



Photo taken by Pastor Rebecca



“SpiritSpark”
The First Baptist Church
of Manchester Center, VT
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Pastor: Rev. Rebecca Sommons

JUNE 2020

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR REBECCA

Dear Church Family,

As we head into June, I think one of the questions on our minds is, “Will we get to worship together in person again?” I miss meeting with you all very much. The sad thing is we won’t be able to go back to the way things used to be, with everyone sharing food and fellowship, hugs and handshakes. A pandemic is no small thing, and its effects will be long-reaching. It is important to allow ourselves space to grieve what we have lost and are missing.

We are exploring ideas about how to have both an online church service and an in-person church service simultaneously, so everyone can participate in the way they feel is best for them. We’ve created a special committee made of volunteers from the deaconate and prudential committees to work together finding a good way forward. I am grateful for the dedication shown by John Hess, Carol Lattuga, Jeremy Crumb, and Ray Koch, as they do research, share creative ideas, sew masks, order materials, build plexiglass barriers, and address computer and sound challenges.

Our situation in Vermont, knowledge about how Covid-19 spreads, and guidelines from Governor Scott all change from week-to-week, so any plans we make will need to be flexible. The current plan is to try to worship in an outdoor space first, so that John and Jeremy have more time to build and buy the plexiglass structures. Being in an enclosed space for an hour together heightens our risks of exposure to the virus, especially if we would like to sing together. If we meet outdoors and are spaced far

enough apart, we should be able to worship through singing together. We would need to be conscious of how the wind is blowing, and possibly still wear masks, unless we were a distance of more than 6 feet from each other.

One of the challenges is securing a place to meet. The committee is considering the town green in Manchester, the Lyons club pavilion in Arlington, and the backyard of the parsonage. Another challenge will be amplifying sound and making sure our wi-fi connection is strong enough to continue the zoom service. There are also concerns about walking a distance carrying a chair. If the weather were rainy, we would plan to do a zoom service from our homes, just as we have been doing. Some may want to continue having the services just through zoom from our homes as our regular way to worship through the summer.

I am writing to you, because I want to invite you to share your thoughts, feelings, and questions about our worship services. You could call or email Carol Lattuga or me. If you have something you want kept confidential, please indicate that. Otherwise, your comments will be shared with the special committee. We want to include you in the process of navigating this unprecedented time together. We also ask that you pray for wisdom and the Holy Spirit's guidance, both for yourself and for our whole congregation. Each of you is precious to God and to me, and we want to have our services be encouraging and healthy for your body and soul.

*Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you,
even as your soul is getting along well.*

3 John 1:2

Love in Christ,
Pastor Rebecca

Contact information

Carol Lattuga (802) 362-3997 carollattuga@gmail.com
Rebecca Sommons (802) 688-3024 rebeccasommons@gmail.com

Community Food Cupboard

Dear Friends,

I am looking for a replacement for me as the First Baptist representative on the Community Food Cupboard Board. I have served two 3- year terms and feel, because of present circumstances with Barb and me, I need to go off the board.

Responsibilities would include a monthly meeting on the second Thursday of each month and finding Food Cupboard volunteers to work at the weekly distribution times for the months of December and January. There would be other opportunities that one could volunteer for throughout the year. That would depend upon one's commitment.

I would be glad to talk with anyone who might be interested in serving in this very commendable and rewarding service. I can be reached at 362-3329 or 802-688-3679. Thank you so much for your consideration.

In peace,
Jim (West)

A Beautiful Psalm written by Rosemary Hall

*When all around you has changed
Like nothing you have ever known before
Your heart thumps, the fear comes in
It is at times like these
We can cast our eyes towards the Heavens
Lift up our arms
Let our feet dance
Our voices sing
In worship to our Maker
Telling Him we do not even pretend to understand
We give it all to Him
Laying it into His hands
The hands that created everything known
For us, His children
Let us praise Him
Give Him all the glory
To calm our hearts
Take away the fear
Replacing it with peace and joy
That can only come from Him*

Missions Committee

The Missions Committee sent \$75.00 to help our International Ministries organization respond to special Covid-19 related problems for the missionaries and those they serve.

If people would like to contribute to this cause individually, they can send a check to Cathy Comar, made out to First Baptist Church. On the memo line put OGHS Covid response.

(OGHS stands for One Great Hour of Sharing). They could also indicate if they would like the money to be used in in the U.S. (Home) or abroad (International).

Jeni Pedzinski, who serves with International Ministries in Thailand is doing well physically, but asks for prayer to handle the loss of traveling and seeing her friends and family.

