



Early 1900

“SpiritSpark”



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

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Pastor: Rev. Rebecca Sommons

NOVEMBER 2019

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR REBECCA

Dear Church Family,

We're here at the door of November once again, a month that invites us to come inside and reflect on the goodness in our lives. It's a beautiful and wise way to embrace the light in a season of cooler, darker days. I would like to take a few moments to share with you what I am thankful for today.

I thank God for the opportunity to live in this beautiful valley surrounded by mountains that change with the seasons and the light. I'm thankful for the little brick parsonage our family calls home and the new window seat, where I am currently sitting. It was created by the wood-working skills of Bryan Richheimer and the upholstery talents of Jim Comar, fulfilling a vision we had when we first saw the house. I am thankful to have a job I love, ministering to and with a kind, humble, giving, honest, and delightful congregation. It thrills my heart to see you stepping out in faith in new ways as well as the ways you have faithfully served over the years.

You are a people of integrity. Your commitment to come out in the rain and celebrate our first responders with the delicious food and thoughtful words you had prepared warmed my heart. I am thankful for the encouragement that God has been bringing to my heart in interactions with all different kinds of people, both in our community and elsewhere. God is caring for our girls, Grace and Natalie, who are both studying far from home and filling their lives with wonderful friends. The emptiness I felt at the beginning of our "empty nest" season is beginning to fill up with gifts God has graciously been pouring out, as I opened my heart to receive them. I hope that your hearts will feel full as you count your blessings and give thanks this November.

***"God, our hearts spill over with praise to you!
We overflow with thanks, for your name is the "Near One."
All we want to talk about is your wonderful works!"***

***Psalm 75:1
(The Passion Translation)***

*Love in Christ,
Pastor Rebecca*



The Diaconate

Please continue to give to the fellowship fund. The needs continue to be great.

The spiritual gift surveys are still available in the Vestry throughout the month of November. You may find one there if you have not completed one and if you have completed one, Pastor Rebecca would welcome the opportunity to talk with you about what you learned and pray about how God might be leading you.

The young adult group is still looking forward to getting together soon. If anyone has ideas of activities that we might consider, please let me know.

We are working on getting an Alpha class together at the church or work with another church to run a course. If you have questions about this, see John Hess or Linell Pike.

The next Missions meeting is on November 20th at 9:30.

~submitted by Kelsey Towslee

Prudential Meeting Highlights of October 2019 submitted by Dottie Sundquist

- The work for our new kitchen will begin in January. Cabinets have been ordered
- Lower windows on Bonnet Street have been caulked and painted. (Thank you, Bryan!)
- Completion of the organ repairs and a tuning is scheduled for early November
 - More work was recommended but tabled due to cost
- Joy Hall sink installation is to be scheduled
- Adam Hess is installing the Joy Hall insulation the last week of October

Summary of Annual Meeting of the Southwest Association of ABC/VNH

This year, the Annual Meeting of the Southwest Association of American Baptist Churches in Vermont and New Hampshire was held at Cavendish Baptist Church. The Moderator, Rev. John Brigham welcomed us and did a wonderful job of leading us in prayer at various points throughout our meeting. We sang both a hymn accompanied by Cavendish's organist and some praise songs led by their band. All of the band members are young men who have recently become a part of the Cavendish church, and it was good to see God's work in the lives of young people in their community. One of the band members, Shaun Brown, even volunteered to serve as the moderator for our next meeting! He was also excited to invite everyone to consider camping with the Great River Outfitters, where he works in Windsor. The pastors in the SW Association have been talking about putting together some combined youth group events, and this is a potential place for having one. The offering that our church sends to the association (\$10) is combined with the offerings of the other churches, and this year we decided to contribute \$400 to the Revitalization Fund. It provides funds for outreach events that churches do in their communities. I learned that the next Annual Gathering to which all American Baptist Churches in Vermont and New Hampshire are invited is scheduled for **March 20-21, 2020**. The theme is "**Discipleship from Scratch.**" Representatives from the main ABCVNH office were also happy to report that they have passed a balanced budget for our region, the first since 1994! In other good news, our sister church in Chester, VT has called a new pastor, Matt Tape, who will be moving his young family from North Carolina to begin serving there this November. I will be serving on the Executive Committee and the Pre Ordination Committee for the coming year. We closed the meeting by celebrating the Lord's Supper together. The soup and bread supper that followed was a good chance to share fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ who live in our corner of Vermont.

