



“SpiritSpark”

The First Baptist Church
of Manchester Center, VT

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Pastor: Rev. Rebecca Sommons

DECEMBER 2019

MESSAGE FROM PASTOR REBECCA

Dear Church Family,

The first message for our Advent series is called *The Promise*. As I prepare for it, I am meditating on what it means for God to be committed to bringing lasting peace to our world. All of the beautiful aspects of Christmas – the lights, the songs, the story of Christ’s birth, the gifts, delicious food, and time together with people we love can fill our hearts with joy. Yet, there are those who do not get to enjoy these beautiful things and their hearts hurt all the more at this time of year. The sadness that exists just beyond the circle of light encroaches on our sense of peace. There is still so much to be healed and made right in the world.

Celebrating the way God kept his promise by sending his Son as a most precious and vulnerable baby can renew our hope as it reminds us that God will also keep the promise of bringing everlasting peace. This peace will bring love and well-being to everyone who welcomes Emmanuel, God with us. May our hearts be open wide with anticipation for the ways that the Spirit of God will bring God’s

peace to us, to our community, and to our world this Christmas season. May we raise a confident, “Amen” to God’s promise, trusting God’s timing to be wise and perfect.

*“For all of God’s promises find their ‘yes’ of fulfillment in Jesus Christ.
And as his ‘yes’ and our ‘amen’ ascend to God, we bring him glory!
He knows we are his since he has also stamped his love over our hearts
and given us the Holy Spirit like an engagement ring is given to a bride –
a down payment of the blessings to come!”
2 Corinthians 1:22,24 (TPT)*

We have been given the gift of the Christ Child and the Holy Spirit. Now we await the final chapter of God’s story, when we will enjoy the glory of being in his presence forever. The purpose of Advent is to prepare our hearts for his coming. May it be soon!

Love in Christ,
Pastor Rebecca



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Save the Date: The Christmas Coffee House is happening December 14th at 7:00 pm. Share some fellowship and Christmas stories, songs, and desserts. Look for the sign-up sheet in the vestry for bringing cookies, hot chocolate, tea, small plates and napkins, and hot beverage cups, or a favorite holiday treat you would like to share. We look forward to seeing you!

Friday December 20th, we have the opportunity to work at St. Paul’s Church packing boxes for families in need during the Christmas season. The boxes will be filled with food, wrapped gifts, and clothing. This annual effort typically yields 200 boxes, so volunteers are needed.

The printer cartridge donation box is in the vestry. Our youth group earns \$4 for each empty cartridge that is recycled. We have to fill the box before sending it in, so please bring in your used cartridges from personal home printers.

Respectfully Submitted,
Annie Crumb

HIGHLIGHTS from the PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE

Nov. 19, 2019

We have a sink in Joy Hall!

The work on the organ is complete. More details are forthcoming.

An energy audit of our church building has been completed

We are applying for energy grants to help with the cost of improving our insulation, and other steps to reduce our heating costs.

Joy Hall storage area insulation project is completed.

The sanctuary grand piano is scheduled for tuning on December 2.

Respectfully submitted:

Bryan Richheimer, chairperson

MARY MARTHA FELLOWSHIP

December is a very busy month for the Mary Martha Fellowship.

1.) **Cookies for the Cupboard** On Saturday, Dec. 7th, MMF is planning a cookie sale from 10 to 1 o'clock. Dottie Sundquist is also planning a cookie decorating group to meet on Friday. The cookies will be sold by the pound for \$8.50. If you can help by baking, buying, decorating and/or selling cookies, let Dottie know. She can be reached at 375-6127 The money raised will be put towards our kitchen renovation fund (cupboards?) or our other outreach projects such as The Food Cupboard. (Also, see "Cookies for the Cupboard" article on page 3.)

2.) **Christmas Baskets** At our next meeting we will be putting together baskets, etc. for our folks at home. There are so many things that are hard for folks to get if they don't get out, such as stamps, envelopes, tissues, etc. Food is often appealing, although some people are diabetic. If you would like to contribute, the packages will be assembled on Dec 8th at our morning 8:30 A.M. meeting. Some of our people will be receiving plants or flowers.

3.) **Rada orders** At that same meeting, the orders to RADA will be collected and sent in. Rada's paring knives are very handy and keep sharp. There are catalogs available.

4.) **Poinsettias** December is the month the church family buys poinsettias to put in church for the Christmas and New Year season. There will be a sign-up sheet posted on the bulletin board for your intent to provide a poinsettia and to indicate in whose honor or memory it is intended. In order for the names to be included in the bulletin on Christmas Eve, it is suggested you sign up by December 19th.