Please pray for those across the world, including Rwanda who are struggling with hunger, in the wake of Covid-19 and extreme weather challenges.

TL Africa is distributing food to the people in need who come to them in Musanze. There was a flood there recently that has affected their food supply.

Our sister church, led by Rev. Aloys in Kihira asks that we pray for them, as they have not been able to meet for the past two months. They have restrictions on gatherings and do not have computer options for gathering.

Thank you for your prayers and donations for these missionary endeavors.

~Linell Pike, Secretary

Janet Roberts Casey

Our dear friend, Jan Casey turned 100 on May 18th! A group of us had the privilege of singing to her at Bromley Manor!

On May 26, 2020, Jan passed away. There is glorious singing in Heaven!



Some of us waiting with our balloons and flowers.

A group photo showing us properly spaced!



The family has chosen to have a service for the family only.

If you would like to let Jan's family know how much her friendship meant to you, you may request an address for Silas Casey or Carol Casey by emailing me.

The door was opened briefly so we could get a glimpse of each other!

Jan's Pencil Box

Jan loved to talk about her childhood growing up on a farm in Dorset. One of the stories she shared seems most poignant for those of us who knew Jan as a writer of exquisite notes and cards.

When Jan was a child, a highlight of the Christmas Season was the big Sears catalog arriving in the mail. She loved to browse through and just look, knowing that she could never expect to see any of those things on Christmas morning.

One year, as she was browsing through the catalog, her eyes fell on a pencil box. She loved that pencil box! Her eyes kept going back to it, but she certainly would never have mentioned it to her mother, knowing that there was no money for such a thing!

When Christmas morning arrived and as they were all sitting around their tree watching the (real) candles alight on the branches, she received a present. It was the pencil box!

Jan said, "I don't know how my mother knew or how she got the money, but I loved that pencil box!"

Jan must have written thousands of notes since that time and many of us have been the blessed recipients. Each note, written specifically for the intended individual, is filled with her love, gentle spirit, and unshakeable faith!

Jan and her pencil box have left their mark.

G. Taxter



Church Picnic at the Taxters - July 18, 2018
Pictured from left to right: Dottie Beers,
Helen Brimlow, Jan Casey, Linda Hulett

MARY & MARTHA FELLOWSHIP

Members of the Mary Martha Fellowship met virtually by Zoom on May 17, 2020. There were three items on the agenda: Ham and Strawberry Supper, Father's Day, and Basket Party.

Ham and Strawberry Supper Members discussed having the supper as a takeout dinner with curbside delivery on June 20, 2020 with staggered deliveries.

It has come to the attention of Mary Martha Fellowship that there are many hurdles to overcome before we can successfully invite the public to a dinner. One of the issues is dishes prepared at home. At this time the possibility of doing the supper seems uncertain. Some volunteers are uncomfortable about the idea that we might be putting the public in danger and the backfire it might cause the church if there was an outbreak of Covid -19.

We await further developments and will have to rely on email and the phone list to share updates about this project.

Father's Day We are planning a surprise for the gentlemen of our church for Father's Day.

Basket Party A tentative date has been set for the Basket Party. Mary Martha looks forward to holding it on Sept. 21, 2020 at the VFW. There will be more information forthcoming as we get closer to the date.

Next Meeting The next meeting of MMF will be held via Zoom on June 14, 2020 at 8:30 A.M. MMF is hoping to soon resume its usual robust support of the church and community.

~Martha Thompson, Secretary

DIACONATE MEETING

One of our greatest tasks at this time is working on designing our church services once we can join together in person again for worship. There will be a gradual increase of people who will be allowed into the church for services. We are planning on having both in person and online service for a while until it is safe for everyone to join together. There will be cleaning measures in place and hand sanitizers around the church. We will keep everyone updated with our plans. If you are in need of a mask, please contact Pastor Rebecca or Carol Lattuga. Please do not hesitate to contact any of the diaconate members if you need anything or if you just want to talk.

Our Fellowship Fund continues to be a vital part of our ministry and the needs at this time are particularly great. There are many ways we can be of help, sometimes providing grocery and gas gift cards or assistance with paying bills. Thank you for your generosity in giving to this important ministry!

Your Diaconate members:

Cara Davenport, Anna Ennis, John Hess, Carol Lattuga, Linell Pike, Martha Thompson, Jim West, Kelsey Towslee and Pastor Rebecca

We are here for you.