~Pastor Rebecca



Mary & Martha Fellowship

This busy organization comprised of any woman in our congregation who wishes to participate invites all to our next meeting on Nov.10, 2019 at 8:30 A.M. A bite to eat and a cup of coffee begin the meeting followed by devotions and a business meeting and often a program.

MMF takes many responsibilities for our congregation such as sending cards for special occasions, providing paper goods for the kitchen and bathrooms, overseeing weekly flowers and doing baskets for homebound seniors at Christmas time. We also have a Mission called White Cross which provides support for National and International Ministries. We sometimes are called upon to organize a reception when there has been a death.

To support these projects, we have several fundraising events during the year such as the suppers, the Basket Party, and selling RADA products.

Our most recent fund raiser was The Chicken Pie Supper which was a great success. We cleared \$1215 and fed about 115 paying customers as well as our help. It is a pleasure to see how well the church family works together to make each of our meals a success.

The work on the new kitchen is expected to begin in January and the cupboards have already been ordered.

~Martha Thompson, Secretary

Mary and Martha Fellowship will again be selling Made in the U.S.A. Rada knives. The knives have a lifetime guarantee. All proceeds will go into the the kitchen fund. We make 40% profit on all knife orders. We would also like to outfit our new kitchen, coming in January with new knives and other utensils. If you would like to purchase a knife or other utensil for the new kitchen, we will have a wish list on the bulletin board. Catalogs will be in the vestry. Contact Judy Koch for more information.

~Judy Koch, Co-Chair of MMF



Thank you to Lily of the Valley and Dan and Peggy Brockett for decorating our church sign so generously with beautiful flowers!

INTERFAITH COUNCIL

Members of the Interfaith Council met at the First Baptist Church on Thurs., Oct. 3, 2019. Final plans for honoring First Responders were shared. Each congregation made its own plans to honor our First Responders on Oct. 27, 2019.



All members of our congregation are invited and encouraged to attend the Annual Meeting, Pot Luck Supper and Harvest Auction to be held on Nov. 17, 2019 at Christ Our Savior Church with the meeting beginning at 5:00 P.M. followed by the dinner at 5:30 P.M. and the auction about 6:15 P.M. The meal will be provided by the Interfaith Council members with help from Christ Our Savior. This is a fun evening with a lot of community attendees. Bill Drunsic will act as the auctioneer and there are many very special donations including gift certificates for restaurants and B & Bs, as well as items from local merchants that have been donated.

Every cent raised goes to benefit the Interfaith Emergency Fund which also helps sponsor the local Holiday Project.

~submitted by Martha Thompson



Thanksgiving Service

The Interfaith Council of the Northshire invites the community to the Thanksgiving Eve Service at the First Congregational Church on Tuesday, Nov. 26, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. There will be a choir with Tom Salmon from the Dorset Church leading.

Rabbi Michael Cohen will be invited to speak and Pastor Rebecca is his back up. This event sets the stage for a Happy Thanksgiving with fellow congregations.

**BLESSINGS from your MISSIONS COMMITTEE!
The ONE GREAT HOUR of SHARING collection
begins in the month of November!
Thank you for your generosity!**

CHURCH YOUTH GROUP



The youth group had a fun time apple picking at Mad Tom Orchard. The kids enjoyed some apple cider donuts and then picked apples on a beautiful sunny fall day. At the parsonage, the youth group prepared and baked an apple crisp while playing games.



Kitchen Renovation Preparation

IT'S FINALLY HAPPENING! Yes, after 10 years and numerous fundraisers, the kitchen is finally getting a facelift including a new dishwasher! The work will be completed in January. All contractors are onboard and ready to go. In preparation for the work that needs to be done, the kitchen will begin to be emptied, leaving only truly necessary items. As this process begins, please be sure to take home any dishes that belong to you. We will need to use paper products for our social gatherings.

