

23104978D

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 652

Offered February 9, 2023

Commending White Oak Primitive Baptist Church.

Patrons—Durant and Scott, P.A.; Senator: Stuart

WHEREAS, for more than 230 years, White Oak Primitive Baptist Church has served the Stafford County community and provided opportunities for joyful worship in the Baptist tradition; and

WHEREAS, White Oak Primitive Baptist Church was originally known as White Oak Church of Christ, and traces its roots to 1789, when it was established as a branch of Chopawamsic Baptist Church; and

WHEREAS, White Oak Church of Christ held services in a white clapboard structure that was deeded to the congregation along with an acre of land for \$1 in 1835; the early church was clad in unpainted wainscoting, heated by wood stoves, and lit by oil lanterns, and all singing was conducted a cappella; and

WHEREAS, White Oak Primitive Baptist Church adopted its current name to better represent the congregation's preference for humble services that emphasized the strong bonds of the community and the simple beauty of faith without adornment; and

WHEREAS, White Oak Primitive Baptist Church was also notable in that there were no racial prohibitions on memberships, and White and Black members of the congregation worshipped together under the same roof; and

WHEREAS, during the Civil War, White Oak Primitive Baptist Church suspended regular services and was at the center of a major encampment by the Army of the Potomac for several months in 1862; and

WHEREAS, during that time, the United States Christian Commission used White Oak Primitive Baptist Church to hold prayer meetings and worship services, as well as distribute Bibles and other supplies to Union soldiers; and

WHEREAS, White Oak Primitive Baptist Church also served as a studio for processing battlefield photography and as a field hospital for wounded troops; after the war, several veterans from New Jersey that had served in the area gifted an organ to the church and later returned to assist with repairs; and

WHEREAS, White Oak Primitive Baptist Church continued to serve the community but was on the verge of closing in 2020, when a group of local residents, Charles Bullock, David Carpenter, Price Jett, and Bruce Sullivan, led efforts to establish a nonprofit organization that has preserved and maintained the church in recognition of its historical significance; and

WHEREAS, White Oak Primitive Baptist Church is listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places and is a site on the Civil War Trails program; and

WHEREAS, White Oak Primitive Baptist Church is open to the public once a month, offering candlelight services, opportunities for prayer and reflection, and a cappella singing; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend White Oak Primitive Baptist Church for its legacy of contributions to the residents of Stafford County; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to White Oak Primitive Baptist Church as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the church's storied history.

INTRODUCED

HJ652