

BY: Senator PHILLIPS

COMMEMORATING the 50th Anniversary of Temple
Isaiah of Great Neck, New York, to be celebrated on
June 1, 2017

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 50th Anniversary of Temple Isaiah, to be celebrated at a Dinner on Thursday, June 1, 2017, at Port Washington Yacht Club in Port Washington, New York; and

WHEREAS, Established in 1967, Temple Isaiah is committed to the equality of all congregational members regardless of age, sex, family circumstances or financial means; its small, intimate size has been a hallmark of its existence, and intellectual truth and discussion are cornerstones of congregational life; and

WHEREAS, Founded during the period of the Six Day War in Israel, Temple Isaiah has maintained a strong sense of attachment with Medinat Israel; the congregants truly believe the destiny of the Jewish people is inextricably linked to the destiny of its spiritual homeland; and

WHEREAS, For the first four decades of its existence, Temple Isaiah worshipped in rented space at a local church; in September of 2008, a new building was opened at One Chelsea Place, leading to the expansion of programming and worship opportunities; and

WHEREAS, In line with its desire to remain a small community, Temple Isaiah is intimate yet inspiring; the large skylight in the sanctuary permits natural light to illuminate morning services, adding a special sense of sacredness to its bima and to its worship; its sacred spaces are warm and welcoming, offering a profound sense of peace and solitude; and

WHEREAS, Since its inception, four rabbis have served Temple Isaiah as its spiritual leader and ethical guide: Rabbi Bonnie Steinberg, Rabbi Judith Lewis, Rabbi Harold Spivack, and Rabbi Theodore Tsuruoka; and

WHEREAS, From 2000-2016, Rabbi Theodore Tsuruoka, affectionately known to his congregation as Rabbi Ted, led Temple Isaiah; beginning as a student rabbi, he brought an unusual diversity of experience and background to the pulpit; and

WHEREAS, Rabbi Ted Tsuruoka followed an unusual path to the

rabbinate; a second-generation Japanese American, he was raised on Manhattan's Upper West Side amid a large Jewish community; he began his spiritual journey as a young man, ultimately converting to Judaism at the age of 22; and

WHEREAS, In 2004, Rabbi Ted Tsuruoka was ordained by the Academy for Jewish Religion, a multi-denominational seminary whose student body consists of many professionals seeking a spiritual vocation as a second or third career; and

WHEREAS, The rabbinate provided Rabbi Ted Tsuruoka the opportunity to fulfill the dream of integrating a life of Jewish living with leadership in a progressive congregation interested in exploring all aspects of our faith. His charge as rabbi was to help each congregant find his or her own way to Torah; and

WHEREAS, On March 27, 2017, Temple Isaiah observed the first yahrzeit of its esteemed Rabbi Ted Tsuruoka; he was deeply committed to traditional Jewish values and had a passion to make Judaism responsive, understandable and accessible to all; and

WHEREAS, Temple Isaiah stands on the threshold of tomorrow, prepared to meet the challenges of the coming decades while retaining that spiritual resolve of its founders; 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 50th Anniversary of Temple Isaiah of Great Neck, 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 Temple Isaiah.