



# “SpiritSpark”

The First Baptist Church  
of Manchester Center, VT

P.O. Box 1049, 4895 Main St. 802-362-1555

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Pastor: Rev. Dr. Theresa Taylor

“Deserted Main Street”

(Taken on a very cold evening by Robert J Waibel)

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MARCH 2026

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## A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR THERESA

Dear First Baptist Family,

I am so grateful that spring will officially be on our calendar this month. The wonder and magic never grows old to me of all the new life, warmth of the sunshine, the smell and taste of newly boiled syrup and of course the obligatory barefoot walk through the mud.

Our church calendar also brings us into a time of reflection and appreciation of the sacrificial love of our Savior. Just as spring bursts forth new life in plants and animals; Lent provides an opportunity to experience a spiritual renewal. It is a time to evaluate our walk with Jesus and discover what we might want to improve on and items that we need to keep in check.

Holy Week will provide a number of ways to worship our Living Hope. We will have a Maundy Thursday service, A Lament and Meditation Opportunity on Good Friday and, of course, an Easter celebration. What an amazing time of year.

I commend each of you for your willingness to move forward with the Church Leadership Council. We would love your feedback along the way to learn what works for you and what areas need improvement. As part of the new plan there are sign-up sheets in the fellowship room for worship assistants, fellowship hour hosts and communion servers. Please take an opportunity to sign up and share your gifts. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. (See page 3 of this newsletter for more details on sign-up sheets.)

May your March be filled with warmth, renewal and an anticipation of new growth both within you and around you.

In Christ’s love,  
Pastor Theresa

## **CHURCH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**

Our restructured church governance, the Church Leadership Council (CLC), was unanimously voted in at the Annual Meeting on February 2, 2026 with a six of seven member slate. At the first CLC meeting held on February 11, 2026, Jim Comar was voted in as Chair. The other six members include: Martha Thompson, Ray Koch, Lisa Towslee, Ken Taylor and Lorraine Wilkins. Alvie McKinstry was not on the original nomination slate and joined the CLC (completing the slate) during a warned church meeting held on 2/22/2026. All seven members have voting privileges. Pastor Theresa Taylor sits on the committee without a vote.

Our Missions role will consider local funding requests and continue with 5 main offerings:

Retired Ministries and Missionaries (RMMO)

America For Christ

One Great Hour of Sharing

World Missions Offering (International)

United Missions Basic (UMB)

Fidium is FBC's new phone company at a considerable savings from our former provider. Yeah!

Spiritual Life of the Church covers mainly worship service and home visitation. Anyone may join Pastor Teresa for a home visitation. A list of members welcoming a visit is forthcoming.

Sunday School is held upstairs. We are awaiting the opening of our sanctuary which will soon facilitate the use of Fellowship Hall to host our Sunday School class.

A comprehensive list of building and grounds purveyors and maintenance schedules was shared by Jim C at the first CLC meeting.

Plans to celebrate our church's 245th anniversary and (perhaps) tie-in with our national 250th anniversary will be addressed in the next months. If you have an idea please share it!

Mark your calendars!

Street Fest - June 26 - Aug 7 - Sept 4

Texas Men's Choir - September 23rd performance at FBC

Submitted by Dottie Sundquist, Church Clerk

## **INTERFAITH COUNCIL of the NORTHSHIRE**

The Council met at the First Baptist Church on February 5th.

Jeremy Means-Koss, chairman, announced that Cantor Buckner is on sabbatical and Rabbi Michael Cohen will fill in for him. The Israel Congregation will be holding a community seder on April 2nd.

More to follow.

The Council was recently able to give away a donated car. They are always looking for reliable used cars, so if you are in a position to donate a car to Auto Angels, call Bill Drunsic at 802-362-1516x1.

The next meeting is planned for Thursday, March 5<sup>th</sup> at noon at Zion.

~submitted by Martha Thompson



In Pastor Theresa's Message at the beginning of this newsletter, she referred to sign-up sheets to help with our Sunday morning services. Please consider volunteering for a Sunday as a Fellowship Host, a Worship Assistant and/or a Communion Server. The sign-up sheets can be found in the Fellowship Room. The responsibilities for each are listed below.

## Fellowship Host Responsibilities

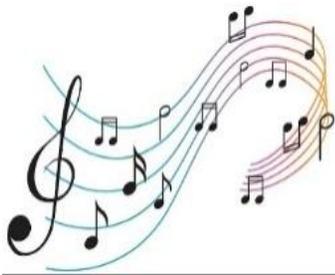
- Make coffee. Instruction for the coffee pot will be posted in the kitchen.
- Set out plates, cups, napkins and silverware. Available in the bottom cupboard next to the refrigerator.
- Provide snack.
- Clean counters and any dishes used. Thank You !!!

