

2009-J3415

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Greek Orthodox Church of the Assumption of Port Jefferson, New York, to be celebrated on November 14, 2009

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 50th Anniversary of the Greek Orthodox Church of the Assumption of Port Jefferson, New York, to be celebrated at a Gala Evening on Saturday, November 14, 2009, at Watermill Caterers, Smithtown, New York; and

WHEREAS, In the 1950s, there was but a handful of Greek families permanently residing on the North Shore of Suffolk County on Long Island, New York; due to their devotion to the Greek Orthodox faith, they would occasionally rent the facility and hold services in the San Remo Christian Church of Smithtown; and

WHEREAS, In 1956, this small band of faithful people came together at the home of John Raptis in Setauket, New York, with the idea that it was time to have their own building; they formed a Greek club named the Athens Republican Club; and

WHEREAS, The first formal meeting was held at the American Legion Hall in Port Jefferson Village and they elected the first Church Building Committee; they also collected money and established a treasury; the priest from the San Remo Christian Church contributed significantly to their cause and as a result they purchased a piece of property (90' by 100') on Sheep Pasture Road where the church now stands; and

WHEREAS, The very first founders of the church were: John Raptis, Demitrios Loizos, Bill Caraftis, Gus Cherouvis, Gus Stamoulis, George Aivaliotis, James Samuel, Theodore Soulopoulos, Alexis Karras, Elias Mazaris, Stamatis Moraitis, Kyriakos Fradelos, Panagiotis Apostolakis, Marika Kratsas, Charles Koutrakos, Evangelos Balafas, Steve Tsarnas, Steve Raptis, George Malahias, Ioannis Poulianos, Elias Poulos, Anthony Poulos, John Politis, Hiraklis Kyriakidis and John Karatzas; and

WHEREAS, The first President and Godfather of the church was James Samuel, the first Vice President, John Raptis, the first Secretary George Malahias and the first Treasurer was Panagiotis Apostolakis; and

WHEREAS, After working extremely hard to buy the land, make a plan and build their church, on Palm Sunday, April 1959, the dream of the founders came true and the Greek Orthodox Church of the Assumption opened its door to the first liturgy under the spiritual leadership of Father Nick Papapetrou; at this time, they also formed a Greek School in the church's basement with Katherine Papadakos as its first teacher; and

WHEREAS, After 1959, they began a drive to purchase neighboring plots of land; as many of the regular visitors and summer vacationers began to settle permanently in the area, the Greek Orthodox community began to grow and had the foresight to plan ahead for future growth and expansion; and

WHEREAS, Five years later in 1964, the parish house was built; in 1971, a decision had to be made for this growing community; an extension was added to the building at this time as well as a bell tower; on May 28, 1972, a memorable event occurred; the church was consecrated followed by a gala event that evening at the Colony Hill Hotel Complex; and

WHEREAS, In 1979, excavation began for the church's community center to fulfill its growing needs; construction began in 1980 on the building itself and much of the work was accomplished by the members of the community; by 1985, the Hellenic Community Center was completed for the

educational, cultural, recreational and entertainment needs of the community; and

WHEREAS, May 1997 marks the next chapter of the church's history with the groundbreaking of the "traditional Byzantine style" Church, Platea, Amphitheater, Arcades, Agora, Courtyard and Bell Tower; the church's goal is to provide buildings and outdoor space reflecting the simplicity that is rooted in the traditions of the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Townscape Heritage of Greece; and

WHEREAS, Today, seven hundred families strong, the Greek Orthodox Church of the Assumption 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 50th Anniversary of the Greek Orthodox Church of the Assumption of Port Jefferson, New York, to be observed on November 14, 2009, 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 the Greek Orthodox Church of the Assumption, Port Jefferson, New York.