



(Photo from 2017)



"SpiritSpark"

**The First Baptist Church
of Manchester Center, VT**

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Pastor: Rev. Rebecca Sommons

APRIL 2021

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR REBECCA

Dear Church Family,

I saw some tiny purple crocuses popping up in the flower bed of the bank near our church. They are such a hopeful sight ~ a bright splash of color against the browns and grays of early spring (aka mud season). There are robins hopping around our yard, and the snowbanks are finally melting. I am thankful that we live in a place that experiences such diversity in our seasons. Each time they change, I am reminded of the wisdom of God's design and His faithfulness in sustaining our world.

Perhaps April is a good time to thank God for the ways He's kept us and brought us through the long winter. We can send up praise for each sign of spring and new life that we notice whether in nature or in our own lives. Maybe we can even think of our heart like a garden and God as the Master Gardener. Bulbs He's planted may be starting to grow. Weeds that choke out those plants have been pulled as we surrendered to the Lenten challenges. Maybe this Easter, we will catch a glimpse of the beautiful work God's been doing in our lives. Truly, when we trust God enough to lay down our life, He shares His resurrection power to allow our true self to live, becoming more gracious and fruitful.

It's possible that our feelings could be fluctuating between energetic hope and weariness. Jesus understands what it is like to live in this world and face its challenges. When we are tired, we can rest in Him. When we feel enlivened by the Spirit, we can move in harmony with God's will. Both are part of a life of worship, connected to the life-giving flow of God's love.

*“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener... you are the branches.
If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit;
apart from me you can do nothing.”
John 15:1, 5*

May we grow and flourish for God’s glory and delight,
Pastor Rebecca

MARY MARTHA FELLOWSHIP

At the last meeting we learned that the vestry floor will be cleaned and refinished as soon as the discolored tiles are replaced. Plans are proceeding to replace the curtains and curtain rods in the vestry. The Fellowship designated \$200 for this purpose.

MMF usually meets the day before Easter to prepare the bouquets for the cross but due to the pandemic, Judy Koch will be decorating the cross with greens and multi-colored flowers for the beautification of the sanctuary and then to be placed in the front door of the church for the community to enjoy.

People are invited to bring a plant or flowers to church for Easter in memory or in honor. I will try to get a sheet typed up listing your names and loved ones to be included in the bulletin after Easter. Rebecca will be gone that Sunday, the 11th. NO LILIES, PLEASE !

Our next meeting will be held on the second Sun of April, the 11th at 9:00 A.M
Martha Thompson, secretary

TWO-HUNDRED FORTY YEARS CELEBRATION OF FBC

Invitations have been sent out to former pastors with a great response. Joe Huse will participate via zoom, Dick and Paula Olmstead will attend, as will Steve Jewett. Pat Crough has gotten back, but no firm plans on how he will participate. Debbie Kamm will send a greeting. Betty Wright-Riggins will participate, but not sure how at this time. Bob and Martha Carpenter will attend if Bob's health permits and Rod and Jill Birney expect to attend also.

As part of the celebration, there will be an open house, cake for the community and weather permitting, a picnic lunch. The worship service will incorporate the pastors taking different parts and special music. Please save this special day, June 27, 2021 to be part of this remarkable anniversary.

DIACONATE COMMITTEE

Please continue to give to the fellowship fund. There are significant needs inside of our church family. We help families pay bills and pay for essentials like groceries and gas. Anything that you are able to give is very appreciated. Our Maundy Thursday/Good Friday Service will be on Thursday 4/1 and the Easter service will be on 4/4. Judy Johnson McGraw will be baptised on Easter Sunday! Pastor Rebecca will be away for the two Sundays after Easter and we have great people who will be preaching for us!

Our next meeting is April 23 at 11am.
Kelsey Towslee, Secretary

PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE

Attendance is down at AA groups and we reduced the rent to \$50/month for the group meeting at noon on weekdays. The weekday morning group will continue to pay \$100 a month. The two groups that meet once per week (Sundays & Tuesdays) will pay \$25 a month. We will revisit this "when we are back to whatever normal is".

Jim Lincoln has volunteered to be on the Window Committee.

Railing on the left side of the ramp was discussed and Lorraine will get an estimate.

There will be a quarterly audit for Missions and forms have been created. The first audit will be in early/mid April. Missions and Benevolence accounts will be combined as of April 1st as they are all part of Missions. There seems to be a lot of confusion. The Local Missions Committee will become the FBC Missions Committee. Their outreach is more than just local which is also causing confusion among some.

Lisa H and Lorraine W took pictures of the stained vestry tiles to send to get estimates – Lorraine has not had a response from Manchester Carpet Care.

Church Cleaning – Sign up in vestry – Maurie volunteered to help with getting people to sign up for the spring cleaning list. Lorraine said she will ask Lindy to help.

