



Our outdoor creche with the church in the background. Photo by Maurie Hill.



## "SpiritSpark"

The First Baptist Church  
of Manchester Center, VT

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

[www.fbcmanvt.org](http://www.fbcmanvt.org)

fbcmanvt@gmail.com

Pastor: Rev. Rebecca Sommons

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DECEMBER 2020

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### A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR REBECCA

Dear Church Family,

I hope that your hearts are being surprised by joy in this final month of 2020. One of the things that lifted my spirits was Holly's suggestion that we do something special for Advent this year. After a little creative collaboration, our Christian Education committee found a way for all of us to have candles in our own homes. We can see their flickering light and read the daily devotions from *The Living Gospel* each night as we wait for Christ's coming.

Another surprise that brought joy was coming in to find the Christmas greens and wreaths already decorating the sanctuary. My soul is craving beauty, and the rich colors and symbols of celebration encourage me to look ahead with expectancy to what God will do among us.

As I read the passages of Scripture for Advent, I am surprised by the joy that pours forth from people like Isaiah, Zechariah, and Mary even before they see the promises completely fulfilled. The promise, the presence of the Holy Spirit, and their personal experience of God in their lives are enough to fill their hearts and mouths with joyful praise. I hope our time with them in our Advent services will be an encouragement to each of us to open our hearts to joy as we celebrate God's faithfulness to fulfill all that He promised.

Let's also keep our eyes open to see what glimpses of hope and joy God sends our way in the coming days.

Love in Christ,  
Pastor Rebecca



### **CHRISTMAS CARD BOX**

For those of you who have previously attended our church services during December, you know that we have always had a Christmas Card Box in the vestry to hold the cards we want to give to our church friends. The cards could then be picked up from the box.

Things are different this year, but fortunately for us we have Lindy, who always manages to think of ways to help that often elude the rest of us! Lindy has offered to collect your cards once you have them ready (with the names written on the front), and she will hand-deliver them for you!

If you want to have Lindy pick up your cards from you, call, email, or text her. Her information can be found in the directory.

Thank you, Lindy!



### **REPORT FROM MISSIONS** - submitted by Linell Pike

The Mission Members Judy Koch, Linda Bushee, Dottie Beers, Linell Pike and Pastor Rebecca gladly celebrate with you our Christmas donations. We rejoiced as we bought an Alpaca for a family in South America. Another village will be getting a flock of chickens, which could be as many as 20 to 50 chicks. This is all through the Heifer International. And a mother and child will have nutrition for a year with Compassion International in honor of the birth of Christ this Christmas.

On our local level, \$200.00 will be distributed to the Holiday Project, \$100.00 to PAVE (Project Against Violent Encounters) and \$50.00 to the Northshire Bookstore for Book Angels.

In January we will be getting ready for our annual RMMO (Retired Ministers and Missions Offering).

Our next meeting will be Wednesday January 27 at 1:00 PM in the Vestry.

Blessings at Christmas

and a

Safe Healthy Happy New Year



## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Save the date for our annual Christmas Coffee House on Saturday December 12 at 7. We will be going virtual this year, so look for the Zoom invitation as the date nears. When you receive the email, please respond if you plan to share something, such as a story, song, poem, or other Christmas related fun, so we can plan the evening. Everyone is welcome to join, even just to share in an evening of socializing with folks we don't get to see regularly. Feel free to make your own hot cocoa and cookies for the event.

The Education Committee will also be hosting another movie night. We will view *The Nativity Story* via Zoom on Sunday December 20 at 7 pm, followed by a brief discussion of the movie. We hope you will join us.

We have tentatively planned an afternoon of caroling at 2:00 on Saturday December 19. This will depend on the nature of the governor's orders at the time. If we are able to follow through with this plan, we will meet at church at 2:00 to pick up song packets. If you would like to join the carolers, or be visited by the carolers, please let Pastor Rebecca know.

Finally, our Sunday study class will continue meeting the first and third Sundays of the month in the vestry or via Zoom at 9:30. Currently, we are working through the series *The Gospel Comes with a Housekey*, a discussion about the nature of Biblical hospitality.

For His glory,  
Annie Crumb



### PACKING THE OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD BOXES

Cara Davenport, Annie Crumb, Julia (Jae) Vickery, Holly O'Brien, Linell Pike, Ayana, Ronan O'Brien  
Pastor Rebecca is behind the camera.

## **MARY & MARTHA FELLOWSHIP**

This is a very busy time of year with no exception for Mary Martha Fellowship. Along with taking care of a family for Christmas (see note below), we will also be preparing baskets and flowers for some of our congregants.

Some members may wish to put memorial flowers in church beginning on December 20. Please let Rebecca know by the 14th of December by phoning, emailing or dropping her a note so those persons can be listed in the program. Poinsettias may be ordered from Peggy Brockett at Lily of the Valley for \$12 and they will be delivered to the church.

We will be putting the flower list together for 2021 and if you have a special date you'd like to have someone remembered, please call Martha Thompson at 362-3473.

Wishing all a Blessed Christmas!

~Martha Thompson

### **Mary & Martha's Gift Giving**

This year as part of our Christmas giving, Mary & Martha Fellowship has decided to help out one of our church families. We have a wish list and are currently signing up for items. If anyone would like to participate, please contact Lorraine at 645-9525 for further details. All items need to be wrapped, tagged with the person's name, and brought to the church by December 15th. Please take them to the Choir Room upstairs. Your help is needed and appreciated. Let's help this family have a joyous Christmas!

