



(Photo from Maurie Hill's Collection)

## "SpiritSpark"

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

**P.O. Box 1049, 4895 Main St. 802-362-1555**

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**Pastor: Rev. Rebecca Sommons**

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**DECEMBER 2018**

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### **MESSAGE FROM PASTOR REBECCA~**

Dear Church Family,

As we enter the month of December, we also begin the season of Advent together. We'll be lighting candles in the darkness, as we wait and watch for Christ's light to break through and bring transformation in our world. With news traveling around the globe day and night, we are aware of turmoil and tragedies that affect the farthest members of our human family. Then there are the heartaches that hit closer to home.

Christ warned that in this world we would have trouble, but to take heart, because he has overcome the world (John 16:33). This overcoming began when he entered the darkness of that first Christmas night. It continued through his victory against the forces of evil when he died and rose again. The kingdom is coming in each heart that welcomes the light of Christ's truth. It will also come in its fullness when God decides the time is right. Could it be this year?

In our Advent services, we'll be exploring the images of the prophecies about Christ's coming. He is the Righteous Branch, the Refiner's Fire, the Singing Warrior, and Shepherd. It is my hope that these images will help us deepen our encounter with Christ this Christmas. May our hearts be open to Christ's purifying, restoring presence, and may that presence extend to all the earth!

With great hope,

*Pastor Rebecca Sommons*



### **VOLUNTEER AT COMMUNITY FOOD CUPBOARD**

December is First Baptist's month to volunteer to distribute food to our clients at the Food Cupboard. This will occur the first two weeks of December on Wednesday and Thursday. The times on Wednesdays is from 2:00 to 4:00 in the afternoon and on Thursdays from 10:00 to 12:00 in the A.M. and 2:00 to 4:00 in the afternoon. We are also responsible for the Last Saturday of the month; that date is the 30<sup>th</sup>. So come and join us on some of those dates to do a great community service.

I will have a sign-up sheet with me each Sunday morning for you to take a time slot – or you can e-mail me at [barbnjim23@comcast.net](mailto:barbnjim23@comcast.net) or call me at 362-3329 (or message me at 802-688-3679) to sign up for a slot or two or any amount you wish to do.

Thank you for considering this great service to our community.

In His love,

Jim West

## DIACONATE NEWS

Welcome Back!

Matt and Natalie Sommons are home after hiking the Appalachian Trail and once again are part of First Baptist's Music on Sunday.

Rev. Jordan (Skip) Dickinson preached on November 18 while Pastor Rebecca was bringing her family home. Because we have known Skip for many years, we think of him as part of our church family and we honor him.

Please continue to give as much as you can to the Fellowship Fund. As a result of your generous giving, we have been able to help families establish homes. In more populated areas, some of the large churches have built apartments on the upper floors and provide homes for the homeless or those in need. This has become a major goal in their ministry. In a small church such as ours, giving to those in need of homes as we have been doing has a huge impact on families. And it feels great to meet some of these needs in our church and community.

This month, our organist/music and choir director, Jeff Linebeck, left First Baptist Church rather suddenly. He will be missed by many, and not just the Baptist members, but other churches in the Manchester area as well. We are grateful to individuals who have stepped up to provide music during this difficult time.

We have provided meals for families or individuals recovering from surgery or illness. We are prepared to do this whenever the need exists.

Pastor Rebecca and a Diaconate member provide communion for several homebound church members each month.

Future Diaconate meetings will be focusing on services celebrating the birth of Christ. Feeling the love Christ gives to us will enable us to experience love and forgiveness in our hearts.

In Christ's Love,  
Martha Bowen, Co-chair  
Linda Hulett, Co-chair



(Photo submitted by Russ Taxter)

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The Advent season is upon us and the Sunday School classes are filled with anticipation!

The Children and Tween/Teen classes prepared boxes for the Missions Committee project with Operation Christmas Child.

On November 18th, the Children's and Tween/Teens met to make beeswax Advent candles to use with their families this Advent season.

We welcome back Matt and Natalie Sommons from their journey on the Appalachian Trail! Matt will again be leading the Tween/Teen class starting December 2nd. "Thank you" to John Hess for making it possible to continue this group through the fall.

Upcoming events for December:

On Saturday, Dec 8th the Children's Sunday School group will be meeting at the Parsonage for a cookie making party at 4:30pm.

Both the Children's and Tween/Teen groups are invited to meet on the Parsonage front porch to view the annual Lighted Tractor Parade!

After the parade, the Tween/Teens can gather for a casual dinner and board game night at the Parsonage.

The all-church Christmas Coffeehouse will be held on Saturday, Dec 15th at 6:30pm at the Church.

And all are encouraged to join with the Choir for a visit to Equinox Terrace on Thursday, Dec 20th at 5:45pm for caroling!