At our last meeting, the subject of the use of the church building was brought up for discussion. Is there a building use policy? Lorraine said she would look into it. Together with Rebecca, they found two different policies. One seemed to be an older one. The Prudential Committee reviewed the latest one and made necessary changes as deemed required. It was voted on and accepted as corrected.

The programmable thermostat for the sanctuary will be installed by GSK. Lisa Hess is contacting them to do so.

Installation of smoke detectors and emergency lights is on hold until we hear when they can be installed. So far the company has been unresponsive to our calls/emails from Lorraine and Lisa. Lisa will call Dee's Electric and GSK to get an estimate for comparison.

Lindy Mylot, Bryan Richheimer and Jim Lincoln have volunteered to be on the stained glass window committee.

The front door and trim need painting. Ballpark figure for the front and sides of the church is \$8000. John Grover from Arlington is certified in lead paint and he will send a quote. Cody Clark painted the parsonage barn and he is giving us a quote including one for the choir room ceiling and hallway. Lux Brush is sending a quote after their March 25th visit.

The front doors need carpentry work. Water in the wall above the main entryway is coming in and rotting the wood which is pulling away from the building. We asked for estimates from Lux Brush, Cody Clark, and John Grover. Once we get the estimates we will be able to determine where the funds will come from. We may have to complete the work in sections.

Lorraine emailed Lifeline Screening regarding the use of the building in June per their request. The Prudential Committee approved their use, but Lorraine has not heard anything back.

We need to replace the cabinet in vestry being used by AA or at least add "feet". The cabinet is staining the floor from moisture. We will keep our eye out for a new cabinet at Habitat and the Thrift Store.

Ashley Hess will replace Jeremy Crumb on the Reopening Committee.

Ashley Hess volunteered to assist at Sunday Service in Jeremy Crumb's place as technical/soundboard operator as needed. She is also willing to work with Russ on the church's website and possibly taking on the task at such time Russ wishes to relinquish the role.

Dottie Sundquist, Secretary

CABINET NEEDED

The Prudential Committee is looking to replace the cherry cabinet that is currently in the vestry and is currently being used by the AA groups. When it gets wet on the bottom the stain comes off onto the floor tiles which stains the tiles. We will be replacing the tiles, but it will be awhile before that can be done. If the current cabinet is put back there after replacing the tiles and the bottom gets wet, it will only stain again, thus wasting our money used to replace the tiles. We need something with "feet" or "legs" to get the cabinet off the floor. Ideally, a medium to dark oak would be great, but we can make something else work. It doesn't have to be quite as big. It should have shelves inside. Since I have not measured it, I would guess it should be about 36"- 40" in width, maybe 30" high and 16" deep. (Only estimates.) Any help in finding something to replace the current piece would be greatly appreciated.

Lorraine Wilkins, Prudential Chairperson

MISSION COMMITTEE

Thank you for your gifts to the Missions Fund. Unless you designate otherwise, half of your offering will continue to go to United Mission Basics and the remaining half will stay with the FBC Mission Committee to use at their discretion.

The Mission committee continues to support Leon in Zimbabwe and Jeni in Thailand.

Our African project for Rwanda has over \$800.00 which we will save as we collect more gifts and give at the end of 2021. Thank you for ongoing funds.

We received expressions of thanks for our gifts in February to United Counseling and to The Fold, in Lyndonville, Vermont, which is for at risk teens.

Thank you to Dottie Beers for presenting our Mission Moment for America for Christ which talked about equipping the saints.

In March we gave to Neighbor to Neighbor and the Arlington Food Shelf.

April's effort is to continue support for International Missionary, Jeni Penzinski.

In May we look forward to joining World Vision's Global 6 Kilometer For Water. Consider taking a 3 mile, or so, walk on Saturday, May 22nd for clean water! Sponsors will receive a T-shirt.

Our next meeting is Wednesday May 12th, 2021 at 3 pm.

Submitted by Linell Pike, Secretary

NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR

The Steering Committee of Neighbor to Neighbor is creating a protocol so the organization can resume offering rides to our care recipients. Many of our volunteers and most of our care recipients have been vaccinated. As the situation improves the hope is that Neighbor to Neighbor can soon start our once-a-month events.

~submitted by Martha Thompson

THE INTERFAITH COUNCIL OF THE NORTHSHIRE

Treasurer Bill Drunsic reported that surprisingly few requests have been made to the Emergency Needs Fund. It is presumed that as things open up more, there will be a greater need for funds.

We were reminded that anyone who has been affected by the pandemic in any way is encouraged to participate in a program called "Everyone Eats". This a statewide sponsored project that provides meals through local restaurants once a week. Here in Manchester meals are available on Wednesday at the Food Shelf and also in Arlington at the Federated Church.

