



Photo from the 1970s from the Manchester Historical Society collection.

"SpiritSpark"

The First Baptist Church of Manchester Center, VT

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Pastor: Rev. Rebecca Sommons

March 2018

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR REBECCA

Dear Church Family,

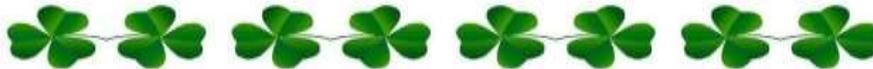
It's been a hard winter this year. The temperatures have been quite cold, depleting the supply of propane and making it more challenging to enjoy being outdoors. Many of us have struggled with sickness, and for some, the struggle goes on. Our church building has taken a beating by the wind that whips through town. The national and world news has been relentlessly heavy, with one tragedy following another.

Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 may reflect the way we are feeling. *"We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed."* It is when things are not going well that the light of God can shine out from the cracks in our lives. Death may have been staring Paul in the face, but in it, he saw the beautiful eyes of Jesus.

We are in the last throws of winter, and spring will come this month. Darkness is waning; the light is growing. And so it is when we look at our world with spiritual sight. Death did not have the last word for Jesus, and neither will it have the last word for us. Resurrection will transform our worn bodies into gleaming reflections of God's glorious light, just as they did for Christ.

Let's not focus on the hardships that have a way of piling up, but courageously choose an eternal perspective. Paul encouraged us to **look beyond** so *"we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all."*
(2 Corinthians 4:16-17).

With faith and hope,
Pastor Rebecca Sommons



Basket Party

Saturday, March 3, 2018

VFW Post Home

280 Depot Street

Doors open at 11:00

Drawing begins at 1:00

\$5 entry fee includes one sheet of tickets

Additional tickets \$3

Food sold separately-all homemade

This basket party is hosted by the Mary and Martha Fellowship of the First Baptist Church in Manchester. All proceeds will be used for kitchen renovation. Questions? Call Lisa-362-3076 or Lorraine 645-9525



I would like to thank everyone for their sympathy cards and kind words when Jeanne passed. They are much appreciated and very helpful.

Also, I want to share how much peace God has given us.

Barb West offered to tell the congregation that Jeanne had passed. Judy and I felt it was better if we were not in church that Sunday.

At first we were going to stay home. But we decided to go to the Arlington Community Church, which meets in the chapel on the green near our home. One of the hymns was "It Is Well with My Soul". My tears that day were tears of comfort and peace. The woman who chose the hymn that day said she wasn't sure why she picked it. Now we know!

The next day I told Jeanne's God Mother. She said they sung the same hymn the same day at her church.

Also, when my sister and her family were traveling to Jeanne's memorial service they were listening to a Christian radio station. You expect to hear gospel music on a Christian station. But once again God's timing was perfect. They were blessed with "It Is Well with My Soul".

I recently attended a retreat with the Christian Veterinary Mission. The theme was PEACE.

It's not just the lyrics of the hymn that are important. The reason it was written is also very meaningful. Horatio Spafford was a business man from Chicago. He lost much of his business in the Chicago fire. And his son died.

In 1873 he and his wife decided to take a trip to Europe. Last minute business prevented him from leaving at the scheduled time. He sent his wife and four daughters ahead. He would join them shortly. The ship his wife and daughters were on was rammed by another ship and sunk in 12 minutes. His wife was rescued. His daughters were not.

As soon as possible he was on a ship to join his wife. When they arrived at the location where his daughters were lost the captain told him, "This is the place". That inspired him to write "It Is Well with My Soul".

Jesus said that he will give us his peace. He certainly does!!

Again, thanks to everyone for your love and support.

Ray Koch



Come join us on Saturday, March 31st as we prepare the flowers for the Easter cross. Breakfast will be served!