5.) **Interfaith Holiday Project** This year MMF will sponsor 4 children for the Holiday Project. The details and needs will be posted on the Bulletin Board in the vestry. Gifts should be delivered to the church before December 19th

Lorraine Wilkins has been working on packing dishes, pots, pans and other kitchen items in preparation for the renovation which will soon begin!

~submitted by Martha Thompson

MISSION COMMITTEE

At the last Mission meeting, the committee voted to send our World Vision student, Leon, a Christmas check of \$25 and to send \$100 to the Emergency Needs Fund stipulating it is for the Holiday Project.

We also authorized Linda Bushee to go to the Northshire Bookstore and select a book for one of the recipients whose names are placed on an ornament decorating a Christmas tree that the bookstore has placed there for that purpose.

INTERFAITH COUNCIL OF THE NORTHSHIRE

At the Annual meeting of the Interfaith Council, the nominating committee announced that Cantor Scott Buckner will be the new leader for the council succeeding Rev. Jim Gray.

Our own Rebecca Sommons gave the message at the Annual Thanksgiving Service held at The Congregational Church on Tuesday, Nov, 26th.

The big project this month is The Interfaith Holiday Project. The Food Baskets and gifts will be dispensed on Friday, Dec. 20th at Christ Our Savior Church. They can use help packing the baskets and dispensing the gifts. If you can help, contact Bill Drunsic at his office.

~submitted by Martha Thompson

COOKIES FOR THE CUPBOARD

Saturday, December 7th from 10am-1pm Mary Martha is hosting Cookies for the Cupboard! Sign-up is in the vestry. Pre-decorated Cookies need to be delivered by Friday afternoon, Dec 6th. If you are baking cookies to be decorated or providing decoration ingredients, please have them at the church by Thursday afternoon of Dec 5th. Some icing needs to set for 8 hours prior to adding more decorations. If you would like to help on that phase you are welcome to join Dottie prior to the Thursday 7pm choir rehearsal. She will begin at 4:30pm. Decorating party is Friday, Dec 6 from 4-7pm. Everyone is welcome!

~Dottie Sundquist



DIACONATE NEWS

Please continue to give to the fellowship fund. The needs are always great and the winter months are especially critical.

It is an exciting time in our church right now! We are in the process of meeting/interviewing potential new members and it is going very well so far! Look for a baptism in December!

The young adult group is still planning on getting together soon and we are still open to ideas. If you have an idea that you believe would be good to do, please let me know. We are also working on getting an Alpha class together at the church or work with another church to run a course. If you have questions, see John Hess or Linell Pike.

Our Christmas Eve service is on December 24th at 5 pm. The next Diaconate meeting is on December 17th at 7 pm.

Submitted by Kelsey Towslee



THE DORSET PLAYERS IS PRESENTING A CHRISTMAS CAROL as their annual holiday show. In keeping with the spirit of the story The Players' are collecting food to be given to the Community Food Cupboard here in Manchester. We hope you will come to the show and bring an item to share with your fellow neighbors. There is a hamper inside the cafe for the donations. Each show begins with live holiday music played in the cafe and ends with an after show reception there as well. Performances are the first two weekends in December. Friday and Saturday performances (December 6th, 7th, 13th, 14th) are at 7:30 and Sunday shows (December 8th and 15th) are at 2:00. We hope to see you at the show and wish you all the very best during this holiday season and in the New Year.

Jane A. LoBrutto, Licensed Minister - Administrator

United Church of Dorset and East Rupert

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

Equinox Group: Mon-Fri from Noon to 1:00 PM

Thursday Morning Men's Group: Thursday 7:30-8:30 AM

Primary Purpose Group: Sunday 7:30-8:30 PM

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

Please call to request a meeting or visit outside of regular church office hours.

CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

Dec. 1: Holly & Ronan

Dec. 8: Maurie & Linell

Dec. 15: Dottie & Bryan

Dec. 22: Cheryl & Jenny

Dec. 29: Cathy & Lindy

FLOWERS

Dec. 1: Barb & Jim West

Dec. 8: Anna Ennis

Dec. 15: Memorial Poinsettias

Dec. 22: Memorial Poinsettias

Dec. 29: Memorial Poinsettias



The First Baptist Church would like to extend their sympathy to the family of Connie Daly. Connie, well-loved by the FBC family, passed away on Thursday, December 28th. The following message was sent to Pastor Rebecca.

I wanted to let you know that my mom passed away this morning at 2:30 am. She died peacefully in her sleep at the hospital. My brother was with her sleeping on a cot beside her bed. We loved our mother dearly, and she is at peace now, no longer in pain. She really had a tough time at the end.

We will miss her terribly, but her life lessons will always stay with us.

Thank you for praying for my mom, and again the kindness and support of the FBC community.

Best,
Courtney