



## **“SpiritSpark”**

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

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[Pastor: Rev. Rebecca Sommons](#)

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**June 2021**

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### **A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR REBECCA**

Dear Church Family,

In the pastor’s spiritual formation group I attend via zoom on Wednesday mornings, we meditate on Scripture together and listen for how the Holy Spirit makes connections with our lives. This past week, Rev. Dale Edwards shared a passage from Genesis 8 that begins by saying:

*“But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark, and he sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded...”*

It goes on to talk about the ark resting on the mountain, of Noah opening the window and releasing a dove to see if it was time to emerge, and ends with everyone coming out and giving thanks to God. It was a process that required patience, but was full of hope for life on the other side of the flood.

The passage reminds me of the long year being in our homes during the pandemic. We too, have had incremental steps forward. A breakthrough came just as we celebrated the Holy Spirit moving as wind and fire, beckoning the believers outdoors to share the light and good news of God’s grace and truth. God is moving on our behalf. He has not forgotten us. There is much for which to give him thanks and praise!

Let's continue to be patient with the process of emerging, even as we enjoy the sudden gust of excitement about the mask and distancing requirements being lifted. The Holy Spirit is guiding our church family toward the next chapter of our lives together. At the end of this month, we'll remember and celebrate God's faithfulness in bringing us through all the chapters of our church story that have already been written. May we joyfully and prayerfully follow God's leading to engage the next steps in a post-pandemic world.

With hope and gratitude,  
*Pastor Rebecca*



## MISSIONS

This past month, thank you notes were received from the Arlington Food Shelf, Neighbor to Neighbor and The Fold, which supports at risk teens.

Each organization was very appreciative of our interest in their causes.

We continue to have funds available to reach out to our town, county, state and worldwide.

In the month of May there are six organizations or projects receiving support:

1- Leon Nyahunhuwa has a birthday in July. All members of the committee signed a card to send through World Vision.

2- The Voice of The Martyrs to help with persecuted Christians.

3- Samaritan's Purse to help with disaster relief efforts such as tornadoes and fires.

4- The Fold for at risk teens. More about this project will come in July as plans for a guest speaker, Scott Rancourt, will visit us.

5- Meals on Wheels to support Bennington County with the West Arlington Grange on Tuesdays and Thursdays

6- Money to buy crafts and prizes for the Manchester Street Fair coming on Friday July 30, 2021.

In June, our focus will be One Great Hour of Sharing. The theme this year is "Let Love Flow".

Thank you for all the wonderful support you give this committee.

Linell Pike, Secretary

## NEW CHURCH DIRECTORY

A new church directory will be coming soon, but we need your help! Many of you have already been in contact with us, but if you have not, we will be reaching out to you. If you are already in the current directory, we will be asking if there are any changes, AND we will ask if you want your birthdays and anniversary listed. We will also be reaching out to those of you who have become part of our church family since the current directory was published. You may email [gtaxter@gmail.com](mailto:gtaxter@gmail.com) with information or questions.

If we have not heard from you, you may expect an email or phone call from someone working to gather this information! Thank you!

## PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE

The Prudential Committee met on May 6, 2021 in the vestry. Those present were Lorraine Wilkins, Maurie Hill, Dottie Sundquist, Ray Koch, Ashley Hess, Pastor Rebecca, and Lisa Hess.

**The Opening prayer** was read. It was the prayer Pastor Rebecca shared for World Day of Prayer.

**Pastor's Report:** AA's Vestry cabinet is now on the rollers, thanks to Jim Lincoln's handiwork and Lorraine's brother's mechanical skill.

The church needs to address the Covid sign-in sheet (vaccinated? symptomatic?).

May 19th at 6pm is the **funeral for Carolyn Kerson** here at church. After discussion it was determined to ask Mary & Martha to do the reception following the service. They will meet this Sunday.

**Old Business:** the **audit** is taking a long time and is ongoing. Since it is the first time in a while, it will take a little longer.

The **Building Use Policy** had to be revisited for clarification. Under weddings from the previous meeting, it should read as follows:

- \*The sanctuary will be available for its use to non-members at a fee of \$100.
- \*Services of the FBC pastor to non-members which includes premarital counseling, the rehearsal and the wedding service is \$150.

**Vestry floor** will be cleaned by Abba Floor Cleaning Service on June 24th after 1:15. Vestry will need to be cleaned out for this to happen. Perhaps some things can be moved after the church service on Sunday (i.e. piano, square table, etc.) They are sure they can get the rest of the stain out. Therefore, no need for tile replacement.

**Maurie** is still looking for **volunteers** to help clean the church before the anniversary. She is going to organize a day in June.

We are still waiting for response from **ASK for smoke detector and emergency lights** to be installed. Everyone is just busy.

The **Stained Glass Window Committee** has had their first meeting. They began by checking the outside of the windows. All of the window caulking is compromised. Some windows are not glass, but plexiglass. May glaze one window to see how it works. Lisa did find the folders from years ago that might be useful.