MISSIONS COMMITTEE

Greetings from your Missions Committee

At our February meeting, we bid a fond farewell to our former Chairperson, Dottie Sundquist. Thank you, Dottie for your service to the Missions Committee. We elected new officers for the coming year:

Chairperson: Jeff Linebeck
Treasurer: Barbara West
Secretary: Martha Thompson

We continue to struggle with our available funds to support local, regional and international missions needs that we evaluate and consider worthy causes for us to support. In April we will collect our America for Christ Offering, but also plead for assistance with our church Missions income. Please consider in your heart what you may be able to contribute to our ongoing efforts.

We continue to sponsor our child from Zimbabwe, Leon Nyakunhwa, at a cost of \$35.00 per month. We received a Christmas Card from Leon which is posted on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall. We are proud of his progress and the fine young man he has grown into.

We have voted to send an Easter gift of \$25.00 to Leon as an additional contribution. We also voted out a contribution of \$100.00 to the Kurn Hattin Homes for Children.

Finally, the American Baptist Home Mission Society has established a campaign for collection of \$1 million to assist the people of Puerto Rico in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria. To date, more than \$770,000 has been pledged and they are requesting a final push to meet the campaign goal. On March 18th we will accept a special offering for anyone wishing to contribute to this cause. We will have special offering envelopes available to you. If you write a check, make it payable to First Baptist Church and write "Puerto Rico" in the memo line. Please continue to pray for the people of Puerto Rico and how you may assist in the recovery effort. Thank you to those who have already contributed and please consider if you could do more.

Thank you all for your prayers and support.

Jeff Linebeck
Chair, Missions Committee



CHRISTIAN ED CORNER

Pastor Rebecca and Linell are continuing with the next book of lessons in the Children's Sunday School curriculum; and the Sunday School Children have been working toward a Cookie Party.

Matthew Sommons is leading the Teen group using material from Right Now Media.

The next Teen Youth Activity will be an Art Night (with Pizza!) on Saturday, March 10th 4:30-6:30pm.

Pastor Rebecca is offering a class for people interested in learning more about baptism.

The next CE meeting is Thursday, March 15th at 5:30pm.

Submitted by Holly O'Brien, Church School Supt



There is still time to help with the church kitchen renovation by donating a basket to the Basket Party! You will find information about this in another part of this newsletter!

PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE NOTES

The Prudential Committee met on Tuesday, February 13. Bryan was elected Chairman and Dottie was elected Secretary

Currently, our projects include repair of the Bonnet Street entrance door, and the cleaning and tuning of our organ, which also requires some structural repair of the surrounding area.

Thank you, Jim Comar and Jim Johnson, for your hard work and devotion to our committee, and our church.

Bryan Richheimer, Chair

DIACONATE COMMITTEE

All meetings are opened with devotions and closed with prayer. In February, we elected officers: Martha Bowen and Linda Hulett, Co-chairs and Paul Bauers, Secretary. The decision was made that only deacons can serve communion. Ushering and lighting of candles and other responsibilities provide opportunities for others to serve.

Communion will be served on Maundy Thursday on March 29. Also, there will be a supper followed by reenactment of the Last Supper. Due to Easter being on the first Sunday, April 1, communion will be served on the second Sunday, April 8.

On February 18, a Healing Service during which anointing with oil and laying on of hands as well as prayer and counseling, was made available and received by many.

The Fellowship Fund stands at approximately \$420. It needs to be built up, so please give as much as you can. We have helped many because of your generosity in giving to this fund.

Respectfully,
Martha Bowen, Co- chairman

Revisions to the church by-laws were made at the January annual meeting. For a revised copy, you may go to the church web site www.fbcmanvt.org and look under the “newsletters and meetings” tab or pick up a copy at church.

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.

FLOWERS

March 4: Lorraine Wilkins

March 11: Maurie Hill

Leona Squires

March 18: Martha Thompson

March 25: Jenny Sprague (palms)

CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

March 4: Barb & Linell

March 11: Lisa & Annabelle

March 18: Jenny & Cheryl

March 25: Dottie & Bryan