## Worship Assistant Responsibilities

- Read designated sections of the bulletin.
- Provide a Word of Preparation. Pastor can assist if you desire.
- Light candles before service.

## Communion Server Responsibilities

- Provide and cut gluten free bread. Check freezer for available bread.
- Provide and put on small tray a bun to be broken.
- Place a small amount of juice in chalice.
- Arrange communion elements on the table.
- Serve the elements as indicated in the service.
- Collect items, clean and store. Thank You!!!



**COME and ENJOY**

**A Benefit Concert for First Baptist Church's Building  
Preservation Fund**

**Saturday, March 7th at 7pm**

**Hosted by The United Church of Dorset and East Rupert**

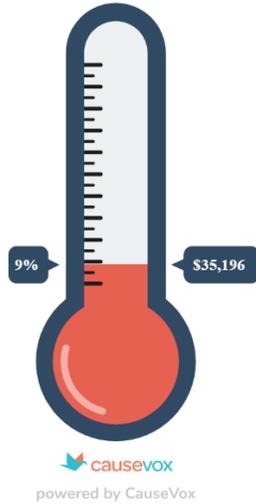
**Come hear the music of Billy Joel**

**performed by a combined choir of Dorset Church and First Baptist Church**

**Invite your family and friends!**

## BUILDING PRESERVATION

GOAL: \$400,000



The Preservation Fund stands at \$35,196.66.

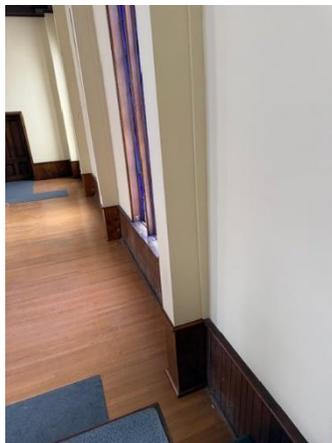
This total reflects deductions already made.

Thank you for your continuous giving!

### Building Preservation Committee

It is certainly very exciting that the work on our sanctuary wall is wrapping up! There is still work to do before it is complete. I understand the desire for us to move back into the sanctuary for services, but we need to be sure we don't rush and do everything we need to do to ensure nothing is overlooked or skipped which may cause more work than necessary.

The wall does look amazing! It has been painted/stained. (Thank you to Ken Taylor for photos.)



Sanctuary



Basement

The electrical work is complete and we are waiting for the heat to go back in. The organ can very possibly be uncovered at this point. The piano in the choir loft is being moved to the Fellowship Hall. Then the pews can be moved back and rugs secured. It is all a work in progress. PLEASE be patient. Once done we can enjoy it for decades to come.

You will notice that our fund is significantly reduced as we pay all of our expenses. There are still some expenses to come out of that fund.

As we move into Phase 2, we will continue to try to secure donations to not only cover that phase, but also Phase 3 which is highly critical to complete sooner rather than later.

If anyone feels the calling to donate, please do. Our estimate for Phase 2 was \$35,000. As you can see, we are very close to that with no leeway.

The Building Preservation Committee has worked very hard. We meet every three weeks and push forward. I thank each of them for their dedication and perseverance. All of this work could not happen without them! It's never too late to join this group, especially if you are a "go getter". Every member works hard, although we've been at it for at least 3 years!

We will keep everyone informed when it is time to move back into the sanctuary. ***Please do not*** just start moving things back in when you feel it's okay. We will let you know.

Thank you to all of you who have made this work possible!  
Lorraine Wilkins, Chairman

### **MARY & MARTHA FELLOWSHIP**

The Mary & Martha Fellowship met on Sunday, Feb 8th at 8:30 A.M. for a breakfast and business meeting.

Lisa Towslee, president, distributed programs for the ensuing year. There are a few extra copies on the table next to the door in Fellowship Hall.

Sign-up sheets for those willing to host a meeting were available. We usually work in pairs, so you might wish to join someone who has already signed up. We welcome all helping hands.

The fellowship will sponsor one of their annual dinners- a pork roast to be held on Thursday, March 19, 2026. Volunteers will begin serving at 4:30 P.M. The cost will be \$15.

This month, in addition to our monthly donation to the food shelves, \$200 will be donated to the Fuel Fund.

The Fellowship is also buying the coffee for our coffeemakers. A Keurig has been donated thanks to Barbara Towsley.

**Our next meeting will be held at the Firehouse on Sunday, March 15, 2026 at 8:30 A.M. and we will be treated to breakfast at the firemen's monthly community breakfast.**

Martha Thompson, Secretary



#### **PORK ROAST TAKE-OUT DINNER**

**ON THURSDAY MARCH 19**

**from 4:30-6:00 pm**

**Pork Roast, Gravy**

**Stuffing, Mashed Potatoes**

**Green Beans, Applesauce**

**Cake for Dessert**

**Donation: \$15.00**

**Sponsored by the**

**Mary & Martha Fellowship**

**For Reservations**

**Call Martha Thompson 802-362-3473 (H)**

**or Lisa Towslee 802-362-3076 (H)**

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH WEBSITE**

The FBCMANVT.ORG website has been updated with the new officers and staff. It can be found on the Home Page and under the ABOUT US section.

