

## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 98

*Commending Antioch Baptist Church.*

Agreed to by the House, January 17, 2022  
Agreed to by the Senate, January 20, 2022

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

WHEREAS, Antioch Baptist Church was the first church of its denomination in Sussex County and one of the earliest in Virginia; it was formed on June 13, 1772, with 87 members and was the result of effective preaching by the Reverend John Meglamre of Kehukee Baptist Church in Halifax, North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, on the same day Reverend Meglamre was chosen as the pastor of Antioch Baptist Church, James Bell and Thomas Bailey were ordained as deacons and William Bishop was chosen as clerk; and

WHEREAS, in 1777, the reformed Kehukee Association of 19 Baptist churches in Virginia and North Carolina held its organizational meeting at Antioch Baptist Church, which was known then as the Raccoon Swamp Meeting House and was the mother church of six congregations in four counties; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Meglamre served as pastor of Antioch Baptist Church from 1772 to 1794 and was succeeded by his assistant, William Browne, who served as pastor from 1794 to 1810, after which time there was no permanent pastor for several years; and

WHEREAS, between 1813 and 1909, Antioch Baptist Church benefited from the leadership of 28 different pastors, along with several seminary students; in 1883, the church began a significant renovation project under the leadership of the Reverend J.D. Brown; and

WHEREAS, between 1910 and 1972, 14 pastors served Antioch Baptist Church; during this time the Sunday school building was added in 1949 under the leadership of the Reverend M.K. Roberson, and the parsonage was built in 1957 along with the addition of the vestibule in 1960, both under the leadership of the Reverend R.S. Carlton; and

WHEREAS, between 1972 and 2019, an additional 13 pastors served the Antioch Baptist Church community; and

WHEREAS, in May 2020, the Reverend Thomas E. Guess became the 58th pastor of Antioch Baptist Church; his compassion and leadership have led to increases in attendance and membership, and he has worked to keep God at the center of the church's mission, inspiring the congregation to do good works and support all residents of the region; 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, and large numbers of friends and former members regularly return to the church for homecomings and revival services; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate 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 House of Delegates 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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