching in Prince George's County Public Schools for a few years. She was an active and faithful member and served at Ebenezer on the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and acted as Chairperson for a term. She was a Liturgist, a Communion Stewart, an Usher, a member of the United Methodist Women, and additionally served as Youth Leader with Sis Gloria Pickett.

Harold and Suella are survived by a daughter and former member of Ebenezer, Chyerl Ingrid Woodard. (Sis. Chyerl now resides in Raleigh, North Carolina.) Additionally, they leave a granddaughter and former member of Ebenezer Monika Amanda Woodard and one great-grandson, Christian Elijah Bobbitt.

The couple will be remembered for their dedication to the Lord, their obligation to serving and giving back to others, their commitment to teaching, and their loving bond.



Sally Marie Cunningham Parks
November 13, 1929—November 21, 2021

A celebration of life for **Sis. Sally Parks** was held on December 8, 2021, at the J.B. Jenkins Funeral Home in Landover, Maryland. Many Ebenezer members, family and friends were in attendance. The Prayer of Comfort was given virtually by Rev. Ronald Powe of St. Luke CME Church in Nashville, Tennessee. Sis. Bernadette Baily read the Scriptures and Sis. Christine Freeman assisted with the acknowledgement of cards.

During the Reflections, remarks were given by her sons and granddaughters, and the Ebenezer Travel Ministry. Pastor Venson delivered the Eulogy. Sister Parks was laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery with her husband.

Sis. Sally Parks was born in Nashville, Tennessee, and was the second of eight children. She graduated from Pearl High School and later attended Tennessee State University, both in Nashville. At Tennessee State she earned a Bachelor of Science in Education and later earned a Master Equivalent from Bowie State University in Bowie, Maryland.

Sis. Sally met her husband at a YMCA teen get-together. She married Jesters Edward Parks, who preceded her in death in 1994. At the time of his death, they were married for 41 years. They both joined Ebenezer under the late Rev. James Waters in 1975.

Sis. Sally accompanied her husband while he was stationed in Taipei, Taiwan. There she worked as the first African-American teacher at Taipei American School, where she later became Department Chair. After teaching in Taipei for three years, she returned to the United States and taught at Prince George's Community College in Largo, Maryland. In 1965, she began teaching in Prince George's County Public Schools at Central High School in Capitol Heights. She remained at Central High for 25 years, retiring in 1990.

During the years at Ebenezer, Sis. Sally faithfully served for many years as a member of the Finance Committee, the Women's Choir, the United Methodist Women, and the Communion Stewards. Additionally, she assisted with the Acolytes and worked in the church library. She loved to travel and joined the Ebenezer Travel Ministry in every trip that was planned to include the Holy Land, Alaska, and Hawaii.

Sis. Sally was an active lady, belonging and/or volunteering to several organizations in Prince George's County and was a member of the Tennessee State University Alumni Association. She was a warm and generous person who will surely be missed by many.

Those left with a legacy of love and devotion to celebrate her memory are two sons (Gregory Edward Parks of Upper Marlboro and Reginal Anthony Parks of Laurel; one daughter Deborah Marie Brown (Wesley) of Bowie who are members of Ebenezer. Additionally, she leaves three grandchildren (Lezly Adrienne Brown, Ashleigh Nicole Brown Knight, and Reginald Anthony Parks II), one sister, two brothers, and a host of in-laws, nieces, nephews, cousins and many special loving and caring friends.





Edna Lyons Becton-Pittmon
September 9, 1955—December 28, 2021

A celebration of life for **Edna Pittmon** was held on January 14, 2022, at the City of Praise Family Ministries in Landover, Maryland. She was affectionately known as Blondell. Rev. Mark Venson officiated the celebration. Two of her grandchildren read the Scriptures and outstanding musical selections were given by Bro. Benjamin Gates and Sis. Robin Williams. During the Reflections, Sis. Bernadette Bailey delivered a tribute from the United Methodist Women, Sis. Eddimae Tisdale spoke on her friendship with Edna, and her sons gave a tribute to their mother. Sis. Pittmon was laid to rest at National Harmony Memorial Park in Hyattsville, Maryland.

Sis. Edna was born in Washington, D.C. During her childhood, she traveled between Washington and Rocky Mount, North Carolina where she attended public school. As the only child, Edna was close to many cousins and treated them like her brothers and sister.

In 1956, she graduated from North Carolina College (now North Carolina Central University). She later attended Trinity College where she earned a Master of Arts in Teaching Degree. She also took several advance courses at the University of the District of Columbia and Catholic University. Sis. Edna worked as a library media specialist for over 36 years, most of those years she was the librarian at the former Randall Junior High School in Southwest Washington.

Sis. Edna joined Ebenezer in the early 1970's under Rev. R. Frederick Crider, Jr. Upon retirement, she became a very active member and participated in nearly every ministry and/or committee over the years. She attended church regularly and faithfully attended Bible Studies over the years, sometimes assisting Rev. Venson with his Bible classes. She was a Certified Lay Speaker and a Stephen Minister. She was very active

and committed to the United Methodist Women and served as President for a term. She spearheaded the Share Program at Ebenezer since its inception and was always in attendance when it was time to distribute the packages. Additionally, she was the coordinator for the Reading Is Fundamental at James McHenry Elementary School. Edna was always willing to help in any way she could, no matter how large or small the task.

Sis. Edna was married to the late Samuel Becton which ended and they had two sons. In 1982 she married Lynn Pittmon. Sis. Edna was a diehard member of the Delta Sigma Theta. She had a zest for life; God's word, the Bible was very dear to her. She was a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. She was a woman of faith and had a quiet strength that allowed her to endure the illnesses she faced during her earthly journey. Over the past couple of years, being unable to attend church regularly became more difficult to her due to her illness.

Sis. Edna leaves to cherish her memory a loving husband of 39 years, Lynn Pittmon; two sons, Spencer (Angela) Becton, and Stanwyn (Cherie) Becton; four grandchildren: Sidonie, Stefan, Stanford, and Sydnae; two stepchildren, Perez (Kim) Pittmon and Teria Pittman; six step-grandchildren and five great grandchildren, and a host of relatives and friends.



