



Our spectacular foliage drew a lot of attention - and traffic - throughout October! It made this photo of a horse, calmly grazing in front of the church, a brilliant contrast! (See page 7 for information.)

**“SpiritSpark”** 

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

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fbcmanvt@gmail.com

**Pastor: Rev. Rebecca Sommons**

**NOVEMBER 2020**

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**A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR REBECCA**

Dear Church Family,

I have been enjoying our time in the “one another” passages of the New Testament. Hopefully, you have found them encouraging too. One of the themes that comes through in the passages is the importance of unity. When we are in unity, love flows through us and we are enabled to do some life-giving things in the world. Conversely, when we are fractured and disunified, anger and fear rise in us and throw up obstacles to the healing, beautiful work God is calling us to do.

Instead of feeling overwhelmed by the disunity of our country, we can choose to live and vote in ways that consider the wellbeing of our neighbors and our country as a whole. In other words, to embody the change we long to see. We can take to heart our passage for this Sunday, Philippians 2:1-14. I'll share verses 3 and 4 ~ *“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility consider one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”* This is how Christ lived, and it reflects the heart of God.

Perhaps joining one of the small groups focusing on spiritual formation will help you to surrender to the Holy Spirit's transforming work in your life. I have hope that our church family can increasingly live with the mind of Christ as we mature in our faith life together. This can be a light in the darkness that draws people to come to know God. It can also free us from obstacles to do the healing, beautiful work God envisions for us to bless our community.

Love in Christ,  
*Pastor Rebecca*

### **PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE**

Thank you to Lindy Mylot for painting up a storm in the church and to her brother for patching walls. We are preparing for a grateful reopening someday!

Our former parsonage will have a new heart beating with the well-loved spirit of all who cared for her and graced her presence over many decades. We are blessed that the new owner is an interior decorator and we imagine the house will soon be a beautiful new home for her. The closing was held on Thursday, October 15, 2020.

Electrical updates are expected to be started in the third week of October. Materials have been in short supply causing delays.

The sprayer in the new kitchen is working overtime and we are looking into a sprayer/stream combo to tame the beast. Joe Mylott is ordering additional plexiglass to complete the backsplash.

We expect the vestry floor tiles to be replaced sometime after Thanksgiving.

We are considering how best to stay current with safety in the church at all times and how to keep everyone apprised of decisions. We are purchasing two additional small air purifiers to that end to be used in Joy Hall and the upstairs rooms as needed.

Work with the Financial Advisory Committee regarding the sale of the parsonage continues.

Dottie Sundquist  
Secretary



**THANKSGIVING SERVICE!**  
**Tuesday, Nov. 24**  
**7:00 pm via zoom**  
**Speaker: Pastor Chris Heintz**  
**Interim at FCC**

## DIACONATE

### SMALL GROUP OPPORTUNITIES BEGINNING IN NOVEMBER~

**(NOTE: The Diaconate continues to seek ways of connection in this time of social distancing. The following invitations come from Pastor Rebecca and John Hess.)**

You are invited to a small group focusing on spiritual formation. We will be reading a book called **Seeking God Together: An Introduction to Group Spiritual Direction** by Alice Fryling. She writes ~ *“The purpose of group spiritual direction is to provide a place where individuals can experience what it means to be listened to and loved by others, so that they can learn to listen more attentively to God in their daily lives and be used by God to spread God’s grace and love throughout the world.”* Our intent will be to learn more about spiritual direction through our reading and discussion and to practice it each time we are together. If the Holy Spirit is drawing you to this group, we would love to have you join us. This will be a mid-morning group that will meet through zoom. Once we know who will be participating, we will choose the morning of the week that works best.

Please let Pastor Rebecca know if you would like to join this group.  
[rebeccasommons@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccasommons@gmail.com) (802) 688-3024



And, from John...

The pandemic has restricted our lives to a great degree, greatly reducing our ability to meet together as Christian brothers and sisters. This is especially so if someone has health issues. I would like to offer another tool for your spiritual tool box, an additional way that can help you get and stay more grounded and centered in your spiritual life. It's called the reunion group.

