

INTRODUCED: June 8, 2026

AN ORDINANCE No. 2026-146

To designate the 2800 block of Fendall Avenue in honor of Reverend A. Lincoln James, Jr.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Patrons – Ms. Gibson and Ms. Robertson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Approved as to form and legality  
by the City Attorney  
\_\_\_\_\_

PUBLIC HEARING: JUN 22 2026 AT 6 P.M.

THE CITY OF RICHMOND HEREBY ORDAINS:

§ 1. **Designation of Street Block for Honorary Name.** The 2800 block of Fendall Avenue shall be designated in honor of Reverend A. Lincoln James, Jr., pursuant to this ordinance.

§ 2. **Effect of Designation.** The designation of the street block made pursuant to this ordinance shall be honorary only, shall not replace the existing name of the street, and shall have no effect on the address of any property with an address on the designated street block. The sole effect of designation pursuant to this ordinance shall be to authorize the placement of commemorative signs in accordance with this ordinance memorializing the designation in honor of the named person.

AYES: \_\_\_\_\_ NOES: \_\_\_\_\_ ABSTAIN: \_\_\_\_\_

ADOPTED \_\_\_\_\_ REJECTED: \_\_\_\_\_ STRICKEN: \_\_\_\_\_

§ 3. **Administration of Ordinance.** The Department of Public Works shall implement this ordinance by installing, as soon as practicable after the adoption of this ordinance and maintaining commemorative signs in accordance with this section. The commemorative signs shall be clearly distinct from the street signs used to identify the street block in question such that a reasonable person could not conclude that the commemorative signs reflect the actual name of the street. The commemorative signs (i) shall be affixed to a sign pole installed at each end of the block designated in section 1 of this ordinance for the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of this section or to any existing sign identifying the road designated in section 1 of this ordinance located at each end of the block designated in section 1 of this ordinance and (ii) shall bear the name of the person set forth in section 1 of this ordinance.

§ 4. **Effective Date.** This ordinance shall be in force and effect upon adoption.

**DATE:** May 26, 2026  
**TO:** The Honorable Members of City Council  
**THROUGH:** RJ Warren, Council Chief of Staff  
**THROUGH:** Will Perkins, Senior Legislative Services Manager  
**THROUGH:** Sophie McGinley, Council Policy Analyst  
**FROM:** The Honorable Kenya Gibson, Councilmember 3rd District  
The Honorable Ellen Robertson, Councilmember 6<sup>th</sup> District  
**RE:** To designate the 2800 Block of Fendall Avenue in honor of Rev. A. Lincoln James, Jr.

**CNL-2026-0057**

**PURPOSE:** To designate the 2800 Block of Fendall Avenue in honor of Reverend. A. Lincoln James, Jr.

**BACKGROUND:** Honorary street naming is reserved for individuals whose lives reflect sustained, meaningful contributions to the City of Richmond, and Reverend Dr. A. Lincoln James, Jr. exemplified that standard through decades of spiritual leadership, civic service, mentorship, and community investment in Richmond. Reverend James served as Pastor of Trinity Baptist Church for more than 45 years and became one of the most respected and influential faith leaders in the Richmond region and throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Reverend James devoted his life to pastoral leadership, theological education, and community transformation beginning in 1967, serving congregations in Virginia before becoming the longest-serving pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in Richmond. Under his leadership, Trinity Baptist Church expanded its ministries, increased community outreach, and became the first Black Baptist church in Richmond to televise its services. The church flourished to more than 700 active members and sustained ministries focused on worship, service, and community impact.

Rev. James also helped establish the Trinity Family Life Center, extending the church's mission beyond the pulpit to provide programs focused on family strengthening, youth development, education, and community stability. The Center became nationally recognized for effective faith-based approaches to supporting children and families. Congressman Bobby Scott noted that Rev. James "improved the Richmond region through his leadership as President of the Virginia Baptist State Convention, his service on the Virginia Parole Board, his work as a seminar

professor and his vision as the driving force in the creation of the Trinity Family Life Center, which provides essential services to thousands of young people every year.”

Beyond his pastoral ministry, Reverend James served in numerous civic and educational leadership roles, including as President of the Virginia Baptist State Convention, Vice President and national officer of the National Baptist Congress of Christian Education, Chairman of the Board of Trustees for Richmond Virginia Seminary, and member of the Board of Visitors at the University of Lynchburg and Virginia Union University School of Theology. He was also widely recognized as a mentor to clergy, elected officials, and generations of Richmond residents. Following his passing in December 2025, hundreds gathered at Trinity Baptist Church to celebrate his life and legacy, with community leaders describing him as a transformational figure in Richmond’s civic and spiritual life.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** This nomination is brought forward by Trinity Baptist Church, reflecting broad appreciation for his decades of service to the Richmond community and his lasting impact on generations of residents and families.

**ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:** This amendment directly advances key goals within the City of Richmond’s Mayoral Action Plan (MAP), which translates the Mayor’s seven pillars for a thriving Richmond into measurable goals and outcomes across city policy areas.

