



“The only sound was the water crashing over the falls by the grist mill, no people, no cars, very peaceful.”
(Photo taken evening of April 2nd by Shawn Harrington - MHS)

“SpiritSpark”



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

P.O. Box 1049, 4895 Main St. 802-362-1555 www.fbcmanvt.org

fbcmanvt@gmail.com

Pastor: Rev. Rebecca Sommons

MAY 2020

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR REBECCA

Dear Church Family,

It will be interesting to see how things unfold in May of this unusual year. I think that hope is stirring in our hearts that we will be able to see each other in person and worship together in our building again. Yet, we do not yet know exactly when that will happen, or what precautions we will need to continue to take to protect each other's health. Many of us have been encouraged by the opportunity to meet through zoom from our homes for worship, and we plan to have an on-line option for people when we do resume worship at the church building. I think that the gift of community is one that we will not

take for granted after several weeks of being apart. Hopefully, we will continue to be patient with the process of reuniting in incremental steps.

In the meantime, I hope that each of us is listening and leaning into the way God is shaping us during this quieter schedule. We do not need to fill every hour with action or noise. Today, I was listening to a friend named Elizabeth Rhyno share some insights with parents about their children and boredom. She said that it isn't necessary for parents to feel pressured to come up with interesting ideas and provide all the materials necessary for their children to be able to carry them out all week long. Making some special plans is good, but she said it is actually a good thing for a child to be bored. It gives them the space and motivation to come up with creative ideas of their own, to find materials to carry out their ideas, and to see what their true interests are.

Since we are God's children, I wonder if we could remember this if we feel bored with our quiet social lives. We have an opportunity to search our hearts to see what we really desire to do. Many of us have the space and time to engage a creative and life-giving idea. Stores may not be open, but we could improvise and find what is possible with things we already have. God is the Creator, and he enjoys watching us be creative. It's a way to grow in self-knowledge, to act in harmony with the Holy Spirit, and to bring glory to God. I have already heard how some of you are making quilts, organizing old photos, gardening, cross-stitching, painting, creating natural bird sculptures, trying new recipes, and making masks to share. It's part of the gift of this home-bound time to be able to grow quiet enough to hear the promptings of our hearts and the Spirit and to see how they come together and then act on them.

*“For we are God’s masterpiece.
He has created us anew in Christ Jesus,
so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.”*
Ephesians 2:10 (NLT)

Love in Christ,
Pastor Rebecca

MARY MARTHA FELLOWSHIP

Greetings Mary Martha Fellowship members. We have been sidelined by the Covid -19 virus but there are some issues to tackle so a meeting is planned for May 17th at 8:30 A.M. It will be a Zoom meeting that Russ and Glenna Taxter will set up. Invitations will be sent out as they are for the church service. Since we have not been able to conduct business as usual our treasury is low. Hope you will add your voice to this meeting so we can talk about Basket Party, Ham and Strawberry Dinner, Father's Day, etc. We'll get through this together.

~submitted by Martha Thompson, Secretary

DIACONATE

At our deacon meeting, we discussed the logistics of having services in the church building again. We are waiting until we hear an official decision from Governor Scott to allow gatherings again, and then we will plan our first service. It is likely that we will need to wear masks, so Carol Lattuga is organizing a sewing project, so we will have a supply of masks on hand at the church building. (If you need one now, we can get one to you.)

Jeremy suggested continuing to offer a Zoom meeting or Facebook Livestream of the service even after we go back to meeting at the church, so people who need to be very careful with their health can still participate. If you have a preference about which forum we use, please let Pastor Rebecca or Jim West know.

Each deacon has a group of people in the church to contact regularly, so we can talk together, pray for each other, and address any needs. We have some Fellowship Funds available to help meet financial needs, as well as gas cards and grocery cards.

Please do not hesitate to contact any of the diaconate members Myself, Cara Davenport, Anna Ennis, John Hess, Carol Lattuga, Linell Pike, Martha Thompson, Jim West, and Pastor Rebecca are all here for you.

Kelsey Towslee, Secretary



THE PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE

Hello Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

There are many aspects of the Covid-19 shutdown in Vermont which are affecting our church and community. Let us continue to pray for healing for those affected by the virus, for those working on the front lines to be healthy while keeping us safe, and for a long term solution to become available. We are beginning to see some more construction activity in our community and this may allow us to begin some of the approved building projects soon. The pending projects are the refurbishment of the slate roof, the replacement of the knob and tube wiring in the sanctuary, and the completion of the attic insulation project. A big thank you to the Vermont Interfaith Power and Light organization which has approved the grant for our foundation and attic installation. The foundation was insulated during the kitchen project, but the attic will be completed after the roof and electric work is done.

With our community and state functioning within the stay-at-home order of Gov. Scott, our church will continue to adapt with the online tools which will allow us to praise our Lord and worship together until our time of returning to the sanctuary.

Humbly submitted for His glory,
Jeremy Crumb, Prudential Committee Chairperson

A MESSAGE from our MISSIONS COMMITTEE

AN AMERICAN BAPTIST PLEA FOR EMERGENCY
“ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING” SUPPORT

As the United States and the globe deal with the death and devastation wrought by the coronavirus, American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) and International Ministries (IM) – seek One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS), COVID emergency support to help families, churches and communities find relief and recovery across the United States, Puerto Rico and countries around the world served by IM.

The OGHS COVID RESPONSE is a two part appeal: one part is for relief across the United States and Puerto Rico; the second part is for international relief.