The reunion group is a type of Christian accountability group where small groups of 2-6 people meet regularly for up to an hour. Ideally, they would meet once a week. Folks take turns answering a series of 3 questions to help them grow spiritually and center their life more on Christ. They witness to the other group members to help them do the same. The three main questions are: 1) Where have you felt closest to Christ in the past week? 2) Where have you been a disciple for Christ this past week? 3) Where did you try discipleship but fail this past

week? Answers do not have to be earth-shaking – a close moment can be as simple as a grandchild's hug, or seeing a beautiful sunset.

Cheryl and I have participated in several reunion groups since 1996, one of which met almost every week for over ten years. Our current group has been meeting regularly for about two years (on Zoom since Spring). For me, it has been spiritually fulfilling to belong to a reunion group, and I would love to be able to share this opportunity for spiritual growth with others. I have never found meetings to be boring, and always leave a meeting feeling filled with the Holy Spirit.

If you feel led to try out a reunion group, I will be scheduling a Zoom meeting every Monday at 7 p.m. starting on November 2. Please email me if you would like a meeting invitation sent to you.

If you aren't on the internet, you can also participate by phone. Either way, I will be glad to help you get connected. I would love to see (or hear) you there. If you have any questions, or want some help getting connected, my cell number: (802) 282-9769, and my email is [jhess.756@comcast.net](mailto:jhess.756@comcast.net).

Peace,  
John Hess

#### Also, from the Diaconate

Please continue to give to the fellowship fund. There are significant needs inside of our church family. We help families pay bills and pay for essentials like groceries and gas. Anything that you are able to give is very appreciated.

Best,  
Kelsey Towslee



#### MARY & MARTHA FELLOWSHIP

Mary Martha Fellowship met Sunday morning, Oct. 11 live and via zoom. The Pork Roast dinner had taken place the day before and by all accounts it was a great success. Doing the dinner as a takeout meant that there was no large gathering and having customers pick up food at intervals also kept the church from being contaminated. Lorraine Wilkins, who was the chairman with Lisa Towslee's assistance, are considering doing another take-out dinner, perhaps chicken and biscuits with pies for dessert. The next meeting is planned for Nov. 8, 2020 at 9:00 A.M.  
~Martha Thompson, Secretary

## **MISSIONS**

We here at First Baptist Church have a wonderful opportunity to spread God's love through shoe boxes distributed through Operation Christmas Child. As the whole wide world is reeling from COVID 19, we can give peace and comfort to the precious child who receives our shoe box. You can choose to pack a whole box, choosing a boy or girl ages 2-4, 5-9, or 10-14. These are available in the church vestry. Another option is to pick up some small toys, school supplies, or hygiene items for the youth to pack into boxes on Sunday, November 15th. To make it more personal, you can pray for the child who will receive your box. If you donate the cost of shipping (\$9) through the Operation Christmas Child Website, you can see where your box will be sent. Another option is to include an encouraging note and/or picture of yourself in the box.

One little girl who received her box was reluctant to open it. She said, "What I want is not in the box." She was an orphan who longed for parents. When she finally opened the box, there was a note from a childless couple from Montana. In God's providence, a few years later they were able to meet the child and adopt her. It all began with a note in a Christmas box.

We look forward to seeing what you decide to bring to the vestry by November 15th at 1:30 pm, so they can get to the distribution center that week. Thank you for your love and generosity for these children, tenderly loved by God.

Submitted by Linell Pike



## **HOLIDAY ON-LINE AUCTION!**

To benefit Emergency Needs in our community

Sponsored by The Interfaith Council of the Northshire

### **WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

We are holding our Annual Auction for our Emergency Needs Fund on-line this year due to our current circumstances, and we need your help.

Please consider donating an item or a service to help support those in our community who are struggling to meet their basic needs. Perhaps you could purchase an item or gift certificate from a local business to help keep them afloat and donate it to the auction, or re-gift an unused item, a hand made scarf, or an hour of service mowing a lawn, shoveling snow or baking food.

Please contact the Dorset Church office at [802-867-2260](tel:802-867-2260) with your donation information. Items are needed *now*.

Thank you.

We cannot be successful without you!

## **CHURCH YOUTH GROUP**

The Christian Education Committee has been busy getting some fun fellowship events underway this fall. We enjoyed picking and painting pumpkins with a dozen children and teens on October 3. On October 22, we tried our first Zoom fellowship hour, which was enjoyed by many. It was relaxing to have a warm beverage at home and conversation with our church family. We will be planning more of these virtual get-togethers! Our next upcoming event is on Saturday November 7; we will be hosting a family Christian themed movie at 7 pm via Zoom, followed by a discussion.