Joseph Hugh Pollard Sr.
February 19, 1931—January 13, 2022

A former member of Ebenezer, **Joseph Hugh Pollard Sr.**, of Clinton, Maryland, passed away peacefully on Thursday, January 13, 2022. Bro. Pollard was a kind and caring person who moved from the area in the late 1980's. He often returned to visit for special occasions and funerals. He served on the Finance Committee and spearheaded the selling of the Ebenezer parsonage. He was a member of Mt. Ennon Baptist Church in Clinton, Maryland.

He leaves to cherish his memory, a loving and devoted wife of 34 years, Julia A. Pollard; one son, Joseph H. Pollard Jr.; two stepsons, Barry A. and Stacy A. (Jill Howlett) Wilburn; two sisters, Veronica Burgess and Myra Morris; one brother, Emanuel Burgess; nine grandchildren; five great-grandchildren and a host of other relatives and friends.

Bro. Pollard was funeralized on Wednesday, February 16, 2022, at Strickland Funeral Services, 6500 Allentown Road, Camp Springs, Maryland, and laid to rest at Maryland Veterans Cemetery in Cheltenham, Maryland.

Submitted by Sis. Gabrielle (Gaye) Patrick



Celebrating Black History Month—February 2022

Zena Howard*BlackAmericaWeb.com*

When the thousands of people heading to Washington, D.C. to visit the National Museum of African American History and Culture, some might not know that a Black woman helped design the sprawling structure. **Zena Howard** took her dreams of becoming an architect as a young girl and is now responsible for bringing forth which might become one of the most significant halls of Black history of culture of all time.

In a recent profile, Howard shared that when she was around seven or eight years of age, she learned what an architect was by way of watching the popular *The Brady Bunch* television series. Howard later entered the University of Virginia, where she earned a bachelor's in architecture.

Among Howard's other designs, such as the Anacostia Public Library in Washington, D.C., and the International Civil Rights Center and Museum, she appears most proud of her work on the Smithsonian project.

Howard, one of the few Black women in her profession, works alongside the American Institute of Architects to promote a gender diversity initiative. At the firm where she works, Perkins+Wills in Research Triangle Park in North Carolina, she is part of an inclusion and diversity committee. She is also a LEED Accredited Professional and is a member of the National Organization of Minority Architects.

**The Beauty Of Little Africa: The History of Black Wall Street***By Brandon Caldwell, Black America Web.com*

Blackness in Tulsa, Oklahoma does not begin and end with the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921. It is thriving, despite years of re-segregation following the death of Jim Crow, redlining, and redistricting. But the residents of the city, particularly those with deep roots and ties to those three days between May 30 and June 1, 1921, remember all too well.

They recall Greenwood, an area of Black abundance, of creation and independence, and the heroes who established one of, if not the model Black economic boomtowns since Reconstruction. Through Hollywood magic, the horrors of the massacre were given new eyes thanks to shows like *Watchmen* and *Lovecraft Country*. But for a generation of Black men, women, and children – Tulsa, Oklahoma wasn't a city in the middle of a state who had gained statehood not long after the turn of the 20th century. Tulsa represented freedom.

The oil boom in the early 1900s brought many from neighboring states such as Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, and more up north to Oklahoma. Following the Civil War, the largest number of Black towns were located in the state. One entrepreneur, O.W. Gurley, wanted to make certain Black people weren't shorted in their chase for an opportunity. He bought 40 acres of land and decided Black settlers would be the main individuals he would sell to. Gurley was born in Arkansas and at the end of the Civil War and waning days of Reconstruction, he and other freedmen ventured northwest to claim land previously owned by Native Americans but the federal government made the land available to settlers who were looking to establish their lives out west. The same Blacks who had walked the "Trail of Tears" of Native Americans as slaves now had an opportunity to own land. Eventually, Gurley and other Black entrepreneurs settled in the Greenwood district of Tulsa, wanting to create as Tulsa-based historian Hannibal Johnson put it, "something for Black people and by Black people."

"It was an economy born of necessity," Johnson told Forbes in 2020. "It wouldn't have existed had it not been for Jim Crow segregation and the inability of Black folks to participate to a substantial degree in the larger, white-dominated economy."

Gurley strongly believed in the circulation of the Black dollar, to the point where when Blacks were routinely denied by white banks and establishments for even entering, Gurley helped them out. One of those early believers was J.B. Stradford, a son of former slaves who later graduated from Oberlin College, obtaining a law degree from Indiana Law School, and established a hotel in Tulsa which became one of the more pristine hotels in the country, Black-owned or not. The Stradford Hotel was the largest Black-operated and Black-guest-only hotel in America, home to a gambling hall, dining room, saloon, and pool hall. It was the mecca for entertainment in Greenwood. Soon after, other entrepreneurs would establish their names in the area. John Williams and his wife Loula would build the Dreamland Theater. Simon Berry built a network of private transportation that brought Black residents from Greenwood through downtown Tulsa. Booker T. Washington, who had a high school named after him in the area dubbed the community, "Negro Wall Street." The white community watching the growth and explosion of Greenwood dubbed it something else: Little Africa.

Gurley continued seeking greater for Blacks in the community and at one point, his portfolio was worth \$150,000. Adjust for inflation and 2020 dollars and we're discussing \$5 million. Former slaves and individuals who believed the Jim Crow South was a dead-end were instead creating the fabled "American Dream" right in the heartland of a country shaking off the tatters of a civil war. There was still a bit of a wealth gap but Greenwood represented modern America far more than any other "small" city.

The Red Summer of 1919, where the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan and white on Black violence began to crack the aura and beauty of Greenwood. By early 1920, tensions between the Black residents and whites who deemed them inferior even with their massive wealth and modern society. It all came to ahead on May 30, 1921.

Dicky Rowland, a 19-year-old Black shoe shiner was accused of sexually assaulting a 17-year-old white elevator operator named Sarah Page. Witnesses saw Rowland enter the elevator with Page, but no sexual assault actually occurred. The mere rumor an assault had occurred enraged a white mob to demand Rowland be handed over to them as opposed to being in the custody of the town's sheriff. Not interested in being intimidated, Black men, mostly comprised of World War I veterans, went to the courthouse, armed to defend Rowland's name. The vets were met by 1,500 whites and later retreated. The show of force by Black residents was enough for whites to begin ravaging Greenwood, shooting Black men, women, and children, firebombing buildings, and more. For two days the massacre raged on. At one point, bombs were dropped on buildings, and in all, over 1,200 houses had been burned to the ground and 35 blocks of Black economic ingenuity and enterprise had been destroyed.

The majority of the 10,000 Black residents who claimed Greenwood as home were now homeless. The Black Oz of the South had been razed and gutted, namely due to jealousy and false witness. Rowland's charges were later dismissed but his name still rings in Tulsa lore. It is widely believed more than 300 Black men, women and children died in the massacre, but in 2020, a mass grave was discovered, potentially unearthing even more horrific tales of the three-day war waged on Black Tulsans in Greenwood.

An all-white grand jury blamed the massacre, not on the white men who caused the destruction but rather the Black residents who were mostly in fear, according to the Oklahoma Historical Society.

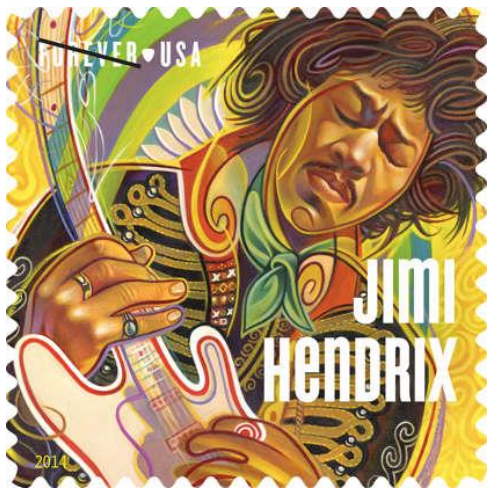
The mythical stature of Gurley, Stratford, and more echoes in the generations who have come after them. Their names are emblazoned on T-shirts and in the case of Tulsa creatives, the heroes of Black Wall Street are gaining a new appreciation in the arts. It would be nearly 100 years before Oklahoma schools would introduce curriculum surrounding Black Wall Street and the Tulsa Race Massacre and even then, they failed to leave out truths about the rebirth after the massacre.

The "reborn" Black Wall Street continued to operate as a bastion for Black business but the trauma of the massacre still permeated through. The rise of integration and government construction cut away at the significance of Greenwood from a financial standpoint. "Urban renewal projects" in the late 1960s and 1970s would strip Greenwood of its uniqueness but the seeds had been planted for a renewed interest in the area.

In 2021, the citizens of Tulsa acknowledge the centennial anniversary of the massacre, of the triumphs by the likes of Gurley, Stratford, Berry and the Williams Family. Of the educators like Dr. Stevie Johnson, who along with Choose Tulsa, hosted a group of journalists from across the country to breathe in the history and importance of Black Tulsa in March 2020. The concept of Black Wall Street isn't gone because the story of Black abundance thrives forever.



10 Black Icons Honored with Stamps by USPS



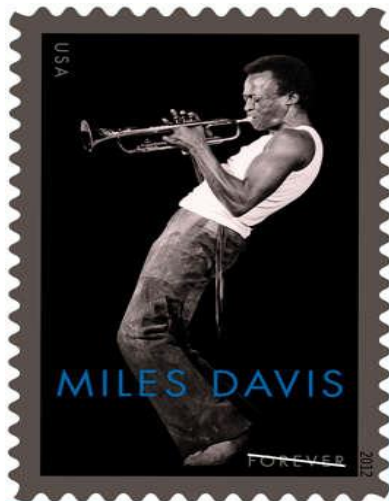
Jimi Hendrix--In 2014, the rock legend scored his own supercool stamp, part of the USPS' Music Icons series and timed to the SXSW festival in Austin. Illustrated by artist Rudy Gutierrez and designed by Greg Breeding, the stamp depicted Hendrix playing one of his white Fender Stratocaster guitars, dressed in one of his famous military-inspired jackets. "While my brother has been cited many times as being among the most influential musicians of all time, the recognition implicit in his being portrayed on a U.S. postage stamp ranks as an unparalleled honor," his sister Janie said at the time.

Rosa Parks—During the NAACP Image Awards in February 2013, civil rights activist Parks' stamp was unveiled. It went on sale on what would've been her 100th birthday, February 4. Parks' stamp was part of the USPS' 2013 civil rights set, which included an ode to the Emancipation Proclamation, and another stamp recognizing the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington.



Ray Charles—Charles was the third person to be honored in the USPS' Music Icons series in 2013, and even had a deluxe CD collection released at various post offices along with his stamp. The image selected was a photo taken by Yves Carrère later in the singer's career. Charles' stamp was celebrated with two concerts: one by Ashanti at the Ray Charles Performing Arts Center at Morehouse College in Atlanta, and another by Chaka Khan at The GRAMMY Museum at L.A. LIVE.

Dorothy Height—The USPS marked Black History Month 2017 with a stamp for Height, one of the 20th Century's most influential voices in the fight for both civil and women's rights. The Richmond native — who served on President John F. Kennedy's Commission on the Status of Women — received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Bill Clinton, and the Congressional Gold Medal from President George W. Bush. Congressman John Lewis was among the luminaries on hand to dedicate her stamp when it was unveiled at Howard University.



Miles Davis—Jazz icon Davis' 2012 stamp was released at the same time as one honoring French singer Edith Piaf, marking a collaboration with the French postal service, La Poste. Unlike many stamps celebrating individuals, these featured the musicians' full bodies, not just their faces. Art director Greg Breeding designed the stamps using black-and-white photos of his subjects, Davis' taken in 1970 by David Gahr.

Ella Fitzgerald—The 30th stamp in the USPS' Black Heritage series featured the "first lady of song," Grammy winner Fitzgerald, and was issued in January 2007. The stamp was illustrated by Paul Davis, and per the Smithsonian National Postal Museum, based on a 1956 photograph of the star.



