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"SpiritSpark"



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

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Pastor: Rev. Rebecca Sommons

AUGUST 2021

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR REBECCA

Dear Church Family,

I've just finished reading a book on Sabbath by Wayne Muller. I enjoyed waking up and starting my day with some reading about Sabbath and poetry before breakfast and my usual devotional reading in Scripture. This practice helped me to be more centered and thoughtful about my day, so I could hear the Holy Spirit's invitations.

Sabbath can hold many delights, but its core is about resting in God and savoring all God has given us. I actually found that engaging Sabbath was more challenging when I was alone, which was much of July, than when I shared my life with my husband. Since many of you also live alone, I wanted to let you know that I sympathize with you if you succumb to the temptation to fill up empty space with noise and information. Yet, I think there is a better choice we can make. Being present with God,

perhaps on a walk or resting under a tree, and being present with other people when they are available is much more soul-filling than watching TV or spending time on the internet.

If you would like to be courageous enough to slow down, be still in your spirit, and experience the delight of Sabbath, I encourage you to intentionally turn off technology for a day each week. Soak in the beauty of God found in nature and the beings God created. One day, I took off my shoes and socks and waded into the brook behind our house, sitting on a rock and letting the cool water flow over my feet and all around me. Nothing virtual can restore a person like a real encounter can. This morning, I took a walk on Raymond road in the shade of tall trees, and God gave me the blessing of having a little foal named Halo come over to the fence and let me pet his nose. What blessing might God have in store for you when you choose to experience Sabbath?

Now the promise of entering into God's rest is still for us today. So we must be extremely careful to ensure that we all embrace the fullness of that promise and not fail to experience it.

Hebrews 4:1



Grace and Peace,
Pastor Rebecca

DIACONATE

Pastor Rebecca announced that there would be an AA Recovery Service on August 4, 2021 to remember those lost during the pandemic and encouragement for those who relapsed during that time.

There was discussion about restarting a men's group at our church. There will be a meeting of interested persons on August 21st at 9:00 A.M. to help decide if there is interest and how it will look.

Rebecca also proposed having a movie night twice a month in the fall showing "The Chosen" followed by a discussion period.

The next Diaconate meeting is scheduled for August 25, 2021 at 7:00 P.M.
~submitted by Martha Thompson

The Diaconate is planning the worship service for August 15th. It will be a hymn sing. Please sign up on the sheet in the vestry or send an email to barbnjim23@comcast.net with your favorite hymn. If possible, please include why it is your favorite hymn.

MARY AND MARTHA FELLOWSHIP

Our next meeting will be in person on September 12, 2021 at 8:30 A.M. We will have some refreshments, but we may still be on the 9:30 A.M. worship time so only light refreshments will be served.

For many years MMF has collected an offering for Love Gift which was an additional support to missionaries. The American Baptist Convention no longer collects this money, but we have continued to collect a Love Gift Offering. The money now is divided with 75% going to our local church mission committee and 25% going to American Baptist Women and Girls.

See below for news of a Ham Take-Out Dinner in August!
~Martha Thompson, Secretary

HAM TAKE-OUT DINNER THURSDAY, AUGUST 12 5:00-6:30 PM

Mary & Martha Ham Dinner

Mary & Martha Fellowship is holding a Ham Dinner on Thursday, August 12th with take-outs only. Menu: ham, home baked beans, potato salad, broccoli salad, roll, and brownie. The price will be \$12. Reservations can be made by calling Lisa Towslee at 362-3076. If you are willing to provide food items and/or help out that day, please contact Lorraine at 645-9525 or Lisa at 362-3076. Dinners may be picked up at the Bonnet Street door between 5 and 6:30 P.M. We will serve until sold out. Why cook on a hot August night when someone else can do it for you!

PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE

The Prudential Committee met on July 22nd.

Pastor Rebecca shared a **request**, for our congregation and other communities that meet here, for a service to help deal with losses during the pandemic and in the past few years. Rebecca will be available and Jim Holden will play a song. Service will be held on August 4th at 5:30pm.