On Sunday November 15, the youth group will be packing and organizing the Samaritan's Purse Christmas Child boxes. If you would like to contribute any items to be placed in the boxes, or prepare a box yourself, please bring any contributions to church by the 15th so they can be included. Categories for the Christmas Child boxes include boy, age 2-4, 5-9, or 10-14, and girl, age 2-4, 5-9, or 10-14. Suggested items for the boxes include a "wow" item, which is a quality toy such as a doll, stuffed animal, or soccer ball with a pump. Other items can include fun toys, hygiene items, and school supplies. (There are a few items that can NOT be included, which are candy, toothpaste, gum, used or damaged items, war related items, seeds, food, liquids, lotions, breakable or glass items, and aerosol cans.) You can include a photo of yourself or family and a personal note. Boxes also need a \$9 donation for each box to cover shipping, so if you are unable to get to the store to purchase items, the shipping fee is another wonderful way to contribute to this project. Finally, pray for the children who will receive each gift box.

Our Christmas Coffee House will go virtual this year, so please mark your calendars for Saturday December 12 at 7 pm. You can share a song, story, talent, or other interesting Christmas themed idea, or simply join and enjoy some fellowship. We look forward to seeing you!

Sunday school classes are now meeting the first and third Sundays of each month at 9:30. Teens and adults can join via Right Now Media or in person in the vestry to share a video and discussion. A children's class will meet at the same time in Joy Hall.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Annie Crumb



**DORSET SALE at the Dorset CHURCH ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7th,  
8:30 AM – 1 PM**

**THE FALL FOOD SALE WILL SELL FROM TENT #1.  
THE MINI-ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR FEATURING FAIR TRADE SERRV, INT'L PRODUCTS WILL BE IN  
TENT #2.  
Shop scarves, jewelry, kitchen items, chocolate, Christmas decorations, Dotty's hand towels  
and more!**



THE PHOTO ON THE COVER IS LOOKING SOUTH ON MAIN STREET. The Colburn House is on the right. It was a continuing operating inn for over a century before the Northshire Bookstore moved there and converted it in 1985. The building on the left would become the Combination Cash Store (when they still had the wagon shop next door). When this photo was taken, around 1900-1905, it was a general goods store owned by A.L. Graves. The photo below was taken 10 years later (1915) and shows the wagon shop converted from a barn to retail space.



**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  
BWHP Group: Mon-Fri 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

**FLOWERS**

Nov. 1: Peggy Brockett  
Nov. 8: Lindy Mylott  
Nov. 15: Jim/Carol Johnson  
Nov. 22: Lisa/Chris Towslee  
Nov. 29: Lisa/Chris Towslee

**CHURCH DATES**

Sunday, Nov.1: Communion, All Saints Day, and Fall Back Day (turn clocks back 1hour)  
Tuesday, Nov.3: Election Day  
Tuesday, Nov.3: Prayer Group at 7 pm via zoom  
Thursday, Nov.5: Interfaith Council Meeting at noon via zoom  
Saturday, Nov.7: Church Movie Night watching "All Saints" through zoom together and then discussing it. Show time is 7 pm.  
Sunday, Nov. 8: Mary & Martha meeting 9 am via zoom and in person  
Tuesday, Nov.10: Prudential Meeting at 5 pm via zoom  
Tuesday, Nov. 10: Prayer Group and Chapter 7 Book Discussion at 7 pm via zoom  
Wednesday, Nov.11: Veteran's Day  
Thursday, Nov.12: Christian Ed. Meeting at 7:30 pm via zoom  
Friday, Nov.13: Deacon Meeting at 10 am via zoom  
Saturday, Nov.14: ABC/VNH Annual Gathering virtual meeting from 9:30 - 10:45 am  
Sunday, Nov.15: Packing Party for Operation Christmas Child at 1:30 pm  
Tuesday, Nov.17: Prayer Group at 7 pm via zoom  
Wednesday, Nov.18: Missions Meeting in the vestry at 3 pm  
Tuesday, Nov. 24: Thanksgiving Interfaith Service via zoom  
Thursday, Nov. 26: Thanksgiving!  
Sunday, Nov. 29: First Sunday of Advent

Above dates do not include the small groups presented on pages 3-4, because the meetings may need to be flexible at first as we seek to work with people's schedules.



