



Snowstorm of December 2020 – Taken by Maurie Hill

“SpiritSpark”

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

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Pastor: Rev. Rebecca Sommons

MARCH 2021

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR REBECCA

Dear Church Family,

I am so grateful for the chance to be doing the Lent Experience challenges with you. It wasn't my idea originally, so that's even better! (Thank you, Holly) I love it when you all think of ways we can go deeper in our walk with God by trying something new, so keep sharing the ideas the Holy Spirit impresses on your heart.

The challenge for the first week of March is one of my favorite spiritual practices ~ silence and solitude. Now that I am an empty-nester, I usually have a space of quiet time in my day to think, pray, journal, and sometimes literally walk with God. Maybe you find that the season of life you are in gives you this space of time too. The pandemic has changed the busy pace of social events, so that many of

us have time on our hands we didn't have before. The question is: what are doing with the gift of time?

It's possible that the isolation and quietness of our schedules has stirred up anxiety, and we might be tempted to fill up the time with noise. I've had some experiences of visiting people and struggling to hear what they were saying because the television was on. They didn't notice the noise because it is their constant "company." I wonder if they have trouble hearing God and enjoying God's company because of the constant noise. God might be waiting for them to turn to Him with their longing for companionship and comfort. I believe with all my heart that God will prove Himself the best Friend and Confidant we could ever have.

That is not to say we shouldn't enjoy conversations with our friends or ever watch what is on television or available through our computer. God's gifts of encouragement can come through these paths too, but the most direct way to nourish our souls is to go directly to the Source. Then when we see a friend or talk with them on the phone, we have the gift of presence to share with them because we have experienced it with God.

I hope that the pandemic is winding down, and we will be able to get back to more personal interactions with each other. Before that happens, may we open the gift that the pandemic has given us ~ plenty of opportunity for silence and solitude ~ and discover its beauty and peace as we spend it with God.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Rebecca

The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught.

*Then, because so many people were coming and going
that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them,
"Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."
So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.*

Mark 6:30-32

TWO HUNDRED- FORTIETH YEAR CELEBRATION

It was announced at annual meeting that The First Baptist Church of Manchester, Vermont will be celebrating the 240th anniversary of their founding which took place on June 22, 1781.

Several people volunteered to be on the committee to celebrate this important milestone. That includes Dottie Beers, Ashley Hess, Lisa Hess, Lindy Mylott, Linell Pike and John Hess, who has already begun looking through old records.

Ideas and plans will be shared as they are decided.

Martha Thompson, Church Clerk

MARY MARTHA FELLOWSHIP

The Fellowship met in February on the 14th.

One of the jobs for which MMF takes responsibility is the care of the kitchen and sometimes the vestry. At our recent meeting it was decided to purchase new curtains and curtain rods for the vestry windows. They also plan to have the vestry floor refinished once the discolored tiles have been replaced.

The next meeting is planned for March 14, 2021 at 9:00 A.M. Plans for the Easter cross and flowers will be discussed.

Martha Thompson, Secretary

MARY & MARTHA BAKELESS BAKE SALE

Just a reminder that the Mary & Martha Fellowship is holding a Bakeless Bake Sale. Originally, we were just going to collect funds during February, however, it seems that it has "slipped our minds". Therefore, if you have not given a donation yet, please consider doing it now. Just calculate how much you would spend on making something for a bake sale including ingredients, time, and electricity(gas). Of course, when you drop off your "goodies" do you buy something? Then, decide what you wish to donate! Of course, any donation is welcome. Please make checks out to Mary & Martha Fellowship and mail to Judy Koch (She is Mary & Martha treasurer.) at 3763 River Road, Arlington. VT 05250. Thank you in advance for your donation. During this difficult time, it's still important for Mary & Martha to continue its vital work for our church, the community and the world.

~submitted by Lorraine Wilkins

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CORNER

The Christian Education Committee has several events and opportunities to offer in March and April. First, Jeremy Crumb will once again be leading a weekly Sunday School class using the series *The Good Book* from RightNow Media. This series examines eight common themes in the Bible and offers vignettes of families applying these themes in practical ways. The class will meet at 9:30 each Sunday in the vestry, except on the second Sunday of each month, when the class will meet upstairs. A Zoom option will be available. Look for the invitation in your email.

We are planning a youth activity in the second half of March at The Chocolorium in Arlington. Participating kids will have an opportunity to watch a movie on chocolate making, check out the facility, and make their own chocolate bar to enjoy.

