

2022 SPECIAL SESSION I

ENROLLED

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 786

Commending St. Augustine's Episcopal Church.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, September 7, 2022

WHEREAS, for 125 years, St. Augustine's Episcopal Church in Newport News has stood as a symbol of God's faithfulness and as a church committed to service; and

WHEREAS, the origins of St. Augustine's Episcopal Church date to 1897, when St. Paul's Church (then called Warwick Parish) in downtown Newport News established St. Paul's Mission for 17 African American communicants under the leadership of the Reverend Joseph F. Mitchell, Vicar; and

WHEREAS, in 1924, the Reverend Adolphus A. Birch, Vicar, and the congregation at St. Paul's Mission renamed the church St. Augustine's Episcopal Church in honor of the great African saint, St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo (354-430 A.D.); and

WHEREAS, in 1952, the Reverend Lloyd M. Alexander, Vicar, spearheaded growth in the congregation's membership and renovations to the church's edifice, and on September 11, 1960, a cornerstone was laid for the construction of a new sanctuary; and

WHEREAS, dedicated on December 2, 1962, the new St. Augustine's Episcopal Church and its contemporary design quickly became hallmarks of the landscape of the east end of Newport News; and

WHEREAS, in 1965, under the guidance of the Reverend Robert C. S. Powell, Vicar, a long concerted effort began for the church to become a self-sufficient parish, and in February 1974, under the leadership of the Reverend Ralph E. Haines III, Rector, St. Augustine's Episcopal Church attained full parish status; and

WHEREAS, St. Augustine's Episcopal Church continues to be involved in community ministries, such as the Outreach Commission, which has ministered to the needy by providing meals and clothing since 1990, by sponsoring annual diaper and back-to-school drives, and by hosting an annual Fall Festival for the surrounding community; and

WHEREAS, under the leadership of the Reverend Terry D. Edwards, Rector, St. Augustine's Episcopal Church celebrated its 120th anniversary, the Blue Christmas Service was instituted, and the parish hall was named after member Mrs. Doris H. Watson; and

WHEREAS, St. Augustine's Episcopal Church navigated the COVID-19 pandemic by embracing online worship, permitting its ministry to continue its mission of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ while adhering to public health and safety protocols; and

WHEREAS, in 2020, under the leadership of the Reverend Phillip H. Shearin, Rector, St. Augustine's Episcopal Church became a part of the Peninsula Ministry Partnership alongside St. George's Episcopal Church and St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, both located in Newport News, and it also reopened its doors as the COVID-19 pandemic subsided with protocols in place for the safety of its members; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That St. Augustine's Episcopal Church hereby be commended on the occasion of its 125th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to St. Augustine's Episcopal Church as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for the church's legacy of spiritual leadership to the Newport News community.

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