



## Dr. John F. Messerschmitt

March 8, 1940 - December 5, 2017

The Rev. Dr. John F. Messerschmitt, 77, of Pittsfield, died on Tuesday, December 5, 2017 at Albany Medical Center after a stroke. He was born in New York City March 8, 1940, the son of Harold and Agnes (Inman) Messerschmitt. John graduated from CCNY in 1960 with a BS in Biology and from Union Theological Seminary in NYC in 1966 with a Bachelor of Divinity. After graduation John worked as the campus minister at Brockport State College in NY, and then as the campus minister at Brooklyn College, while he continued studies at the Institutes of Religion and Health in NYC. In 1975 John moved to Pittsfield to start and co-direct the Counseling Center in the Berkshires. His desire to help people led him to Andover Newton Seminary where he earned a Doctorate of Divinity, enabling him to become a licensed psychologist in Massachusetts.

John was particularly dedicated to the issues of peace and justice and constantly strove to help improve the lives of others. He was actively involved with many organizations, including Bridges for Peace, Berkshire Citizens for Peace and Justice, the Berkshire Environmental Action Team, Mass Audubon Society, and most recently, Literacy Volunteers. John received the Distinguished Service Award from the American Association of Pastoral Counselors, Northeast Region; additionally, he was a member and supervisor in the American Association of Marriage and Family Counselors. He was an active member of First Church, Congregational, where he served on its Mission Committee and Church Council, and taught adult classes. He loved

hiking (including with his friends the Monday Mountain Boys), camping, traveling, reading, poetry, painting, seeing the heavens with his telescope, and photography.

John is survived by his wife, the former Carol Lynne MacDonald, whom he married September 2, 1961; his daughters, Kristin Kinsky (Greg) and Karen Lavery (Christopher); his grandchildren, Ryan and Chase Kinsky, and Trea and Aislinn Lavery; and his brother, Peter Messerschmitt (Diane). He was predeceased by his parents, his brother, Paul, and his sister, Betty.

Funeral Notice:

Funeral services for Rev. Dr. John F. Messerschmitt will be Saturday, December 16, 2017, at 11 a.m. at the First Church Congregational, celebrated by the Rev. Dr. James Lumsden. Calling hours at the Dwyer Funeral Home will be on Friday, December 15, 2017 from 4 p.m. until 7 p.m. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to First Church Congregational in Pittsfield, Hancock Shaker Village, Mass Audubon, or a charity of your choice, care of the Dwyer Funeral Home, in his memory. DONATIONS CANNOT BE MADE ONLINE BUT MAY BE MADE THROUGH THE FUNERAL HOME.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

DEC **15**. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Dwyer Family Funeral Home  
776 North Street  
Pittsfield, MA 01201  
(413) 442-5094  
info@dwyerfuneral.com  
<https://www.dwyerfuneral.com/>

## Service

DEC **16**. 11:00 AM (ET)

First Church of Christ  
27 East St.  
Pittsfield, MA

# Tribute Wall

SH

“ To Carol and family -- John was a wonderful man and all of us at Literacy Volunteers will miss him greatly. Shawn Hancock, Literacy Volunteers of Berkshire County

---

**Shawn H Hancock** - February 06, 2018 at 01:47 PM

LF

“ My heart goes out to you, Carol. John was one of the kindest people I have ever known and made me feel welcome when we moved to the Berkshires. Please accept our deepest sympathy. Leslie Fishbein and Tom Sebestyen.

---

**Leslie Fishbein** - December 21, 2017 at 10:07 AM

DP

“ Hi Carol,

*I want you to see this which I wrote to fellow pastor's in the area about John soon after I got word form the AAPC of his "home going":*

*"John Messerschmitt was a man of character, courage and compassion. Celebrating his life: He was a known friend to me as joint members in American Association of Pastoral Counselors. When I was considering a change of ordination status he made time out of his busy schedule as speaker and counselor to meet a few times with me over coffee just to hear my story and to encourage me in my journey. It was a quiet, unheralded, and small service to the broader church of Jesus Christ that is not about the walls of the church but about the "Sanctuary without Walls" aka "The Kingdom of God". A Rabbi taught me to always ask, "IN whose Service is the service". John was a man whose service was in service of others. I am a living testimony to that reality of this person who made "It Real". I salute his heart, mind, and spirit. I join others who pray for his wife, Carol and family." (written 12/11/17)*

