DENVER CITY COUNCIL

Proclamation

Proclamation No. 24-0003
A Proclamation Honoring Reverend Brian Henderson and the First Baptist Church

WHEREAS, in 2012, Rev. Henderson developed a 3-year plan to revitalize First Baptist Church's ministry, which was in danger of shutting down; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Henderson negotiated creative ways to co-share First Baptist's historic facility with not-for-profit organizations, and he created a social enterprise with a nonprofit partner in the building that provided employment training for newly arrived refugees and immigrants, and three community choruses have found a home at First Baptist Church for rehearsals and concerts; and

WHEREAS, in the face of the country's gun-fire epidemic, and with congregational leadership, First Baptist Church became a partner with the national Soul Box Project, providing education to the larger metro area community; and

WHEREAS, First Baptist Church became the first of two Safe Outdoor Spaces (SOS) in the City and County of Denver, and the church partnered with the Colorado Safe Parking Initiative to provide parking for people living in their vehicles, and the church became a part-time shelter for houseless women, and in partnership with a community nonprofit, a soup kitchen was opened at the church serving people who are houseless; and

WHEREAS, Jeanette Vizguerra, named by Time Magazine as one of America's most influential people, found sanctuary at the First Baptist Church; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Henderson led the church to participate in its first PrideFests, and organized the annual Interfaith Pride Service for the last 10 years, and contributed articles to OUTFRONT, one of the Rocky Mountains' leading media outlets to the LGBTQ+ community; and

WHEREAS, with State Senator Steadman and State Senator Moreno as his sponsors, Rev. Henderson served for several years offering prayers as a Chaplain to the Colorado Senate, and the church is a hub of activity for legislators and advocacy groups who meet there during sessions; and

WHEREAS, with the support of the Colorado State Historic Fund, improvement projects have been completed to the First Baptist Church's historic edifice; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Henderson has served on numerous Boards, including: Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods, Capitol Hill United Ministries, Interfaith Alliance of Colorado, Denver Lions' Club, and Denver Lions' Foundation; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Henderson is now departing First Baptist Church after 12 years of faithful service.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER:

Section 1. That the Council of the City and County of Denver acknowledge Rev. Brian Henderson and the First Baptist Church's contributions in the City of Denver.

Section 2. That the Clerk of the City and County of Denver shall affix the seal of the City and County of Denver to this proclamation and that a copy be transmitted to Rev. Brian Henderson and to the First Baptist Church of Denver.

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL January 8, 2024

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PRESIDENT