

2021 SPECIAL SESSION I

ENROLLED

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 593

Commending First Baptist Church of Merrifield.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 27, 2021

WHEREAS, in October 2020, First Baptist Church of Merrifield commemorated 150 years of providing spiritual leadership, generous community outreach, and opportunities for joyful worship in the Baptist tradition to residents of Fairfax County; and

WHEREAS, in the first quarter-century of its existence, the congregation of First Baptist Church of Merrifield was led by itinerant preachers and met in various informal locations, including tents, lodges, and members' homes; and

WHEREAS, the congregation of First Baptist Church of Merrifield constructed its first church building in the 1890s, appointed its first pastor in 1898, and continued to grow into the 20th century as it added members and expanded and improved upon the existing church facilities; and

WHEREAS, during the 32-year tenure of Pastor Charles Parker, First Baptist Church of Merrifield added a youth department; established a college scholarship fund; added deacons, deaconesses, and trustees to the boards; and completed a new church building; and

WHEREAS, beginning in 1983, Pastor Lenwood Graham, Sr., led First Baptist Church of Merrifield through another period of expansion as the church increased its membership, became more active in foreign and domestic missionary work, and established the Merrifield Child Development Center; and

WHEREAS, today, First Baptist Church of Merrifield is led by the Reverend Dr. Paul A. Sheppard, offering worship services every Sunday and Bible study classes and other ministries during the week; throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the church has utilized a virtual platform to safely connect with its congregation; and

WHEREAS, recent outreach activities carried out by members of First Baptist Church of Merrifield included community festivals in 2018 and 2019, food and gift card giveaways, and seminars on anxiety and grief; and

WHEREAS, members of First Baptist Church of Merrifield have become leaders in their professions and in the community, empowered and inspired by the lessons of grace and generosity learned at their home church; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That First Baptist Church of Merrifield hereby be commended on the occasion of its 150th 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 of Merrifield as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for the church's legacy of contributions to the Fairfax County community.

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