Best,

Kelsey Towslee

NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR

The work of Neighbor to Neighbor has been less evident because of the Corona Virus. They are now looking at resuming providing rides and how this can be safely accomplished for both driver and passenger. Our care recipients have been very responsive to the request for staying at home and their families and friends have been helping. N 2 N is hopeful that things will soon go back to normal.

~submitted by Martha Thompson

INTERFAITH COUNCIL of the NORTSHIRE

The Kids Summer Lunch Program which is sponsored by the Interfaith Council has sent out an appeal letter this month asking for financial support. Last summer the Kids Lunch program fed over 100 kids. This year they expect the numbers to be much higher because of the Corona Virus and its effect on unemployment. The program feeds children in Dorset, Manchester, Mettowee Valley and Danby for ten weeks in the summer. There is a possibility that they will extend that this year due to the unusual circumstances.

If any member of our congregation wishes to contribute, checks may be mailed to the United Church of Dorset and Rupert, PO Box 263 Dorset, VT 05251. Checks should be made out to Interfaith Council of the Northshire with Kids Summer Lunch on the memo line.

~submitted by Martha Thompson



A NOTE FROM BARB

There is a large pile of piano music in the choir room that is available to anybody who would be interested in it. There are lots of sheet music and many music books. Some of it is very old and some is a bit more recent. Please feel free to keep any of it you would like to have or just borrow it and return it to the church. We are going to find a place to store it as a music library. Also, the music covers a wide range of ability levels. Contact Barb West if you have any questions.


GNAT-TV CHANNELS HAVE CHANGED!

On May 23, 2020, the channels on Comcast changed.

First Baptist Church can now be found on CHANNEL 1094. Our service is shown Tuesday 7AM and 6PM and Sunday 7AM and 7PM.

Keep in mind that GNAT can change these dates and times as well as the service being shown at any time.

If you would prefer, you can watch past services on our CHURCH WEBSITE at fbcmanvt.org Find the ABOUT US tab, click on it, and it will take you to another page where you can click on watch past videos

of church services, or click on the  and you will be taken to another page where videos are listed. See Russ Taxter for questions or assistance.

Many thanks to Peggy and Dan Brockett for planting flowers at the base of our sign! Also, thank you to Paul Bauers who places the letters on the signboard each week!



PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE

Hello Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

While we continue our distancing and antiviral measures, we are beginning to accomplish tasks and plan for having services together again. It is important to continue praying for healing for those affected by Covid-19, for those working with increased potential exposure, and for a cure. In this Spirit Spark, Pastor Rebecca is providing the overall plan we are working on to reopen our services, and eventually, our building.

We recently initiated the endowment withdrawal approved by the congregation on March 8. The first project with these funds is the repair of the church roof. Some of you may have noticed the workers on the sanctuary roof. The crew is doing as many repairs as possible via ladders before they bring in the crane to service the steeple. Let us hope for the project to be completed safely, and for the repairs to endure. I am working with Dee's Electric to schedule the replacement of the knob-and-tube wiring above the sanctuary, the installation of the new electrical sub-panel, and the installation of the on-demand hot water heater. When those projects are complete, I will schedule the insulation project in the attic spaces.

Some other projects are also being scheduled and completed. The recently installed baseboard heater cover in the kitchen exposed some of the old paint. Thank you Jim Comar for working to paint this and the other remaining spots in the kitchen. Another pending project is to replace the stained tiles in the Vestry and professionally clean the floor. It seems that when we make one area shine (e.g. the kitchen) other areas need a little care to match.

We are all looking forward to praising our Lord together soon. Until then, please let any member of the committee know if there are building issues which need to be addressed. Praise the Lord!

Humbly submitted for His glory,
Jeremy Crumb, Prudential Committee Chairperson

CHURCH DATES

Wednesday, June 3 Re-entry Committee Meeting at 3 pm via zoom

Thursday, June 4 Interfaith Council Meeting at noon via zoom

Tuesday, June 9 Prudential Meeting at 5 pm via zoom

Wednesday, June 10 Mission Meeting at 3 pm via zoom

Sunday, June 14 Mary & Martha 8:30 am via zoom

June 15-21 Matt and Rebecca will be away

Sunday, June 21 Father's Day ~ John Hess will share message

Wednesday, June 24 Deacon Meeting at 4 pm via zoom

Prayer & Study Group meets at 7 pm every Tuesday evening via zoom

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.

NOTE: Flowers for a church service may not be required. You will need to check each Sunday.

FLOWERS

June 7: (none)

June 14: Rosemary Hall

June 21: Anna Ennis & Family

June 28: Judy & Ray Koch