

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 185

BY SENATOR CATHEY

A RESOLUTION

To commend and congratulate Liberty Baptist Church in Union Parish upon the momentous occasion of its one hundred seventy-fifth anniversary and to recognize its enduring legacy of faith, service, and community commitment.

WHEREAS, it is fitting to recognize and honor institutions that have stood as pillars of spiritual guidance, community strength, and historical significance in the state of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, Liberty Baptist Church, one of the oldest churches in Union Parish, celebrates one hundred seventy-five years of continuous ministry, rooted in a legacy of faith, sacrifice, and perseverance; and

WHEREAS, the church's humble beginnings featured a first building with split-log pews, serving the congregation for seventeen years before Mr. Louis Lanair generously deeded two acres of land on January 11, 1850, establishing the site where Liberty Baptist Church proudly stands to this day; and

WHEREAS, under the leadership of Reverend A.J. Calloway in 1892, a new sanctuary was planned and built using hand-planed lumber, wood pegs, and square nails, with Mr. Crawford as the head carpenter; this structure served faithfully for sixty-three years; and

WHEREAS, the church cemetery, established in 1853, includes markers that date even earlier, providing a sacred resting place for generations of faithful members; and

WHEREAS, in the early years, devoted pastors often served with little or no compensation, accepting offerings of produce such as eggs, chickens, pork, syrup, and corn as tokens of appreciation from their congregations; and

WHEREAS, under the pastoral guidance of Reverend Grey Nolan beginning December 31, 1941, services were expanded, and a more structured worship schedule was implemented; and

WHEREAS, in 1947, under Reverend Herman Hayes, Liberty Baptist became a full-time church, and in 1949, a Training Union was organized to further spiritual education; and

WHEREAS, under Reverend Clemens Smith, the church expanded in 1950 with the addition of four Sunday School rooms, followed by the formation of the Women's Missionary Union (WMU), Sunbeams Missionary Auxiliary (Sunbeams), Girls in Action (GA's), and Royal Ambassadors (RA's) in 1953, promoting involvement among women and youth; and

WHEREAS, in 1955, a new chapter began with the dismantling of the old sanctuary and the building of a new one, made possible in part by the generous donation of timber from widow Eula Pearl Beckley, with the church dedicated under Reverend Lamar Hayes on April 1, 1956; and

WHEREAS, the baptistry, lovingly painted by Docia Mae Smith in 1956, remains a cherished symbol of the church's dedication to baptizing new believers in Christ; and

WHEREAS, the completion of the Family Life Center in 1998, dedicated in memory of Reverend Bruce Lunsford and his wife Betty, further expanded the church's ministry capabilities; and

WHEREAS, Liberty Baptist Church has consistently supported numerous mission efforts including those of Lottie Moon, Annie Armstrong, Georgia Barnett, The Gideons, Samaritan's Purse, Life Choices, Rolling Hills Disaster Relief, and various state and foreign missionaries through the Cooperative Programs; and

WHEREAS, the church remains a beacon of prayer, dedicating Wednesday nights to intercession for community, nation, and global concerns; and

WHEREAS, Linda Kennedy has faithfully directed Vacation Bible School for forty-five years, exemplifying the church's commitment to nurturing the faith of children and families; and

WHEREAS, traditions such as the children's Christmas program and carol singing continue to bring joy and strengthen bonds among the congregation each year; and

WHEREAS, Liberty Baptist Church has been guided by devoted pastoral leadership, including Reverend Paul King and his wife Stephanie, followed by interim pastors Reverend

B.K. Miller and Louisiana Supreme Court Justice Jay McCallum, who also pursued and completed a theological degree during his service; and

WHEREAS, through the financial leadership and service of Deacon Jim Reynolds and his wife Cindy, the church has prospered and been able to extend support and relief to those in need across the community and nation.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend and congratulate Liberty Baptist Church upon the historic occasion of its 175th anniversary, and does hereby express enduring appreciation for its steadfast spiritual leadership, dedication to community service, and vital role in the heritage of Union Parish and the state of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Interim Pastor Brother Jay McCallum.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE