

2026 SESSION

INTRODUCED

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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 145

Offered March 2, 2026

Commending Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church.

Patron—Aird

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

WHEREAS, founded in 1875 by Robert Smyther, Major Allen, Thomas Poindexter, and Cyrus Ellyson, Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church started under a brush harbor on land purchased from Field and Georgianna Finney, and the congregation soon relocated to a log cabin, followed by a wooden framed building in 1880; and

WHEREAS, Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church was first led by the Reverend Stokes, who was followed by a succession of 17 accomplished pastors, including the Reverend Dr. Vincent T. Smith, Sr., who has been the church's pastor for the past 30 years; and

WHEREAS, with an eye toward the future of its congregation, Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church held its first baptism at Boar Swamp Creek in December 1898, the same year the church established its first Sunday school; and

WHEREAS, under the leadership of the Reverend Thomas White, Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church broke ground on a new church building in 1962 and welcomed the congregation for its first service in the new building two years later; and

WHEREAS, guided by the church's mission to be "Strong in Teaching, Friendly in Fellowship, and Supersized in Love," the members of Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church have given generously of their time and resources over the years to support expansions at the church and a number of choirs, youth groups, mentoring programs, health and wellness programs, and other forms of community outreach; and

WHEREAS, Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church held an anniversary gala on October 25, 2025, and the congregation honored past Sunday school superintendents the following day during an anniversary worship service led by one of the church's former pastors, the Reverend Dr. Micah L. McCreary, president of New Brunswick Theological Seminary; and

WHEREAS, Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church's anniversary events provided an opportunity for the congregation to reflect upon the positive and lasting impact the church has had on the Sandston community over the past 150 years and to envision all that it will accomplish in the future; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Rising Mount Zion 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 Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the church's contributions to Sandston and the Commonwealth.

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