~Lorraine Wilkins



INTERFAITH HOLIDAY AUCTION  
Benefiting  
INTERFAITH EMERGENCY NEEDS FUND  
November 30 – December 10

Please visit <https://www.32auctions.com/interfaith2020> to support our community with assistance at this difficult time in the Pandemic. We have already had requests for assistance with rent, electricity and heat, and we need your help!

Holiday shop for great and unique items while supporting your community. It's a win-win!

Take a look at our Chandler 4 Corner pillows, restaurant gift cards, personalized hand-made teddy bears, a fly-fishing package and so much more!

Thank you for your support.

## **PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE – November 2020**

Our November meeting addressed a number of building items including work on the Joy Hall sink, an odor coming from the open kitchen drain and mice who believe a drawer makes the perfect place to call 'home'. Rebecca, Jeremy and GSK are handling the concerns.

Mary Martha has offered to cover the cost of a new faucet in the kitchen to supplement the sprayer.

Total Restoration has returned twice to complete work on the roof. We are DONE with electrical work. Subpanels have been installed. Knob and tube wiring has been removed from the attic. The electricians discovered knob and tube wiring under the organ which needs to be addressed. Circuits for the new water heater have been installed and the new water heater is scheduled to be installed in mid-November.

We are scheduled in January with VT Foam for an attic insulation installation and awaiting a contract.

We have a vulnerable population to consider as we deal with COVID-19 and we are striving to strike a safe balance in favor of them as we address protocols for gathering at the church.

We are switching to a Comcast 35 MG plan for about the same price as Consolidated Communications 10MG plan. This will allow Jeremy to add more computers to the sanctuary technology and enhance our Sunday service.

### **New Business**

Lorraine Wilkins will represent the Prudential Committee on the Budget Committee.

We are looking into a programmable thermostat to regulate the heat in the sanctuary. Andover Organ highly recommends turning up the heat at least two hours prior to the Sunday service to ensure the organ plays in tune.

Jeremy is checking into both smoke detectors and emergency light upgrades.

Dottie Sundquist, Secretary



## **PRAYER TEAM**

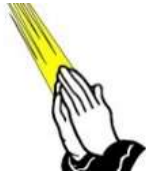
Did you know that your First Baptist Church has a Prayer Team? There are about 24 people who have committed to praying for each submitted prayer request.

Prayer requests are kept confidential. When asking for prayer for someone other than yourself, please ask permission to add them to our prayer list.

Prayer requests should be short and to the point. Prayer requests are kept on the list for 30 days. If you wish to be on the Prayer Team speak with Pastor Rebecca.

If you or someone you know needs prayer, send it to [fbchurchatprayer@gmail.com](mailto:fbchurchatprayer@gmail.com).

Although we do not keep official track, we have had almost 400 prayer requests since we started in Oct 2018 and, because the information is on our church website, we have had requests from all over the world.



## **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**

Pastor Rebecca's e-mail address: [rebeccasommons@gmail.com](mailto: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 over the last few months 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](mailto:rebeccasommons@gmail.com)

## CALENDAR OF CHURCH EVENTS

Tuesday, Dec. 1: Prayer Group with Book Study (ch. 8) at 7 pm via zoom  
Thursday, Dec. 3: Interfaith Council Meeting at noon via zoom  
Monday, Dec. 7: Emmaus Group Meeting at 7 pm via zoom  
Tuesday, Dec. 8: Prudential Meeting at 5 pm via zoom  
Tuesday, Dec. 8: Prayer Group at 7 pm via zoom  
Wednesday, Dec. 9: Seeking God Together Group at 11 am via zoom  
Friday, Dec. 11: Deacon Meeting at 10 am via zoom  
Saturday, Dec. 12: Christmas Coffee House at 7 pm via zoom  
Monday, Dec. 14: Emmaus Group Meeting at 7 pm via zoom  
Tuesday, Dec. 15: Prayer Group with Book Study (ch. 9) at 7 pm via zoom  
Saturday, Dec. 19: Possible opportunity to Christmas Carol at 2 pm  
Sunday, Dec. 20: Movie night watching ***The Nativity Story*** at 7 pm via zoom  
Monday, Dec. 21: Emmaus Group at 7 pm via zoom  
Tuesday, Dec. 22: Prayer Group at 7 pm via zoom  
Wednesday, Dec. 23: Seeking God Together Group at 11 am via zoom  
Thursday, Dec. 24: Christmas Eve Service 7 pm (In person and via zoom)  
Friday, Dec. 25: Merry Christmas!  
Monday, Dec. 28: Emmaus Group Meeting at 7 pm via zoom  
Tuesday, Dec. 29: Prayer Group Book Discussion (ch. 10) at 7 pm via zoom

## FLOWERS

Dec. 6: Anna Ennis  
Dec. 13: Barbara West  
Dec. 20: Memorial Poinsettias  
Dec. 27: Memorial Poinsettias

\*If you wish to order Memorial Poinsettias from Peggy Brockett at Lily of the Valley (362-7181) for \$12.00, they will be delivered to the church for you.



*The First Baptist Church family would like to extend their love and prayers to Paul, Rachel, Sarah and the entire family of Susan Bauers. Susan, a well-loved friend of the FBC family, went to be with the Lord on November 9, 2020.*