Old Business: The next quarterly **audit** has been scheduled.

Church cleaning was “a bear” to get done before the 240th Anniversary Celebration. With help from Maurie, Arden, Lisa Towslee, Ashley Hess, and Lorraine, it eventually got done. Ray and Judy covered the expense of cleaning the carpet in the Sanctuary, Mary & Martha covered the stripping and waxing of the vestry floor, and the church covered the expense of having both stairways cleaned. It was shared that the carpet in the History/Choir room is probably no longer protected for wear given its age. It has not been cleaned as it was under construction at the time of the celebration. Because of the cost of carpet and maintenance of them, maybe wooden stairs would be an alternative in the future. Perhaps a more regular floor cleaning schedule would be a great idea to keep all floors in good shape. New vinyl floors are very difficult to clean (kitchen/ downstairs bathroom). Given the availability of people to regularly clean the church, perhaps it's time to revisit having someone clean the church, even for a few hours a month.

Not a surprise to anyone to find that the church has **resident mice** who need to be relocated. We have tried traps, but have not caught any. However, it is VERY evident that mice are all over the church. Lorraine will contact Orkin to have them help with the situation and see if we can get it under control. We will try this for one year and reevaluate.

Update on painting/repair. Front of the church is complete. The Sanctuary wall WAS done.

History/Choir Room ceiling/ walls are also done. If you have not had a chance to see this room yet, it's worth the trip upstairs. Thank you to Mary & Martha for the curtains! Cody Clark and his helper, Denver, painted over the stairs and the adjacent window sill in the History/Choir Room at no cost! They just wanted to do something nice for our church. They have also repaired the **roof on the west side** of the second floor over the windows between the Health Center and our building. The damage was compromising our trusses. It obviously had not been touched in decades. The slate on the Sanctuary has again been a problem causing water damage in the sanctuary. Mike Taylor from Total Restore has been back and fixed the roof. (A hole) Our insurance company has been notified and an adjuster has been to take pictures. Waiting to hear from them. Cody had said he would come back when the roof got fixed to repair/repaint the wall. Lorraine will contact him.

The **Sanctuary roof** is in need of replacing. A committee will be formed to look into options and report back to the Prudential Committee and then discuss with the whole congregation. Lorraine will chair, but wants help in exploring options.

Some people have asked for a **railing** to be installed on the Bonnet Street entrance. Lorraine started exploring this. She found out that it has to be 42” high for it to be ADA approved and 12” back from where it meets the sidewalk. The inside of the door handle had to be replaced on the Bonnet Street Door, which Cody repaired at no cost. We just paid for the materials. Door was also adjusted so it closes more easily. Bryan volunteered to repair the white **railing in the History/Choir Room** and secure it with screws or with a plate to eliminate wiggle and then paint it. Lorraine has offered to get **new chairs** for the History/Choir Room. We decided to move chairs from the office conference table to the choir room instead if there is a need for a larger meeting space upstairs.

In May we were supposed to get a **new copier**, but it was caught in the Suez Canal embouteillage. It is due to arrive in mid- August. Lisa Hess knows how to fix the current copier when it is broken, or if not, she can call to have it repaired.

Stained Glass Windows: Joe and Jim may be able to replace the outside window panes to help with insulation and appearance. Joe Mylott has one piece of insulated glass for one window. May do the one window this year and see how it works. Jim would like to request to take one of the damaged **stained glass panes** out to try to match the color and paint the stained glass ones that have been washed and subsequently damaged.

New Business: When the new line item was added this year to pay Jeremy for **technology support**, there was not a discussion to pay a **substitute** when Jeremy is unable to be in church on Sunday. It was voted to pay a substitute \$50.

Martha Thompson was granted **permission** to once again begin holding **Neighbor-to-Neighbor** meetings in the Vestry once a month.
Next meeting is Thursday, September 9th at 4:00 PM in the Vestry.

