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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2024

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

JOYOUSLY CELEBRATING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OFFICIAL FOUNDING  
OF THE BEREAN BAPTIST CHURCH OF BURRILLVILLE, RHODE ISLAND, ON  
OCTOBER 20TH OF 2024 AND DECLARING SAID DAY TO BE "BEREAN BAPTIST  
CHURCH DAY" IN THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

Introduced By: Representatives Place, Chippendale, Kennedy, Fellela, Shallcross Smith,  
Tanzi, Handy, Ajello, Boylan, and Cortvriend

Date Introduced: April 30, 2024

Referred To: House read and passed

1           WHEREAS, In or around the year 1867, Emeline Steere established a Sabbath School on  
2 Main Street in the mill villages of Harrisville, in order to help heal the grievous wounds of the  
3 Civil War; and

4           WHEREAS, Shortly thereafter, a group of dedicated ladies, including Emeline Steere,  
5 established a working group called the Harrisville Union Sewing Circle with the objective of  
6 raising funds for the procuring of a place to hold meetings and conduct a Sabbath School. The  
7 women encouraged each member to pay five cents per fortnight, whether they worked or not.  
8 They sewed, knitted, quilted, and hosted community dinners with all of the proceeds dedicated to  
9 the building of a place to meet in worship. Their hard work included donating clothes they made  
10 for the needy within their community; and

11           WHEREAS, The dedication, commitment and abiding integrity of the women of the  
12 Harrisville Union Sewing Circle attracted the attention of many people within the community. As  
13 a result, an Acting Pastor, the Reverend William Fitz, was called in to assist the Church in 1874.  
14 Meetings and services were held in a rented second story room in White's Hall on the South Side  
15 of Chapel Street. The new church was organized with thirteen members; and

16           WHEREAS, On March 3rd of 1876, the Church was granted a charter by the State of  
17 Rhode Island and the membership voted to accept the charter of Incorporation on December 4th,  
18 1880. In naming the new church, the members were guided by the accounts in Acts 17 of the

1 people of Berea, who listened to Paul’s message with great eagerness and an open mind. They  
2 studied the Scriptures to verify Paul’s words. As this seemed a most fitting inspiration, they  
3 named the new Church, the Berean Baptist Church; and

4 WHEREAS, In 1879, the Reverend Dr. Abraham Granger was called to be the first  
5 permanent pastor. He served until 1891. During this time, plans were made for a permanent  
6 building. Reverend Granger served until 1891, During this time, plans were made for a  
7 permanent building. Construction began in 1880 and a new building was dedicated in 1881; and

8 WHEREAS, The Berean Baptist Church has, since its inception, developed strong bonds  
9 with the community, such as granting permission in 1913 to the Harrisville Fire District to use the  
10 Church bell to sound the alarm in case of fire or any disaster. This agreement remined in effect  
11 for more than thirty years until the District acquired its own equipment in 1949. In the 1970’s, the  
12 church continued this tradition of community involvement when they offered space to the School  
13 District for classrooms. Berean Baptist Church has a long history of offering its spaces for use by  
14 the Boys and Girl Scouts and Alcoholics Anonymous as well as other community organizations.  
15 Most recently, Berean has held “Feed the Five Thousand” programs to provide food for the  
16 community. A thriving clothes closet and food bank presently serve the community as outreach  
17 missions; and

18 WHEREAS, Berean Baptist Church exists to proclaim the Gospel, preach the story of  
19 God’s love, and to provide an inclusive witness to the glory of God’s creation, and to covenant in  
20 support of one another in times of sickness and in health; now, therefore be it

21 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby  
22 joyously celebrates the 150th Anniversary of the official founding of the Berean Baptist Church  
23 of Burrillville, Rhode Island, on October 20th of 2024 and declares said day to be “Berean Baptist  
24 Church day” in the State of Rhode Island; and be it further

25 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to  
26 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to the Berean Baptist Church of Burrillville,  
27 Rhode Island.

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