

2025-J185

Senate Resolution No. 185

BY: Senator GRIFFO

COMMEMORATING the 225th Anniversary of the First
Presbyterian Church of Cazenovia on June 16, 2024

WHEREAS, Religious institutions, and the many spiritual, social, and educational benefits they confer, play a vital role in the development of the moral fabric of a responsible citizenry; and

WHEREAS, It is the tradition of this State and this Nation to pay tribute to those institutions and individuals who have contributed to the ethical and spiritual values of their communities; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 225th Anniversary of the First Presbyterian Church of Cazenovia on Sunday, June 16, 2024; and

WHEREAS, During this auspicious event, Director of Music Vincent Guarneiri will begin the celebration by playing a selection of 18th century pieces on the organ; Reverend Anna Gheen will then deliver a biographical sketch of the church's first pastor, Reverend Joshua Leonard (1768-1843), an early settler of Cazenovia and a veteran of the War of 1812; and

WHEREAS, Among Reverend Joshua Leonard's possessions during this time was a Chippendale cherry oxbow four-drawer chest; this bureau was

taken in a wagon in April of 1799 from Ellington, Connecticut to Cazenovia, New York, by Margaret Field Leonard who was the granddaughter of the sixth generation of Reverend Henry Whitfield, born in England in 1597 who came to this country in 1639; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, the chest of drawers, which features ogee bracket feet and maple inlay, was built in New England around 1750-1780, and was given to the Cazenovia Preservation Foundation (CPF) in the 1970s along with other small furniture items, maps, and art; and

WHEREAS, After nearly a half-century in storage, it was auctioned off by CPF in 2023; the winning bidder acquired the piece with the intent of gifting it to the First Presbyterian Church of Cazenovia; and

WHEREAS, During the 225th Anniversary celebration, the piece will be placed under a portrait of Reverend Joshua Leonard in the church's narthex, where it will remain permanently; and

WHEREAS, The event will also include a slideshow presentation titled "Cazenovia First Presbyterian Church: Looking into its Bones and Architectural Changes"; the speaker, Ted Bartlett, is chairman of the Village of Cazenovia Historic Preservation/Architectural Review Committee; and

WHEREAS, According to Bartlett, the Cazenovia First Presbyterian Church meeting house was designed by prominent Albany architect Philip Hooker; it was built in 1806 at the head of Hurd Street, formerly Church Street, on the north side of the village green; in 1826, the building was relocated to its present location at 27 Albany Street on the public square; and

WHEREAS, In the 1860s, the meeting house was remodeled in the Italianate style and the changes included the long leaded glass windows, balcony removal, walnut pews, and dark exterior paint colors; it was during the 20th century that the colonial revival work on the pulpit was added; and

WHEREAS, Today, the building has a notable pedigree and retains its basic federal-style meeting house form with its original tall timber framed tower and spire roof; hidden within the bones of the meeting house are a wealth of architectural artifacts showing its earliest designs and workmanship; the noted church has played an important visual role in its position on Cazenovia's Public Square since 1826 and stands testament to its excellent original architectural design and subsequent high-style alterations; and

WHEREAS, Under the able leadership of Reverend Anna Gheen, the First Presbyterian Church of Cazenovia stands on the threshold of tomorrow, prepared to meet the challenges of the coming decades, while retaining that spiritual resolve which has so characterized its glorious past; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to take note of enduring religious institutions and to bring such institutions to the attention of the people of this Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 225th Anniversary of the First Presbyterian Church of Cazenovia, confident that this commemoration reflects the belief in those values which enhance the dignity and purpose of life; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the First Presbyterian Church of Cazenovia.

