

November 17, 2009

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia: Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the enduring legacy of a faith institution in the city of Richmond. On Saturday, November 28, 2009, The Saint Paul's Baptist Church will celebrate its 100th anniversary, and in recognition of this milestone I would like to take a moment to reflect on the history of this esteemed church and its contributions to the greater Richmond community.

The Saint Paul's Baptist Church began, fittingly, on Thanksgiving night in 1909, when a group of congregants of First Union Baptist Church received a letter of release to form their own Church. The newly organized Church elected Rev. George Pinkney as its first Pastor. Reverend Pinkney's years were dedicated to establishing the new parish on a firm footing. Under his leadership, the first sanctuary with a seating capacity greater than 50 was constructed on Botetourt Street.

The Saint Paul's family grew considerably in a short period of time under Reverend Pinkney and the church's second pastor and Reverend Pinkney's son, Timothy Pinkney. During the service of Saint Paul's third pastor, Rev. Isaiah Hines (1913-1928), a second sanctuary was built that accommodated the growing church's 200 worshippers.

Saint Paul's underwent significant change under the leadership of their fourth and longest serving pastor, Rev. Journey A. Mosby. During his 40 year tenure, the church expanded its commitment to the development of young people, especially aspiring theological students from nearby Virginia Union University. Reverend Mosby was also responsible for many ministries that still exist in the church today. A new building was once again needed to accommodate the growing congregation. Reverend Mosby launched an expansion campaign on Thanksgiving Day 1950 and by 1957, the church was able to buy an existing facility on the corner of 26th and Marshall Streets in the Church Hill neighborhood. This served as the Church's home for 45 years, and the Parish House is now listed on the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places.

The Church's fifth pastor, Rev. James Leary, was installed in 1969. Under his direction, the Saint Paul's Baptist Federal Credit Union, the Saint Paul's Housing Corporation, the Saint Paul's Manor, and the J.A. Mosby Scholarship fund were all initiated.

Saint Paul's sixth and current pastor is Rev. Lance Watson, installed in 1985. Under his leadership, Saint Paul's has continued to thrive and expand. Over the last 30 years, the congregation has grown to over 12,000 members. The church has instituted many more ministries including a bookstore, multiple schools, a counseling service, a community development corporation, and a media company that produces weekly recordings of Saint

Paul's services and broadcasts them nationally.

In 2002, the Church moved into its present facility on Creighton Road. Although this is now the heart of Saint Paul's, the church has multiple locations throughout Greater Richmond including the Marshall Avenue facility, which is under development to become a performing arts center. Saint Paul's has been such a positive spiritual influence on the Richmond community that since 2005, two churches faced with the prospect of selling their property on the open market elected instead to give their physical plants to Saint Paul's to help expand its ministry. The church's dedication to "finding needs and meeting them, finding hurts and healing them, finding problems and solving them" has made it an indispensable institution of faith in the Greater Richmond area.

I would like to commend Pastor Watson and the congregation of The Saint Paul's Baptist Church as they celebrate their 100th anniversary. I hope that their next 100 years of service will be as fruitful as their first 100 years.