



## Commending Ebenezer Baptist Church

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 984

Offered February 16, 2017

Patrons—Delegate: Toscano; Senator: Doeds

WHEREAS, Ebenezer Baptist Church in Charlottesville is celebrating 125 years of serving the community in Christ's name; and

WHEREAS, Ebenezer Baptist Church was founded on March 25, 1892, by the Reverend Alexander Truatt; and

WHEREAS, the original church building was destroyed by fire in 1907, but a new Ebenezer Baptist Church edifice was rebuilt on the same location just 11 months later, and that brick structure still stands today in Charlottesville's historic Starr Hill neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, in the early part of the 20th century, Ebenezer Baptist Church purchased a parsonage and Deacon Adolphus Paige, Sr. rebuilt the structure, which is now located at 402 8th Street NW; and

WHEREAS, Ebenezer Baptist Church undertook an ambitious three-year \$250,000 maintenance, renovation, and restoration effort in the first decade of the 21st century that included the comprehensive refinishing of the church sanctuary, which features a Roosevelt Pipe Organ; and

WHEREAS, included in the upgrades made by Ebenezer Baptist Church were the purchase of a fully equipped media center and the installation of an elevator lift, a project that was recognized by the City of Charlottesville with the 2008 Herman Key Access to the Disabled Award; and

WHEREAS, over the past decade, Ebenezer Baptist Church's visionary ministry outreach has grown to meet community needs at the local, national, and international levels; and

WHEREAS, Ebenezer Baptist Church leads an annual mission trip to the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis, where its donations of medical supplies and equipment have totaled over \$3 million; and

WHEREAS, the University of Virginia recognized Ebenezer Baptist Church's mission efforts by creating an academic course "Disaster Preparedness in St. Kitts and Nevis," an annual overseas research study practicum for approximately 30 undergraduate students; and

WHEREAS, after an earthquake devastated Haiti in 2010, Ebenezer Baptist Church was the first congregation in the United States to host Haitian Ambassador to the United States Raymond A. Joseph and his wife, Lola, due to the church's unique response to the tragedy; and

WHEREAS, Ebenezer Baptist Church reaches out to help the underserved in the Charlottesville community through participation in projects and partnerships with other congregations and interfaith fellowship organizations; and

WHEREAS, during its 125-year history as an agent of change, Ebenezer Baptist Church has been served by 17 pastors and, since 2006, the Reverend Dr. Lehman D. Bates II has led the church's congregation; and

WHEREAS, Ebenezer Baptist Church marks its 125th anniversary in 2017 during a weekend of celebratory events March 17 - 19 that culminates with a 125th anniversary worship service on Sunday, followed by dinner; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Ebenezer Baptist Church in Charlottesville on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of its founding; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Reverend Dr. Lehman D. Bates II, pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church, as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration and best wishes for a joyful celebration and future success in the church's ministry.