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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2024

SENATE 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: Senator Jessica de la Cruz

Date Introduced: April 30, 2024

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

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 Senate of the State of Rhode Island hereby joyously celebrates the
22 150th Anniversary of the official founding of the Berean Baptist Church of Burrillville, Rhode
23 Island, on October 20th of 2024 and declares said day to be “Berean Baptist Church day” in the
24 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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