Plans are underway for a Sunrise Service to be held on Easter morning, April 4, 2021, 7:00 A.M. at Dormy Grill on Union Street. Rev. Jordan Dickinson and our own Rev. Rebecca Sommons are planning this service.

~submitted by Martha Thompson

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CORNER

The Christian Education Committee took a group of youth and adults to The Chocolatorium for a chocolate bar making event. The kids were able to learn about chocolate making and make their own chocolate bar with a choice of fillings. It was a fun event that we hope to try again in the future. Also in March, we shared the movie *Breakthrough* via Zoom.

The adult Sunday School class continues to meet each Sunday morning in the vestry and via Zoom at 9:30. The class, led by Jeremy Crumb, is working through the series *The Good Book*, available on RightNow Media. The class will not meet Easter Sunday or Mother's Day. Also, please note that on the second Sunday of the month, the group meets upstairs in the conference room instead of the vestry.

Stay tuned for details about a trivia game night planned for April. This event will be held virtually.

For His Glory,
Annie Crumb

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Church Office Hours 9:30-12:30 AM on Tuesdays and Wednesdays

Pastor Rebecca's e-mail address: rebeccasommons@gmail.com

Pastor Rebecca's cell phone: (802) 688-3024

Church office Phone: (802) 362-1555

Pastor Rebecca continues to remain open and eager to meet with church family. These get-togethers have taken a different look as they have moved away from set office hours. She has, instead, met on an as needed basis. She is happy to meet with you in person, over the phone, or through zoom. When the weather is good, she often meets people outside and talks while taking a walk. She is open to any ideas you may have. Pastor Rebecca's phone number and email are included here. Feel free to reach out to her anytime throughout the week. (802) 688-3024 rebeccasommons@gmail.com

CHURCH EVENTS

Thursday, April 1: Interfaith Council Meeting 11:45 am via zoom

Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service 7 pm in-person and via zoom

Saturday, April 3: Easter Egg Hunt at the Town Green 9 am -noon

Sunday, April 4: Sunrise Service at 7 am at the Dormy Grill Porch

Worship Service at 10:30 am in the sanctuary and via zoom

Tuesday, April 6: Prayer Group and Book Study on chapter 6 at 7 pm via zoom

Thursday, April 8: Prudential Meeting at 4 pm in the vestry and via zoom

Sunday, April 11: Mary and Martha Meeting at 9 am in the vestry and via zoom

John Brigham speaking in church

Mission Moment Update on Jeni Pedzinski

Tuesday, April 13: Prayer Group at 7 pm via zoom

Wednesday, April 14: Missions Meeting in the church vestry at 2 pm

Sunday, April 18: Cara Davenport speaking in church

Tuesday, April 20: Prayer Group and Book Study on chapter 7 at 7 pm via zoom

Wednesday, April 21: Seeking God Together at 11 am via zoom

Friday, April 23: Deacon Meeting at 11 am via zoom

Saturday, April 24: Jeopardy Virtual Game Night Activity at 7 pm via zoom

Tuesday, April 27: Prayer Group at 7 pm via zoom

Thursday, April 29: Church Anniversary Celebration planning meeting at 4:30 pm in the vestry

Christian Ed. Committee Meeting at 7:30 via zoom

FLOWERS

April 4: Maurie Hill (in memory of Millie Hill)

April 11: Martha Thompson (in memory of Matt Thompson)

Lois Squires (in memory of Nadine Hayes)

April 18: Peggy Brockett (in memory of Edith & Willard Thompson)

April 25: Jim West (in memory of Lewis West)



The First Baptist Church would like to extend sympathies to the family of Wayne Norse. Wayne, Lindy Mylott's brother and Lois Squires' nephew, was well-known and well loved by his many friends and relatives. His family thanks us for our prayers throughout this time and grateful that he is at peace in the arms of the Lord.



Many of us remember Robert and Janet Taylor who were members at FBC since 2007. We looked forward to their summer visits each year and most of us will remember our first time seeing Bob come through the church door dressed in his Abraham Lincoln attire as he did each summer!

Over the past few months, my attempts to reach out to them failed and I lost touch. Then, I happened to see a post on Facebook by a Suzie Taylor-Meadows and realized that she was a relative. I was able to connect with her.

She expressed how much Bob and Janet loved their Vermont church and she gave me permission to share with you.

Susie, who is a niece and became their adopted daughter after her own parents died, told me that Janet passed away two days before Thanksgiving (November 24, 2020) and Bob passed away two days before Christmas (December 23, 2020).

Here is what Susie wrote about their final year.

“They moved to assisted living near Dallas, where Daryl lives. Unfortunately, the lockdown happened shortly after they moved in. Daryl was able to deliver things they needed plus donuts every Sunday. There were a few distanced visits once hospice was ordered. We believe they passed in peace and of course happily welcomed home to heaven.”

She sent this photo taken on Bob’s 90th birthday, He would have been 97 years old on March 22nd.

