

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 150th Anniversary of Congregation Berith Sholom of Troy, New York, on May 1, 2016

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 150th Anniversary of Congregation Berith Sholom of Troy, New York, feted with several events held throughout the year, including a Community Day on Sunday, May 1, 2016; the year-long celebration will culminate with a Gala Dinner on November 10, 2016; and

WHEREAS, This auspicious milestone was celebrated with a myriad of events including tours of the oldest building in continuous use as a synagogue in New York State, and an exhibit on its storied history; in addition, there were various activities for children, craft vendors, food, and a concert by Ruth Pelham of the Music Mobile; and

WHEREAS, In 1866, a year after the Civil War, "all male persons of full age" were gathered together "in their rooms in the Wotkyns' Block...for the purpose of incorporating themselves as the religious Society and Congregation of Baris Sholem."; previously, this group held worship services in their homes and created a burial society; and

WHEREAS, By 1870, land was purchased at the present site on Third and Division Streets in Troy, New York; the cornerstone was laid in June, and the building was completed in time for the High Holy Days in September of that year; and

WHEREAS, From its inception, the congregation exhibited its liberal tendencies; men and women were seated together, the choir was mixed, and an organ was played; reform ritual was adopted around 1890, and in 1920, during its 50th Anniversary year, the congregation joined the Union of American Hebrew Congregations; and

WHEREAS, A few interesting features of the Congregation are the elaborately carved ark, which resembles a boat, was donated after the building was completed, in memory of a young man who died in a boating accident on the Hudson River; the ner tamid (eternal light) is unusual in that it is a gas flame, not an electric bulb, and the lovely stained glass windows were completed in 1965; and

WHEREAS, Congregation Berith Sholom 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 150th Anniversary of Congregation Berith Sholom observed on May 1, 2016, 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 Congregation Berith Sholom, Troy, New York.