



Taken by Pastor Rebecca 2020



"SpiritSpark"

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

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Pastor: Rev. Rebecca Sommons

DECEMBER 2021

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR REBECCA

Dear Church Family,

The weather is certainly all we could hope for to inspire Christmas spirit. Looking out my windows, I feel like I am living inside a magnificent snow globe.

Each year that December comes round, I find my heart is drawn to the deepest gifts of Christmas ~ hope, peace, joy, and love ~ all flowing from the heart of God the Father through the birth of Jesus. I am grateful that I grew up knowing and cherishing the nativity story, but I didn't come to know about Advent until I was an adult. One of the beautiful things about the Advent themes that name the gifts of hope, peace, joy, and love is that they are available to everyone. The only cost is God's. To receive them, we need only to open our hearts to God. In this moment of gift exchange, we can give God the things He most desires from us ~ our love and trust.

As we light our candles and spend time reflecting on God's gifts, maybe the Spirit will inspire us with an idea of how we might spread the light to another person. Who is in need of hope? Who can we join in praying for peace? How might we bring a spark of joy to another person? What gift of love will connect our heart to another?

Let's resist the pressure that can drain this holy season of its joy and instead live mindfully and wholeheartedly, enjoying God's presence and sharing the light of God's gifts with others.

Warm Blessings,
Pastor Rebecca Sommon



Homemade Holiday Cookie Sale

Mary Martha is holding a holiday cookie sale on Saturday, December 11th from 10am-1pm.

We are on a **roll**!

roll up your sleeves
roll out some dough
and **roll** into church with your goods

Decorate cookies and set-up Friday, December 10th at 1 pm

Contact Dottie Sundquist to help
dotsun53@gmail.com



REPORT FROM MISSIONS

The Mission and Outreach Committee has not met for the month of November as we are hoping to increase our funds to support our many projects - Jeni in Thailand, Leon in Africa and Book Angels here in Manchester.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 8, 2021 at 2:00 pm in the vestry.
God Bless You All.



Linell Pike

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Thank you to everyone who helped make the Christmas Child boxes successful this year. Many people shopped to fill the boxes and many others generously paid the shipping costs. What a wonderful collaboration between the shoppers and the shippers! May the Lord bless our efforts to reach the hearts of the children who receive our boxes this Christmas.

First Baptist Church will be hosting another showing of *The Chosen*, along with a potluck dinner, on December 4th. Dinner will be at 5:30, with the viewing of this month's episode at 6:30.

Save the date for our annual Christmas Coffee House! The Coffee House will be held December 11th at 7:00 in the church vestry. Join us to share a special memory, story, musical talent, or reading, or just come to share in fellowship and seasonal fun.

In Christ,
Annie Crumb



MARY & MARTHA FELLOWSHIP

The nominating of officers took place at Mary Martha's last meeting.

Lisa Towslee has agreed to remain as president, Lisa Hess will assume role of vice-president, Judy Koch remains as treasurer, Martha Thompson as secretary and flowers, Linda Hulett as Sunshine chair, Lindy Mylott as Kitchen chair, and Barbara West as devotional chair.

Linda Drunsic has approached us about helping with the Holiday Project sponsored by the IFCN. After discussion with different Mary Martha members, we will receive two children. More information will be posted when the children are assigned.

Baskets for our friends at home are planned. Call Lorraine at 802-645-9525 if you need help with ideas. Items need to be at church on or before Sunday, Dec. 12 when all gifts will be assembled.

Poinsettias.

A list will be on the bulletin board in the vestry if you wish to memorialize or honor someone at Christmas. The two dates before Christmas are Dec. 19th and Dec. 24th. Rebecca will start putting the bulletin together the week of the 13th and will try to be done by Thursday the 16th so you will want to add your information to the list by then.

Our next meeting is Sunday, Dec. 12, 2021 at 8:30 a.m.

~submitted by Martha Thompson, Secretary

DIACONATE COMMITTEE

Deaconess Cara Davenport shared a Thanksgiving message in Rebecca's absence on Nov. 21st. What a blessing it is to have so many of our own congregants willing to share their special gifts!

The Diaconate are collectively reading a book entitled *The Twentieth Century Christian*, about ways modern Christians can spread the Word and expand our fellowship.

The Advent and Christmas theme is shining the light.

The Diaconate has assembled Advent devotional candles and devotions for our congregation. We can deliver these to you if you let Jim West (802-362-3329) or Rebecca (802-688-3024) know that you would like this done. At the present time, they are on the refreshment table by the kitchen.

T-Shirts: John Hess has been seeking information about t-shirts and sweatshirts with our church logo on it. It is good publicity for our church when members wear their shirts at public events, like working at the food shelf or helping serve a dinner. More information following soon.

Our next meeting is Dec. 14th at 4:30 p.m.
~submitted by Martha Thompson



INTERFAITH COUNCIL of the NORTSHIRE

The Council is sponsoring an online auction to benefit the Emergency Needs Fund which can be found at www.32auctions.com/interfaith2021.

Linda Drunsic is again gathering names for the Holiday Project. Mary & Martha will be participating.

NEIGHBOR to NEIGHBOR

We welcome new care recipients and volunteers. Call Robin Galguera at 803-367-77897 if you know of someone who needs help or someone who might wish to volunteer.

