

2023 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 419

Commending Wesley Grove United Church of Christ.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 24, 2023

WHEREAS, for 135 years, Wesley Grove United Church of Christ has provided spiritual leadership, generous community outreach, and opportunities for joyful worship to the residents of Newport News; and

WHEREAS, originally known as Wesley Grove Christian Church, Wesley Grove United Church of Christ was established in 1887 at a place known as "The Acre"; in its early years, the church held services in various places around Newport News, then constructed its first permanent building at the corner of 19th Street and Ivy Avenue in 1892; after paying off the debt of that building, the church built a larger building in 1895, and within four years the church had paid off all of its debt again; and

WHEREAS, around the turn of the century, due to another increase in membership, the church built a larger building; and Wesley Grove United Church of Christ then grew to include more than 1,000 members; and

WHEREAS, Wesley Grove United Church of Christ raised funds to purchase the former First United Church of Christ at the corner of 23rd Street and Roanoke Avenue and held its first service in the building, which is its current location, on November 22, 1964; and

WHEREAS, after a transitional period with different pastors and gaps of time without pastors, the church found new leadership, and in the late 1970s and through the 1980s, Wesley Grove United Church of Christ increased its membership and created several new ministries to better serve and stay engaged with members of the community; and

WHEREAS, over the course of its history, Wesley Grove United Church of Christ has benefited from the leadership of 12 pastors, the Reverend J.H. Edlow, the Reverend James M. Parson, the Reverend Smith A. Howell, the Reverend J.B. Jones, the Reverend Thomas J. Moore, the Reverend Zander P. Jenkins, the Reverend Vernon Harris, the Reverend G. Wesley Raney III, the Reverend Dr. Isaac L. McDonald, the Reverend Prince Raney Rivers, the Reverend Dr. Alexander Jamison, Sr., and the current pastor, the Reverend Antonio L. Newsome; and

WHEREAS, since 2013, Reverend Newsome has helped Wesley Grove United Church of Christ continue to grow in faith and number; he invigorated its ministries while creating new initiatives, events, and opportunities for congregants and the wider community; and

WHEREAS, Wesley Grove United Church of Christ has played an integral role in local history, providing stability and guidance to countless residents over the years, with many generations of the same families worshipping under the same roof or serving as church leaders; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That Wesley Grove United Church of Christ hereby be commended on the occasion of its 135th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Wesley Grove United Church of Christ as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for the church's long history and legacy of contributions to the Newport News community.

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