

BY: Senator MYRIE

COMMEMORATING the 170th Anniversary of Bedford Central Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn, New York, on April 24, 2022

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 170th Anniversary of Bedford Central Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn, New York, on Sunday, April 24, 2022; and

WHEREAS, Bedford Central Presbyterian Church exists to seek Christ first in all things, to glorify God by equipping believers to serve and evangelize through meaningful relationships; and

WHEREAS, This vital institution assists its members in ways of growing and maturing so each may serve the world actively sharing their gifts and talents; and

WHEREAS, Bedford-Central's birth took place under an apple tree in a field at Vanderbilt and Atlantic Avenues where Henry Newcomb ministered to children who had little or no education; this eventually led to the creation of a school on July 4, 1852; and

WHEREAS, After outgrowing an attic, the school moved to a barn on Dean Street and Underhill Avenue which became Mount Prospect Mission School, under the leadership of Superintendent Silas Davenport; and

WHEREAS, Worship services were held at the Atlantic Avenue chapel of the Clinton Avenue Congregation Church before a chapel was built in 1871 at Classon Avenue, between Park and Sterling place; and

WHEREAS, February of 1894 marked the beginning of the church's affiliation with the Presbyterian denomination and it became known as the Bedford Presbyterian Church with a membership of less than 100 with Reverend George E. Gillespie as pastor; and

WHEREAS, By 1909, the congregation had grown from 101 to 742 members, while the Sunday school grew from 81 to 900; subsequently, a new building which is now the main Sanctuary was dedicated in 1910; and

WHEREAS, On January 1, 1944, Central Presbyterian Church united with Bedford, and on May 1, 1961, Classon Avenue Presbyterian Church joined the merger; the new congregation became Bedford Central Presbyterian Church; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Dr. Clive E. Neil, Senior Pastor of Bedford Central Presbyterian Church since 1988, was instrumental in the development of a Day Care Center, Community Development Corporation, Church Library, Bible Institute, and Christian Counseling Ministry; and

WHEREAS, Under the dynamic and creative leadership of Reverend Dr. Clive E. Neil, Bedford Central Presbyterian Church has seen a 30 percent increase in membership, an increased annual budget, and an emphasis on Christian education; an increased emphasis on developing new leaders also led to the successful commissioning and training of 13 lay leaders; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, with a strong desire to make the youth feel like a vital part of the church, Reverend Dr. Clive E. Neil developed a teen outreach partnership with New Life; and

WHEREAS, Today, Bedford Central Presbyterian Church now stands on the threshold of tomorrow, prepared to meet the challenges of the coming decades, while retaining that spiritual resolve which has so characterized its glorious 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 170th Anniversary of Bedford Central Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn, New York, confident that this commemoration reflects our 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 The Reverend Dr. Clive E. Neil, Bedford Central Presbyterian Church.