Althea Gibson—Billie Jean King was among the tennis stars who celebrated Gibson's stamp when it was dedicated in 2013. "Her achievements served as a catalyst for equality in sports and in life and I am honored to participate in this historic event," King said at the time. Gibson was the first Black tennis player to win a Grand Slam tournament, and at one point was the No. 1 player in the world. Her stamp, designed by Derry Noyes, is based on a photo taken of her at Wimbledon that inspired a painting by Kadir Nelson.

Barbara Jordan—The ground-breaking Texas politician was the 34th honoree in the USPS' Black Heritage stamp series, in 2011. Her stamp was based on an oil painting by artist Albert Slark, who based his work on a black-and-white photograph of Jordan. Jordan was the first Black woman elected to the Texas legislature, and first Black woman from the south elected to Congress. She again made history in 1976 when she gave a keynote address at the Democratic National Convention, making her the first woman to do so.



August Wilson—Playwright Wilson's stamp came out in January 2021, weeks after his the critically acclaimed film version of his play *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* was released on Netflix. His stamp, also designed by Ethel Kessler, was based on an oil painting of the Pulitzer Prize winner with a picket fence behind him, a nod to his work *Fences*.

Gwen Ifill—The first Black female journalist to moderate a vice-presidential debate — scored a stamp in honor of Black History Month in 2020. "As a reporter and moderator, Gwen was dedicated to two principles: getting the story right and getting the right stories out." Her stamp dedication ceremony was held at her church, the Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C.



15 Quotes By African Americans To Motivate You In 2022

By adminblkfit

Let these inspiring quotes encourage you to be your best you.

“Never be limited by other people’s limited imaginations.” —Dr. Mae Jemison

“Whatever we believe about ourselves and our ability comes true for us.”—
Susan L. Taylor



“He who is not courageous enough to take risks will accomplish nothing in life.” —Muhammad Ali

“I can accept failure. Everyone fails at something. But I can’t accept not trying.” —Michael Jordan

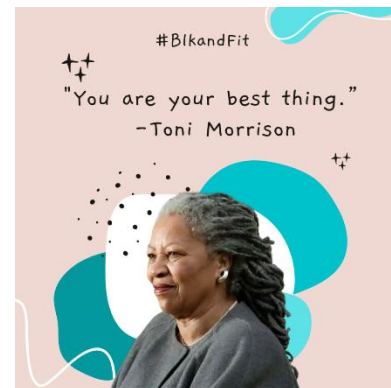
“I am lucky that whatever fear I have inside me, my desire to win is always stronger.” —Serena Williams

“Stretch your mind and fly.” —Whitney M. Young Jr.

“Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.” —Harriet Tubman

“It was when I realized I needed to stop trying to be somebody else and be myself, I actually started to own, accept and love what I had.” —Tracee Ellis Ross

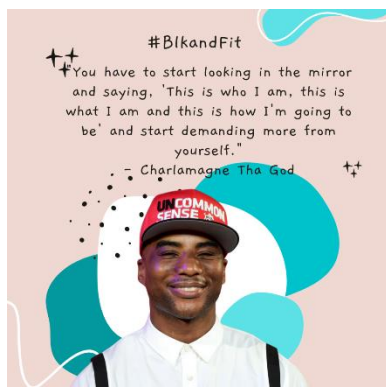
“Challenges are gifts that force us to search for a new center of gravity. Don’t fight them. Just find a new way to stand.” —Oprah Winfrey



“Belief in oneself and knowing who you are—I mean, that’s the foundation for everything great.” —Jay-Z

“If you’re always trying to be normal, you will never know how amazing you can be.” – Maya Angelou

“Luck is when an opportunity comes along and you’re prepared for it.” -Denzel Washington



KIDZ CORNER***Ebenezer United Methodist Church Sunday School Celebrates Black History Month!!***

During Black History Month, the virtual Sunday School highlighted the many accomplishments and achievements of African Americans; we enjoyed many activities, watched “The ABC’s of Black History” video, and played “Black History Bingo”! We also focused on African American leaders, positive role models and the students shared what they wanted to do and be when they grow up.



We learned about the positive contributions of a very brave Miss Ruby Bridges, who, at 6 years old, faced an unruly mob as she boldly walked with police to school in order to integrate the schools in New Orleans. We discussed the many accomplishments of Ms. Angela Alsobrooks, the first African American woman to serve as our Prince George’s County, Maryland, County Executive. We also studied Mr. Frederick Douglass who was born in Maryland and escaped slavery to become an author, national leader, and diplomat who traveled the world speaking out about the atrocities of slavery. Lastly, we were honored by a visit from our own Ms. Imani West, the 2022 Prince George’s County Youth Poet Laureate. Imani read her winning poem, shared how she creates poems, described how her love of poetry started when she was a little girl, provided college advice, and reminisced as she talked about the numerous ministries she participated in while attending Ebenezer United Methodist Church.

On the next few pages, students share what they want to do and be when they grow up.

Naomi Camille Starks



Scientist or Painter

Miss Naomi is pictured with her best friend Bruno. We also see one of her favorite paintings of Bruno painted by Miss Naomi and her mom. Miss Naomi was interviewed by Mrs. Kathleen Jones and asked what she wanted to be when she grows up. Naomi expressed interest in being a scientist, she likes digging up stuff and maybe studying ancient bones. She also loves to paint and might want to be a famous painter someday.



Rosanne Neal



Lawyer

When I grow up I want to be a lawyer because they help you stay out of trouble. They give you advice and help their clients win in court. I also look up to my Mom because she is the best!



Corlissa Avery



Scientist

I would like to be a scientist because I like doing experiments. I look up to Dr. Mae Jemison because in 1992, Dr. Jemison became the first African American woman to travel in space. She has also written several books. I will enjoy being a scientist because I love to invent things that will make life easier, and I also want to make people feel better. To be a scientist I will study biology in college. I will study living things and become a researcher to help people.



Joelle Smith



Reporter or Scientist

When I grow up I would love to be a CNN News reporter or a scientist. I enjoy informing and investigating current events. A scientist is also a career interest because I would love helping others by creating cures for cancers and other diseases.



Bella Randall



Doctor

When I grow up I want to be a medical doctor so I can help people that are sick and make them feel better. I want to be a doctor so I can treat people and little children who have diseases or broken bones. I will need to go to college so I can learn how to be a doctor so I can take care of my patients. Being a doctor will make me happy so I can take care of people.

