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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 146

Offered March 2, 2026

Commending Mount Calvary Baptist Church.

Patron—Aird

WHEREAS, for 150 years, Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Hopewell has provided its congregation with inspirational spiritual guidance, joyous occasions for worship and fellowship, and meaningful opportunities for community outreach; and

WHEREAS, Mount Calvary Baptist Church was founded in 1876 by the Reverend William Willis and a small group of parishioners, who held worship services in each other's houses in the beginning; and

WHEREAS, the Reverend Willis was succeeded by the Reverend Norman Dugger, who spearheaded the construction of a 15-by-25-foot building to serve as the church's place of worship; and

WHEREAS, during World War I, the federal government acquired Mount Calvary Baptist Church's property to expand Fort Lee; displacing the congregation; with great faith and resolve, Mount Calvary Baptist Church's congregation persevered, and the church's trustees purchased the land where the church now stands in 1920; and

WHEREAS, Mount Calvary Baptist Church has flourished over the years under the leadership of a distinguished line of pastors, including the Reverend Dr. L.W. Jacobs, who was the longest-tenured pastor in church history, and the Reverend Dr. Vodricka L. Epps, who became the church's 11th pastor on July 17, 2016; and

WHEREAS, Mount Calvary Baptist Church supports other local faith organizations in the Commonwealth as an active member of the Bethany Baptist Association of Southside Virginia and the Baptist General Convention of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, Mount Calvary Baptist Church's charitable outreach endeavors include steadfast support of the American Red Cross, the Alzheimer's Association, the American Cancer Society, the Autism Foundation, and Hopewell Public Schools; and

WHEREAS, Mount Calvary Baptist Church made history in 2025 by ordaining its first-ever female deacons, Cheryl Fleming Chambers, Billy J. Glasper, and Diana Tucker; and

WHEREAS, Mount Calvary Baptist Church has broadened its impact by cultivating new generations of faith leaders, with many of its young members becoming licensed into the Gospel ministry during their time with the church; and

WHEREAS, through the leadership of Reverend Epps and the unwavering dedication of its members, Mount Calvary Baptist Church has successfully advanced the church's mission "to empower the faith community by encouraging all to Know God, Grow in Faith, and Go in Power"; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Mount Calvary Baptist Church on the occasion of its 150th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Mount Calvary Baptist Church as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the church's contributions to Hopewell and the Commonwealth.

INTRODUCED

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