

2024 SPECIAL SESSION I

INTRODUCED

24200030D

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 612

Offered May 13, 2024

Prefiled May 11, 2024

4 *Commending First Baptist Church Centralia.*

5 Patron—Coyner

6
7 WHEREAS, for 157 years, First Baptist Church Centralia in Chesterfield County has provided its
8 community with uplifting spiritual guidance, joyful occasions for worship and fellowship, and abundant
9 opportunities for charitable outreach; and

10 WHEREAS, originally known as Salem African Baptist Church, First Baptist Church Centralia was
11 founded in 1867 by freedmen from Salem Baptist Church of Chesterfield County, and a modest
12 sanctuary was built a couple miles from the mother church in the same year; and

13 WHEREAS, first led by the Reverend Lewis Branch, First Baptist Church Centralia continued to
14 grow and flourish over its first century under the subsequent leadership of the Reverends Ned Bland, Eli
15 Saunders, J. E. Brown, T. H. Johnson (1897-1906), William Thomas (1906-1915), H. M. Chapman
16 (1915-1919), J. H. Binford (1919-1929), C. A. Cobbs (1929-1931), C. J. Washington (1932-1934), and
17 W. B. Ball (1934-1949); and

18 WHEREAS, in the early 1900s, a second building incorporating twin towers and other Gothic
19 Revival, Colonial Revival, and Shingle style architectural elements was constructed and later renovated,
20 enabling First Baptist Church Centralia to better serve its congregants; and

21 WHEREAS, from 1950 to 1990, First Baptist Church Centralia was led by the Reverend Dr. Samuel
22 Moss, who accommodated his thriving discipleship by moving the church to its current building on
23 Kingsdale Road, a short distance from its previous location on Centralia Road; and

24 WHEREAS, after First Baptist Church Centralia's historic building on Centralia Road was tragically
25 destroyed by arsonists in 1996, the congregation and its current pastor, the Reverend Dr. Wilson E. B.
26 Shannon, rallied the community together to build an authentic reconstruction of the church within a
27 year; and

28 WHEREAS, First Baptist Church Centralia's building on Centralia Road was named a Chesterfield
29 County Historic Landmark in 2014 in recognition of its architectural and historical significance, and the
30 site was further commemorated that year with a prestigious historical highway marker from the
31 Department of Historic Resources; and

32 WHEREAS, since its founding, First Baptist Church Centralia has provided a spiritual home to its
33 congregants and has made a profound and lasting impact on the Chesterfield County community; now,
34 therefore, be it

35 RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That First Baptist Church Centralia hereby be commended
36 on the occasion of its 157th anniversary; and, be it

37 RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution
38 for presentation to the Reverend Dr. Wilson E. B. Shannon, pastor of First Baptist Church Centralia, as
39 an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for the church's history and its contributions to the
40 Commonwealth.

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