

Assembly Resolution No. 1011

BY: M. of A. Pheffer Amato

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 100th Anniversary of Congregation Kneseth Israel, The White Shul, of Far Rockaway, Queens and the Five Towns

WHEREAS, The quality and character of life in New York State is greatly enriched by its religious institutions and the faithful and generous service of those who devote themselves to endeavors of family, faith, and community; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and commend institutions of such magnanimous conduct and bearing which demonstrate a deep and continuing concern for others, and in so doing, inspire others to do the same; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of Congregation Kneseth Israel, The White Shul, of Far Rockaway, Queens and the Five Towns; and

WHEREAS, The theme for this momentous milestone is "A Century of Achdus. A Legacy of Community. A Place to Learn, Daven, and Grow."; and

WHEREAS, Congregation Kneseth Israel, widely known as The White Shul, was established in 1922, in the Far Rockaway Chamber of Commerce building; eight years later, the Congregation moved to the old Temple Israel building, which was a white marble building, hence the name "The White Shul"; later, in 1964, the Congregation moved to its current building on Empire Avenue; and

WHEREAS, Rabbi Abraham Kahan became the first rabbi of the shul in 1928, followed by Rabbi Shimshon Fortman in 1931, and Rabbi Rafael Pelcovitz who served for over 70 years, and then Rabbi Tzvi Flaum; since 2008, Rabbi Eytan Feiner has been shul Rabbi, first with Rabbi Shay Schachter as associate rabbi, and currently, with Rabbi Motti Neuburger as associate rabbi; and

WHEREAS, During the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, with many homes destroyed and a widespread power outage, The White Shul opened as a recovery center for the community, providing free food, creating charging stations for phones and other electronic devices, and housing a doctor's practice whose office was destroyed; and

WHEREAS, For a century, The White Shul has served as the anchor of the Jewish community of Far Rockaway and the Five Towns, maintaining stability in times of urban blight and upheaval, and it continues to be a magnet for youth; and

WHEREAS, From its humble beginnings with 20 families, Congregation Kneseth Israel has grown to over 600 families; and

WHEREAS, Members of The White Shul are involved in all aspects of the community, maintaining strong civic and Zionist values; and

WHEREAS, Under the able leadership of Head Rabbi Eytan Feiner and Associate Rabbi Motti Neuberger, Congregation Kneseth Israel, The White Shul, 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 100th Anniversary of Congregation Kneseth Israel, The White Shul, of Far Rockaway, Queens and the Five Towns; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Head Rabbi Eytan Feiner and Associate Rabbi Motti Neuberger, Congregation Kneseth Israel, The White Shul.