

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate a storied institution of faith in Virginia's Third Congressional District. This year, Trinity Episcopal Church in Portsmouth, Virginia is celebrating its 250th anniversary, and I would like to take a moment to reflect on the history of this esteemed church and its contributions to the greater Hampton Roads community.

The story of Trinity Episcopal Church begins in 1752 with William Crawford, the founder of Portsmouth, when he designated space at the intersection of High and Court Streets for a parish church. Between 1761 and 1762, the Vestry of Trinity Church was formed. Reverend Charles Smith served as the first parish priest.

During the American Revolution, the church was used by the British garrison, and Trinity's old church bell was cracked celebrating General Cornwallis' surrender. During the War of 1812, Captain Arthur Emmerson III, a lay leader in the congregation, was instrumental in the American victory at the Battle of Craney Island. During the Civil War, the crew of the ironclad C.S.S. Virginia--commonly called the Merrimac--worshipped at Trinity before boarding the ship to fight in the first battle of the ironclads against the Union ship, U.S.S. Monitor.

Over the years, Trinity continued to grow and expand, and its congregation felt a great sense of community responsibility, contributing to the well-being of the City of Portsmouth, surrounding neighborhoods and area churches. In the 1890s, Trinity founded the King's Daughters Hospital, which later became Portsmouth General Hospital. In the 1960s, under its noted Rector, the Rev. C. Charles Vaché, the congregation was active in the civil rights movement and endorsed the equality of all persons. Its members support organizations such as Portsmouth Volunteers for the Homeless, Oasis Social Ministry Center, and other social agencies, providing breakfasts, dinners, overnight accommodations, and financial support to those in need. Trinity is best known for its Annual Children's Christmas Shoppe, where hundreds of children, guided by members of the parish and community disguised as "elves," can do their own shopping for loved ones. The Episcopal Church Women and the Brotherhood of Trinity take on additional local, national and even international community service projects of their own.

Yet another longstanding Trinity tradition worthy of note is its music. Mentions of organists and accompanying choirs date back to 1823. Instruments housed at Trinity are revered as representative early-American works by their crafters. The choir has received acclaim dating back to the 1860s, when the Rt. Rev. John Johns, Bishop of Virginia, called the Trinity Choir "the best in the diocese." Today, the Trinity Music Series features local musical ensembles and world-renowned artists, working with the Virginia Arts Festival and other community organizations to provide quality music services, recitals and concerts to the public free of charge.

As Trinity Episcopal Church gathers to celebrate this historic milestone, the church can truly remember its past, celebrate its present, and focus on its future. I would like to congratulate Rev. John R. Throop, D. Min., and all of the members of the Trinity Episcopal Church on the

occasion of their 250th Anniversary. I wish them many more years of dedicated service to the community.