I reported about the 3 companies that I contacted for painting the **front door/trim on the church**.

After inspection of the exterior, it was determined that all of the front needs to be painted. Lux Brush is too busy. They wouldn't even commit to giving an estimate. John Grover gave an estimate of \$8000, but never received an itemized quote. (This quote was for all of the outside of the church, but when contacted to only estimate the front, he did not provide a revised quote.) Cody Clark 's quote was for \$3250 for labor only. He is working on the estimate for the materials. We asked him to only focus on the front of the church and the choir room as there are multiple stains on the ceiling. The choir room estimate is \$1000.

**Water Stain in Sanctuary** on the North wall. I called Total Restoration and they said two slates came

off the roof. Assured me they would be there as soon as they could to fix the slates. Decided to schedule a church meeting on May 16th for building maintenance to spend the money to paint the front of the church and the Choir Room ceiling.

The **boiler inspection** for our insurance company was done on May 5th. This inspection has to be done every two years. I was informed that GSK needs to move the reset button box before the next inspection as it was installed incorrectly. Report is forthcoming. I am waiting to see the report before calling GSK. Inspector suggested we insulate the pipes. He also suggested we might want to check on the bees in the basement as he found 3 bees during the inspection. We need to get a step ladder to get to the boiler.

**Reopening Committee Report (Ashley/Ray)** The committee was meeting that day to address some questions as we proceed with reopening. (See their report on page 7 of this newsletter.)

**In New Business**, the first order of business was the water damage in Sanctuary. Lorraine has been in contact with Mike from Total Restoration. He will come as soon as he can.

**Vestry Windows** - replace or fix? The fixtures holding in the windows and the fixtures allowing the window to tilt in are broken in a couple of the windows. I will check into this further.

**Treasurer's Report**- discussion about Youth Ministries. Monies taken from there should be moved to Scholarships. Monies spent for visit to the Chocolatorium will be taken out of the \$175.74.

### **Clarification for Missions Donations**

After several Annual Meetings of hearing concerns surrounding the Missions Account, I decided to check into this account. First, I talked to Lisa T., Cathy C., the FBC Missions Committee, and a few members. I also found notebooks in the church office, one for each committee, that had been created when Steve Jewett was here most recently. Along with help from others, two documents were found. The most recent document stated that all monies given to Missions and is unspecified is split. 50% goes to United Missions Basics (formerly Benevolence) and the other 50% goes to First Baptist Church Missions (FBC Missions). Of course, any donations which are specified will be given directly to that fund. Hopefully, this clears up the concerns.

~Lorraine Wilkins  
Prudential Committee Chair

## **INTERFAITH COUNCIL**

Two of the Council's organizations are in our news this month.

The Kids Summer Lunch Program is getting ready to kick off their Kids Lunch Program the third week of June. Nearly 200 children were served last summer. Each child receives a bag of groceries every week the program is in operation. Children in the Manchester, Dorset, Pawlet and Danby areas are served by this program. If you are motivated to support Summer Lunch, you may send a donation to The United Church of Christ

P.O. Box 263  
Dorset, VT 05251  
Attention: Kids Summer Lunch / Karen Allen

Neighbor to Neighbor's fund raising project this year is a raffle with over 30 wonderful prizes. Tickets are \$5 apiece or 3 for \$10 and can be purchased at local farmer's markets or through the Neighbor-to-Neighbor office. Robin Galguera, the director, is there weekdays 9 to 1 and can be reached by phone at 367-7787. Neighbor to Neighbor's mission is to assist care recipients to live as independently as possible by providing no cost assistance.

~Martha Thompson

## **MARY MARTHA FELLOWSHIP**

Lorraine Wilkins reported that she has cleaned the windows and the walls in both the vestry and the bathroom in readiness for our anniversary celebration. The new curtains and rods have been hung and look lovely.

A treat for the men of our congregation has been planned to celebrate Father's Day.

The next scheduled meeting of Mary Martha is planned for June 13, 2021, probably at 8:30 A.M.

## **DIACONATE NEWS**

Please continue to give to the fellowship fund to help our families that may be in need. You may reach out to any of the Deacons if you or anyone you know is in need.

Thank you everyone that helped with the mother day arrangements!

The Anniversary service is being worked on and we are eager to celebrate with all of you on June 27th.

We also discussed an upcoming important church observance, Pentecost. The observance will be based on the scripture, Matthew 5: 14-16 with Pastor Rebecca's sermon entitled "Light Up the World". All are encouraged to wear red to add to the celebration. And because the evening bonfires were as popular as they were last year, the Diaconate decided to hold them once again this season. John and Cheryl Hess and Linell and Jerry Pike decided to host them this year. Sounds like great fun for those available to attend.