We are hosting a Holiday Dinner on Dec. 17, 2021 beginning at 12 noon for care recipients and volunteers. Call Robin, 802-367-7787 if you are interested in attending.

~submitted by Martha Thompson

PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE

The Prudential Committee met on November 11th at Maurie's House. What a treat! Thank you Maurie! Your hospitality was impeccable.

During our **Old Business**, I gave a lot of updates on items that we continue to work on: roof/water damage in the Sanctuary. (Cody will repaint as insurance company said to go ahead.) The Roof Committee met via Zoom. (Jeremy, Ray, & Lorraine). They will begin to explore replacing the Sanctuary roof with slate, shingles, standing seam, & solar panels. We will begin the process of getting estimates and findings will be discussed at the Annual Meeting with next steps determined by the congregation.

I will call GSK to see about a "vent cover" for the drain in the kitchen to help with the smell. GSK had been to Long Trail School and installed one there. They have the same system we do.

The organ was tuned on Monday. Maurie came to let them in.
The oven has been fixed in the kitchen. Maurie once again opened the building for them. Mary & Martha will pay for oven repair. The smell in Joy Hall and hallway has disappeared.
Lindy has been checking the dehumidifier and it is working.

It was brought to our attention that the choir cannot be heard on Zoom. Jeremy has given a quote of \$1,000 for microphones. I will contact Jeremy and ask more questions. We will discuss this at the next meeting.

Lastly, Lisa has seen the first drawing for the railing to the entrance to the vestry. This option is \$1200. We will try another, perhaps matching the front ones, and will determine which is the best.

The only **New Business** item was discussion about the flags that have been replaced in the front of the church. Maurie took them to be dry cleaned. We are thankful that the dry cleaners did not charge for the American flag. Maurie graciously took care of the payment for the Christian flag. However, the American flag had many holes in it. Jim Johnson ordered a new one. Thank you, Jim.

Next meeting will be December 9th at 4 PM.
Lorraine Wilkins, Chairman



Thank you, Linda Hulett, for finding this and sharing it with us!

New Christmas Tradition

Beginning December 1st

Read one chapter of the book of Luke in the Bible each evening.

There are only 24 chapters

On Christmas Eve you will have read an entire account of Jesus's

Life and wake up Christmas morning knowing who and why we celebrate.

MEN'S GROUP
SATURDAY, December 18th
9:00 am in the Vestry

OUR CHURCH IS PRIVILEGED TO BE ABLE TO OFFER
OUR FACILITY TO THE FOLLOWING AA GROUPS EACH WEEK.

Breakfast with Your Higher Power Group: Mon-Fri from 7:30-8:30 am (open group)

Equinox Group: Mon – Fri from Noon to 1:00 (open group)

Primary Purpose Group: Sunday 7:30 -8:30 pm (closed group)

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 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 throughout 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

Wednesday, Dec. 1 Seeking God Together meeting at the Sommons' house

Christian Ed. Meeting at 7:30 pm via zoom

Thursday, Dec. 2 Hanging of the Greens at the church at 9 am

Interfaith Council Annual Meeting via zoom at noon

Choir Practice at 7 pm at the church

Saturday, Dec. 4 Watching the Tractor Parade at 5:30 pm followed by a Potluck Supper

and showing of the Christmas Episode of The Chosen.

Sunday, Dec. 5 Second Sunday of Advent and Communion

Tuesday, Dec. 7 PRC Meeting at the West home at 11 am

Prayer Group with Book Discussion at 7 pm via zoom

Wednesday, Dec. 8 Mission Meeting in the vestry at 2 pm

Thursday, Dec. 9 Prudential Meeting in the vestry at 4 pm
Choir Practice at 7 pm at the church
Friday, Dec. 10 Cookie Decorating and Set up at 1 pm
Saturday, Dec. 11 Cookie Sale from 10 am to 1 pm at the church
Christmas Coffee House at 7 pm
Sunday, Dec. 12 Third Sunday of Advent
Mary and Martha Meeting and Breakfast at 8:30 am
Tuesday, Dec. 14 Deacon Meeting in the vestry at 4:30 pm
Wednesday, Dec. 15 Seeking God Together Meeting at 11 am
Thursday, Dec. 16 Choir Practice at 7 pm at church
Saturday, Dec. 18 Men's Breakfast Meeting at 9 am in the vestry
Sunday, Dec. 19 Fourth Sunday of Advent
Tuesday, Dec. 21 Prayer Group with book discussion at 7 pm via zoom
Thursday, Dec. 23 Choir Practice at 7 pm
Friday, Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Service (Lessons and Carols) 7pm
Saturday, Dec. 25 Merry Christmas!
Sunday, Dec. 26 Worship Service at 10:30 am
Wednesday, Dec. 29 Seeking God Together Meeting at 11 am
Thursday, Dec. 30 Choir Practice at 7 pm

Look for more meetings and events throughout the month. Martha Thompson will be calling a nominating committee together and Pastor Rebecca is hoping to host a young adults game night!

FLOWERS

Dec. 5: Barbara West / in memory of Miriam Wertman

Dec. 12: flower arrangement

** Dec. 19: Memorial Poinsettias

** Dec. 24: 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.