

Senate Resolution No. 1731

BY: Senator MAYER

COMMEMORATING the 75th Anniversary of the
Larchmont Temple, Har Chayim on August 17, 2024

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 75th Anniversary of the Larchmont Temple, Har Chayim on August 17, 2024; and

WHEREAS, At the time of the Temple's founding, there were very few Jewish families in Larchmont, New York; the trauma of World War II led to many Jewish families looking to disaffiliate, to melt into normalcy and Americanize their names to create an anonymity of a non-Jewish environment; and

WHEREAS, Recognizing the need to educate their children, Jewish families in Larchmont fostered the idea to start a Jewish Reform congregation and religious school; the idea was first introduced by the Larchmont Temple's founder, Pearl Belchetz, who invited interested Jewish residents in the community to attend a meeting in her home on June 8, 1948; and

WHEREAS, With 60 residents responding to the initial call to action, the first official membership meeting was held at the Larchmont Public Library on August 17, 1948; a constitution was adopted, and officers, and trustees were elected; and

WHEREAS, Friday evening services were held at the homes of members, religious school classes in a music school, and the first High Holiday services at the American Legion Post 347; but soon it became clear that a larger house was needed, so the large house, designed by Stanford White in 1892 and now the Blum Building, on Willow Avenue was purchased to accommodate all Temple functions including Friday evening services, the religious school, and all meetings; and

WHEREAS, The original Larchmont Temple, Har Chayim (Mountain of Life), was located in a Victorian mansion, the Blum Building, and the present establishment was dedicated in 1954; the current sanctuary for religious services, Social Hall and Garden Room, were dedicated in 2001 to meet the needs of an expanding membership and Temple community; and

WHEREAS, From its humble beginnings with 50 families, the Larchmont Temple has grown to over 800 families, reaffirming covenant and our commitment to a vibrant Jewish future; and

WHEREAS, Members of the Larchmont Temple are involved in all aspects of the community, maintaining strong civic and religious values; and

WHEREAS, Under the able leadership of Senior Rabbi Jeffrey J. Sirkman, the Larchmont Temple, 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 75th Anniversary of the Larchmont Temple, Har Chayim on August 17, 2024; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Senior Rabbi Jeffrey J. Sirkman, Larchmont Temple.