

**BY:** Senator LARKIN

**COMMEMORATING** the 190th Anniversary of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church of Newburgh, New York on April 8, 2017

**WHEREAS,** Throughout the storied history of New York State, there have emerged among its noble institutions certain houses of worship which have become distinguished through their spiritual leadership and commitment to service, and therefore warrant special recognition; and

**WHEREAS,** It is the sense of this State and 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 just pride in commemorating the 190th Anniversary of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church of Newburgh, New York on April 8, 2017, to be celebrated at the Thayer Hotel in West Point, New York; and

**WHEREAS,** In addition, Father William "Bill" Scafidi will be recognized for his overwhelming spirit of charity and compassion, acting from vision and enlightenment in conducting his administrative and spiritual duties, while always displaying the highest standards of personal and professional integrity and dedication; and

**WHEREAS,** The oldest African American Church in the Hudson Valley and the first African American Church in the City of Newburgh, the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Zion Church of Newburgh was founded in 1827, under the luminous leadership of Reverend John Matthews; it has continued to grow under the able leadership of its pastors as well as the support of a dedicated congregation, and city of Newburgh; and

**WHEREAS,** After holding services at various temporary locations, the AME Zion Church of Newburgh moved into its own facilities on Washington Street, following the appointment of The Reverend William Bishop as Pastor in 1832; and

**WHEREAS,** The AME Zion Church of Newburgh was incorporated in 1848 under the guidance of Reverend R.E. Eaststep, and rebuilt under the Pastorate of The Reverend Peter Ross in 1851; and

**WHEREAS,** Throughout its esteemed history, the AME Zion Church of Newburgh has been blessed with outstanding church leadership which has provided guidance and spiritual outreach during difficult times; and

**WHEREAS,** During the tenure of its longest serving Pastor, The Reverend Frank E. Jones, the AME Zion Church of Newburgh sponsored and completed the construction of Varick Homes, a multi-family housing complex; in addition, the Church completed major repairs to its facilities and instituted numerous programs for the benefit of the local

community; and

**WHEREAS,** In 2002, The Reverend Twila Rucker Caines became the first woman to be appointed Pastor in the history of the AME Zion Church of Newburgh; her leadership was vital in making major improvements, as well as in recovering from several fires which caused considerable damage; and

**WHEREAS,** Under the illustrious supervision of its current Pastor, Reverend Milton Stubbs, the AME Zion Church now stands on the threshold of tomorrow, preparing 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 190th Anniversary of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church of Newburgh, New York; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Father William "Bill" Scafidi and The Reverend Milton Stubbs, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church of Newburgh, New York.