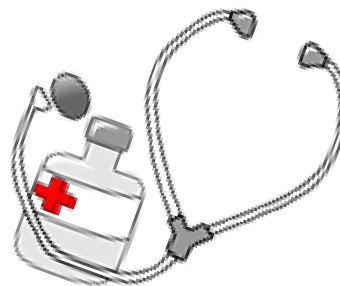


Rotee Neal



Nurse

When I grow up I want to be a nurse. I chose the profession because nurses are very helpful. Their hard work comes from the heart. Being a nurse would make me happy because you can form bonds with the people you love and help other people be loved and take care of them. This profession will help others because I will show compassion when I am attending to my many patients and their needs.



Robert Neal



Fashion Designer

When I grow up I would like to be a fashion designer. I love to put together outfits and help others with clothes. I'm a very creative person. I love to construct and build things. I get my inspiration from Mr. Virgil Abloh, a famous African American fashion designer who was CEO of his own fashion line. He lived in Chicago with his wife and two children. Mr. Abloh passed away in November 2021.



Ms. Imani West

Ms. Imani West lives in Maryland and graduated from Bishop McNamara High School.

Imani West was recently awarded the Prince George's County "Youth Poet Laurette."

She attends Ebenezer United Methodist Church where she sang in the Children's choir, attended camp, participated in plays, and served as an acolyte.

She is currently attending Hampton University located in Virginia.

Ms. Imani West
Prince George's
County, Maryland
Youth Poet
Laurette



Kudos to the children and youth participants, you all did amazing work and we are so proud of all of you!!!



Keeping You Informed**Fact Sheet: Biden Administration Launches Nationwide Test-to-Treat Initiative Ensuring Rapid ‘On the Spot’ Access to Lifesaving COVID Treatments**

Source: HHS.gov, March 8, 2022

As part of President Biden’s National COVID-19 Preparedness Plan (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/covidplan/>) to help America move forward safely, the Biden-Harris Administration is launching a nationwide Test to Treat Initiative this week so Americans can rapidly access needed COVID-19 treatments. Through this program, people who test positive for COVID-19 will be able to visit hundreds of local pharmacy-based clinics and federally-qualified community health centers (FQHCs), and residents of long-term care facilities will in one stop, be assessed by a qualified health care provider who can prescribe antiviral pills on the spot. This ensures that, if people who are at high risk for developing severe disease test positive and if administration of an antiviral is appropriate, they can get treatment quickly and easily. The program is run by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and includes a direct allocation of antiviral pills to participating clinics, centers, and facilities.

“Our mission remains to protect the health and wellbeing of every American,” said HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra. “Tackling barriers to testing and treatments remains a priority for us, including making sure people can access these tools for free, wherever they are, and even if they don’t have health insurance. This important Test to Treat Initiative will help more at-risk people get the care they need if they get sick.”

In addition to vaccines, HHS has worked to invest in and purchase a broad variety of COVID-19 treatments and therapies to help protect Americans from COVID-19. The Test to Treat Initiative will also include new actions to educate the public about the availability of new treatments and the importance of starting them soon after the onset of symptoms; and provide information to health care providers about these new treatments.

A full fact sheet about this initiative from HHS is below.

Fact Sheet: COVID-19 Test to Treat Initiative

The Biden-Harris Administration is launching a new nationwide Test to Treat initiative that will give individuals an important new way to rapidly access free lifesaving treatment for COVID-19. In this program, people will be able to get tested, and – if they are positive and treatments are appropriate for them – receive a prescription from a qualified health care provider, and have their prescription filled all in one location. These “One-Stop Test to Treat” locations will be available at hundreds of locations nationwide, including pharmacy-based clinics, FQHCs, and long-term care facilities. People will also continue to be able to be tested and treated by their own health care providers who can appropriately prescribe these oral antivirals at locations where they are being distributed.

While vaccination continues to provide the best protection against COVID-19, therapies are now available to help treat eligible people who do get sick. The Biden-Harris Administration has invested in a number of COVID-19 treatments, including

two oral antiviral pills – Pfizer’s Paxlovid and Merck’s Molnupiravir – that can help prevent severe illness and hospitalization when taken soon after symptom onset.

The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) already distributes COVID-19 treatments, including oral antivirals, to states and territories for free on a weekly basis. All qualified health care providers can prescribe these therapeutics to patients who are at increased risk for developing severe COVID-19.

Effective March 7, HHS will also begin distributing oral antiviral pills directly to participating Test to Treat pharmacy-based clinics, making more treatments available to more people in more locations. ASPR will also launch a program for long-term care pharmacies to directly order these antivirals to facilitate increased access for eligible long-term care residents who are at increased risk for developing severe COVID-19.

These pharmacy-based clinics and long-term care facilities join hundreds of FQHCs in our hardest-hit and highest-risk communities – these centers will provide access for people to get tested, receive a prescription from a qualified health care provider if appropriate, and have their prescription filled, all at one convenient location.

Building upon the existing distribution of oral antivirals to thousands of locations across all states and territories, the Test to Treat initiative is part of a broader strategy to quickly connect eligible individuals who are at high risk of getting very sick from COVID-19 to appropriate treatments. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is also connecting our nation’s veterans who test positive at VA medical centers directly to treatment. For more information regarding available COVID-19 treatments, visit www.aspr.hhs.gov.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Test to Treat Initiative

What pharmacy-based clinics, health centers, and long-term care facilities have partnered with HHS as part of the Test to Treat initiative?

Some of the nation’s largest pharmacy chains are participating. The participating locations have health clinics inside their stores where qualified health care providers can prescribe these COVID-19 therapies to eligible people who need them. These oral antivirals may only be prescribed by a qualified health care provider. There are also hundreds of FQHCs already participating in our hardest-hit and highest-risk communities, with additional long-term care facilities that serve high-risk residents also coming on board.

Which treatments will participating Test to Treat locations receive?

Pharmacy-based clinics participating in the initiative are eligible to receive the oral antiviral pills from Merck (molnupiravir) and Pfizer (Paxlovid) through direct allocations from HHS/ASPR beginning the week of Mar. 7, 2022.

How does the Test to Treat program work?