Even though there is a special committee to plan the celebration of the church's 240<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Martha Thompson gave a report on the progress of that event being held on June 27th. It is exciting for all of us, but especially for those of us who have been around for awhile, to learn that so many of our former pastors will either be here to celebrate with us or will take part in the event in some other way. It is an event to look forward to!

~Kelsey Towslee, Secretary



Pentecost Campfire and Praises at the home of John and Cheryl Hess



### **FATHER'S DAY IS JUNE 20<sup>th</sup>!**

The Diaconate would like you to know that, since our Mother's Day Collection of Memories was so well-received, we will be doing the same thing for our fathers this month. If you would like to write a tribute for your father or a father figure in your life, please send it to Glenna Taxter by Monday, June 14.

They will be printed as a collection and will be sent out to all who receive the SpiritSpark.

### **THE CELEBRATION OF OUR 240th ANNIVERSARY**

Plans are well underway for our Founding Anniversary. Dick and Paula Olmstead, Steve and Kathy Jewett, Betty and Aidsand Wright -Riggins and granddaughter, Martha Gale and Bob Carpenter, Rod and Jill Birney and Executive Minister, Dale Edwards will be attending in person. Joseph Huse will be participating via zoom. Pat Crough and Debbie Kamm will be sending messages.

The celebration begins at 9:30 A.M., June 27, 2021 with a worship service which will include special music by the choir, the reading of our covenant, and a few words from our former pastors.

This will be followed at about 11:00 with an open house in the vestry and cake for the community which will be served at the Bonnet Street entrance.

At about noon there will be a picnic lunch to which the anniversary committee, choir et al, committee chairs and our visiting pastors and wives, etc. are invited. We are trying to keep the number to about 40 for this lunch as we are limited in space. There may be a few spots left so if you are interested in attending, let Martha Thompson know. First come - first serve. Let's hope this part will all work out.

It is looking more and more that we will be able to fill the sanctuary and there will be time to visit with our honored guests following the worship service.

~submitted by Martha Thompson



Jim Holden singing his new song!

## **THE CHURCH RE-OPENING COMMITTEE-**

The Church Re-opening Committee met on 5/27/2021 and determined that the safety protocols currently in place at the church; including signing a contact log, taking temperature upon arrival, and closure of pews for distancing, is no longer required at this time. Those who wish to continue wearing a mask while in church may continue to do so if they wish. The discussion of resuming coffee hours after church will be left up to the discretion of the Deaconate. As always, the safety of our church family is of utmost importance and restrictions and safety protocols may be reinstated if deemed necessary.

Ashley Hess, Pastor Rebecca, Carol Lattuga, Ray Koch, John Hess

**SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP  
SERVICES WILL BEGIN AT 9:30 am  
STARTING ON JUNE 20th!**



### **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**

Church Office Hours 9:30-12:30 AM on Tuesdays and Wednesdays

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 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 often meets people outside and talks while taking a walk. 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)

## **CHURCH EVENTS**

Tuesday, June 1: Prayer Group and Book Study Chapter 9 of *Soul Shift* at 7 pm via zoom  
Wednesday, June 2: Christian Ed. meeting at 7:30 pm via zoom  
Thursday, June 3: Interfaith Council meeting at 11:45 am via zoom  
Thursday, June 3: Prudential Committee meeting at 4 pm at church  
Thursday, June 3: Choir Practice at 7 pm at church  
Saturday, June 5: Committal Service for Edie Sargood at 10 am at the Ira Allen Cemetery  
Sunday, June 6: Communion / Last week for Adult Sunday School for the spring  
Tuesday, June 8: Prayer Group at 7 pm via zoom  
Wednesday, June 9: Seeking God Together at 11 am via zoom  
Thursday, June 10: Choir Practice at 7 pm  
Sunday, June 13: Mary and Martha meeting at 8:30 am at the church before the worship service,  
Mission Moment ~ One Great Hour of Sharing  
Tuesday, June 15: Prayer Group at 7 pm via zoom  
Wednesday, June 16: Deacon Meeting at 7 pm  
Thursday, June 17: Missions Meeting at 3 pm at church  
Thursday, June 17: Choir Practice at 7 pm  
Sunday, June 20: Father's Day / Our church service time will move to 9:30 am  
Tuesday, June 22: Church Anniversary Planning Meeting at 3 pm at church  
Tuesday, June 22: Prayer Group at 7 pm via zoom  
Thursday, June 24: Choir Practice at 7 pm  
Sunday, June 27: Celebration of First Baptist Church's 240th Anniversary ~ Picnic after church  
Tuesday, June 29: Prayer Group at 7 pm via zoom

## **FLOWERS**

June 6: Bryan Richheimer / son Jeff  
June 13: Anna Ennis / Steven Ennis  
June 20: Rosemary Hall / Kathleen Walker  
June 27: Judy & Ray Koch / Jeanne Winfier



The First Baptist Church family would like to extend their love and prayers to the family and friends of Carolyn Kerson. Carolyn went to be with her Lord on May 2, 2021. She is greatly missed.