



Text File

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Committee: City Council

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Whereas, Ebenezer Baptist Church first began its history in 1875 as an outreach of the all-Black Fourth Baptist Church, Downtown. The 10-member congregation named themselves Ebenezer Baptist in 1882, after an Old Testament altar of thanksgiving. Rev. R. Henry Marshall served as the first pastor. In 1914, the congregation bought property at 2001 Wylie Ave. that included an imposing brick church built by Tenth Presbyterian Church. The congregation settled in the Hill and began to flourish. Today, Ebenezer Baptist Church is guided by the spiritual leadership of Dr. J. Van Alfred Winsett; and

Whereas, With a thriving membership of over 1,500, Ebenezer not only meets the spiritual needs of the community, but also sponsors outreaches to people in prison and on the street, addicts, alcoholics, the elderly and the youthful. Ebenezer Baptist operates an 11-story apartment building for the elderly and people with disabilities, hosts a Head Start program, an Alcoholics Anonymous program, and has a Boy Scout troop that reaches back four generations; and

Whereas, Tragically, on Saturday, March 13, 2004, Ebenezer Baptist Church was consumed and destroyed by a four alarm fire that also took the lives of two of Pittsburgh's finest firefighters who fought valiantly to save the church; and

Whereas, In just hours, an abundance of calls began to come in from the local and national community of friends and supporters who seek to help support Ebenezer Baptist in any way possible, whether through fiscal means or through prayer. And with the help, love and support of the community and the City of Pittsburgh, due to their stake in the community, Ebenezer has vowed to rebuild their church in the exact same place, in the heart of the Hill District.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh express its condolences to the firefighters who were injured and those who gave their lives in a heroic effort to save Ebenezer Baptist Church. Council also wishes to thank all the firefighters who joined forces that day to fight the fire.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Council of the city of Pittsburgh join the community in recognizing and giving praise not only to the legacy, but also to the present and future success of Ebenezer Baptist Church.