Patients will be able to get tested, and -- if they are positive and eligible for treatment -- to receive an appropriate prescription from a qualified health care provider, and have their prescription filled, all in one location. Individuals who receive COVID-19 test results through at-home tests or another testing site can also utilize a Test to Treat location to receive a prescription from a qualified health care provider and treatment on the spot if eligible.

Will there be a Test to Treat site near me?

The initial launch of the Test to Treat initiative includes hundreds of FHQCs, pharmacy-based clinics, and long-term care facilities across the country. HHS will enroll additional sites in the coming weeks as the program launches and expands. In addition to the Test to Treat sites, states and territories will also continue to receive oral antiviral pills available for distribution throughout their jurisdictions.

How will people find Test to Treat sites as more come online?

A federal Test to Treat website is in development with anticipated launch in mid-March.

Will the Test to Treat program reduce the amount of oral antiviral treatments that a state or territory receives?

No, this program will have a separate federal supply that will not impact current state and territory allocations that are going to other sites and providers. The Test to Treat program is not intended to interfere with or supplant existing allocation protocols, but rather to offer more options for places where eligible people can quickly get needed care.

Are pharmacists themselves able to prescribe the oral antiviral pills (Paxlovid and molnupiravir)?

No. The Test to Treat initiative includes sites that have health care providers available to provide timely and thorough assessment and discussion relevant to oral antiviral treatment option(s), consistent with FDA requirements regarding these drugs. The Test to Treat initiative does not change existing requirements for a qualified health care provider to write the prescription.

Can I get oral antivirals through my regular health care provider?

Yes. As has been the case until now, qualified health care providers will continue to be able to prescribe oral antivirals to their eligible patients who are at increased risk of developing severe COVID-19. Patients will be able to pick up those prescriptions wherever antivirals are being distributed.

Can I bring at-home test results to a Test to Treat site for assessment to receive treatment?

Yes. The Test to Treat initiative does not require that an individual is to be tested at the Test to Treat site.

###



10 Money Moves to Start the New Year Right How to boost your financial security in 2022

by Kimberly Lankford

- 1. If you're still working, raise your retirement savings ...**Of all tasks related to financial security, one of the most important is to save more for that time when earnings stop coming in. Using tax-favored retirement accounts is a good choice, and you have more time than you might think to bump up your 2021 contributions: Until April 15, 2022, you can deposit as much as \$7,000 in earnings into a traditional or Roth IRA. (That's the standard \$6,000 limit, plus a \$1,000 catch-up contribution if you're 50-plus.) It's easy to open an account online with a

brokerage such as Charles Schwab, Fidelity, T. Rowe Price or Vanguard. Once that's done, you can think about contributing another \$7,000 for 2022.

2. **... and go automatic.** If you have a 401(k) account available at work and you're not currently contributing, tell your HR department you'd like to start (or resume) having contributions deducted from each paycheck. Already in a plan? Increase your annual deduction another percentage point or two. For further savings, go through your bank or brokerage to make an automatic monthly contribution to an IRA, an emergency saving fund or another account you've created for a onetime need, whether it's a new furnace or a dream vacation. "Automating your savings is the best way to reach your financial goal," says Shay Cook, CEO of Crusaders for Change, a financial counseling firm in Odenton, Maryland. "Not having to think about it is key," she says. "You are more likely to hit your goal than if you have to manually transfer money to the designated account each month."
3. **Reassess your budget.** Another golden rule of financial security: Make sure your monthly spending is less than your monthly income. Your needs may be far different than they were before the pandemic. So take an hour or two to review your outlays: Make a list of all your regular bills, such as your mortgage or rent, insurance, cellphone and utilities. Look at a few recent months of credit card and bank statements to see what you're spending on food, health care and the other expenses in life that are hard to keep track of. "It's easy for things we don't value to get added to our budget over time without us realizing it," says Laura Cuber, a financial adviser in Schaumburg, Illinois. Look for places to cut: small items that add up, recurring charges for services you no longer need, or big changes that could have a major impact, such as moving to a less expensive area.
4. **Make a home movie.** Just in case we face yet another year of natural disasters, inventory your possessions and review your homeowner's or renter's insurance. Use your smartphone to take a video of everything in your home, says Eileen Freiburger, a financial planner in Sebastopol, California. Narrate while taping to give context and to highlight things of value. Open your drawers and closets: "Make sure it's all there so later you aren't trying to guess," she says. Save the file online in case you have to make a claim.

Separately, verify that you have enough coverage to rebuild your home if it's destroyed — a problem after the California wildfires, says Kathryn Peyton, a financial adviser in Sonoma County, California. For a good estimate, she recommends asking a builder about local construction costs per square foot for your type of home.

5. **Consolidate and simplify.** You may have accumulated a variety of retirement accounts from former employers through the years. Track down those accounts and weigh the benefits of consolidating them into one account — an IRA or, if you're still working, possibly your current 401(k). That makes it easier to track required minimum distributions; you might also save money by switching out of high-fee investments in one account into low-fee funds in another. "I'm a really big proponent of trying to consolidate," says Michelle Morris, a financial planner with Brio Financial Planning in Quincy, Massachusetts. "Either you do it while you're still alive, or your heirs will have to find everything."

