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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 351

Offered February 23, 2018

Commending First Baptist Church Denbigh.

Patrons—Price and Mullin; Senator: Mason

WHEREAS, in 2017, First Baptist Church Denbigh in Newport News celebrated its 155th anniversary of providing spiritual fellowship and generous outreach to the local community; and

WHEREAS, First Baptist Church Denbigh's long history dates to 1862, when a group of black worshippers began meeting in a church building that had been abandoned by the white community due to the Civil War; and

WHEREAS, after their building was reclaimed by its previous occupants at the end of the Civil War, the congregation of First Baptist Church Denbigh constructed a new structure; church membership later increased to some 450 people in the late 1860s during the tenure of the Reverend T.G. Wright; and

WHEREAS, First Baptist Church Denbigh continued to flourish during the first half of the 20th century, when it was led by a number of influential pastors, including the Reverend Robert H. Nazareth, the Reverend T.C. Williams, the Reverend A.A. Hudgins, the Reverend Isaac Daniel, the Reverend J.D. Atkins, and the Reverend Joseph H. Brown; and

WHEREAS, First Baptist Church Denbigh moved into a newer and more modern building in 1972; when the structure was later destroyed by fire in 1986, the congregation banded together and continued meeting in private homes and at an elementary school until the completion of its current building in 1988; and

WHEREAS, First Baptist Church Denbigh's current pastor, the Reverend Ivan T. Harris, began serving in 1988; under his diligent leadership, the church has introduced numerous new ministries, including the Brotherhood, the Baptist Young Women, Acteen, Girls in Action, and youth missionaries; and

WHEREAS, First Baptist Church Denbigh has operated several outreach projects to feed and clothe the homeless and the less fortunate; the church also conducts a ministry for prisoners and offers transitional housing for women looking to further their education; and

WHEREAS, in addition to its service to the local community, First Baptist Church Denbigh has provided extensive aid to a small community in the country of Benin as part of its African village adoption project; since 2005, the congregation has furnished the villagers with books and vehicles and helped finance construction of a well, a medical facility, a school, and a church building; and

WHEREAS, throughout its long history, First Baptist Church Denbigh has spread the gospel to countless people and been a force for good in the community; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend First Baptist Church Denbigh on its service to the residents of Newport News on the occasion of its 155th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to First Baptist Church Denbigh as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for its longstanding commitment to providing spiritual guidance and helping those in need.

INTRODUCED

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