

## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 878

*Commending Bethlehem Baptist Church.*

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 15, 2013  
 Agreed to by the Senate, February 21, 2013

WHEREAS, Bethlehem Baptist Church of Gum Springs in Fairfax County will proudly celebrate 150 years of worship and service to the community in 2013; and

WHEREAS, Bethlehem Baptist Church traces its roots to 1863, when an escaped slave, Samuel K. Taylor, made his way to Gum Springs and held services in individual homes; and

WHEREAS, after the Civil War, Samuel Taylor, along with several other dedicated Christians, constructed a building to serve as both a church and a school; early member Alice Williams suggested the name Bethlehem for this new endeavor; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Samuel Madden, the pastor of what is now known as Alfred Street Baptist Church, served as the itinerant minister until Reverend Taylor's ordination into the ministry in 1882; and

WHEREAS, Bethlehem Baptist Church continued to grow in numbers and faith, resulting in the cornerstone dedication of a new building in 1884; and

WHEREAS, in 1890 Reverend Taylor and four other members of Bethlehem Baptist Church formed The Joint Stock Club, which proved to be instrumental in the development of the Gum Springs community; and

WHEREAS, Bethlehem Baptist Church continued to thrive under the leadership of Reverend Taylor and mourned his passing in 1912 after 30 years of distinguished service; and

WHEREAS, in 1913 Bethlehem Baptist Church welcomed Reverend William H. Triplett, who faithfully served the congregation for 35 years and oversaw the formation of a church choir, Sunday school, Willing Workers Club, Church Aid Club, Usher Board, and Missionary Circle; and

WHEREAS, during Reverend Triplett's tenure, Bethlehem Baptist Church constructed an eight-room parsonage, installed its own electrical plant, and dedicated its third building in 1930; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Harvard M. Chapman served as Bethlehem Baptist Church's third pastor and continued his predecessor's work of creating new outreach groups and continuing with physical improvements while promoting the spiritual growth of its members; and

WHEREAS, Reverend John H. Chase served briefly as interim pastor until Reverend James A. Kearse became Bethlehem Baptist Church's fourth pastor and during this time a Sunday school choir, known as the Stars of Bethlehem, was formed; and

WHEREAS, under the direction of Reverend Kearse, Bethlehem Baptist Church built a new parsonage, established a new morning worship service and deaconess board, and created a Baptist Training Union; and

WHEREAS, Bethlehem Baptist Church continued to thrive under the leadership of its fifth pastor, Reverend William Wilson, who was succeeded by Reverend Anthony Parrish; and

WHEREAS, Bethlehem Baptist Church dedicated a new edifice in 1993 under the direction of its sixth pastor, Reverend Parrish, and served as a founding member of Ventures in Community and joined the Baptist General Convention of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, Reverend James A. Kearse returned briefly as interim pastor until Bethlehem Baptist Church welcomed the Reverend Dr. Darrell K. White in 1999 as its seventh pastor; and

WHEREAS, under the inspired direction of Reverend White, Bethlehem Baptist Church moved from using auxiliaries and clubs to the development of organized ministries to enhance the church's five-fold mission of Christian education, evangelism, missions, stewardship, and worship; and

WHEREAS, Bethlehem Baptist Church reorganized its service order, combined its adult choirs into one large choir enhanced by specialty choirs, and reached out to the community through audio and media technology and the provision of food and clothing to more than 50 families monthly; and

WHEREAS, Bethlehem Baptist Church partnered with Virginia Union University's Evans-Smith Leadership Training Institute to train new church leaders, with Reverend White serving as the site coordinator; and

WHEREAS, Bethlehem Baptist Church, which has been the recipient of two grants targeted at helping youth, also seeks to empower young people through healthy habits and helping them find their callings; and

WHEREAS, Reverend White also provides strong leadership to the Baptist faith as vice moderator of the Northern Virginia Baptist Association and the president of the Baptist General Convention of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, for 150 years, Bethlehem Baptist Church has been well served by dedicated leaders who

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have provided inspiring words to faithful members who have labored to serve one another and uplift the community; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Bethlehem Baptist Church on the occasion of its 150th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Bethlehem Baptist Church as an expression of the General Assembly's congratulations and admiration for the church's commitment to serving its members and the community.