

2008 SESSION

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 320

Offered January 31, 2008

Commending First Baptist Church of Vienna on the occasion of its 140th anniversary.

Patrons—Shannon; Senator: Petersen

WHEREAS, First Baptist Church of Vienna celebrated its 140th anniversary of serving its faithful congregation and the community in 2007; and

WHEREAS, before the first church was built, freed slaves gathered to worship at what were known as "bush meetings" held in the woods where West Street and Lawyers Road intersected, and the spot where the faithful gathered came to be called Association Grove; and

WHEREAS, First Baptist Church was founded in 1867 when a small group of African-American worshippers sharing the same Christian beliefs came together to organize a church under the leadership of the Reverend Cyrus Carter on land donated by Major Orrin T. Hine, a former officer in the Union Army who settled in Vienna in the years after the Civil War; and

WHEREAS, constructed from Civil War barrack material secured through the Freedmen's Bureau, First Baptist Church's first building was erected on Lawyers Road at the site of what is now the Knights of Columbus Hall, and it was deeded September 1, 1867, to the first trustees of the church for the consideration of one dollar; and

WHEREAS, an integral partner in community life, First Baptist Church of Vienna also served as a school and meeting place for civic gatherings; and

WHEREAS, a cornerstone was laid on September 7, 1884, and over the years, the church's congregation grew in numbers and the building underwent many improvements, and in 1915 First Baptist Church of Vienna was renovated and modernized with the addition of a new central heating plant and electricity; and

WHEREAS, after 90 years of worship on Lawyers Road, First Baptist Church of Vienna purchased a three acre site for \$3,000 to build a new church on the corner of Orchard and Nutley Streets, and the congregation celebrated the historic laying of a new cornerstone and within a year moved into its new home at 450 Orchard Street in December 1957; and

WHEREAS, another tremendous surge in membership and church ministries began in 1986, and in the next 10 years a new church building was planned and was completed in December 1996; and

WHEREAS, the First Baptist Church of Vienna has been served throughout its 140-year history by immensely dedicated and able pastors and lay people, who have provided visionary leadership, devout worship, meaningful Christian education, and enthusiastic ministries, especially for its young people; and

WHEREAS, throughout its long history, First Baptist Church of Vienna has been the "heart of the community" and provided its devoted congregation and its neighbors with a place to worship, to help others, and to grow in faith and service; and

WHEREAS, the congregation of First Baptist Church of Vienna celebrated its 140th anniversary with gala festivities, a church banquet, special sermons, and a pilgrimage from the old church site on Lawyers Road to the new church on Orchard Street on December 1-2, 2007; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby congratulate First Baptist Church of Vienna on the occasion of its 140th anniversary; 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. Kenny Smith, pastor of First Baptist Church of Vienna, as an expression of the General Assembly's best wishes for future success in the church's ministry.

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