

The church was instrumental in the development of Unity House. The program operated for 35 years in the Case Mansion and has expanded to other locations as well. It has grown from serving 24 disabled veterans to serving more than 700 clients a day in several counties.

With changes in mental health services, the Unity House residence program left the mansion at the end of 2011.

After a period of prayer and discernment, at its stated meeting in December 2016, the session approved plans in redesigning the Case Mansion as the church's new *Presbyterian Event and Retreat Center* (PERC).

The Center, continuing the mission of First Presbyterian Church (*Living as Disciples of Jesus, Practicing Hospitality, Bringing Hope through Worship, Prayer, and Fellowship*), provides an ecumenical ministry of hospitality, offering programs, space, and nourishment to individuals and groups desiring spiritual growth, renewal, and peace.

In the tradition of Presbyterian retreat centers like Montreat in North Carolina or Stony Point in New York, the Center offers opportunities to bring people together from all walks of life for prayer, rejuvenation, and creative ways in building community.

The Center hosts various groups throughout the year and offers the following retreat and event options:

Personal Retreats -- Reflect, Refresh, Renew, Refocus ... Come and spend a day in which we offer solitude and space to pray, walk, think and relax.

Group Retreats ... Use our facility and grounds to create the perfect environment for a successful group retreat.

Special Events ... Family and Group Gatherings, Workshops, Conferences

Partnerships ... with individuals and organizations for opportunities in building healthy and authentic relationships supporting community.

For events and programs please visit our calendar at <https://www.percatthemansion.com>

First Presbyterian Church Event and Retreat Center

Being Disciples, Practicing Hospitality, Bringing Hope



Pastors

Reverends Banu and James Moore, Ob/ISB

Church — 112 South Street, Auburn, NY 13021
www.auburnfirst.org

PERC — 108 South Street, NY 13021
www.percatthemansion.com

Sunday Worship 10am
Followed by Fellowship and Prayer Group

Church Phone: 315.252.3861

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The Presbyterian Event and Retreat Center (PERC) is an unfolding ministry of First Presbyterian Church, Auburn, New York. Located at the historic Case Mansion, the Center provides hospitality and programming for spiritual renewal, educational enrichment, fellowship, and creativity.



The beginnings of this ministry extend to 1845 when Dr. Sylvester Willard became a part of First Presbyterian Church. He was a benefactor of First Presbyterian Church and an elder for 38 years (1848 - 1886).

Dr. Willard was married to Jane Case Willard, whose brother, Theodore Pettibone Case, was also a benefactor of First Presbyterian Church. His son was Willard Erastus Case, whose son was Theodore Willard Case, the builder of the Case Mansion.

Dr. Willard had two daughters. These generous women gave the Willard Chapel to the Auburn Theological Seminary. They died with no heirs other than their cousin Willard Erastus Case. Thus the Willard fortune passed on to Theodore (Ted) Willard Case.

Ted Case was very inventive and devised a method of putting sound on film. Thus he is credited with inventing "talking pictures." His work was done in a laboratory behind his home, the former Willard Mansion, now the Cayuga Museum.

In 1931, having sold the sound on film technology to Fox, Ted Case built the Case Mansion. The MacDougall and Boyd mansions were demolished to make way for the new house, which is 36,000 square feet. Over time Ted Case's fortunes waned, and he gave the Willard Mansion to the city in 1936 and the Case Mansion to the city in 1938.

From 1938 to 1946 the Case Mansion was used for various purposes, including a National Youth Administration center, housing women who lived and worked in the mansion, making sheets, pillowcases, and towels for wartime supply.

In 1946 the Carmelite Friars purchased the home from the city for use as a monastery and training of priests. In 1972 the Carmelites offered shelter to mentally disabled people there. Afterwards, the Fathers invited a group of volunteers to move in and shelter mentally disabled veterans in the mansion. The service came to be called Unity House. By 1975 the Carmelites could no longer afford to keep the Case Mansion property.

In the meantime, First Presbyterian Church continued its mission and ministry. On April 5, 1973 the church's old building which was located by the arterial was destroyed by the collapse of the steeple. The congregation determined the church had to be demolished and the site sold. The search began for a new site. The Carmelite Fathers offered land next to the Case Mansion, and there the new First Presbyterian Church was built in 1975.

As the Carmelites' crisis deepened, the volunteers appealed to the First Presbyterian Church to buy the Case Mansion and continue the program. The church did so, thus embarking on yet another enormous mission in the city of Auburn.

