

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 129

BY SENATOR FOIL

A RESOLUTION

To commend St. James Episcopal Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, on the occasion of its one hundred eighty years of worship.

WHEREAS, in 1819, two years after the incorporation of Baton Rouge, a group of local inhabitants felt the need to establish an Episcopal church in Baton Rouge and began meeting in the area; and

WHEREAS, on March 16, 1820, they became incorporated and met from place to place, including on the area that is now the State Capitol grounds, thanks to the determined efforts of several individuals including Margaret "Peggy" Smith Taylor, who sought the permission of her soldier husband, the Garrison Commander Colonel (and future president of the United States) Zachary Taylor, to grant space for a chapel at what is now known as the Pentagon Barracks; and

WHEREAS, on March 25, 1844, by Act 97 of the Louisiana Legislature, St. James Episcopal Church was granted a charter to operate as a body and to worship under the laws of the state and in communion with the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, subject to the Ecclesiastical government and decisions of the bishops and Convention of the Diocese of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, they purchased the property at the corner of Convention Street and Church, now Fourth Street, in Baton Rouge, where they constructed a church consecrated by Bishop Leonidas Polk, and have continued to worship there for one hundred eighty years; and

WHEREAS, as one of the largest parishes in the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana, St. James assumed a local leadership role in the Baton Rouge area by assisting with the establishment of all the other Episcopal churches within the Baton Rouge Deanery; and

WHEREAS, in an effort to increase communication and understanding throughout the entire Baton Rouge faith community, St. James served as one of the founding churches of the Interfaith Federation of Greater Baton Rouge, one the oldest interfaith organizations in the nation and one of the few in the Deep South; and

WHEREAS, one of St. James' many ministries is the operation of St. James Episcopal Day School, recognized three times by the United States Department of Education as a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence; and

WHEREAS, the Day School recently celebrated seventy-five years of operation; and

WHEREAS, St. James and its parishioners led the effort to establish Episcopal High School college preparatory school and St. James Place, a well-respected total life-care retirement community; and

WHEREAS, St. James Episcopal Church has established itself to be more than a community of the faithful, but a community of faith.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend and recognize St. James Episcopal Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, on the occasion of its one hundred eighty years of worship.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the Reverend Christopher Duncan, Rector, and Senior Warden Ben Dampf of St. James Episcopal Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE