

2011-J1510

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 75th Anniversary of St. Leonard's Church, Inc., AAO of Brooklyn, New York, on Friday, November 11, 2011

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 75th Anniversary of St. Leonard's Church, Inc., AAO of Brooklyn, New York on Friday, November 11, 2011, at Grand Prospect Hall; and

WHEREAS, Becoming legally certified as St. Leonard's Church, Inc. on April 29, 1936, the institution's annual membership meetings were held for reports and discussions of all matters conducive to its welfare; a continuing Board of Trustees consisting of 11 financial members was subsequently elected to perform the administrative duties relevant to the peaceful operation of matters pertaining to the well-being of the Church; and

WHEREAS, The spiritual and pastoral duties are vested in the hands of the head cleric who is elected by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast at a special membership meeting of members; it is essentially a congregational form of government, with the Board of Trustees as the official representatives; and

WHEREAS, After many years of seeking a suitable edifice, in October of 1944, an unoccupied Jewish Synagogue located at 765 Putnam Avenue was purchased; the most memorable event in the life of St. Leonard's was the dedication and consecration of the building on Sunday, October 9, 1955;

this rewarding experience was followed by a silent and increasing urge by some parishioners for a centralized denominational union; and WHEREAS, Under the dynamic leadership of a prominent layman, Mr. Alexander B. Inniss, and with the approval, support and cooperation of the head cleric, a special meeting was held for the selection of Incorporators; this was done and the new religious denomination was to become Afro-American Orthodox; and

WHEREAS, The founder and first Primate of the Afro-American Orthodox Church, Archbishop Donald M. Forster, S.T.D., D.C.L., was consecrated on Sunday, January 8, 1961, at St. Leonard's Church; and

WHEREAS, A list of the clergy who served St. Leonard's Church from its inception to present is as follows: the late James Cornelius Van Loo (1st Bishop 1936-1939); Charles Siebert Rhoden (1st Rector 1939-1945); Hubert Augustus Rogers (2nd Bishop 1945-1949); The Reverend Julian Smith (1945-1949); Donald Mitchinson Forster (2nd Rector and 3rd Bishop 1950-1975); James H. Rogers (4th Bishop and 3rd Rector 1975-1991); Reverend Canon Dennis Barrett (1977-1986); Reverend Roger Fawcett (1991-1993); Deacon Clifton Yearwood (1991-1993); Reverend Hallum Denny (1991-1993); Reverend Rudolf Griffith; Reverend Selwyn Gittens (1991-1992); Bishop Trevor D. Bentley (4th Rector 1993-1996); Reverend Othaniel C. Waterman (1996-2003); and Reverend John Ofori-Mensah (5th Rector (2003-2005); and WHEREAS, Currently led by the Reverend Iverston Walrond, St. Leonard's Church continues to prosper today and into the future; and WHEREAS, St. Leonard's Church guilds are the Unum Society, Hospitality Guild, Senior Choir, Youth Choir, Willing Workers, Men's Guild, Women's Auxiliary, Youth Organization, Sunday School, Altar Guild, Ushers Board and the Scholarship Committee; and

WHEREAS, St. Leonard's Church, Inc., AAO, 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 75th Anniversary of St. Leonard's Church, Inc., AAO of Brooklyn, New York, on Friday, November 11, 2011, 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 Iverston Walrond, Pastor, St. Leonard's Church, Inc., AAO, Brooklyn, New York.