

PRAYER PROFILE: FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF LEROY

For years a rumor was going through the First Presbyterian of LeRoy and the village—a rumor finally verified to be true after several months of intense research by Rev. James Evinger. YES, the abolitionist Frederick Douglass did speak at the church in the 1840's. The church hosted several abolitionist meetings as there were quite a few folks leaning that way in the community and the church at that time, although there were also several members of the community and church who were not in favor of these activities. There were protests outside the building during these meetings and, in one case, several windows were broken (sound familiar?).

This church had its beginning as a Congregational group in 1812 and eventually changed to the Presbyterian Society. They met in homes, schoolhouses, and barns until the present building was completed in 1827. During its history there have only been about 19 ministers as at least 2 pastors were in the pulpit for over 30 years, one being Rev. Charles Leport. Its present pastor, Rev. David Pepper, began in 2003 and says he has no plans of moving on.

Today, Sunday attendance ranges from 30 to 45. As with many of our churches this does cause concern for the session, but in recent years they house a community nursery school and are finding several new attendees on any given Sunday and even some new members. Despite the lack of a large membership there is a very vibrant spirit within the church. They are up to any challenge that comes their way—a mission-minded congregation. They host a thrift shop (closed now due to the virus) and often donate items directly to the needy. They support the community through free dinners on Tuesdays as well as the local food bank with donations and volunteers.



Of course there are concerns at this uncertain time and they are being addressed:

- There have been no virus-related illnesses in the church family so far and they pray this will continue
- They have a couple members with no nearby families so the pastor and session give them extra attention during this time
- Members miss having the church open and there are some who are very eager to reopen, but for the most part it has been OK
- Rev. Pepper emails and snail-mails the service each week giving members the chance to reread the sermon and reflect on it during the week—which they like
- Rev. Pepper also sends out a midweek meditation
- The session contacts members once a week to see how they are and to find out the joys and concerns to be included in the service bulletin.

First Presbyterian Church of LeRoy

Address: 7 Clay St., LeRoy, NY 14482

Pastor: Rev. David Pepper

Clerk of Session: Lynda Taylor



Thanks to Kay VanNostrand, Relationships Working Group, for preparing this profile.