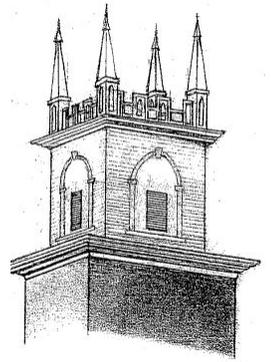


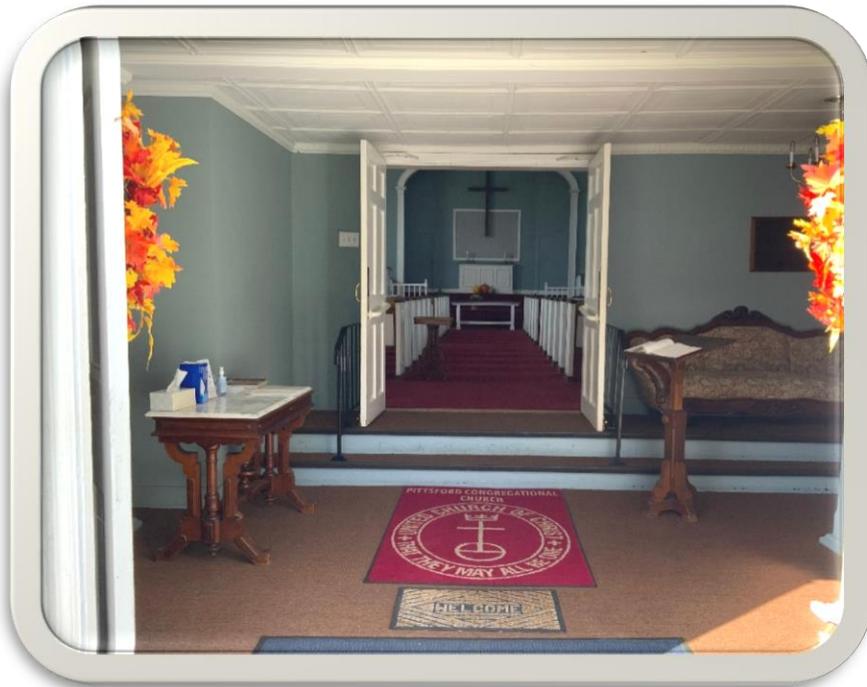
+ **N.E.W.S. CONNECTION**
Pittsford Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
121 Village Green
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Message from the Pastor



On a Thursday afternoon in early October, I opened the church for our guest musicians, Alastair Stout and Olivia Boughton, to rehearse for their recital and our hymn sing. The afternoon sun coming through the windows filled the sanctuary with light and inspired to take these pictures and compose this message. Our open church doors welcome all to worship with us on Sunday morning. Some members of our congregation join us every week. We have also seen new faces from time to time. It is especially joyful when we see young families with children coming to church. Those experiencing our church for the first time often comment what a peaceful, dignified, calming, and elegant interior we possess, all conducive to experiencing our service. In a world that has not yet returned to “normal,” our church provides an anchor of stability. With the isolation and social distancing that still prevails because of COVID, some people cherish even more the comfort of being together in person on a Sunday morning. From my vantage point in the pulpit, hearing the congregation pray and sing together helps fulfill one essential element of my ministry among you. We need, however, to invite others—family, friends, strangers, to join us. Every one of us has the opportunity to proclaim the Good News we hear in Jesus and to walk the walk and not just talk the talk in what it means to be a Christian.



Our open doors looking out to the Village Green leads the path from church into a wider world. How do we bring the message from within our sanctuary to a turbulent, troubled, and needy world? What responsibility do we have in caring for others, not only within our community, but also all those who need our help and support? As recently-elected chair of the Witness and Mission Committee of the South West Association, I now have the opportunity to engage in dialogue and shared initiatives among the other United Church of Christ churches in our region. Of course, we honor our long-standing commitments to help our neighbors in need, yet we also need to recognize the church's global outreach. We do not have to travel far to encounter people from our parts of the world who desperately need our help, protection, and support. I am proud that the Mission Committee of Pittsford Congregational Church has made a generous contribution, with the hope of matching funds, to Bridge to Rutland. This program, started by volunteers from Grace Congregational Church, has made possible asylum refugees from Central America to settle here, learn English, find housing, and acquire job training as they become our Vermont friends and neighbors. Hearing firsthand the terror some families experienced before coming to the United States should make all of us appreciate all that we have and count our many blessings. We may yet welcome others fleeing for their lives. Specific plans have not yet materialized as to how and when Afghan refugees may settle in greater Rutland.

Thank our Mission Committee for responding to a significant local and global need.

Yours in faith,
Michael F. Dwyer, Pastor