

2015-J1043

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 200th Anniversary of the Bethel AME Church of Copiague, New York, on October 31, 2015

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 takes pleasure in commemorating the 200th Anniversary of Bethel AME Church of Copiague, New York, to be celebrated at a Gala event on Saturday, October 31, 2015, at the Crest Hollow Country Club, Woodbury, New York; and

WHEREAS, The earliest known black church founded in Long Island, the Bethel AME Church has provided spiritual fulfillment and outreach to the Amityville community for the past two centuries; and

WHEREAS, Established in 1815, the Bethel AME Church was founded in Amityville, New York, by Daniel Squires and Delaney H. Miller, both of whom had also started a Sunday school the previous year; over the next 20 years, both the school and the church met in the homes of residents in the Amityville community; and

WHEREAS, In 1839, Elias and Fanny Hunter offered land on Albany Avenue to the congregation, and a building previously used as an icehouse was donated and moved to the site; after being refurbished, this small building served as the Bethel AME Church's first church edifice, and included an auditorium, stained glass windows, and a steeple by 1843; and

WHEREAS, Benjamin Bates served as the first pastor for the Bethel AME

Church, traveling from Jamaica, Queens, each Sunday on foot to preach to the congregation; and

WHEREAS, As its membership continued to expand, the Bethel AME Church moved in the 1960s, to a larger building in Copiague, New York, where it has continued to serve its community up to the present day; and

WHEREAS, Under the illustrious leadership of Senior Pastor Reverend Keith Hayward, Bethel AME Church now stands on the threshold of tomorrow, prepared to meet the challenges of the coming decades while retaining that spiritual resolve which characterizes its 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 200th Anniversary of the Bethel AME Church of Copiague, New York, fully 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 Reverend Keith Hayward, Senior Pastor, Bethel AME Church, Copiague, New York.