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## HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 156

Offered February 4, 2013

*Commending Saint Matthew's Baptist Church.*

Patron—Tyler

WHEREAS, Saint Matthew's Baptist Church in the Town of Kenbridge celebrates its 140th anniversary in 2013; and

WHEREAS, organized by a group of freedmen looking for a place to worship closer to their homes in Lunenburg County, Saint Matthew's Baptist Church traces its roots to worship services held in a member's home; and

WHEREAS, with the approximate date of its organization placed sometime in 1873, the earliest record of Saint Matthew's Baptist Church dates to 1874 when a land deed was purchased for the church; and

WHEREAS, Saint Matthew's Baptist Church has a unique history as the oldest predominately African American congregation in the area and actually predates the Town of Kenbridge by around 40 years; and

WHEREAS, after holding services under a brush arbor for a time, Saint Matthew's Baptist Church built three successive churches on the same site; today, the church still stands on the original plot of land purchased almost a century and a half ago; and

WHEREAS, in its history, 13 pastors have served Saint Matthew's Baptist Church and the community, including Brother Jerry Greenhill, Reverend Robinson, and Reverends Norman Tolliver, Berry Jennings, W. A. Burton, P. W. Price, L. A. Wilson, J. L. Wood, R. L. Petty, H. R. Watkins, Sr., J. M. Yarbrough, Sr., J. T. Boyd, Jr., and Kevin A. Robinson; and

WHEREAS, Saint Matthew's Baptist Church considers its primary mission to be spreading the word of the gospel and has succeeded in adding many new members; 85 members were added under the leadership of Reverend Tolliver and 20 members have been added under the present pastor, Reverend Kevin Robinson; and

WHEREAS, offering inspirational leadership through a Sunday school program and discipleship training groups, Saint Matthew's Baptist Church has motivated many individuals to join the ministry; and

WHEREAS, Saint Matthew's Baptist Church also prepared many members of its congregation to become city, state, and national government leaders; other members of the congregation have gone on to become successful educators, doctors, lawyers, authors, military leaders, and entrepreneurs; and

WHEREAS, serving the youth of the community, Saint Matthew's Baptist Church sponsors youth choir and usher programs, the Baptist Young People's Union, Vacation Bible Schools, afterschool Good News clubs, National Bible Bowls, the Community Garden, and the Ebenezer Baptist Convention Annual Youth Conference; and

WHEREAS, Saint Matthew's Baptist Church will celebrate its 140th anniversary with events throughout 2013, culminating with a special service on November 17; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That Saint Matthew's Baptist Church hereby be commended 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 Saint Matthew's Baptist Church as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for the church's long tradition of spiritual leadership and contributions to the community.

INTRODUCED

HR156