



City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Legislation Text

File #: 150062, **Version:** 0

Honoring, recognizing and commending The Rev. Dr. Napoleon Livingstone Divine, an ordained Baptist Minister, for his devotion to his community and the people of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, Rev. Divine is a citizen of the Republic of Liberia and is the founder and pastor of Christ International Baptist Church-a multi-ethnic congregation located in Southwest Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Divine holds both a Master's and a Doctorate degree from Temple University in Education and has studied at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in pursuit of his Masters of Divinity degree. He is married to Mrs. Anita A. Divine, also originally from Liberia, and they are both actively involved in the ministry and life of Christ International Baptist Church; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Divine joined White Rock Baptist Church in the spring of 1982, a decision he considers as both fortuitous and providential, because at White Rock, under the strong leadership of Dr. William J. Shaw, his spiritual life was remarkably transformed. At White Rock he experienced the warmth and support of an African-American church and congregation that embraced him and treated him as one of its own; and

WHEREAS, For most of his thirty year stay in the United States and during the fifteen year Liberian civil war, Rev. Divine has been involved in advocacy to foster reconciliation among Liberia's warring parties and to bring about peace and stability to Liberia. His advocacy entailed leading and organizing reconciliation conferences in American cities where many Liberians live preparing letters and petitions to members of the United States Congress and the White House urging their diplomatic involvement in ending Liberia's civil war, and traveling to Africa for peace conferences; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Divine presided over the funeral of 7 of his fellow Liberians who perished in a Philadelphia house fire in December 2008 bringing consolation and hope to his fellow grieving Liberians, the immigrant community and their American friends; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Divine is the first African to serve on the Executive Committee of the Foreign Mission Board of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., in a hundred years. He serves as its Corresponding Secretary with his involvement contributing to the Board's decision to return to Liberia, after 15 years of absence, to assist the country in its post war development; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Divine is also the Chair of the International committee of the Black Clergy of Philadelphia and Vicinity forging relations between the Black Clergy and Diaspora of African religious and civic groups around the world. Rev. Divine's work with the Mayor's Commission for African and Caribbean's Affairs has involved the Commission's collaboration with the Red Cross in providing disaster relief and support to immigrant families experiencing fires and other crisis in Philadelphia and its environs; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Divine and his church responded to a tragic fire in southwest Philadelphia on the morning of July 5, 2014 that resulted in the destruction of eight homes, the dislocation of 43 residents and the death of four children under the age of five. Under Rev. Divine's leadership, the church opened its heart and its house to

victims of the fire, praying and ministering to their emotional, physical and spiritual needs; and

WHEREAS, The Church joined forces with the faith community, the Philadelphia Red Cross, Philadelphia City officials and other representatives of civil society to ensure that those affected would have a place of shelter and also would have their other basic needs met; and

WHEREAS, The Church developed a major distribution center and for over seven weeks, provided the victims with food, clothing and other personal items donated by the church and the general public. Such assistance served as a source of stability for the victims as they attempted to reestablish themselves and improve their states of wellbeing; and

WHEREAS, Again, as in 2008, Rev. Divine had the onerous task of presiding over the funeral services and committal of the four little children to the ground. Rev. Divine's favorite Bible passage is Proverb 3:5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your path; now therefore,

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA hereby honors, recognizes and commends The Rev. Dr. Napoleon Livingstone Divine, an ordained Baptist Minister, for his devotion to his community and the people of Philadelphia.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to The Rev. Dr. Napoleon Livingstone Divine as evidence of the sincere admiration of the Council of Philadelphia.