- 6. Find tax-smart ways to give.** Doing OK financially? Take advantage of giving strategies that benefit you at tax time. Though you usually need to itemize to deduct charitable contributions, a special rule lets nonitemizers deduct \$300 in cash donations (or \$600 per couple) in 2021. If you are at least 70½, you can also save on taxes by making donations directly from a traditional IRA. See “New Rules for Retirement Accounts” for more details.
- 7. Eliminate your paper trail.** Gather together all the old financial and medical documents you no longer need to refer to — and which may be piling up so high you can’t find the ones you really do need — and shred them to protect your personal data from prying eyes. A local government or community organization might do it for free; AARP state offices sponsor shredding days. Find one near you at [aarp.org/\(your state\)/shredding](http://aarp.org/(your state)/shredding). Office-supply chains and shipping stores will shred for a per-pound fee; alternatively, you can buy a crosscut shredder for less than \$50.
- 8. Clear out your flexible spending account.** If you contribute pretax money to a health care flexible spending account at work, you may lose any money you haven’t used by the end of the year. Government rules permit your employer to either give you until March 15 to use your 2021 money or let you carry over up to \$550 in unspent account money to 2022; COVID-era legislation allows even more flexibility, such as letting you spend the cash on over-the-counter medications, not just prescription drugs. So ask your employer about your account’s current rules and deadlines and make plans to spend any remaining money — perhaps updating your eyeglasses, buying a blood pressure monitor or getting physical therapy.
- 9. Review your legal paperwork.** Set aside a few hours to reread your will, power of attorney, estate plans and other legal documents to see if they are up to date and still reflect your wishes. “Are they still relevant based on changes in your family, changes in your residency or changes in your net worth?” asks Tim Steffen, director of tax planning at the investment firm Baird. Check with your retirement plan administrator, any firm holding an IRA of yours and your insurance company (if you have life insurance) to be sure those accounts have the correct beneficiary designations, since they regularly determine who receives any money after your death, even if your will says otherwise.
- 10. Reassess your priorities.** The pandemic has changed many people’s life goals — and financial goals, too. Tim Maurer, a financial planner in Charleston, South Carolina, recommends creating a list of goals you hope to accomplish in 2022, organized in four different categories: relationships, wellness, interests and work. “You’re now ready to apply the financial planning to-do’s that will help you realize your goals,” he says. “When you have clarity regarding what is most important to you in life, your financial decisions can become surprisingly simple.”

Kimberly Lankford has been a financial journalist for more than 20 years. She was the “Ask Kim” columnist at Kiplinger’s Personal Finance, and her articles have also appeared in AARP The Magazine, U.S. News & World Report, The Washington Post, The Boston Globe and other publications. She received the personal finance Best in Business award from the Society of American Business Editors and Writers, and she has written three books.



NASA Supports Research to Advance Earth Science

Editor's note: This feature was updated on Feb. 24, 2022 to correct the dates for the competition's deadline and live challenge event.

Through a new prize competition, NASA is engaging minority serving institutions (MSIs) to bring ideas for new information technologies that will help address climate change. The prize competition, the MSI Space Accelerator, comes from a new partnership between NASA's Science Mission Directorate, the Minority University Research Education Project within the Office of STEM Engagement, NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in Southern California, and Starburst Accelerator in Los Angeles.

The MSI Space Accelerator competition is designed to engage under-represented academic institutions and help NASA make significant advancements in the areas of machine learning, artificial intelligence, and the development of autonomous systems. The best ideas will be awarded up to \$50,000 in prize funding to each institution.

"As we aim for the cosmos, preparing to return to the Moon with the first woman and first person of color, we are exploring every potential and untapped talent right here on planet Earth," said Shahra Lambert, senior advisor for engagement and equity at NASA Headquarters in Washington. "NASA is committed to help address climate change and this competition will join our two most precious resources, Earth and our youth, to work hand in hand to create a more sustainable planet for generations to come."

This prize challenge follows similar competitions recently sponsored by NASA's Science Mission Directorate that foster innovation and encourage cost efficient ways to develop new technologies. The current competition will also include mentoring from autonomous systems experts at JPL, and will feature business accelerator services from Starburst to help align the ideas with NASA goals, provide the competing teams with business acumen, and expose them to venture opportunities and potential customers outside of NASA.

For this pilot challenge, the technical focus is to create systems that operate without human oversight for future science missions. NASA invites participation from minority serving institutions that can offer capabilities in the design and/or demonstration of tools that can perform effective monitoring of such autonomous systems to diagnose problems, and optimize, reconfigure, and recover from failure. These systems should learn and adapt to improve their behavior over time, including acquiring, modifying, and transforming their activities by augmenting their knowledge on how to perform tasks more effectively and efficiently.

The prize competition will be conducted in two rounds. In round one, institutions will submit research papers – due on March 30, 2022 -- that broadly describe the capability being offered and how it might be applied to an Earth observing system need, as well as whether the idea represents an existing product or a concept that still needs to be matured. Judges will select the top 10 papers for advancement to the next round.

Round two is the live challenge event, currently scheduled to be held on May 12, 2022. During the event, the participants are brought together in a pitch day forum to make oral presentations about their ideas to a judging panel of NASA program managers. The judges will select up to three institutions for the prizes, which are comprised of the cash awards, mentoring, and participation in the accelerator program operated through Starburst. Opportunities for follow-on funding are anticipated. NASA's Advanced Information Systems Technology program is planning an open solicitation in the summer of 2023 that will include a topic on autonomous systems for Earth Science. Awards under that solicitation may be worth up to \$1 million per year.

Submitted by Sis. Falvia Coleman



BIRTHDAYS

| January | |
|----------------------|----|
| Marie Fuller | 5 |
| Shauna Douglas | 6 |
| Avis Jenkins | 9 |
| Lynn McGill | 12 |
| Bernadette Miller | 18 |
| Charles Jones | 19 |
| Clayton Butler | 19 |
| Harold (Randy) Smith | 28 |
| Angelei Gibson | 29 |
| Deborah Branch | 29 |
| Joelle Smith | 30 |
| Sidney A. Brown | 25 |
| Daphne Fuller | 25 |

| February | |
|--------------------|----|
| Eric Bell | 1 |
| Alice Jackson | 1 |
| Danielle Branch | 1 |
| Malcolm Maycole | 2 |
| William Murdock | 3 |
| Jaime Winbush | 3 |
| Jocelyn Smith | 4 |
| Joyce Smith | 4 |
| Joanne Barber | 5 |
| Joilyn Smith | 6 |
| Edith Wright | 9 |
| Jalen Butler | 10 |
| Doug Jackson | 10 |
| Naomi Kamara | 11 |
| Janet Sledge | 12 |
| Khia Forbes | 13 |
| Pastor Mark Venson | 13 |
| Betty Bradford | 18 |
| Jobie Bell | 19 |
| Joshua Chinagorom | 23 |
| Angela Brown | 27 |

Every year is another chapter God fills with the plans He has written just for you. Happy Birthday!

