

BY: M. of A. Jacobson

COMMEMORATING the 165th Anniversary of Temple Beth Jacob of Newburgh, New York, to be celebrated on May 5, 2019

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 is justly proud to commemorate the 165th Anniversary of Temple Beth Jacob of Newburgh, New York, to be celebrated at an event on Sunday, May 5, 2019; and

WHEREAS, Jewish settlers arrived in the Hudson Valley as early as the 1650's; Isaac Newstadt was the first Jew known to permanently settle in Newburgh, followed by Henry Hirschberg and Abraham Schoenfield; this trio opened their homes for worship, hosting services for each other and fellow Jews; and

WHEREAS, By 1854, seven families residing in Newburgh formed the first Jewish congregation in a rented space in Crawford Hall at the southwest corner of Front and Third Streets; they purchased the Big Rock Cemetery on upper First Street, and chose the name Beth Jacob; one of the most noted Jewish scholars of his day, Joshua Ben Mordecai Falk Hakohen, became the first Rabbi; and

WHEREAS, In 1873, the entire top floor of the Townsend Building, at Third and Water Streets, became the new "House of Assembly," and in 1890, the congregation decided to erect a synagogue on South Street, between Liberty and Grand, which was completed and dedicated on September 8, 1891, as a Reform synagogue; and

WHEREAS, Under the spiritual leadership of Rabbi Maurice J. Bloom, Congregation Beth Jacob celebrated its 100th Anniversary in 1954; Rabbi Bloom's spiritual, scholarly, and civic leadership impacted the State, Nation, and Jewish world at large, while the congregation grew from 44 members to over 200 families; and

WHEREAS, The congregation moved to its present location at Gidney Avenue while Rabbi Norman Kahan was its spiritual leader from 1956-1968; Rabbi Dick Steinbrick next served the congregation from 1968-1970 counselling many on conscientious objector status and was an early officiate of intermarriages; Milton Rosenfeld then served as rabbi for a few years; and

WHEREAS, In 1974, Rabbi Hirshel Jaffe began a 25-year term as the congregation's leader; in this capacity, he was actively involved in

important Jewish issues here and around the world; he and Cantor Bill Satzman successfully taught Bar/Bat Mitzvah students Jewish tradition, allowing them to lead services with a skill and understanding of their heritage; and

WHEREAS, Rabbi Hirshel Jaffe's book, **Why Me? Why Anyone?**, chronicling his struggle with illness, has been an inspiration to many; currently, he is a Rabbi Emeritus of the congregation; and

WHEREAS, Under the luminous leadership of Rabbi Robert L. Rozenberg, Temple Beth Jacob has diligently worked to teach its youth, inspire its adults, create a caring community, and develop a literate congregation whose beliefs are grounded in Torah; and

WHEREAS, Rabbi Rozenberg was honored as Rabbi Emeritus on November 2, 2007; Rabbi Darryl Crystal next served as interim rabbi and in 2008, Larry Freedman became the Rabbi of the community; and

WHEREAS, Recently, Temple Beth Jacob has partnered with Congregation Agudas Israel and the Jewish Community Center to create Kol Yisrael, a campus which will provide a home for those communities as well as the Jewish Federation of Greater Orange County; and

WHEREAS, For 165 years, the congregants of Temple Beth Jacob have lived by its motto "House of Jacob, let us go in the light of the Lord!", which has also been the mantra of Jewish people for over 4,000 years; and

WHEREAS, Temple Beth Jacob 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 165th Anniversary of Temple Beth Jacob, to be observed on May 5, 2019, 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 Rabbi Larry Freedman, Temple Beth Jacob.