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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 754

Offered February 17, 2023

Commending Ascension Lutheran Church.

Patrons—Marshall and Adams, L.R.; Senator: Ruff

WHEREAS, Ascension Lutheran Church of Danville, which has provided generations of congregants with edifying spiritual guidance and abundant opportunities for community outreach, celebrated its 100th anniversary in October 2022; and

WHEREAS, the origins of Ascension Lutheran Church date to April 19, 1922, when a small group of Lutherans gathered at the home of E.C. Cadwallader to observe Holy Week using the liturgy of the Lutheran Church; and

WHEREAS, after several other small worship gatherings in the succeeding months, a group of 32 Lutherans in Danville decided to charter the city's first evangelical Lutheran church on June 18, 1922, naming it the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Ascension; and

WHEREAS, the Reverend John Link became the first pastor of what is now Ascension Lutheran Church on October 18, 1922, and the church was admitted into the Southwest Virginia Synod on September 7, 1923; and

WHEREAS, in the early years of Ascension Lutheran Church, the congregation lacked its own church building and worshipped at various places in the community, including the YMCA, a local church, and Beth Shalom Temple; and

WHEREAS, Ascension Lutheran Church moved its services to Hylton Hall in the Schoolfield area of Danville in 1928 until its church building on West Main Street was completed in 1935, with the first services in the building being held on May 26, 1935; and

WHEREAS, the congregation at Ascension Lutheran Church continued to grow over the years and by the 1960s was in need of a larger facility for the church's services; this new building, located across the street from the first church building, held its first service on October 1, 1972; and

WHEREAS, Ascension Lutheran Church has been led by 16 different pastors over its history, who have each provided the congregation with instructive and comforting spiritual counsel and opportunities to engage with and support the broader Danville community; and

WHEREAS, in 1957, Frances Kipps Spencer and the women of Ascension Lutheran Church developed the first Chrismons, short for "Christ monograms," which served as ornaments on the church's Christmas tree; and

WHEREAS, the practice of decorating Christmas trees with Chrismons has since spread to other denominations and around the globe, earning Ascension Lutheran Church great renown as the birthplace of this joyous and meaningful tradition; and

WHEREAS, Ascension Lutheran Church commemorated its 100th anniversary in October 2022 with services led by former pastors, including a special worship service led by former Pastor Jim Utt on October 30, 2022, which was accompanied by music written by former director of music Robert Shaver; and

WHEREAS, in its anniversary year, members of Ascension Lutheran Church worked toward producing a history of the church, as well as a pictorial timeline and collection of old church documents and pictures, honoring the legacy of Ascension Lutheran Church and its impact on the Danville community; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Ascension Lutheran Church of Danville on the occasion of its 100th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Ascension Lutheran Church as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the church's history and its contributions to the Commonwealth.

INTRODUCED

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