

## 2004 SESSION

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### SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 253

Offered March 8, 2004

*Commending First Mount Olive Baptist Church.*

Patrons—Mims and Potts; Delegates: Black, Marshall, R.G., May, Reese and Rust

WHEREAS, between 1864 and 1900, 30 African-American churches were founded in Loudoun County, one of these being Mount Olive Primitive Baptist Church of Leesburg, the precursor to today's First Mount Olive Baptist Church of Leesburg; and

WHEREAS, the church began with a small number of dedicated Christians who had a desire to worship God together; and

WHEREAS, in 1884, under the leadership of Elder Alfred Wright, the members of First Mount Olive Baptist Church purchased a small building on the east side of Liberty Street between Loudoun and Market Streets in Leesburg for worship services, and the building served as the church for almost 70 years and is still standing; and

WHEREAS, the first trustees of the church were Richard Bailey, Robert Ash, Silas Davis, Jessie Moton, and Grandison Washington, and the ensuing pastors of the church were Elder Jerry Jones, Reverend Wash Johnson, Elder Carroll Lee, and Elder Harry Williams; and

WHEREAS, the early churches became the center of African-American community life, being the strongest institutions over which African Americans had control; and

WHEREAS, during the late 1940s, First Mount Olive Baptist Church saw so much growth that a new building was needed; and

WHEREAS, under the leadership of Reverend Howard Twyman, the sixth pastor of the church, land was purchased on West Loudoun Street in Leesburg, and the new church built on that land was completed in 1953; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Twyman served as pastor until his death in 1968 and was followed by Reverend Earl King, Reverend Dalvin Brent, and Reverend Chauncey Hierst; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Harold S. Stinger, a son of the church, accepted the pastorate call in December 1989 and was installed as pastor on June 10, 1990; and

WHEREAS, under Reverend Stinger, the church experienced so much growth in membership that a new, larger church building became necessary, and the existing church building, which could hold 200 members, gave way in 1998 to a new church building that could hold 650 worshipers; and

WHEREAS, what was historically an all-Black church now serves a diverse community; and

WHEREAS, First Mount Olive Baptist Church of Leesburg, Virginia, celebrates its 120th anniversary on March 14, 2004; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend First Mount Olive Baptist Church on the occasion of its 120th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to First Mount Olive Baptist Church as an expression of the General Assembly's appreciation for its many contributions to the spiritual welfare of the Leesburg community.

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