

## 2025 SESSION

ENROLLED

### HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 777

*Commending New Mount Vernon Baptist Church.*

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 18, 2025

WHEREAS, for 90 years, New Mount Vernon Baptist Church has provided opportunities for spiritual growth to its congregation while enhancing the quality of life for the Portsmouth community through inspirational outreach; and

WHEREAS, New Mount Vernon Baptist Church was established in 1935 by Hiram H. Maggett, who served as the first chair of the Board of Deacons; the Reverend F.G. Sharp briefly served as the original pastor and was succeeded by the Reverend E.C. Walton, who served for 10 years and oversaw the purchase of the church's first location on South Green Street; and

WHEREAS, in 1947, the Reverend J.R. Wilkerson was elected pastor of New Mount Vernon Baptist Church and led a transformational period in the church's history; he guided the church to its second location on Wythe Street in the early 1960s and to a three-story building on Fourth Street in the mid-1970s; and

WHEREAS, after helping New Mount Vernon Baptist Church grow in both faith and number, Reverend Wilkerson retired in 1977 and was named pastor emeritus; he was succeeded by the Reverend Vernon S. Lee, Sr., who helped the church engage with the community by expanding volunteerism efforts and educational programs; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Lee oversaw the purchase of New Mount Vernon Baptist Church's property on Victory Boulevard and led services at another nearby church until the new building opened in 1991; and

WHEREAS, in 2001, the Reverend Allen Clark, Sr., who had previously held many other leadership roles in the congregation, was called as the fifth pastor of New Mount Vernon Baptist Church; and

WHEREAS, the current pastor of New Mount Vernon Baptist Church, the Reverend Michael D. Chance, originally served as a spiritual facilitator before he was officially installed as pastor in 2008; he invigorated the congregation by establishing new ministries, such as Sisters with Vision, Men of Blessings, and Senior Saints, and revamping the Creative Arts Ministry, Youth Bible Study, Youth Choir, and Youth Ushers programs; and

WHEREAS, under Reverend Chance's leadership, New Mount Vernon Baptist Church has remained a beacon of hope and faith for the residents of Portsmouth, and its members have gone above and beyond to make a difference in the community; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That New Mount Vernon Baptist Church hereby be commended on the occasion of its 90th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to New Mount Vernon Baptist Church as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for the church's legacy of service to the Portsmouth community.

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