So that the kitchen work can be done, and to be sure we have some source of water, a sink will be installed in the kitchen area downstairs by the end of November.

It truly is a very exciting time for First Baptist since the last renovation of any kind in the kitchen was in the 70s!

Kitchen Committee: Jim Comar, Jeremy Crumb, Martha Thompson, Barb West, Lorraine Wilkins

Community Food Cupboard Holiday Wish List

The holidays are coming! At the Community Food Cupboard we are gearing up to provide Thanksgiving and Christmas groceries to hundreds of local families. Our wish from now until the new year is your help with that goal. A gift of funds will help us to purchase enough turkeys and fresh produce to ensure that everyone in our community can have a holiday meal. Donations of gift cards to our local markets will help families to purchase other necessities. Donations of stuffing mix, baking essentials like flour and sugar, canned pumpkin and cranberry sauce, and chicken broth are especially helpful this time of year. Non-perishables can be left outside our door in the Manchester Town Office building across the hall from the Town Clerk's office. Collection bins for food donations can also be found in the Manchester Community Library, the Dorset Post Office, and Shaw's Supermarket. Turkeys or perishable items can be brought to CFC on Wednesdays or Thursdays between 9:00 and 4:00. Donations of funds may be made online through our website, communityfoodcupboard.org or mailed to CFC, PO Box 864, Manchester Center, VT 05255. If you or someone you know could use assistance this holiday season please give us a call at 362-0057, see our website for further information or visit us on Wednesday or Thursday in the Manchester Town Office Building. As always, we are grateful to everyone whose support and generosity allows us to fulfill our mission to help families in need. Together we can make a positive difference in the lives of our neighbors.

~submitted by Jim West



Are you interested in learning more about the 238 year history of our church? You are welcome to join in the History Project, as we work together to organize the pictures, documents and books that have been collected. We'd appreciate your perspective, organizational skills, and memories as we embark on this endeavor. Our first meeting will be the Saturday, November 2nd from 2 - 4 pm.

Christmas Cookie Sale
December 7, 2019
10am-1pm in the Vestry

Seeking bakers to bake Christmas cookies!
No worries we even need rookies!
So roll up your sleeves
And try, if you please
Oh! And no one's allowed to play hookie!

What fun! We will sell them to raise
Needed funds to help with a phase
To set up our kitchen
For old stuff we're ditchin'
Oh! Lordy! Sing loud and Sing "Praise!"

But when does the fun all begin?
December the seventh at ten!
We'll sell by the pound
Cookie bars and some round
Christmas music will add to the din!

Contact: Dottie Sundquist 375-6127 with
questions
Sign-up for bakers and workers coming
soon!

The following prayer was offered by Pastor Rebecca during a Prayer Vigil at the Israel Congregation in 2018. This beautiful prayer is worth reading, and meditating upon, again.

Creator God,

You have made us in your image, so we can think and choose, create and love. You are patient and merciful, full of grace and kindness. As we come to know you, we let your love flow through us out to each other and back to you in a stream of blessed connection.

We are grieved by the brokenness that turns human encounters into painful tragedies. We need your forgiveness and healing to help us to see each other clearly, so we recognize each person as beloved by you.

We ask that you teach us to think clearly and embrace truth. Help us to choose the ways of peace, to strive to hear and understand, to respect and protect one another. May we use the gift of creativity to bless and cooperate with one another in ways that fulfill our purpose and bring you glory. Most of all, may your love fill our hearts, ever expanding until pride, selfishness, and fear have no place.

We cannot do this on our own, but only as we know and rely on you. May you transform us, our community, our nation, our world into people of blessed and loving connection.

In your holy name

Amen

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: rebeccasommons@gmail.com

Pastor Rebecca's cell phone: (802) 688-3024

Church office Phone: (802) 362-1555

Please call to request a meeting or visit outside of regular church office hours.

FLOWERS

Nov. 3: Flower Arrangement

Nov. 10: Lindy Mylott

Nov. 17: Linda Hulett

Nov. 24: Lisa Towslee

CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

Nov. 3: Holly & Ronan

Nov. 10: Maurie & Linell

Nov. 17: Lindy & Cathy

Nov. 24: Lisa & Annie

