

2016 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 198

Commending Little Bethel Baptist Church.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 29, 2016
Agreed to by the Senate, February 4, 2016

WHEREAS, in 2016, Little Bethel Baptist Church in Suffolk celebrates its 150th anniversary of joyful worship, spiritual renewal, and service to others; and

WHEREAS, Little Bethel Baptist Church, which is in the Chuckatuck section of Suffolk, was founded by people who had just emerged from slavery; the vision of the church's first leaders was strong, and by the middle of the 1860s, they established their own faith community; and

WHEREAS, the theme for the 2016 anniversary celebration is "grace through every generation: remembering, rejoicing and rededicating"; the members of Little Bethel Baptist Church are preparing for the sesquicentennial by conducting research on the church's early days; and

WHEREAS, several artifacts provide insight into Little Bethel Baptist Church's first years, including the original deed for the church, which dates from 1886 and can be seen at the courthouse in Suffolk; and

WHEREAS, church members know that the land for Little Bethel Baptist Church on Everets Road was donated or sold to the congregation by the Beale family; the church building originally was located further back from the road and an outdoor baptismal pool was nearby; and

WHEREAS, inside Little Bethel Baptist Church, members have carefully preserved some of the original pews on the inside balcony; members also plan to restore the original pulpit and pastor's desk as part of the sesquicentennial events; and

WHEREAS, another interesting part of the interior of Little Bethel Baptist Church is the original pressed-metal ceiling that is stamped with a carpenter's block design; the ceiling design is symbolic of the quilt codes that were part of the elaborate Underground Railroad system that assisted fleeing slaves; and

WHEREAS, other artifacts that will be on display during the 150th anniversary celebration of Little Bethel Baptist Church include old photographs, Bibles, and other items of historical significance; members also hope to unearth more relics from the church's founding days; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Little Bethel Baptist Church in Suffolk on the occasion of its 150th anniversary in 2016; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the pastor of Little Bethel Baptist Church as an expression of the General Assembly's respect and congratulations for its many years of service and its storied history.

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