Funds raise for relief across the United States and Puerto Rico will be utilized by ABHMS as a part of an emergency plan – COVID RECOVERY: Renewing Hope and Service – currently being developed to address the far-reaching needs created by the current pandemic. Moreover, OGHS contributions will support American Baptist regions and churches dealing with current challenges as well as those bound to follow in the weeks and years ahead.

Specifically, donations to ABHMS’OGHS appeal will assist with immediate needs, such as unemployment or loss of income, housing, hunger and access to healthcare. Donations will also fund programs supporting the well-being and mental health of faith leaders, congregations and communities. In the current context of social distancing, as churches seek to connect with members through online connections, the need for enhanced technology has emerged in many churches. ABHMS also seeks to support American Baptist Churches, denominationally related colleges, universities and seminaries along with community ministries (Neighborhood Action Programs and other service organizations) that are serving in marginalized settings. There are also emerging needs that are not presently known.

Funds given to OGHS COVID RESPONSE: INTERNATIONAL for global relief will be used by IM to respond to requests by international partners for emergency grants. Gifts will meet immediate needs for feeding, housing and providing healthcare for persons impacted by COVID-19, with particular support for emergent and unmet needs of refugees, asylum seekers and immigrant populations. Funds will also support IM’s global partners at risk of suspending vital services to vulnerable members of their communities and will facilitate activities and programs focused on sustainable solutions that address the long-term impact of the pandemic.

Donations may be sent to our own church clerk. Indicate OGHS COVID RESPONSE on the memo line and you may choose to specify HOME MISSIONS or INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES.

INTERFAITH COUNCIL OF THE NORTHSHIRE

The Interfaith Council's next meeting is scheduled for May 7, 2020. It will again be a Zoom meeting. This time of year, ICN is planning for the Kid's Summer Lunch Program. Karen Allen, the Director of this program, is again helping get it organized although she is stepping back and a committee of four are taking over eventually. The program will run from June 25th to August 27th, 2020. People interested in signing up for this program can contact the school the child attends or, if they want to offer assistance, contact Karen Allen at famallen4@comcast.net or Cantor Scott Buckner at 362-4578.

If we return to regular meetings, First Baptist will host the next meeting on June 4, 2020. IFN then disbands for the summer.

~submitted by Martha Thompson



The following reflection is from Dale Edwards, our ABC VT & NH Regional Minister

Pandemic Reflection

Over time, I have frequently practiced lectio divina during my prayer time. Although not a daily practice, I will sit frequently with a verse of Scripture for a prolonged period of time. What I enjoy about lectio divina is when the Holy Spirit impresses on me a verse or phrase, and invites me to simply sit with that verse or phrase and listen to God.

Not long ago I was sitting with the first few verses of Acts 1. A small phrase in the 4th verse stood out to me: “. . . but wait for the gift my Father promised. . .” In all this waiting for the pandemic to lift, I suspect God is preparing us for a new future, a deeper presence of the Holy Spirit, a more faithful church. The word “wait” is difficult to hear when we believe we are self-sufficient. Henry Nouwen once wrote, “we cannot receive God's gift with clenched fists, only with open hands.”

We can wait in a disconcerting and grieving presence, knowing in the wait, we meet God. We can sit with what God is doing, and how we are being changed for good.

In Jesus name,

Dale

For many years, it has been our Easter tradition to decorate a cross with tiny bouquets during our Easter morning service. Although we were unable to do that this year, the cross was still decorated with the greens and carnations by Russ and Glenna and placed at the front of the church by Jim J. Thank you to Dottie for taking this photo.



Our good friend, Jan Casey, is having her 100th birthday on Monday, May 18th! We know you won't want to miss this opportunity to wish a wonderful lady Happy Birthday!

Obviously, we cannot visit her inside her residence at Bromley Manor, but we can stand outside her window and sing "Happy Birthday"! Maybe, we'll even have a sign or two.

If you would like to join us, let Lindy or me know and we'll provide some details. And, even if you can't join us at the window, we can all send cards!

Jan's address is Bromley Manor, Room B6, Manchester Center, VT 05255.

You may address your questions to Lindy Mylott or Glenna Taxter.

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU to all of you who are so consistently remembering your tithes and offerings for the church! We appreciate you!

Checks or cash may be mailed directly to our collector, Cathy Comar, at her home address OR may be mailed to the church where treasurer, Lisa Hess, will pick them up and leave them with Cathy who makes the weekly deposit.

Cathy's address can be found in our church directory and the church mailing address can be found on the front page of this newsletter.



Some of the meeting dates for the month of May are tentative and some, but perhaps not all, will be using zoom. You may want to check ahead of time for your meeting.

Thursday, May 7: Interfaith Council Meeting

Sunday, May 10: Glenna Taxter will present the Mother's Day Message

Tuesday, May 12: Prudential Meeting 5 pm

Wednesday, May 13: Mission Meeting 3 pm

Monday, May 18: Jan Casey's 100th birthday!

Wednesday, May 20: Deacon Meeting 2 pm

Thursday, May 28: PRC Meeting

Also, the Prayer & Study group meets every Tuesday evening at 7:00 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.

FLOWERS

May 3: none

May 10: none

May 17: Martha Thompson (if needed)

May 24: Linda Hulett (if needed)

May 31: Jim & Cathy Comar (if needed)

CHILD CARE PROVIDERS will be scheduled once we are back in the sanctuary.