It would be helpful if all officers and staff checked it for accuracy. Also, check your photo. If you would like a different picture, send it to me so a change can be made.

If you have thoughts and ideas about any part of the website, please let me know and we can discuss what you have in mind.

~submitted by Russ Taxter

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**INVITATIONS from the ZION CHURCH**



**Join us at 5:00 pm at St. John's Chapel  
every Wednesday night during Lent for  
the candlelight, meditative service  
known as Taize, led by Michael  
Giordano of Zion Episcopal Church. All  
are welcome.**

Also, of interest is an event to be led  
by Rabbi Michael Cohen:

March 17 -Rabbi Michael Cohen: Rabbi Jesus:  
An exploration of the Jewish context of the  
teachings of Jesus

We will explore some verses from the Gospels placing them within their Jewish context. If you want to read up on the topic, beforehand consider "The Jewish Annotated New Testament," co-edited by Any-Jill Levine and Marc Brettler.



# March Wish List



## Community Food Cupboard

Spring is coming and the mornings are getting brighter. Our goal is to help our families get every day off to a good start! (802.733.8119)



Breakfast Cereal/Instant
Oatmeal Breakfast bars
Pancake Mix & syrup
Nuts & dried fruit
Peanut Butter
Coffee/Tea/shelf-stable milk
Toothbrushes & toothpaste
Deodorant

*Thank you!*  
CFC

**Drop-off locations:** Manchester Town Hall, Shaw's, Manchester Library, Dorset Post Office, Christ our Savior Parish, First Congregational Church, Dorset Church.

### IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Rev Dr Theresa Taylor: (802) 535-7710

First Baptist Church: (802) 362-1555

Website: [www.seektheson.org](http://www.seektheson.org)

My office door is always open for visitors. Here are my office hours:

Mondays - 12:00-4:00

Tuesdays - 9:00-1:00

Wednesdays - 9:00-1:00

I would also delight in home visits. Contact me if you are interested.

Text or call: (802) 535-7710.

Email: [revtheresa67@gmail.com](mailto:revtheresa67@gmail.com)

### OUR CHURCH IS PRIVILEGED TO BE ABLE TO OFFER OUR FACILITY TO THE FOLLOWING AA GROUPS EACH WEEK.

Breakfast with your Higher Power: Monday-Friday 7:30-8:30 am

Equinox Group: Monday-Friday: NOON -1:00 pm

The Depth & Weight Group: Thursday 6:00-7:00 pm

NOTE: These AA groups will be meeting at the Congregational Church during our construction.

## CALENDAR of CHURCH ACTIVITIES FOR MARCH

- 1 Adult & Youth Sunday School at 9:30 am  
Worship Service with Communion at 10:30 am
- 5 Interfaith Council meeting at Zion at noon
- 7 Dorset Benefit Concert at 7 pm at Dorset Church (Benefitting our Preservation Fund!)
- 8 Daylight Savings ~ Spring Ahead!  
Adult & Youth Sunday School at 9:30 am  
Worship Service at 10:30 am
- 9 Uplift Cancer Support Group at Linda H's home at 2 pm  
Preservation Meeting via zoom at 7 pm
- 10 Prayer Group and Book Study (Ch. 9-10 of "What's Next?") at 7 pm via zoom
- 11 CLC at the church and via zoom at 5:00 pm
- 14 Men's FOCUS breakfast and meeting at 9 am
- 15 Mary and Martha breakfast and meeting at the Fire House 8:30 am  
Adult & Youth Sunday School at 9:30 am  
Worship Service at 10:30 am
- 17 Happy Saint Patrick's Day!
- 21 Spring Cleaning around the church at 10 am
- 22 Adult & Youth Sunday School at 9:30 am  
Worship Service at 10:30 am
- 23 Uplift Cancer Support Group at Linda H's home at 2 pm
- 24 Prayer Group and Book Discussion (Ch. 11-12 of "What's Next?") at 7 pm via zoom
- 29 Adult & Youth Sunday School at 9:30 am  
Worship Service Palm Sunday at 10:30 am

## FLOWERS

- March 1: Jim Holden in memory of James & Helen Holden
- March 8: Barb Towsley in memory of husband, Sherman
- March 15: Jim & Cathy Comar in memory of Pete & Bev Comar and Judy Comar
- March 22: Leona Squires in loving memory of Vernon Squires
- March 29: Lisa Towslee

**Daylight Saving Time begins on Sunday, March 8, 2026**

