

BY: Senator GRIFFO

COMMEMORATING the 200th Anniversary of
Westernville Presbyterian Church on January 21, 2018

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 is justly proud to commemorate the 200th Anniversary of Westernville Presbyterian Church, to be celebrated with a special dedication worship service on Sunday, January 21, 2018; and

WHEREAS, The First Presbyterian Church and Religious Society of the Town of Western was organized at the initiative of its earliest settlers who, in 1810, pledged to fund the establishment of a meeting place for addressing the spiritual needs of the community; and

WHEREAS, Constructed in the Village of Westernville and dedicated on January 15, 1818, the church building was originally shared by three denominations: Presbyterians, Methodists and Baptists; and

WHEREAS, During this time, the joint use of the building fell on hard financial times and in 1830, the notable town father, George Brayton, settled the debts of the society and purchased and deeded the church to the Presbyterian congregation; and

WHEREAS, Since its inception, Westernville Presbyterian Church has undergone many renovations including the addition of a steeple and narthex; in 1892, a chapel was constructed on the east side and electric wiring was installed as it became available in the town; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, in the 1950s, the basement was excavated to make space for Sunday school classrooms and social gatherings; and

WHEREAS, Many notable pastors served the congregation over the years including its longest serving minister, Reverend Chester P. Lippy, who served from 1965 to 2003, and who currently serves as pastor emeritus; and

WHEREAS, Following his illustrious tenure, Westernville Presbyterian Church called its first female minister, Reverend Sarah Schmidt-Lee, who was succeeded by its current leader, Reverend Jeff Courter, an army veteran who served in the Afghanistan conflict; and

WHEREAS, The constancy of the Westernville Presbyterian Church

speaks to the vision and commitment of its original founders and congregations; and

WHEREAS, Over its distinguished 200 year history, Westernville Presbyterian Church has demonstrated continuous service to the residents and communities which it serves; and

WHEREAS, The success of Westernville Presbyterian Church is in direct correlation to the efforts of its clergy, whose involvement is, and always has been, characterized by an impressive commitment, an unbridled enthusiasm, and an uncompromising standard of excellence in all endeavors on behalf of the organization and the community it serves; and

WHEREAS, Under the luminous direction of Reverend Jeff Courter, Westernville Presbyterian 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 200th Anniversary of Westernville Presbyterian Church on January 21, 2018; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Reverend Jeff Courter, Westernville Presbyterian Church.