



Manchester Historical Society – Bottom photo is from 1925

“SpiritSpark”



The First Baptist Church of Manchester Center, VT

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Pastor: Rev. Rebecca Sommons

June 2019

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR REBECCA

Dear Church Family,

I've enjoyed planting things in the yard of the parsonage this spring. There are new flowers near the house and a crop of vegetables in the garden behind the barn that are soaking in the rain and sunshine. One thing that I didn't need to plant is the long row of raspberry bushes on the left side of the backyard. The red raspberries and little black caps have been a source of delicious snacking for us and our neighbors in years past. We weren't able to get to the ones further into the patch, because of the dense

growth. So this year, I took my mom's advice and my new pair of clippers and set to work removing the dead canes.

It took several hours to wade through the patch and remove the hard, brown stems that had held fruit in years past. I filled the wheelbarrow seven times before the job was done. Even the parts that had green stems and leaves had a long brown and barren piece at their tips that needed to be removed. Along the way, I came across a vine that had infiltrated the raspberry patch, climbing the plants, tangling them up, and stealing their vitality.

All of this reminded me of the image that Jesus used in John 15 about being connected to the true Source of Life to live fruitful lives. He said: *"I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father."* (v. 1-2,8). We can think of our own lives, and how God prunes things from our lives that hold us back from having a vital and fruitful life because He loves us.

As I worked in the raspberry patch, I also thought of how it represented the church I have been entrusted with. I didn't plant it, and it was both fruitful and a bit tangled before I came here. God has invited me to be a part of discovering the parts of our church that are connected to its true Source and purpose in the world, and to help to clear away the things that can get in the way of our church's mission. It is something that we do in prayer, conversation, and discernment together.

When my husband, Matt, came home from work he surveyed the patch, he thought that maybe I had pruned too much. There were some branches with green leaves in the wheelbarrow. I needed to tell him about the sneaky vine that was just pretending to be part of the patch, but was really hurting it. I also needed to reassure him that the patch will be more fruitful when the most healthy branches had room to grow. His momentary anxiety may resonate with some of you who are reading this letter and feeling nervous about changes that have happened, some that are in progress, and some that are yet to come in the life of our church this year. If so, I hope you will be able to trust that the changes are motivated by love. Even though the process is uncomfortable and difficult at times, the harvest that is coming will be good and in line with God's purposes for us. May the fruit that God brings through our lives and our church be nourishing both to us and to those outside the church walls, so that more in our community will be drawn to Jesus.

Love in Christ,
Pastor Rebecca



On Wednesday, July 10th, the Mary and Marth Fellowship will be carpooling to the Wild Wings Conservatory and Gardens in Deerfield, Massachusetts. We are planning a potluck picnic after visiting the butterflies and gardens. The cost will be \$16.00 for adults and \$12.50 for seniors. We will meet at the church at 8:30 am. WE WANT YOU TO JOIN US! See Judy Koch for more information and to sign up!

PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE

Here are the highlights from our Prudential Committee meeting of May 14, 2019:

Church volunteers patched the walls and painted the conference room for the cost of one gallon of paint. Thanks to all those who made this happen!

Our organ tuning and cleaning was scheduled with Andover Organ Co. and is now completed.

Several people volunteered to sort out the tables and chairs that were rusted and bring them to the dump.

Jeremy updated the committee on the kitchen remodeling plans.

Respectfully submitted,
Bryan Richheimer, Chairman



If you enlarge the photo, you'll find two men cleaning and tuning the organ... a 4-day project!
(Thank you, Pastor Rebecca, for taking this photo.)

DIACONATE

The demands on our Fellowship Fund continue to be great. Thank you for your generous giving to this important fund.

Camp Sentinel is coming up! You can find information about it on the bulletin board in the vestry.

There will be a sign-up sheet for people to bring food for coffee hour during the summer on the bulletin board in the vestry. Also, there will be a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board to be a part of the service by giving a testimony or doing a piece of music. If you have any questions, please speak with Pastor Rebecca.

On Sunday, June 9th, our coffee hour will be a special lunch and cake provided by the Sommons family. This is in celebration of Natalie Sommons's graduation from BBA. Cards for Natalie are welcome!

We'd like to start a Young Adult Group at Church. If you know of anyone who would like to join in our activities, please let me or Pastor Rebecca know.

On July 13th the Middle River Gospel Band is performing at Horseshoe Acres Campground in Andover, VT at 7 pm. We are planning to have a picnic at the campground before the performance. We will leave the church at 4 pm if anyone would like to carpool. There is no visitor fee and if you would like to camp it is ½ price for the 12th and 13th if you mention the poster.

Starting on the June 23rd the Sunday Morning worship service will begin at 9:30 am for the summer.

Submitted by Kelsey Towslee

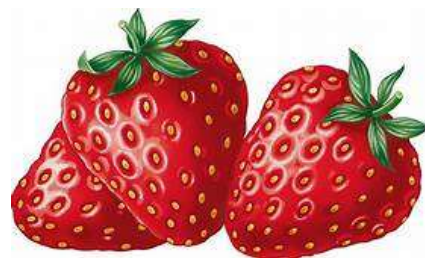
Ham and Strawberry Dinner

June 22, 2019 the Mary and Martha Fellowship will be hosting our annual Ham and Strawberry Dinner. The meal will be served at 6 P.M. Take-outs will be available beginning at 5:15 P.M. To make arrangements for seating or take-outs, please call Martha at 362-3473.

