

2015-J4820

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 110th Anniversary of Bethel Baptist Church of Brooklyn, New York, on May 22, 2016

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to celebrate the milestones of those enduring places of worship within the State of New York which serves the spiritual needs of our citizens; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body takes pleasure in commemorating the 110th Anniversary of Bethel Baptist Church in Brooklyn, New York, on Sunday, May 22, 2016; and

WHEREAS, In celebration of this auspicious occasion, a souvenir journal will be available to members of the Bethel Baptist Church; and

WHEREAS, At an early age, Reverend Timothy White, D. D., the founder and first pastor of Bethel Baptist Church, moved to Brooklyn, New York; he joined the Holy Trinity Baptist Church, which was organized under Reverend S. W. Timms; it was not long before he became a vital member and Chairman of its Board of Trustees; and

WHEREAS, Receiving the call to ministry, Timothy White was granted his license to preach in 1905; in 1906, with the assistance of Reverend S. W. Timms, Reverend Timothy White organized the Holy Trinity Baptist Mission, named in honor of the Trinity Baptist Church, located on the corner of Third Avenue and Warren Street in Brooklyn; and

WHEREAS, A prayer group which consisted of Brother Joseph Holland, Sister Bertha Brooks, Brother Jordan Robinson and fourteen other followers, formed the nucleus of the Holy Trinity Baptist Mission; and

WHEREAS, In 1907, Reverend Timothy White was ordained to preach the gospel and gradually the Holy Trinity Baptist Mission was developed into a full-fledged Baptist Church; on April 16, 1907, the church was renamed The Bethel Baptist Church; Reverend Timothy White appointed a Deacon

Board, Trustee Board and Missionary Board; and

WHEREAS, In 1912, the property at 263-5 Bergen Street was purchased, and two years later, the ground was broken to erect the first church building by Grandmother Timms, the wife of the late Reverend S. W. Timms; in 1915, the building was completed and it became the first church built from the ground up by a Black Minister and his congregation in South Brooklyn; and

WHEREAS, Bethel Baptist Church continued to grow and prosper, and consequently, in 1917, the adjoining lot was purchased; in 1918, the property situated on the east side of the church, 269 Bergen Street was also purchased; and

WHEREAS, The membership of Bethel Baptist Church steadily increased, making it necessary to build a larger church; in 1923, the original building was knocked down and the present building was erected on the same site; this new edifice was dedicated on the first Sunday in October of 1924; and

WHEREAS, After the death of Reverend Timothy White, Reverend L. T. Chapman, former Sunday School Superintendent and assistant to the Pastor, became the second Pastor of Bethel Baptist Church; and

WHEREAS, Under the luminous leadership of Reverend L. T. Chapman, the Church's mortgage was paid off on April 26, 1946; in 1947, the pipe organ was repaired and 26 chimes were installed, a new roof was added, and the church was decorated; and

WHEREAS, In 1952, Reverend L. T. Chapman had all of the exterior work done and every space of the church was waterproofed; four years later, a lot was purchased next to the church to be used by members and friends for parking on Sundays; and

WHEREAS, Throughout Reverend L. T. Chapman's tenure, the Bethel Baptist Church fellowship grew to more than 1,000 members; this exceptional leader died on April 1, 1960; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Paul T. Pruden, who had been ordained under Reverend

L. T. Chapman, became the Interim Pastor; in this capacity, he performed many marriages, visited the sick, and ministered numerous congregants; and

WHEREAS, In October of 1961, Reverend Willie James Hall was installed as the third Pastor of Bethel Baptist Church; under his guidance, membership increased immensely, the church was renovated three times, new pews, a Hammond Organ and a new piano were bought, and wall to wall carpeting was installed along with central air-conditioning and a new roof; and

WHEREAS, Bethel Baptist Church entered a new level of service to the community with the founding of the Bethel Baptist Day Care Center, as well as the Brooklyn multi-purpose self-help counsel; as a result of the counsel, the South Brooklyn Family Planning Clinic was established, treating hundreds of young children as well as adults free of charge; and

WHEREAS, In 2001, a new Hammond Organ, new hanging microphones, a music mixer, and decorative lamps that were hung outside the front of the church were purchased; one year later, the music department continued to improve the sound system, allowing services to be heard in the lower sanctuary; in 2003, new furniture was purchased for the pastor's office by members of the congregation; and

WHEREAS, On May 5, 2003, the members of the Bethel Baptist Church were saddened by the loss of their oldest member, Mother Belle Demby who was 107 years-old; and

WHEREAS, Upon the retirement of Reverend Willie James Hall, Reverend Horace DeVore Chapman was installed as the fourth pastor of Bethel Baptist Church on December 4, 2005; and

WHEREAS, Under Reverend Horace DeVore Chapman's able management, the entire church was renovated; in addition, a van was purchased, new ministries were formed and Bergen Street was renamed Reverend Timothy White Way, in honor of Bethel Baptist Church's founder; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Horace DeVore Chapman was instrumental in launching

a Bible Study Group, and procuring new chairs for the lower sanctuary, as well as a roof for the church; he also made sure that every member, new and old, received a Bible; and

WHEREAS, Moreover, the Bethel Baptist Church renovated the Annex/Cadet Hall to continue to be a Beacon of Light in its community; and

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WHEREAS, On April 13, 2015, Reverend C. Ramont Morris was elected as the fifth Pastor of Bethel Baptist Church; he was officially installed on November 3, 2015; and

WHEREAS, Bethel Baptist Church 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 110th Anniversary of Bethel Baptist Church in Brooklyn, 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 The Reverend C. Ramont Morris, Pastor, Bethel Baptist Church.