Save the date for March 27th at 7 pm, when we will offer another Movie Night via Zoom. We will be showing the movie *Breakthrough*, a true story of faith through challenges.

Finally, in April, we are planning to host a virtual game night. Stay tuned for more details soon.

For His glory,
Annie Crumb



Amelia Vickery, Jae Vickery, Annie Crumb, Emily Stevens, John Hess, Cheryl Hess.
Pastor Rebecca behind the camera.

It was a beautiful day to be outside.

The snow was tricky, with a hard crust of ice covering soft snow underneath.

We used snowshoes to make a path and created a sledding run that was working pretty well. Then Emily decided to try a gentler slope that hadn't been used yet. She glided along for so far, we were yelling for her to stop, but she went right over the riverbank!!! John and Pastor Rebecca both set off as fast as they could through the snow to find her. She had landed on a flat sheet of ice/snow. Thank the Lord she was okay! We decided to call it a day and headed in for hot chocolate and cookies.

PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE

The Prudential Committee is organizing a Window Committee to explore options to replace our stained glass windows in the sanctuary. Since they were temporary 240 years ago, it's probably time to look at some permanent ones! Lindy Mylott has volunteered to represent the Prudential Committee. Three members is probably a good number. This committee will report back its findings to enable the Prudential Committee to make a recommendation to the church members as to how to proceed. If you are interested, please contact Lorraine Wilkins, Prudential Committee Chairman.

In preparation for our 240th Anniversary Celebration, our church building needs some much needed inside attention. Even though it has not seen a lot of use in the last year, it still collects dust. We are looking at the month of May as "Spring Cleaning Month". We are hoping that a family, or small group of 1-2 people would sign up for a room in the church and give it a thorough cleaning. I will put a sign-up sheet in the vestry. Mary & Martha Fellowship has volunteered to do the kitchen. There are some painting projects to do as well, if you are one of those people that love to paint. They will be listed in the vestry as well. They could be completed whenever you'd like. Please help out. "Many hands make light work." If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Lorraine.

~Lorraine Wilkins, Prudential Chairperson

PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE

Water down the drain = \$\$\$ down the drain. A leaky toilet sent tens-of-thousands of gallons of water through our system and our water bill = \$671.16! GSK replaced all innards of toilets and they will make sure the water meter is not running.

COMPLETED

- Attic insulation is complete and the bill has been paid.
- The church is noticeably warmer! \$14,501.00 has been paid to complete the ceiling insulation project. (Paid from the Memorial Fund, a grant and the difference from Money Market Fund)
Approx \$6,500 will be sent back to the American Baptist Church (ABC) fund once all the bills are paid.
- Roof slate repair is completed and the bill has been paid.
- The Internet connection/wifi has been updated and we are awaiting a bill.
- The backsplash plexiglass in the kitchen will not 'accept' trim and may (split). Therefore, we will leave it as is.

TO-DO LIST

- Flooring in vestry (replacement of stained tiles) will be addressed in March.
- The Joy Hall crawl space opening may be best served with a door. Lindy is checking into this.
- GSK will be notified to install a wire to connect the new programmable thermostat to the boiler.
- We are installing 10 emergency lights and exit sign units and 2 additional lights for staircases 6 smoke/carbon monoxide detectors per code requirements.
- The insurance company also sent a CO2 detector to install.
- We need to paint the front doors and trim in the front and will contact local painters.

OUTSIDE USE OF CHURCH

- There are four different AA groups using the church space. We decided on a rental of \$25/month for one day/wk and \$100 for 5 days a week.
- Life Line Screening will use the vestry in June for an event with the stipulation they follow strict State of Vermont Covid guidelines.
- We were approached by a wedding planner requesting information on renting the church. We do not have written guidelines. We invited the individual to contact us post-Covid and in March we will address the rental of the church for weddings.

Dottie Sundquist, Secretary

Message from our Church Collector

If you would like church offering envelopes for 2021 and do not have them, you may request them from Cathy Comar, church collector.

MISSION COMMITTEE

In February, the Missions Committee expended funds to The Fold (a residential home in Lyndonville for teens) and to United Counseling in Manchester. We also continued our support to Jeni Pedzinski in Thailand and to Leon in Zimbabwe.

Thank you notes were received from Guatemala, Manchester Christmas Project, and the Northshire Book Angels as well as a certificate from Heifer International.

We ordered 25 Easter booklets from the Daily Bread Organization. They will be available in the vestry to anyone interested in having one.

We will continue to accept contributions for the Rwanda Project until December when we will send our entire total to Africa.

