

2015-J1364

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 100th Anniversary of St. George Greek Orthodox Church of Schenectady, New York

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, This Legislative Body takes pleasure in commemorating the 100th Anniversary of St. George Greek Orthodox Church of Schenectady, New York; this momentous occasion will be commemorated with a Hierarchical Great Vespers service at St. George Greek Orthodox Church and a Diamond Jubilee celebration on Saturday, April 25, 2015, at Glen Sanders Mansion, Scotia, New York; and

WHEREAS, St. George Greek Orthodox Church had its origin on January 5, 1914, when James Stathelopoulos, Nicholas Contompasis and Anthony Svolos met in a coffee house on Clinton Street on the Eve of the Theophany; while reminiscing about the observance of the holy days in their homeland, they formed the idea to found a church of the Orthodox faith in Schenectady; and

WHEREAS, These dedicated men, encouraged by their friend, Alexander Karastathes, garnered the support of 13 local Greek families, and on April 19, 1915, the legal transaction of the transfer of a two-family wooden house at 107 Clinton Street took place for the sum of \$1.00 from Mr. and Mrs. Tom Kansas, Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Svolos, Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Contompasis and Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Stathes; and

WHEREAS, On this same date, the certificate of incorporation of the Hellenic Orthodox Church of St. George of Schenectady, New York, was

signed, executed, and acknowledged by the first priest of St. George Church, Reverend Andreas Constantinides; and

WHEREAS, Over the next two decades, the parish grew with the influx of Greek immigrants to Schenectady; and

WHEREAS, A devastating loss occurred on February 7, 1937 at 3:14 a.m. when a fire of unknown origin erupted and the church was completely destroyed; and

WHEREAS, Despite the distressing economic struggles caused by the ongoing Great Depression, the 150 member families determined to rebuild their church, joined together, raised the funds necessary, and in September of 1937 the cornerstone for a new church was laid; and

WHEREAS, In 1939, the new, and present day, St. George Greek Orthodox Church was completed; and

WHEREAS, During the 1950s, the parish continued to grow and eventually five lots on Liberty Street adjacent to the church property were purchased; on April 23, 1961, the cornerstone was sealed in place and on June 11, 1961, the Hellenic Center officially opened and His Eminence, Archbishop Iakovos of North and South America, traveled to Schenectady together to attend the Dedication Ceremony; and

WHEREAS, In 1963, St. George Greek Orthodox Church joined with priests from area Russian Orthodox churches and together had the honor of displaying the most significant of all Russian Orthodox icons, "The Virgin of Kazan," which was touring the United States; and

WHEREAS, During the 1990s, the parish youth participated in the Junior Greek Olympics program sponsored by St. Sophia Church in Syracuse, New York, winning two divisional trophies by overcoming teams from much larger parishes in major metropolitan cities such as New York City, Buffalo, Rochester and Albany; and

WHEREAS, St. George Greek Orthodox Church was the childhood parish of a present day Metropolitan, His Eminence Nicholas of Detroit (born Nicholas E. Pissare) and Bishop, His Grace, Dimitrios of Xanthos (born

James Couchell); and

WHEREAS, Following his service to the St. George parish in Schenectady, New York, Very Reverend Philip Koutoufas became His Grace, Bishop Philip of Atlanta, of blessed memory; and

WHEREAS, St. George's annual Grecian Festival is held every September on the weekend which follows Labor Day; and

WHEREAS, As it was in its early years, St. George Greek Orthodox Church of today is the home parish of many families who own and operate successful and thriving diners, restaurants and cafes throughout the Capital District area; and

WHEREAS, The members of St. George Greek Orthodox Church continue to fulfill the hopes and aspirations of past generations who came to America to pursue their dreams, and remain firm in their resolve to maintain their Orthodox faith and their Greek heritage not only in present time but for tomorrow and future generations to come; 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 100th Anniversary of St. George Greek Orthodox Church of Schenectady, 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 copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Father Theodore Roupas; to Parish Council Officers, President - Evan Euripidou, Vice President - Antonia Kananis, Treasurer - Charlie Koines, Secretary - Lainie Christou; and to Parish Council Members, Scott Morlock, Athena Pagnotti, Morgan Gazetos, Chris Euripidou and Lucy Brady of St. George Greek Orthodox Church, Schenectady, New York.