

2015-J2153

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the Bicentennial Anniversary of the St. James Episcopal Church, in Batavia, 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, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body takes pleasure in commemorating the Bicentennial Anniversary of the St. James Episcopal Church, in Batavia, New York, to be feted with a year-long celebration; and

WHEREAS, On June 6, 1815, a group of 11 men met for the purpose of incorporating St. James Parish, and on April 10, 1816, ground was broken for the brick Church on Ellicott Street; and

WHEREAS, It took six years to complete construction of this vital house of worship; the first St. James Episcopal Church was officially consecrated on Friday, September 22, 1826; and

WHEREAS, By 1833, the life of the brick Church was fading, and a new stone building was erected on the same site three years later; this church was consecrated on September 11, 1836; and

WHEREAS, A parsonage was also built adjacent to the Church, housing the Rector for almost 70 years; today, the building is still used as office space; and

WHEREAS, After almost seven decades, the stone church began to deteriorate; the cornerstone of the new St. James Church building on East Main Street, the residential heart of the city, was dedicated on April 10, 1908; and

WHEREAS, At this time, the barn on the property was sold, the land rented and the lumber from the house was saved for building purposes; only the iron fence was left and today, is still standing along Main Street; and

WHEREAS, As building progressed, windows were transferred from the old church along with choir stalls, organ, chancel rail, lectern, tabernacle, Bishop's chair, litany desk and candelabras; Mr. George Rupprecht also donated a new chancel window; the old Troy bell now hung in a truly English belfry and first chimed the call to worship in the fall of 1909, and the new rectory was completed in 1930; and

WHEREAS, Numerous events have been planned to be held throughout 2015, in acknowledgement of the 200th Anniversary of St. James Episcopal Church; to kick off the year-long celebration, a Sunday service was held on Sunday, February 8, 2015; it was a recreation of its first service which was held in 1815; and

WHEREAS, Many of Batavia's founding families were the first parishioners of the historic church, and many of the streets in Batavia are named after the original vestryman and founders, such as Ellicott, Trumbull, Ross and Richmond; some of the current members attended the service in costume of the 1815 time period; and

WHEREAS, Other planned events include: a lecture by local historian Larry Barnes regarding Batavia with a focus on the founders and early vestrymen of the Church who played a prominent role in the formation of the city; a musical presentation by VoxLumine; Thanksgiving in May dinner; Period Tea and Fashion Show; and a Festival Eucharist Celebration with choral singing and brass accompaniment with celebrant William Franklin, Bishop of Western New York; as well as a presentation by Suzanne Oliver, co-author of THE FAITH CLUB; and

WHEREAS, Under the illustrious guidance of its current Pastor, The Reverend Carolyn Lombard, St. James Episcopal 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 Bicentennial Anniversary of the St. James Episcopal Church, in Batavia, New York, fully confident that this memorial 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 Reverend Carolyn Lombard, Pastor, St. James Episcopal Church.