Martha T. will have sign-up sheets beginning Sun. June 2nd. The menu includes baked beans, potato, macaroni and broccoli salads and of course strawberry shortcake for dessert. A group to pick strawberries will be under Lisa Towslee's direction, probably Friday morning. We ask our talented cooks for their help preparing the beans and salads and providing groceries.

Dishwashers and waitstaff are needed, Tables will be set on Thursday afternoon at 4:30 and help is needed there also. This is one of the opportunities for our church to interact with the community and we always seem to put our best foot forward.

~submitted by Martha Thompson



MARY MARTHA FELLOWSHIP – submitted by Martha Thompson, Secretary

June is going to be a very busy month for MMF! In addition to the Ham and Strawberry Dinner mentioned on the previous page, we will be celebrating Natalie Sommon's Graduation from BBA on June 9th after church. Pastor Rebecca plans on hosting this event.

On June 16, 2019 at 8:30 A.M. MMF will be treating the men in our congregation to a breakfast celebrating Father's Day. Dining with us that day will be the Lansdale Youth Group, joined by our own Ronan O'Brien. The group will leave later that day to begin their mission trip to Rutland. There is a sign-up sheet in the vestry if you would like to help with this breakfast.

And, incidentally, we thank the gentlemen of the church who prepared such a delectable breakfast for the ladies of the church in a very lovely dining room at church, all under the leadership of Jim Comar. THANK YOU!!!



The First Baptist Church has some amazing chefs! Here are two of them – Jim J. and Jim C.!

Volunteer at Community Food Cupboard

June is First Baptist's month to volunteer to distribute food to our clients at the Food Cupboard. This will occur each week on Wednesday and Thursday. The time 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 30th. 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 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

MISSIONS COMMITTEE

The Missions Committee met on May 22, 2019 under the direction of chair, Lisa Towslee.

This coming month the church will be collecting one of the four offerings taken during the year, One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS). During the month of June, we will also be highlighting local missions particularly The Kids Summer Lunch Program on the 16th.

We received a thank you note and picture from Leon, the child we support in Africa, for our Easter/Christmas gift and they are posted on the bulletin board in the vestry.

Thank you notes have also been received from The Heifer Project and World Vision for our donation of trees and bees to Heifer and money towards a cereal project for World Vision both gifts multiplied which maximizes our ability to help.

The Mission Committee has made arrangements for Ronan O'Brien to join the Lansdale Youth Group on their Mission trip to Rutland. The Sommons family will be hosting them at their home on Sat. June 15th, and they will be joining our gentlemen for breakfast the next morning. They will be departing for Rutland following the breakfast. At this meeting we also discussed some overlapping of events in June.

The Committee adjourned and we will meet again on Wednesday, Aug. 21st at 4:45 P.M.
~submitted by Martha Thompson

THE INTERFAITH COUNCIL

One of the big projects Interfaith oversees this time of year is The Kids Summer Lunch Program which runs from the end of school till the last week in August and feeds about 200 kids in Manchester, Dorset, Pawlet, Rupert and Danby. The Mettowee School, which serves Pawlet and the Rupert areas, has begun a backpack program which helps kids during the school year and this is also supported by the Kids Summer Lunch Program. They now figure it costs almost \$150 to feed one child for the summer. The Golden Bag program is the money raising central for the Lunch Program which is under the direction of Karen Allen.

Auto Angels is always seeking good used cars and if this is something you can help with or know someone whose life would be enhanced with a car you may speak to Pastor Rebecca or contact Rev. Jim Gray or Bill Drunic.

Neighbor to Neighbor has announced the date and location of The Pie Auction which will be held on Oct. 6th at BBA cafeteria.

A committee from Interfaith has met to discuss ways to honor all first responders in our area. A weekend will be designated with various opportunities at each congregation to honor our firemen police and rescue workers both paid and volunteers.

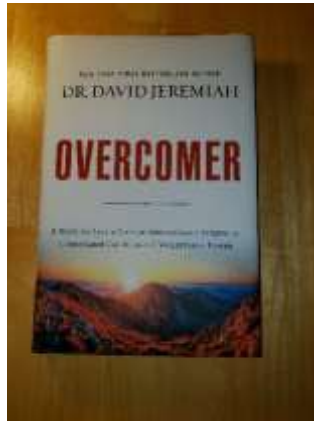
The Interfaith Council does not meet in the summer and resumes monthly meetings in September. The meetings are scheduled for the first Thursday of each month, hosted by each member church at 11:45 A.M.

~submitted by Martha Thompson

THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH TUESDAY EVENING PRAYER/STUDY GROUP

The Prayer Group is starting a new book! It is titled Overcomer by Dr. David Jeremiah. What do we need to overcome? Weakness, falsehood, evil, anxiety, fear, confusion, temptation... Dr. Jeremiah will guide us in discussing how to overcome all these, and more, with prayer. He uses illustrations and stories throughout his book to help our understanding and make it entertaining! Join us!

See Pastor Rebecca for more information or check the 'Calendar of Events' and just show up!



SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP
SERVICES WILL BEGIN AT 9:30 am
STARTING ON JUNE 23rd!



**OUR CHURCH IS PRIVILEGED 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

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

June 2: Martha Thompson

June 9: Martha Thompson

June 16: Martha Thompson

June 23: Rosemary Hall

June 30: Russ and Glenna Taxter

CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

July 2: Lindy & Cathy

July 9: Jenny & Cheryl

July 16: Lisa & Annie

July 23: Dottie & Bryan

July 30: Holly & Ronan