

BY: Senator HELMING

COMMEMORATING the lowering of the Blue Star Service Flag at the conclusion of World War I and the 200th Anniversary of the First Presbyterian Church of Waterloo on March 19, 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 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 lowering of the Blue Star Service Flag at the conclusion of World War I and the 200th Anniversary of the First Presbyterian Church of Waterloo to be celebrated on March 19, 2017, at a Service Flag Commemoration in honor of the lives of United States Veterans past and present, at the First Presbyterian Church of Waterloo, Waterloo, New York; and

WHEREAS, The First Presbyterian Church of Waterloo was founded on July 7, 1817, when a group of religiously inclined settlers met in a schoolhouse to organize a Presbyterian Church; later that year, the church was legally incorporated and became the pioneer religious organization in Waterloo; and

WHEREAS, In March of 1821, Reverend Aaron Lane was installed as pastor and remained for 15 years; three years later, a house of worship was erected and became known as the Little White Church; in February of 1836, Reverend Samuel Gridley was installed as pastor, a role he held for 37 years; and

WHEREAS, In 1817, the First Presbyterian Church of Waterloo was established with eight members; as time went on, the membership continued to grow; by 1850, the Church had become too small to accommodate the growing congregation; and

WHEREAS, The cornerstone for the new church was laid on August 21, 1850, and was finished by November 12, 1851; after the completion of the building, the oldest bell in the Village of Waterloo was moved from the original Little White Church to the present church; and

WHEREAS, During World War I, a Blue Star Service Flag hung on the Church Sanctuary Platform; the flag's 33 stars, represented the 33 men from the church serving in the war; after the war was over, on March 28, 1920, a special service was held to lower the flag; and

WHEREAS, According to legend, the flag was given to a church elder

and subsequently, the flag was misplaced; almost a century had passed before the flag was found for sale online by a museum volunteer; the volunteer and a board member purchased the flag to donate to the Terwilliger Museum; and

WHEREAS, During the summer of 2016, the Presbyterian Church historian was at the museum when she stumbled upon the church's Service Flag; she was able to convince the Terwilliger Museum Director to allow the flag to be placed in the church's display case for the March 19th service, celebrating 200 years of service to the people of Waterloo; 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 lowering of the Blue Star Service Flag at the conclusion of World War I and the 200th Anniversary of the First Presbyterian Church of Waterloo, 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 Sarah West, Pastor, First Presbyterian Church of Waterloo.