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**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 353**

Offered February 24, 2016

*Commending Unitarian Universalist Church of Roanoke.*

Patrons—Rasoul, Carr, Hope, Spruill and Watts; Senators: Edwards and Howell

WHEREAS, on March 4, 1956, the Unitarian Fellowship of Roanoke observed its first formal Sunday worship service, which was celebrated in rented space at the Roanoke YWCA; and

WHEREAS, on January 31, 1958, the congregation voted to change its name to Roanoke Valley Unitarian Church; and

WHEREAS, on September 3, 1959, Roanoke Valley Unitarian Church organized a chapter of the group Liberal Religious Youth; and

WHEREAS, on December 7, 1960, the Roanoke Valley Unitarian Church purchased its own building located on McVitty Road in Roanoke County; during that year, the church organized its first children's choir; and

WHEREAS, on April 9, 1961, the Roanoke Valley Unitarian Church dedicated its new building in Roanoke County, and later that year, it joined the merged Unitarian Universalist Association; and

WHEREAS, on March 11, 1962, the Roanoke Valley Unitarian Church installed the Reverend Greta Crosby as its first settled minister; during that year, the church began regular summer worship services; and

WHEREAS, on November 19, 1967, the Roanoke Valley Unitarian Church installed the Reverend Allie Frazier as its second settled minister; that same year, the church sponsored an innovative racially integrated vacation arts camp; and

WHEREAS, on February 24, 1973, Roanoke Valley Unitarian Church ordained and installed the Reverend Michael McGee as its third settled minister; he became the first interfaith clergyman invited to join the Roanoke Valley Ministers Conference; and

WHEREAS, on December 5, 1976, Roanoke Valley Unitarian Church installed the Reverend Bruce Southworth as its fourth settled minister; under his leadership, the church began growing its youth education programming; and

WHEREAS, on October 26, 1980, Roanoke Valley Unitarian Church installed the Reverend Timothy Ashton as its fifth settled minister; during that year, the church began growing its interfaith worship with neighboring Jewish and Muslim congregations; and

WHEREAS, on May 19, 1985, Roanoke Valley Unitarian Church changed its name to Unitarian Universalist Church of Roanoke; that same year, the church purchased another building and thereafter held services in a new location on Grandin Road in the City of Roanoke; and

WHEREAS, on October 4, 1987, Unitarian Universalist Church of Roanoke installed the Reverend Kirk Ballin as its sixth settled minister; during that year, the church began growing its progressive worship, music, and education programming; and

WHEREAS, on November 25, 2001, Unitarian Universalist Church of Roanoke ordained and installed the Reverend Audette Fulbright as its seventh settled minister; during that year, the church began growing its denominational, regional, and community mission work; and

WHEREAS, on March 6, 2016, Unitarian Universalist Church of Roanoke will install the Reverend Alex Richardson as its eighth settled minister, and the grateful congregation covenants to celebrate the transcending mystery and wonder of progressive religious liberty, affirmed by the interdependent web of existence, while seeking to live in harmony with nature and neighbors; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Unitarian Universalist Church of Roanoke on the occasion of installing its eighth settled minister and its 60th anniversary of celebrating Sunday worship services in 2016; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Gary Weldon Crawford, president of the Board of Directors of Unitarian Universalist Church of Roanoke, as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the congregation's commitment to religious liberty and six decades of service to the residents of the Great Appalachian Valley.

INTRODUCED

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