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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 73

Offered January 21, 2026

Designating April 24 to April 30, in 2026 and in each succeeding year, as Christian Heritage Week in Virginia.

Patrons—Fowler, Wright, Clark and Walker; Senators: Cifers and Sturtevant

Referred to Committee on Rules

9 WHEREAS, on April 26, 1607, English settlers of the Virginia Company landed on the shores of what is
10 now Cape Henry; and

WHEREAS, on April 29, 1607, the settlers planted a cross they had carried with them on the shore and held a service of prayer and dedication led by the Reverend Robert Hunt, who stated "We do hereby dedicate this Land, and ourselves, to reach the People within these shores with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to raise up Godly generations after us, and with these generations take the Kingdom of God to all the earth. May this Covenant of Dedication remain to all generations, as long as this earth remains and may this land . . . be evangelists to the world. May all who see this cross remember what we have done here, and may those who come here to inhabit join us in this Covenant . . . "; and

18 WHEREAS, on May 24, 1607, Christopher Newport, captain of the *Susan Constant*, the largest of the
19 ships that brought these settlers across the Atlantic Ocean, erected a Protestant cross at the James River fall
20 line in what is now the City of Richmond; three hundred years later, in 1907, a bronze replica of the
21 Christopher Newport Cross, which is currently located near Richmond's Canal Walk, was dedicated as a
22 remembrance of the settlers' deep and abiding faith; and

WHEREAS, on December 4, 1619, Virginia settlers held a prayer service at Berkeley Plantation in Charles City County to "be yearly and perpetually kept holy as a day of Thanksgiving to Almighty God," which is considered by some historians as the first observance of Thanksgiving in the New World; and

26 WHEREAS, the settlers' strong faith and Christian heritage played an essential role in life at the
27 Jamestown Colony and was influential in the early development of many of the Commonwealth's long-
28 standing institutions, as well as the birth of the United States as an independent nation; and

29 WHEREAS, the writers of the Declaration of Independence expressed their faith through the
30 acknowledgment "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain
31 unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness"; and

32 WHEREAS, George Mason wrote in the Virginia Declaration of Rights, forerunner to the Bill of Rights in
33 the Constitution of the United States, "that it is the mutual duty of all to practice Christian forbearance, love
34 and charity towards each other"; and

35 WHEREAS, the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of Virginia states "That religion or the duty which we
36 owe to our Creator, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by
37 force or violence; and, therefore, all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the
38 dictates of conscience"; and

38 dictates of conscience"; and
39 WHEREAS, the founders of the United States were great men and women from many religious
40 denominations, races, and cultures, who came here from all over the world to establish a country "with liberty
41 and justice for all," and the Christian faith is an integral part of this rich heritage in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, many of the founders of the United States, giants in the structuring of American history and statesmen of integrity and high caliber, were Christians who did not hesitate to express their faith; and

43 statesmen of integrity and high honor, were Christians who did not hesitate to express their faith, and
44 WHEREAS, George Washington stated that "animated alone by the pure spirit of Christianity, and
45 conducting ourselves as the faithful subjects of our free government, we may enjoy every temporal and
46 spiritual felicity"; and

47 WHEREAS, James Madison, primary author of the Constitution of the United States, advocated for the
48 "diffusion of the light of Christianity in our nation" in his treatise on religious liberty, *Memorial and*
49 *Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments*; and

50 WHEREAS, Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence, wrote "Can the liberties of a
51 nation be secure when we have removed the conviction that these liberties are the gift of God?"; and

52 WHEREAS, the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, drafted by Thomas Jefferson and enacted in
53 1786, set the standard for the protection of religious freedom throughout the United States; and

54 WHEREAS, the principles of liberty, justice, and equality before the law, as well as the very structure of
55 the nation's representative form of government, are rooted in Christianity and demonstrate the importance of
56 faith in the history of the nation; and

57 WHEREAS, Christian Heritage Week provides an opportunity for Virginians to learn more about the
58 spiritual and structural foundations of the Commonwealth and the United States; now, therefore, be it

59 RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly designate
60 April 24 to April 30, in 2026 and in each succeeding year, as Christian Heritage Week in Virginia; and, be it
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62 RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit a copy of this resolution to
63 the Virginia Christian Alliance so that members of the organization may be apprised of the sense of the
64 General Assembly of Virginia in this matter; and, be it

65 RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates post the designation of this week on
the General Assembly's website.