| March | | | |
|------------------|----|-------------------|----|
| Rotee Neal | 1 | Sonya Robinson | 17 |
| Linda Porter | 3 | Darrell Jackson | 17 |
| John Grantham | 4 | Stephanie Hazell | 17 |
| Aaron Ware, Jr. | 4 | Alabama Brumskine | 18 |
| Caprice Brown | 6 | Diane Stinson | 19 |
| Eddimae Tisdale | 10 | Bella Randall | 20 |
| Carolyn Winbush | 11 | Kendra Freeman | 21 |
| William Butler | 13 | Bernadette Bailey | 21 |
| Nakita Smith | 13 | Andre Bailey | 22 |
| Melissa B. Riley | 13 | Jackie Tyler-Hope | 24 |
| Cordelia Maycole | 14 | Aaron Ware, Sr. | 28 |
| Jacqueline Bell | 16 | Vernon Bell | 29 |
| | | Brianna Miles | 30 |

ANNIVERSARIES



Wesley and Ellen Watkins
February 11, 1956 - 66 Years

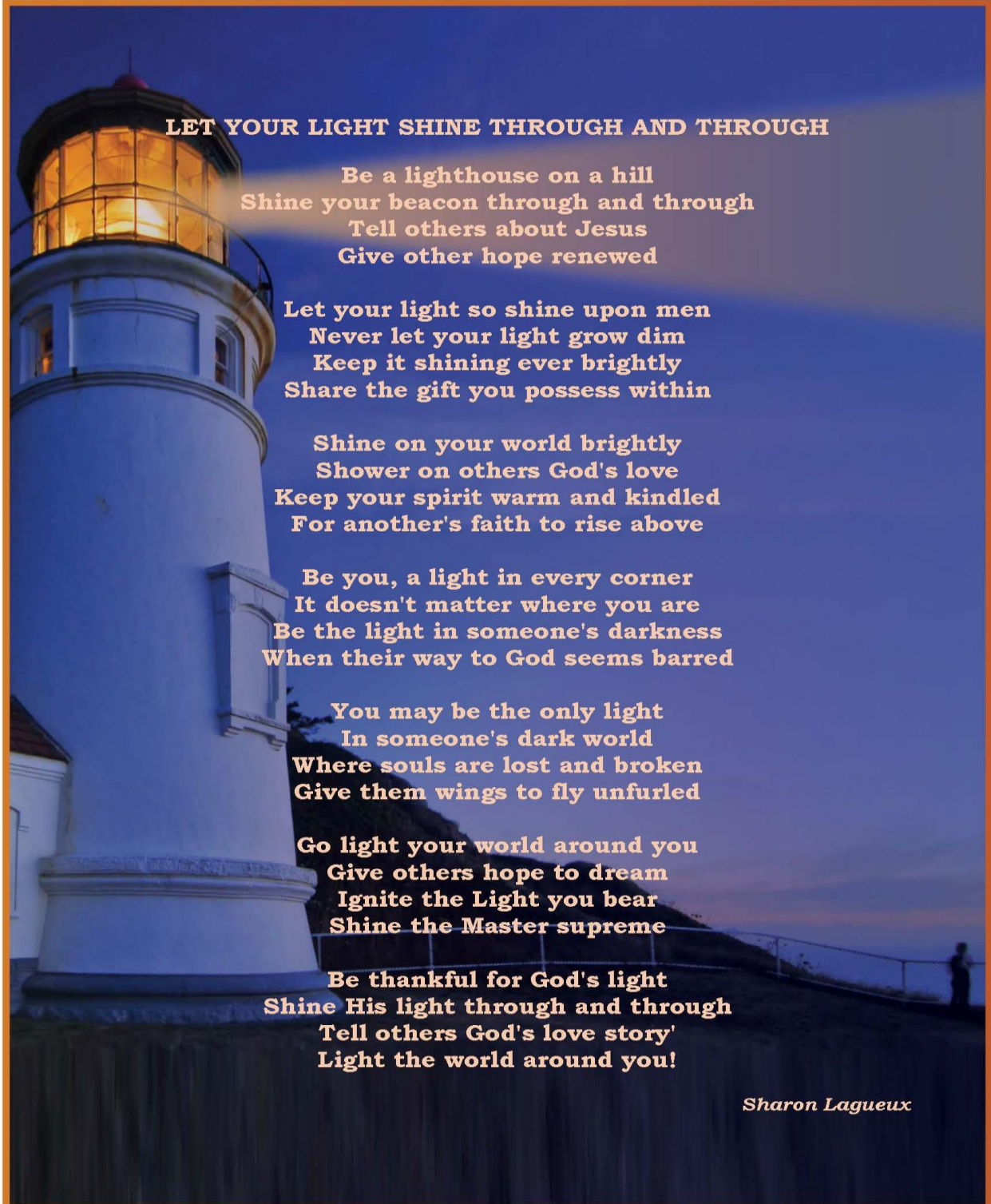


Donald and Alice Jackson
March 30, 1974 - 48 years

May the love you have for one another continue to grow and blossom with each passing year. Happy Wedding Anniversary!



From the Newsletter Coordinator



LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE THROUGH AND THROUGH

**Be a lighthouse on a hill
Shine your beacon through and through
Tell others about Jesus
Give other hope renewed**

**Let your light so shine upon men
Never let your light grow dim
Keep it shining ever brightly
Share the gift you possess within**

**Shine on your world brightly
Shower on others God's love
Keep your spirit warm and kindled
For another's faith to rise above**

**Be you, a light in every corner
It doesn't matter where you are
Be the light in someone's darkness
When their way to God seems barred**

**You may be the only light
In someone's dark world
Where souls are lost and broken
Give them wings to fly unfurled**

**Go light your world around you
Give others hope to dream
Ignite the Light you bear
Shine the Master supreme**

**Be thankful for God's light
Shine His light through and through
Tell others God's love story'
Light the world around you!**

Sharon Lagueux

Sis. Ellalene Barnaby





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*“Now we see but a poor reflection
as in a mirror; then we shall see face to
face. Now I know in part; then I shall
know fully, even as I am fully known.”*

1 Corinthians 13:12

Until we immerse ourselves in the Spirit of God we are poor representations of what we can be...fully alive, vibrant and joyful. Finding a place for God will help you find yourself.

Source: Daily Whisper