



The blizzard of 1888.

"SpiritSpark"



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

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Pastor: Rev. Rebecca Sommons

January 2018

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR REBECCA

Dear Church Family,

Christmas, with all its charm, has come and gone. Now we face the possibilities and wonderings of the New Year. The snow that came, giving us a beautiful, white Christmas is still here, and so is Christ. He doesn't get tucked away with the decorations, waiting to make an appearance next December. Jesus is Emmanuel ~ God with us. Whatever this year holds, we do not need to go through it alone, with only our own strength to draw on. God is with us each step of this journey, whether we realize it or not. But if we choose to focus on God's presence, we will be much better able to live graciously, joyfully, and purposefully. As 2018 begins, may each of us follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit to arrange our lives in a way that helps us to be aware of Christ with us, whatever may come.

With love,
Pastor Rebecca

SUNDAY SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

On Sunday, December 24, the Sunday School children showed their many talents - for drama, humor, and memorizing many lines! The play had a modern twist, presenting 2 angels with opposing ideas on the historic scene of Jesus birth. One angel, played by Lydia, thought that Mary should stay in a 5 star hotel instead of a rustic barn, while another angel, played by Jewels, wanted to tone down the glitz and glamorous ideas of her co-planner and listen to God's plan. Gabriel, played by Pengju, announced the mother of Mary via a walkie talkie and had several little angels, Emily, Izzy, and Annabelle to look after. The Shepherds, David, Seth, and Aiden were the first to know about the birth of Jesus by Mary (played by Khloe). Meanwhile, Joseph, played by Wyatt, woke up from his dream. Scattered with several Christmas carol favorites, the lesson appeared to be that we should all live our lives according to God's plan and not be guided by our own glitzy ideas of what that should be. Great job! And thanks to Jenny Russell, Pastor Rebecca, and Linell Pike for working so hard to put it together, along with the great costumes.

~Submitted by Maurie Hill



Lydia Stevens, Jeweliana Boudreau, David Dunlap, Seth Dunlap, Aiden Russell, Khloe Russell, Wyatt Harriman-Russell, Emily Sevens, Isabelle Harriman-Russell, Pengju Sui
(Photo courtesy of Jenny Russell)

OTHER CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NOTES

There will be no Sunday School on Sunday, December 31st. Class will resume on Sunday, January 7th. The youth activity planned for this month will be a snow shoeing and sledding event at Bryan and Dottie's home on Sunday, January 14th from 1:30-4:00pm.

The Mary and Martha Fellowship will be holding a
SOUP and BREAD LUNCHEON
to benefit the Kitchen Fund on January 27th from 12-2:00.
We're looking for willing soup makers, bread makers and dessert
makers! You will find a sign-up sheet in the vestry.
If you have questions, please Lisa Towslee. Thank you!



GOOD NEWS! OUR NEW LIFETOUCH MOBILE DIRECTORY IS READY!

Our Mobile Directory contains contact information for all the families of The First Baptist Church and is an easy to use tool to help you stay connected. PLUS, you will see portraits of all our families who participated in our recent photography event. It's a great way to connect names and faces!

To access the mobile directory:

1. Type in the link <https://mobiledirectory.lifetouch.com/133217/first-baptist-church>
2. Enter your Access Code which will be emailed to you within a week, or so. Please do not give out the link and password to anyone other than church family.

When you first log on, there will be an on screen Guided Tour which will walk you through each of the areas. You will be able to scroll through the directory, search by name and view families.

To update your contact information, please contact Russ Taxter at rtaxter@gmail.com.

Check it out!

Blessings,

Russ and Glenna Taxter

WARNING

The members of the First Baptist Church of Manchester Center, Vermont are hereby warned to meet in their house of worship at Manchester Center on Sunday, January 28, 2018, following worship and lunch for the following purposes:

- 1.) To hear the reports of the Officers and Committees for the past year and act thereon.
- 2.) To elect Officer and Committees for the coming year.
- 3.) To hear recommendations of the By-Laws Committee and act thereon.
- 4.) To discuss any other business proper to come before the Annual Meeting.

Martha Thompson, Church Clerk

Further information regarding the ANNUAL MEETING on SUNDAY, JANUARY 28th:

If you or your committee is responsible for a report, please have that report to Jim Comar by JANUARY 17th. They need to be printed and prepared to hand out on January 21st, the Sunday BEFORE the annual meeting. Thank you.

As you will note in the warning, the By-Laws Committee will be making recommendations for changes to the church by-laws. These changes will be available to you on January 21st, so you can familiarize yourself with them prior to the meeting.

As in the past, you are advised to bring your own sandwich for the luncheon. Beverages will be provided and there may be soups, breads, and desserts available from the Soup & Bread Luncheon taking place the day before!

REPORT OF THE DIACONATE

Most of this past month, of course, was spent celebrating the birth of Christ along with all of us here at First Baptist Church, and along with many others around the world! Now, as we look forward to another year of sharing the joy of that event, the deacons have been talking about ways we can better serve the needs of church members, friends, and others seeking help and spiritual guidance. We are committed to fulfilling the needs that Jesus taught us - to love and serve mankind, and to share His lessons with others. In the coming year, we will strive to reach these goals with the guidance and leadership of our pastor, Rebecca. Wishing you all a joyous, healthy and peaceful New Year.

