

## 2022 SESSION

INTRODUCED

22100299D

### SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 64

Offered January 19, 2022

*Commending Antioch Baptist Church.*

Patron—Lucas

WHEREAS, for 250 years, Antioch Baptist Church in Sussex County has provided spiritual leadership, generous outreach programs, and opportunities for joyful worship to members of the Yale, Sussex County, and Southampton County communities; and

WHEREAS, inspired by the effective preaching of Elder John Meglamre from Kehukee Baptist Church in Halifax, North Carolina, 87 individuals established the Raccoon Swamp Meeting House in Sussex County on June 13, 1772; the congregation was the first Baptist church in Sussex County and one of the earliest in the Commonwealth; it would later become Antioch Baptist Church; and

WHEREAS, upon the founding of the Raccoon Swamp Meeting House, Elder John Meglamre was chosen by the congregation to serve as pastor, while James Bell and Thomas Bailey were ordained as deacons and William Bishop was chosen to serve as clerk; and

WHEREAS, from 1772 to 1794, the Reverend John Meglamre served as pastor of the Raccoon Swamp Meeting House; five years into his tenure, the reformed Kehukee Association of 19 Baptist churches in the Commonwealth and North Carolina notably held its organizational meeting at the church; and

WHEREAS, William Browne, who had served as assistant pastor alongside the Reverend John Meglamre, assumed leadership of the congregation from 1794 to 1810; he has since been succeeded by a line of 56 pastors; and

WHEREAS, Antioch Baptist Church was known as the Raccoon Swamp Meeting House until 1852 and has over the years served as a mother church to six congregations located across four counties; and

WHEREAS, under the direction of the membership and the leadership of the Reverend J.D. Brown, Antioch Baptist Church was completely renovated in 1883; and

WHEREAS, the Antioch Baptist Church Sunday school building was added in 1949 under the direction of the membership and the leadership of the Reverend M.K. Roberson, followed by the parsonage in 1957 and the vestibule in 1960, both under the direction of the membership and the leadership of the Reverend R.S. Carlton; and

WHEREAS, in May 2020, the Reverend Thomas E. Guess became the 58th pastor of Antioch Baptist Church, and he has since grown the church's attendance and membership through his compassionate leadership and inspirational sermons about God and faith; and

WHEREAS, throughout its history, Antioch Baptist Church has welcomed people from diverse backgrounds and built an enduring sense of community in the Yale, Sussex County, and Southampton County areas; the many friends and former members who return to the church when they are in town for homecomings and revival services are a testament to the close bonds the congregation shares; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Antioch Baptist Church on the occasion of its 250th anniversary; and be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Reverend Thomas E. Guess, pastor of Antioch Baptist Church, as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the church's legacy of contributions to the Yale, Sussex County, and Southampton County communities.

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