Senate Resolution No. 1655

BY: Senator PARKER

HONORING Antioch Baptist Church upon the occasion of the 24th Pastoral Anniversary of the Faithful Leadership of Rev. Dr. Robert M. Waterman

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and commend those houses of worship and spiritual leaders whose steadfast commitment to faith, service, and community uplift has strengthened the moral and civic fabric of our State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Antioch Baptist Church upon the celebration of its 24th Pastoral Anniversary, recognizing the devoted leadership of Rev. Dr. Robert M. Waterman; and

WHEREAS, Founded in 1918 under the visionary leadership of Reverend Moses Prophet Paylor, D.D., Antioch Baptist Church has stood for more than 107 years as a pillar of faith, resilience, and community empowerment in Brooklyn, guiding generations through worship, education, and service; and

WHEREAS, From its early days on Fleet Street to its enduring presence at 828 Greene Avenue in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Antioch has grown into one of Brooklyn's most prominent African-American congregations, welcoming civil rights leaders, elected officials, cultural icons, and faithful worshippers through its doors, and remaining a beacon of spiritual strength and social progress; and

WHEREAS, Following a distinguished pastoral lineage that includes Reverend George Lawrence, a noted civil rights leader and associate of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; Reverend Phillip E. Elliott, who expanded Antioch's community partnerships; and Reverend D. Darrell Griffin, who advanced restoration and development efforts, Antioch in 2001 was divinely guided to call Rev. Dr. Robert M. Waterman as its fifth pastor; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. Robert M. Waterman, affectionately known as "Pastor Rob," began his service at Antioch on November 4, 2001, and was officially installed in February 2002, bringing with him youthful exuberance, spiritual fervor, and an unwavering commitment to excellence in ministry; and

WHEREAS, A native son of Brooklyn, shaped by both Pentecostal and Baptist traditions, Pastor Rob has faithfully pursued theological scholarship alongside his pastoral calling, earning a Master of Divinity from New York Theological Seminary in 2003 and a Doctorate of Ministry from Drew University in 2009, embodying his belief that if a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing right and well; and

WHEREAS, Under his guiding scripture, Ephesians 2:14, Pastor Rob has

labored to strengthen both the internal life of the church and the surrounding Bedford-Stuyvesant community, challenging Antioch not only to grow spiritually within its walls but to serve boldly beyond them; and

WHEREAS, His transformative leadership has included the revitalization of Youth Ministry, the re-institution of Christian Education, the establishment of leadership classes and retreats, the revival of Antioch Community Services for youth and seniors, and the licensing and ordination of more than 50 clergy leaders between 2014 and 2024; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Rob spearheaded major renovations to the sanctuary and fellowship spaces, launched the innovative "Tent Ministry" revivals and youth conferences, enhanced worship through technological improvements, and witnessed approximately 100 new believers annually join the Antioch family, earning him the affectionate title, "The Preacher of Thunder"; and

WHEREAS, Beyond the pulpit, Pastor Rob has demonstrated exemplary civic engagement as Director of Career Management Services at Medgar Evers College, Community Board 3 member and former Transportation Committee Chair, Ecumenical leader, President of the African American Clergy and Elected Officials (AACEO), Chair within the Black Leadership Commission on AIDS, member of the National Black Commission on AIDS, and lifetime member of the NAACP, while also serving as an author, entrepreneur, educator, and devoted husband to Lady Lola Oguntunde Waterman and father to Nia Folasade, Imani Oyinlola, and Jada Simisola Waterman; and

WHEREAS, Throughout 24 years of steadfast pastoral service, Rev. Dr. Robert M. Waterman has exemplified spiritual courage, intellectual discipline, prophetic voice, and compassionate leadership, ensuring that Antioch Baptist Church remains not only a house of worship, but a center of restoration, advocacy, and hope; and

WHEREAS, It is fitting and proper to recognize this sacred milestone and to commend both pastor and congregation for their enduring partnership in faith and service; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Antioch Baptist Church upon the celebration of its 24th Pastoral Anniversary and to commend Rev. Dr. Robert M. Waterman for his distinguished leadership, visionary ministry, and unwavering commitment to restoring life and strengthening community; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Rev. Dr. Robert M. Waterman and the Antioch Baptist Church family in recognition of this joyous and historic occasion.