Sunday School classes will not be meeting on Dec 23 or Dec 30. All will resume again on January 6.

The CE committee will not be meeting in December. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 17th at 5:30pm.

~Holly O'Brien, Church School Sup't



## **MISSION COMMITTEE**

The Mission Committee meets once a month. The committee receives appeals for help including Kurn Hattin, The Fold, and the appeal from Samaritan's Purse. This year several members of the congregation including the Sunday School contributed to this cause which was founded by Franklin Graham, Billy Graham's son.

~submitted by Martha Thompson

## **MARY MARTHA FELLOWSHIP**

The Mary Martha Fellowship has come to the end of a very busy year.

Our last project for the year is the Baskets of Love for some members of our congregation as the need arises. Some of our recipients receive baskets with items they might particularly enjoy and some receive poinsettias with a homemade treat. The list is on the bulletin board in the vestry and if someone has an idea of another recipient or specific ideas of items to put in the baskets your input would be appreciated.

The group will also be participating in the Interfaith Holiday Project and we welcome participation from others in the church not connected to MMF.

The Fellowship has had several smaller projects during the year to raise money for the Kitchen Renovation, one of them being the sale of the very popular and serviceable RADA knives and other products. A Soup and Bread Luncheon will be coming up in January also for this purpose.

The list to sign up for memorial poinsettias will be on the bulletin board. You may contact Lily of The Valley, Peggy Brockett, and order a poinsettia for \$12, covered and finished with a bow and delivered to the church for you or purchase and bring your own. Lily of the Valley 362-7181.

~submitted by Martha Thompson, Secretary

## **HIGHLIGHTS from the PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE**

The Andover Organ Company has inspected the organ and is currently working on an estimate to clean plaster out of the pipes and to tune it.

Bryan Richheimer  
Chairman

## **INTERFAITH COUNCIL OF THE NORTHSHIRE**

The Council hosted a Harvest Supper for our Annual Meeting and Auction which raised funds for the Emergency Needs Fund and was the most successful auction ever.

A Thanksgiving Eve Service was held at the Dorset United Church under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Jim Gray and Tom Salmon, music director at Dorset. An Interfaith Choir participated under the direction of Jeff Linebeck and accompanied by Tom Salmon.

The next Interfaith event will be a Martin Luther King Service on Jan. 21 with Cantor Scott Buckner's son providing leadership.

~submitted by Martha Thompson

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

It is almost time for our annual meeting and that means it is time to get our reports together! Jeremy Crumb will be putting the annual report together this year. Please email him with your report by January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Jeremy's email is: [jeremy.crumb@gmail.com](mailto:jeremy.crumb@gmail.com).

It is important to respect this timeline so that we can all have access to the written report before the annual meeting takes place on Sunday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019!  
Thank you!



## **WELCOME HOME!**

Matt and Natalie completed the Appalachian Trail on Wednesday, November 14th! Go to [Matt and Natalie AT Thru Hike 2018](#) to see some wonderful photos and to read Matt's "reflections on what has made this journey significant"!

## **PRAYER & STUDY GROUP**

The Prayer/Study Group will begin a new study in January 8, 2019. Our discussions will be guided by Christine Labrum's new book, Divine Hands and each of the six sessions will be led by Pastor Rebecca.

The Prayer/Study Group meets at the home of Lois Squires every other Tuesday at 7:00 pm and new participants are always warmly welcomed! For more information, see Pastor Rebecca or Lois Squires.



### **WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE PART OF THE FBC PRAYER TEAM?**

We have an active committed team of prayers at the First Baptist Church. If you would like to be a part of this dynamic group, you may speak to Pastor Rebecca.

Your only obligation is to pray for each request that you receive, and in a timely fashion. You may choose to pray as often about a singular request as you feel led to pray. It is important to remember that all requests are confidential.

Anyone may submit a prayer request at any time to [www.fbchurchatprayer.com](http://www.fbchurchatprayer.com).



### **MEN'S GROUP SATURDAY, DEC. 2 at 8 AM**

Matthew Sommons will be speaking about his and Natalie's trip on the Appalachian trail. Should be interesting and fun so come and bring a friend!

Questions? Contact Jim Johnson at 362-3039 or Russ Taxter at 362-2667.



Photo taken by Maurie Hill during a recent November snowstorm.

**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: [reccasommons@gmail.com](mailto:reccasommons@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**

December 2: Russ & Glenna Taxter

December 9: Barb & Jim West

\* December 16: Memorial Poinsettias

\* December 23: Memorial Poinsettias

\* December 30: Memorial Poinsettias

**CHILD CARE PROVIDERS**

December 2: Maurie & Kristen

December 9: Cathy & Lindy

December 16: Dottie & Bryan

December 23: Holly & Ronan

December 30: Barb & Linell



