

2019 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 751

Commending Gilfield Baptist Church.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 4, 2019
Agreed to by the Senate, February 21, 2019

WHEREAS, for more than 155 years, Gilfield Baptist Church in Ivor has enriched the Southampton County community through opportunities for worship, joyful evangelism, and generous mission work; and

WHEREAS, the oldest African American church in Southampton County, Gilfield Baptist Church was established by former members of Tucker Swamp Baptist Church in 1863, two years prior to the end of the Civil War; and

WHEREAS, Gilfield Baptist Church held its first services in a brush arbor on land owned by the Diggs family; the church's location on a hill at the turn of a road made it an important local landmark for years to come; and

WHEREAS, the members of Gilfield Baptist Church eventually erected a small frame building, which was renovated and modernized in the 1940s, adding new floors, heaters, windows, pews, lighting, and a pulpit to better serve the growing congregation; and

WHEREAS, Gilfield Baptist Church was active during the Civil Rights movement, hosting numerous important speakers who inspired the entire community to take a more active role in civic life; and

WHEREAS, in the 1990s and continuing into the new millennium, Gilfield Baptist Church greatly expanded its worship services, programs, and ministries, enhancing the quality of life for all residents through its generosity and leadership; and

WHEREAS, throughout its storied history, Gilfield Baptist Church has benefited from the wise leadership of 11 pastors, the Reverend Jordan Thomas, the Reverend Ashley Lewis, the Reverend Holland Powell, the Reverend Henry Madison, the Reverend Collin P. Madison, the Reverend Ralph Page, the Reverend George W. King, the Reverend Curtis W. Harris, the Reverend Eustis Mitchell, Jr., the Reverend Kenneth W. Ricks, and the Reverend Elizabeth B. Jones; and

WHEREAS, the current pastor, the Reverend Elizabeth B. Jones, was the first female minister in the Berlin District of Southampton County, and she has helped Gilfield Baptist Church continue to grow in faith and numbers; and

WHEREAS, Gilfield Baptist Church has worked diligently to make Christian values a part of everyday life and has played a vital role in supporting and strengthening the African American community for generations; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Gilfield Baptist Church 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 Gilfield Baptist Church as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for its legacy of contributions to the residents of Southampton County.

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