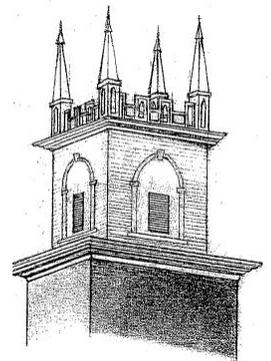


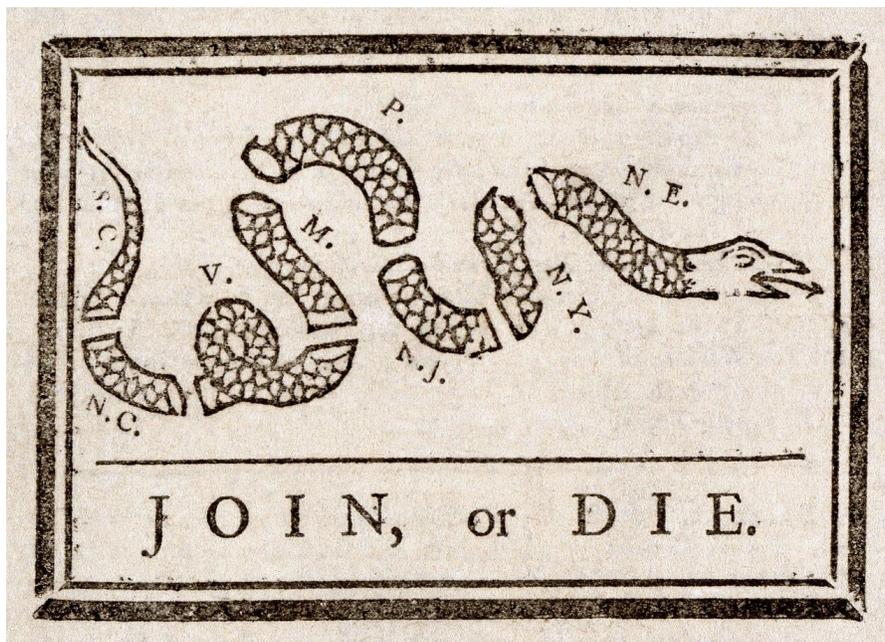
+ **N.E.W.S. CONNECTION**
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Message from the Pastor



Benjamin Franklin published this political cartoon in 1754 at the start of the French and Indian War. It vividly drew to the attention of the colonies that in their present crisis, they needed to pull together. A generation later, Franklin's dream was realized when the thirteen distinct colonies did unite for their common good. Ever since then, it has been an ongoing give and take between allegiance to a federal government and individual state sovereignty. The same tensions could be said of churches.

June 25, 2022 marked the sixty-fifth anniversary of the United Church of Christ, the result of intense discussion among churches going back several decades. The UCC felt joining together various Congregational, Reform, and Evangelical traditions would live up to the motto, "That We May Be One." Some members of our congregation recall individuals in their families who had reservations about losing our identity as an independent Congregational Church. Yet, then it came time for a vote at our Annual Meeting in January 1961, the resolution to join the UCC passed with no dissenting votes.

In the last six decades many storms, from within and from without have buffeted our church community. We have prevailed. This sixty-fifth anniversary is a good time to recall foundational principles that I quote below: As people of the United Church of Christ, affirming our Statement of Faith, we seek within the Church Universal to participate in God's mission and to follow the way of the crucified and risen Christ.

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we are called and commit ourselves:
To praise God, confess our sin, and joyfully accept God's forgiveness;
To proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our suffering world;
To embody God's Love for all people;
To hear and give voice to creation's cry for justice and peace;
To name and confront the powers of evil within and among us;
To repent our silence and complicity with the forces of chaos and death;
To preach and teach with the power of the living Word;
To join oppressed and troubled people in the struggle for liberation;
To work for justice, healing, and wholeness of life;
To embrace the unity of Christ's church;
To discern and celebrate the present and coming reign of God."

We live in increasingly turbulent times. Through the medium of the internet and social media platforms, we hear many strident voices among Christian churches. Among the pointed questions for which I have a ready answer: "We want to bring God to Pittsford." My reply, "He has been here all along. He never left us." At the Pittsford Congregational Church, we demonstrate in new-found ways that "All are welcome here."

While there are differences of opinion the stances that individual ministers may hold among the Vermont UCC, I am grateful to the organization for licensing and validating my service to you as your pastor. I maintain we are best served by maintaining and strengthening our ties with our churches with the South West Association of the Vermont United Church of Christ.

Yours in shared faith,
Michael F. Dwyer, Pastor