HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 448

Commending Union Baptist Church.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 13, 2026

WHEREAS, Union Baptist Church, a fixture of the Virginia Beach community, recently celebrated the 163rd anniversary of its establishment; and

WHEREAS, Union Baptist Church began as a vision in the hearts and minds of a faithful few, who, in 1862 while laboring under the overwhelming conditions of slavery, walked down long dusty roads and rode horse-drawn carriages to meet at the first structure known as the “Bush Shelter” at Walk's Corner; and

WHEREAS, members of this early church later constructed a second structure, known by many as Smith Corner, thus giving the church its first name, “Smith Corner Baptist Church”; as the church expanded, additional buildings were constructed for the growing congregation, and the church adopted its current name, Union Baptist Church; and

WHEREAS, in the early 1900s, Union Baptist Church became the site of the first secondary school for African American students in what was then Princess Anne County; students traveled from all parts of the county to attend the school, uniting families and creating bonds and friendships that lasted a lifetime; and

WHEREAS, over time, the church grew and developed with its members and was the first African American church in Virginia Beach to have a central air conditioning and heating system; on December 31, 2002, during the church's New Year's Eve Watch Night Service, a Mortgage Burning Celebration was held to commemorate the final paying off of the church's mortgage; and

WHEREAS, over more than a century and a half, Union Baptist Church was led under 14 senior pastors, including Reverend Land, Reverend Tucher, Reverend Winfield, Reverend Jackson, Reverend M. Outlaw, Reverend Washington, Reverend Saunders, Reverend Arnold, Reverend Sanderlin, Reverend Hoard, Reverend S.L. Scott, Sr., Reverend Dr. S.L. Scott, Jr., Reverend W. Samuel Walton, and Reverend Dr. Thomasine Reid, as well an interim pastor, Reverend Dr. Robert L. Barnes, II; and

WHEREAS, under the leadership of these pastors, the church's deacon and trustee ministries have grown in membership and service, as well as numerous other ministries, including the deaconess, transportation, hospitality, floral, food pantry, culinary, media, security, and prison outreach ministries; and

WHEREAS, to keep its ministry alive during the COVID-19 pandemic, Union Baptist Church unwaveringly continued its mission through the use of social media outreach, parking lot worship services, and socially distanced services held in the church's Family Life Center until it was safe to return to the sanctuary; and

WHEREAS, on April 18, 2025, Reverend Dr. Kelvin McDonald was elected as Union Baptist Church's 15th and current senior pastor and has continued to grow the community through practicing prayer, love, forgiveness, unity, support, and inclusiveness; and

WHEREAS, Union Baptist Church diligently strives to fulfill its mission of service by bringing souls to Christ through prayer, leadership, and Christian education through Sunday school, Bible study, new members class, and various noonday services; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That Union Baptist Church hereby be commended on 163 years of worship and service to the congregation and the community; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Reverend Dr. Kelvin McDonald, senior pastor of Union Baptist Church, as an expression of respect and admiration for the church's long history of worship and service to the Virginia Beach community.