*On a more personal note, he was the only pastor in the UCC to send me a direct and personal note when he heard about my near fatal accident on June 19, 2016. He was and is in my heart the experience and expression of a true "pastoral heart" not because of a designation of "pastor" but because it is who his is: a reflection of the Chief shepherd, a good shepherd.*

*Don Paine, fellow AAPC and UCC colleague and friend*

---

**Donald Paine** - December 15, 2017 at 04:11 PM

KK

“ Dear Carol and Family,

*I am so sorry to hear of John's passing. I have heard so many wonderful things about him. I send you my deepest sympathy and you are all in my prayers.*

*Karen Ketcham  
Berkshire Concert Choir*

---

**Karen Ketcham** - December 15, 2017 at 10:18 AM

MA

“ *My deepest condolences to the Messerschmitt family, John counseled me for many years and was always a great source of comfort and we remained friendly all the years after. He was a good and decent human.*

---

**Matt Albert** - December 15, 2017 at 07:52 AM

RB

“ *I knew John as a man of deep compassion, spiritual insight and grace. My time with him was far too short... May his memory inspire others to acts of righteousness and peace.*

---

**Rabbi Josh Breindel** - December 15, 2017 at 07:30 AM

JD

“ We are still in shock at receiving word of John's passing. What a great friend he was over many years. Bill treasures the connections with Union and with Riverside . Carol, please know that we are available to help in any way we can. Just give us a call (413-527-2193) and we come to Pittsfield to be with you. Please know you have our love and prayers, and the prayers of our daughter Julie and granddaughter Madi too. God be with you and your precious family! Love, Jan and Bill Duffe

---

**Jan Duffe** - December 14, 2017 at 10:15 PM

JD

“ I am very sorry to hear of John's passing! He was a good family friend for countless years and he will be greatly missed! My prayers go out to his entire family, Rest in Peace John.  
-Julie E. Duffé, Easthampton, MA

---

**Julie E. Duffé** - December 14, 2017 at 03:43 PM

JD

“ Dear Carol and family, I am one of John's former AAMFT Supervisor-in-training students of long ago. For several years I would travel from Hudson Falls NY to Pittsfield to see John, present my supervision work and just be in his inviting, safe, compassionate, exacting challenging presence. He mentored me toward achieving AAMFT Approved Supervisor status. I am deeply saddened to hear of his death and send you my deepest love and sympathy. John is a dear part of my life and practice as I now live into my retirement season of life. Love, Peace, Comfort & Blessing,  
Joseph Roberts DMin, Gorham, ME

---

**Joseph Roberts DMin** - December 13, 2017 at 12:27 PM

BL

“ Dear Carol, Martin and I were so sorry to hear about John and are sending you and your family our love and prayers. I know from personal experience what a wonderful, caring counselor John was and remember how committed he was to peace and justice for all. He will certainly be missed by many in Pittsfield. May your memories of him help to speed the long road of your sorrow. Keeping you in our prayers. Martin and Bev Langeveld

---

**Beverly Langeveld** - December 12, 2017 at 11:46 AM

RM

“ John was a skilled and empathetic counselor during times of turmoil in my life. We also had several very meaningful discussions about philosophy and theology. I was greatly saddened to hear of his loss and will always treasure his memory. Richard Markham

---

**Richard E Markham** - December 12, 2017 at 10:24 AM

GP

“ I would like to extend my condolences to the family and friends of John Messerschmitt.

*From my very humble perspective, I have had the distinct pleasure to have known and admired John, first in his role as a consultant for a school program that I worked with in the late 80's and early 90's. I also relied on John personally, as I struggled with some of my own personal issues .*

*In both encounters that I was fortunate to have with John, I benefitted so much from John's patience, respectfulness, humor , genuine joy and professionalism. I even benefitted from John's ability to quietly listen, and to pose important questions that often would get right to the point, and make me squirm, but knowing all along that he would be asking the right question.*

*As years have transpired, I have often walked by John's office on Depot St. and I would wonder how John was doing, and also realize how fortunate I was to have John as a talented, caring and effective caregiver who I admired greatly. He was truly a shining star who touched so many lives in Pittsfield and beyond.*

*Respectfully,  
George Phillips*

---

**George Phillips** - December 12, 2017 at 07:22 AM