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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 73

Offered February 12, 2020

Commending Third Street Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Patrons—Bourne and Carr

WHEREAS, Third Street Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, the oldest church in the Jackson Ward neighborhood of Richmond and the second oldest African Methodist Episcopal church in the Commonwealth, commemorates the 170th anniversary of the founding of its congregation in 2020; and

WHEREAS, the congregation at Third Street Bethel AME Church traces its origins to a group of formerly enslaved people who worshipped in the gallery of Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church beginning in 1850; and

WHEREAS, with the support of skilled African American artisans and the trustees of Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, the main portion of what is today Third Street Bethel AME Church was completed between 1856 and 1857, known then as Third Street Church; and

WHEREAS, on May 10, 1867, Third Street Church established the Virginia AME Annual Conference with encouragement from St. John's Chapel in Norfolk, becoming the mother church of the African Methodist Episcopal denomination in Virginia and renaming itself Third Street Bethel AME Church; and

WHEREAS, during the Virginia AME Annual Conference in 1867, James D.S. Hall was appointed to lead Third Street Bethel AME Church, becoming the congregation's first African American pastor; and

WHEREAS, over the years, Third Street Bethel AME Church has been the setting for many important, historical moments, including a speech by Maggie L. Walker in 1901 in which she outlined her vision for establishing an African American-owned bank, newspaper, and department store; and

WHEREAS, as one of the few antebellum African American churches remaining in the United States and in recognition of its role in several pivotal historical movements, the Third Street Bethel AME Church was placed on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places in 1975; and

WHEREAS, with an active and engaged congregation that continually looks for ways to serve others, Third Street Bethel AME Church remains a cornerstone of its community and an irreplaceable Richmond institution; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That Third Street Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, a long cherished and historically significant church in the Jackson Ward neighborhood of Richmond, hereby be commended on the occasion of the 170th anniversary of the founding of its congregation; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Reverend Reuben J. Boyd, pastor of Third Street Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, as an expression of the House of Delegates' profound respect and admiration for the church's history and contributions to the Commonwealth.

INTRODUCED

2/14/20 5:36