

2025-J176

Senate Resolution No. 176

BY: Senator GRIFFO

COMMEMORATING the 225th Anniversary of First
Congregational Church of Bridgewater, 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 225th Anniversary of First Congregational Church of Bridgewater, New York, on Sunday, September 15, 2024; and

WHEREAS, First Congregational Church attained its actual 225th Anniversary in March of 2023; however, due to renovations to preserve this valuable historical cornerstone of the community, the congregation will celebrate in 2024; an actual memorialization will be presented by Pastor Alan White and the celebration committee; and

WHEREAS, On March 8, 1798, a meeting for the establishment of a church was held at the residence of Colonel Thomas Converse; and

WHEREAS, The original congregants were seven men and six women, and

the church services were conducted by Colonel Converse, the church moderator, and Elias Hopkins, the church scribe; and

WHEREAS, On July 13, 1802, Reverend James Southworth was appointed as the first minister of the First Congregational Church; he was paid \$200.00 his first year and received annual \$10.00 increases in salary until his income reached the sum of \$300.00; as part of his compensation, he also received a supply of firewood; and

WHEREAS, A Meeting House was constructed, and church services relocated from congregants' homes to the new church building in 1805; that same year, the church purchased a grist mill which provided the means to fund the pastor's salary; and

WHEREAS, On April 14, 1820, the church's first Sunday School was founded; the building in Bridgewater, which houses the church today, was built in 1834; and

WHEREAS, The Missionary Society of First Congregational Church was organized in 1904; this group of women historically supported the church by hosting public suppers, providing funding for missionary work in the United States and abroad, and assisting individuals or groups in need; and

WHEREAS, Presently, the Missionary Society financially supports the church by hosting suppers, holding basket raffles, and providing homemade candy; and

WHEREAS, Through the decades, the membership of First Congregational Church has expanded tremendously; this charming, welcoming country church, known as "the little church with a big heart," has undergone many renovation projects; and

WHEREAS, First Congregational Church lends assistance to the community spiritually and financially; clothing drives, meals, and Christmas gifts are just a few of the many kindnesses for disadvantaged neighbors this humble place of worship provides; the Homeless Program for Oneida County receives countless articles of clothing from the congregants; and

WHEREAS, Many generations have attended First Congregational Church, and present generations perpetuate the loving, caring, and compassionate gathering of like-minded people who unselfishly share with the less fortunate members of their community; 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 First Congregational Church of Bridgewater, 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 First Congregational Church.