Lorraine Wilkins, Chairman



NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR

Neighbor to Neighbor held the drawing of raffle prizes on July 14th. It was a very successful event and over \$8000 was made. Thank you to anyone who purchased tickets!

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

In July, the Christian Education committee planned an all church picnic at the Rec Park. Looking ahead, the CE committee will host an afternoon of apple picking for the youth on September 18th from 1-3. We will pick at Mad Tom Orchard and then bake an apple treat in the vestry.

On October 9th, we will host an all church movie night with the film The Girl Who Believes in Miracles. Also in October, we are planning a pumpkin painting event for the youth on the 23rd from 1-3. We will select pumpkins at Equinox Valley Nursery and then paint them in the church vestry.

In Christ,
Annie Crumb



Great picture of Bryan Richheimer at the church picnic held at the Recreation Center.

(Thank you, Cara Davenport, for the photo!)



The church prayer team has 23 members who have agreed to respond to requests for prayers. These requests can be made by emailing your request to fbchurchatprayer@gmail.com. There is also a link on our website www.fbcmanvt.org. Our website receives requests from around the world. Since we started the prayer team in 2016, we have prayed for over 1000 requests for prayer. If you interested in being part of the prayer team, speak with Pastor Rebecca.

OUR CHURCH IS PRIVILEGED TO BE ABLE TO OFFER
OUR FACILITY TO THE FOLLOWING AA GROUPS EACH WEEK.

Breakfast with Your Higher Power Group: Mon-Fri from 7:30-8:30 am (open group)

Equinox Group: Mon – Fri from Noon to 1:00 (open group)

Primary Purpose Group: Sunday 7:30 -8:30 pm (closed gr

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

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 listed above. Feel free to reach out to her anytime throughout the week.

CHURCH EVENTS

Sunday, Aug. 1: Communion in the morning worship service

Tuesday, Aug. 3: Missions Meeting at 3 pm in vestry

Tuesday, Aug. 3: Prayer Group via zoom

Wednesday, Aug. 4: Service of Remembrance and Potluck at the church at 5:30 pm

(Pastor Rebecca will be in Maine visiting her parents from August 9 - 15).

Tuesday, Aug. 10: Prayer Group via zoom at 7 pm

Thursday, Aug. 12: Mary and Martha Ham Dinner (take out)

Sunday, Aug. 15: Hymn Sing at Church for the morning Service

Tuesday, Aug. 17: Prayer Group via zoom at 7 pm

Wednesday, Aug. 18: Seeking God Together (meeting in person at 11 am)

Wednesday, Aug. 18: Christian Ed. Committee Meeting at 7:30 pm via zoom

Thursday, Aug. 19: Choir Practice at 7 pm

Saturday, Aug. 21: Men's Group Meeting at the Church at 9 am

Sunday, Aug. 22: Mission Moment during service (United Missions Basic)

Tuesday, Aug. 24: Prayer Group via zoom at 7 pm

Wednesday, Aug. 25: Deacon Meeting at church at 7 pm

Thursday, Aug. 26: Choir Practice at 7 pm

Friday, Aug. 27: Street Fest from 6-9 pm

Tuesday, Aug. 31: Prayer Group via zoom at 7 pm

FLOWERS

Aug 1: Lisa Hess / Lisa's Birthday and Charles Towslee's birthday (Dad)

Aug 8: Jim & Cathy Comar / Judy Comar

Aug 15: Lisa Hess / George & Lisa's anniversary and Kelsey Towlsee's birthday

Aug 22: Carol Lattuga / Charles Moore

Aug. 29: Jackie Perry



The First Baptist Church Family would like to extend their love and prayers to Jim and Cathy Comar and family on the passing of Cathy's mom, Mary Jean Pierce, who went to be with the Lord on July 3rd, 2021 and to Steve and Kathy Jewett and family on the passing of Kathys's mom, Jeanne Wood, who went to be with the Lord on June 25th, 2021.