



Proclamation Celebrating

Sinking Spring Presbyterian Church's 250th Anniversary

WHEREAS, Sinking Spring Presbyterian Church and Ebbing Spring Presbyterian Church, now the Glade Spring Presbyterian Church, are first mentioned, officially, in the records of Hanover Presbytery, in April 1772; and

WHEREAS Parson Charles Cummings, called by these churches on January 5th, 1773, accepted the call at the meeting of Hanover Presbytery on June 2nd, 1773; and

WHEREAS, the Sinking Spring Cemetery marks the site of the first of five church buildings bearing the Sinking Spring Presbyterian name, a log structure built in the early 1770s, building a more prominent hewn log structure sometime about 1783, which stood until around 1841. In about 1832, a new church was built on Main Street, which was later sold to "The Sons of Temperance" and called Temperance Hall, and was subsequently turned over to the Town of Abingdon and presently houses Barter Theatre; and

WHEREAS, in 1837, the Church divided into two congregations, one remaining at Temperance Hall, while the other moved and built the fourth Sinking Spring Presbyterian Church structure, in 1851, at the corner of Main and Pecan; and

WHEREAS, the two congregations, weakened by the split of 1837 and the woes of war in 1861-65, were reunited on April 9th, 1865, the same day as the surrender of General Lee to Grant at Appomattox; and

WHEREAS, the Rev. James McChain, from upstate New York, ministered to the congregation from 1843-1869, and witnessed both the fourth structure in 1851 and the reunification of the Church in 1865; and

WHEREAS, after the Civil War, the Church prospered and grew steadily with the years, and in 1868 established the Stonewall Jackson Female Institute for the education of young women in the area, which was renamed Stonewall Jackson College, and operated until 1930 on Main Street; and

WHEREAS, the fifth and present sanctuary was dedicated in 1891 on the same site as the 1851 structure, and a large Christian Education wing was constructed on the current site in 1929; and

WHEREAS, the cabin built by Parson Cummings as his home in the 1700's, and given to the Church by the Arthur Cummings family in 1968, was moved in 1971 to the Sinking Spring Cemetery, and which is believed to be the oldest church relic from Roanoke to the Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, the Church conveyed the cabin of Parson Cummings, along with the Sinking Spring Cemetery, to the Town of Abingdon in 2006; and

WHEREAS, many renovations to the 1891 structure have occurred through the years, including the 2018 renovation of the bell tower, with the addition of the lighting of the steeple into the night sky above Abingdon; and

WHEREAS, the 200th anniversary was celebrated in 1972 in the Sinking Spring Cemetery with worship services on the site of the first Church, near the graves of Parson Cummings and the Rev. James McChain; and

WHEREAS, Sinking Spring Presbyterian Church continues its positive Christian influence, and its strong, dynamic missions and ministry in the Abingdon area and beyond,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Derek Webb, Mayor of the Town of Abingdon, now proclaim that the Town of Abingdon, Virginia commends Sinking Spring Presbyterian Church on their 250th Anniversary.

Proclaimed this thirteenth day of June 2022.

MAYOR DEREK WEBB