The committee would like to expand their giving to local missions. Covid 19 continues to cause hardships. If there is a need or request of which you are aware, please let us know.

Dottie Beers will do a Mission Moment on Sunday, March 14 for America For Christ.

We appreciate your support! Thank you!

Linell Pike, Secretary

Members: Judy Koch, Linda Bushee, Dottie Beers, Pastor Rebecca

NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR

The care recipients of the Neighbor-to-Neighbor organization have been collecting recipes to create their own cookbook.

Kathy Malley is assembling material to send out activity packets for our care recipients until we can meet again in person.

~submitted by Martha Thompson

DIACONATE

Jim West continues as our Diaconate chairperson and Kelsey Towslee as secretary.

Our fellowship fund balance is \$2294.94. There was a discussion of possible disbursements from that fund.

We discussed Holy week with a tenebrae service on Maundy Thursday. We are also considering a sunrise service on Easter Sunday, along with the regular 10:30 service.

We have a candidate currently preparing for baptism in the near future.

We discussed our current individual calling lists and will discuss this again at our next meeting

Our next meeting will be March 19th at 11am.

Kelsey will present devotions for that meeting.

~submitted by Carol Lattuga

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 has often met people outside and talked while taking a walk and she is happy to continue that during the winter. 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

CALENDAR OF CHURCH EVENTS

Monday, March 1: Emmaus Reunion Group Meeting via zoom at 7 pm

Tuesday, March 2: Prayer Group via zoom at 7 pm

Wednesday, March 3: Seeking God Together via zoom at 11 am

Thursday, March 4: Interfaith Council Meeting via zoom at noon

Sunday, March 7: Adult Sunday School class in vestry at 9:30 am (zoom option available)

Sunday, March 7: Communion in our Worship Service at 10:30 am

Monday, March 8: Emmaus Reunion Group Meeting via zoom at 7 pm

Tuesday, March 9: Prudential Meeting via zoom at 4 pm

Tuesday, March 9: Prayer Group & Book Discussion of chapter 4 in *Soul Shift* via zoom at 7 pm

Sunday, March 14: Mary & Martha Fellowship in vestry and via zoom 9 am

Sunday, March 14: Adult Sunday School class at 9:30 am (upstairs and zoom option available)

Sunday, March 14: America for Christ Mission Moment in our Worship Service at 10:30 am

Monday, March 15: Emmaus Reunion Group Meeting via zoom at 7 pm

Tuesday, March 16: Prayer Group via zoom at 7 pm

Wednesday, March 17: Seeking God Together via zoom at 11 am

Friday, March 19: Deacon Meeting via zoom at 11 am

Sunday, March 21: Adult Sunday School class in vestry at 9:30 am (zoom option available)

Monday, March 22: Emmaus Reunion Group Meeting via zoom at 7 pm

Tuesday, March 23: Prayer Group & Book Discussion of chapter 5 in *Soul Shift* via zoom at 7

Thursday, March 25: Christian Education Meeting via zoom at 7:30 pm

Saturday, March 27: All Church Zoom Movie Night "Breakthrough" at 7 pm

Sunday, March 28: Adult Sunday School class in vestry at 9:30 am (zoom option available)

Sunday, March 28: Palm Sunday Worship Service at 10:30 am

Monday, March 29: Emmaus Reunion Group Meeting via zoom at 7 pm

Tuesday, March 30: Prayer Group via zoom at 7 pm

Wednesday, March 31: Seeking God Together via zoom at 11 am

Missions Committee Meeting – to be determined

FLOWERS

March 7: Lorraine Wilkins / mom Francis Mitchell

March 14: Jim Holden & Lisa Catapano-Friedman

March 21: Lindy Mylott / Wayne Norse

March 28: Palm Sunday – Jenny Sprague / Moe Thompson



Lois Squires sent this picture showing that all of the buds had blossomed in one night! It seems a fitting reminder of spring and the renewed hope it brings.

The First Baptist Church would like to extend their sympathy and prayers to the family of Edie Sargood. Edie went to be with the Lord on February 7, 2021. She will be greatly missed by her church family as well as her numerous other friends and family.



The First Baptist Church would like to extend their sympathy and prayers to McKenna, Elex and Nancy and to all the family and friends of Carl Johnson on his passing on February 10, 2021. Carl was a well-known figure in the community and will be greatly missed.



The First Baptist Church family was saddened to hear of the passing of Dottie Moore during the week of February 8th at their Florida home. Every summer, Dottie and Bill would grace our church with their presence. Our hearts go out to Bill and to all of Dottie's family.

