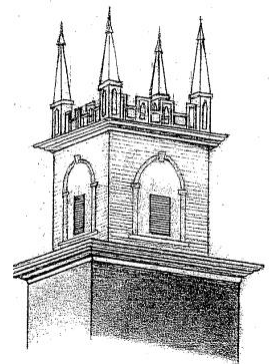


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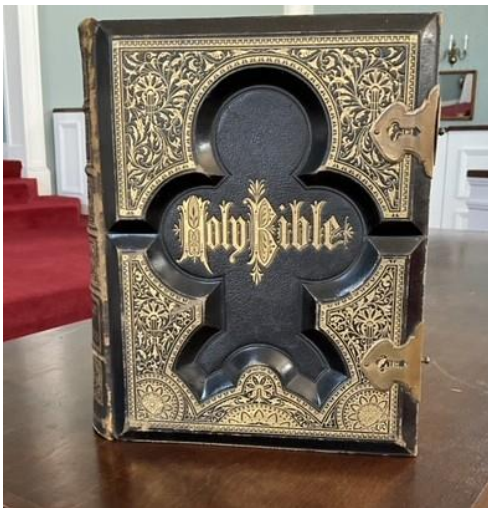


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Message from the Pastor

One Bible's Journey to Pittsford



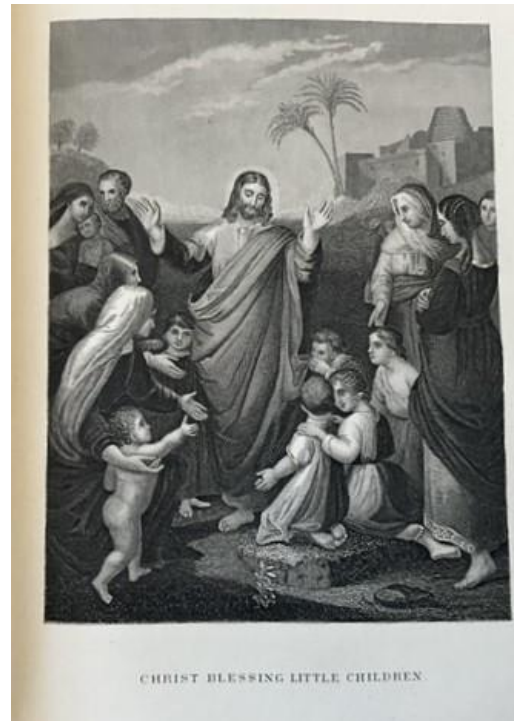
Most United Church of Christ churches prominently display a Bible in the sanctuary. We, of the Pittsford Congregational Church, are no exception, thus affirming the primary of Scripture's role in our lives and at the heart of our worship. The way we display the sanctuary Bible also reflects the changing church seasons with purple for Lent. Paraments [liturgical hangings] for the pulpit, lectern, and the Bible marker were lovingly hand-stitched by Ruth Mary Chutter, Jocelyn Frost's mother. No doubt because they were custom made, they date from the early years after the major church renovation of 1961. A relic of ancient church practice adorns the pulpit parament, I H S, [Jesus Hominum Salvator], meaning "Jesus, Savior of the World."

Because the Bible rests on a cradle, with the marker opened to Psalms, you don't often get to see the beautifully tooled leather cover. How this particular Bible made its way to us has an interesting back story. Over 40 years ago, my late grandmother said to me, "Find out what happened to my grandmother's sister, Aunt Hattie. She had a daughter who was a nurse..." Today, finding answers about this family who lived in Fairhaven, Massachusetts, would take fifteen minutes on the internet. Back then, it took much longer! I started by walking the cemetery where I hoped I would find a stone for Hattie's family. Fortunately, the names of all her children were on the stone including her son Ezra who died in 1963. With that information, I went to the local library in search of obituaries. The research librarian, a retired teacher, not only found Ezra's obituary for me, she also revealed that she taught Ezra's daughter Barbara in high school. "Why don't I contact Barbara on your behalf?"

You know where this story is going, don't you? Barbara, eager to learn more about our family history, and I became fast friends. Barbara was Aunt Hattie's only grandchild. We enjoyed holiday visits at her home for

many years. Sadly, two weeks after Barbara's husband died, her only son, age 43, died of a heart attack. He had no children. So, as Barbara reminded me, she was the last of her family. She asked me to take home with me a family Bible owned by Hattie's mother-in-law, a woman named Jessie Hawkins, who immigrated from Wales to Nova Scotia, and then to Massachusetts. I promised Barbara, who followed her son in death by a few years, that I would take care of her Bible.

So, here it is, a deluxe family Bible that won prizes at the Centennial Exhibition in 1876. It was certainly the most important book in its original home. More than a compilation of the Old and New Testaments, this hefty volume is an encyclopedia of religious history with entries on giants of Protestantism, a gazetteer of Bible lands, along with hundreds of engravings like those below which serve as great teaching tools.



Booksellers will tell you, "Old Bibles aren't worth much because there so many of them." For me, this Bible is a priceless treasure to be shared with you. It is a tangible symbol that reminds us that Scripture must be read, studied, and prayed over. It takes lifetime to learn all the wisdom contained therein.

"There is yet more light and truth to break forth from God's Holy Word."

With shared blessings,

Michael F. Dwyer, Pastor