In God's love,

Martha Bowen, Carol Lattuga co-chair

Deacons: Linda Hulett, Lindy Mylott, Paul Bauers, Linell Pike, Anna Ennis, Edie Sargood



The Men's Group - F.O.C.U.S. (**F**ellowship **O**f **C**hristian **U**nder**S**tanding) will meet on
Saturday, January 6th at 8:00 AM in the vestry!
Come for a 2018 Planning Session and stay for coffee and donuts!

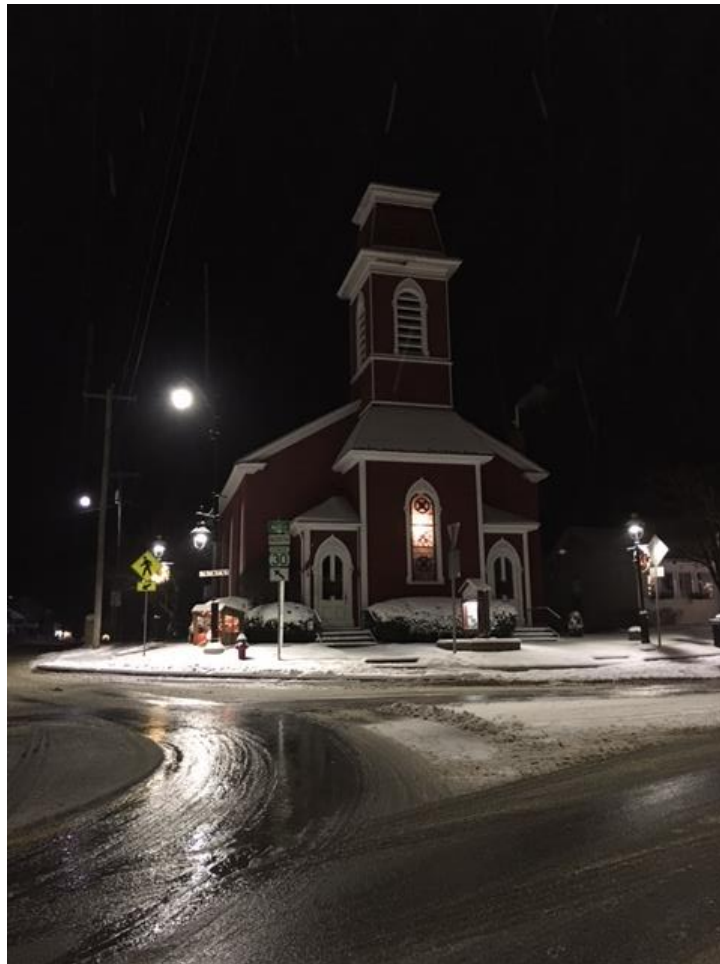


Photo courtesy of Maurie Hill. Look for the creche!

The **MISSIONS COMMITTEE** decided to create a visual explanation of our weekly offering. Please see one of us if you need further explanation!

We wish everyone a blessed New Year in 2018!
Martha Thompson, Lisa Towslee, Jeff Linebeck, Barbara West,
Carolyn Kerson and Dottie Sundquist, Chairperson

Understanding Our Offering



White Envelope

If you choose 'Current',
monies go directly to church expenses.

If you choose 'Special' you need to designate where to direct the funds.

Write 'Missions' if you wish 100% of the monies to be disbursed by the FBC Missions Committee.

Write 'Benevolence' if you wish 50% of the monies to be disbursed by the FBC Mission Committee and 50% to be disbursed by the American Baptist Church United Mission Basics (UMB)

Or you may divide your offering between Current and Special. Just remember to designate where to allocate the Special funds.

Green Envelope

First Sunday of the month
To Deaconate for Fellowship Fund
(Local needs: food, gas, bills, etc)

Special Envelope

Jan/March/June/Oct
American Baptist Church
Annual World Mission Offering



<http://www.abc-usa.org>

(Thank you to Holly O'Brien for contributing the following poem.)

There is a Providence that brought us here and gave us to each other at this time. In and through us, a greater tapestry to creativity is being woven.

The great traditions tell us that community somehow already exists. When we come together in compassion and generosity, this hidden belonging begins to come alive between us.

Perhaps community is a constellation. Each one of us is a different light in the emerging collective brightness. A constellation of light has greater power of illumination than any single light would have on its own.

Together we increase brightness.

John O'Donohue

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

Parsonage Phone: (802) 362-5335

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

CALENDAR OF CHURCH EVENTS

You will find the church events calendar as a separate attachment.

Some of the less familiar abbreviations are as follows:

N2N: Neighbor to Neighbor

CR: Celebrate Recovery

M&M: Mary & Martha Fellowship

FOCUS: Men's Group

FLOWERS

January 7: Poinsettias

January 14: Poinsettias

January 21: Russ & Glenna Taxter

January 28: Martha Thompson

CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

January 7: Glenna & Annie

January 14: Lisa & Annabelle

January 21: Jenny & Cheryl

January 28: Dottie & Bryan