### **A City That Cares for People**

**Goal A: Improve quality of life outcomes for Richmond residents by strengthening neighborhoods, supporting families, and expanding community opportunity.** Rev. James’ leadership through Trinity Baptist Church and the Trinity Family Life Center directly supported youth development, family stability, educational advancement, and community wellness for thousands of Richmond residents.

### **A City That Tells its Stories**

**Goal C: Share and document Richmond’s rich cultural history.** This honorary naming recognizes the enduring contributions of one of Richmond’s most influential faith and civic leaders and preserves the legacy of Black church leadership as a foundational part of Richmond’s social, cultural, and civic history.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** DPW estimates that each honorary street sign costs approximately \$800 for manufacturing, installation, and some contingency although actual costs may vary. Funds are sufficient in the agency's FY26 operating budget to cover adoption of this ordinance.

**DESIRED EFFECTIVE DATE:** Upon adoption.

**REQUESTED INTRODUCTION DATE:** June 8, 2026

**CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING DATE:** June 22, 2026

**REQUESTED AGENDA:** Consent

**RECOMMENDED COUNCIL COMMITTEE:** Land Use, Housing & Transportation

**AFFECTED AGENCIES:** Department of Public Works

**RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING ORD. OR RES.:** None

**ATTACHMENTS:** Honorarystreetsign\_Rev. A. Lincoln James, Jr.pdf

**STAFF:** Sophie McGinley, Council Policy Analyst, (804-925-9269)

## Honorary Street Sign Nomination Form

### Applicant Information:

Name of Nominator (Individual or Organization): Trinity Baptist Church

Contact Person (if organization): Rev. Wendy Bullock, Interim Pastor

Address: 2811 Fendall Avenue, Richmond, VA 23222

Phone Number: 804-484-5017

Email: 2811christianed@gmail.com

Relationship to Nominee: Associate Minister

### Nominee Information:

Full Name of Nominee: Rev. A. Lincoln James, Jr.

Connection to City of Richmond, VA (check all that apply):

Born in Richmond, VA

Raised in Richmond, VA

Graduated from a Richmond, VA educational institution

Represented Richmond, VA (please explain below):

### Qualifications:

Describe in detail the Nominee's historical or cultural significance, including any significant contributions to the community and City of Richmond:

In 1967, Dr. James devoted his life to pastoral leadership, theological education, and community transformation. His ministry journey included service as Youth Minister at Greater Bethesda Baptist Church in Chicago and pastorates at Calvary Baptist Church (Kilmarnock, VA), Pleasant Grove (Prince George) and Tabernacle Baptist Church (Petersburg, VA), before becoming the longest-serving pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia, where he faithfully shepherded the congregation for more than 45 years.

Dr. James led Trinity Baptist Church to a historic milestone with the licensing of the first female minister and the ordination of its first female deacons in the church's history. A true trailblazer and visionary, Dr. James expanded the church's reach beyond its walls, leading Trinity to broadcast its worship services on the radio and later becoming the first Black Baptist church in Richmond to televise its services. Under his faithful and forward-thinking leadership, Trinity Baptist Church flourished, growing to more than 700 active members today and sustaining over 30 ministries dedicated to worship, service, and community impact,

Under his leadership and vision, Trinity Baptist Church established the Trinity Family Life Center, extending the church's mission beyond the pulpit to address the holistic needs of families and communities. The Center developed comprehensive programs focused on family strengthening, youth development, education, and community stability. Trinity Family Life Center became a national model for Casey Family Programs, recognized for its effective faith-based approach to strengthening families and improving outcomes for children and youth. This national recognition affirmed Dr. James's belief that faith institutions can play a critical role in building resilient families and thriving communities.

Beyond the pulpit, Dr. James was a respected civic and denominational leader. Never forsaking his call as a Christian leader, he served as President of the Virginia Baptist State Convention, Vice President and national officer of the National Baptist Congress of Christian Education, Chairman of the Board of Trustees for Richmond Virginia Seminary, a board member of the University of Lynchburg, and Virginia Union University School of Theology - adjunct professor teaching pastoral care. As a civic leader, Dr. James served as President of the Southside and Central Virginia Banking Consortium, on the Virginia Parole Board, and he was often called upon

to lead prayers for local and state legislative bodies. His life and service were recognized nationally, including acknowledgment in the U.S. Congressional Record. His most recent award was the Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award given by President Joe Biden. In recognition of his enduring impact, he received an Honorary Doctor of Divinity from McKinley Theological Seminary and an Honorary Doctor of Humanities from Baltimore Seminary and College.

**Requested Location:**

Street name and block # 2800 Block of Fendall Avenue which is in front of the church  
Neighborhood: Battery Park Neighborhood  
Council District: 3rd District - Councilmember Kenya Gibson

**Supporting Documentation:**

Please attach to this form a letter of support from a local civic organization (if applicable) from the neighborhood or community in which you request that the honorary street sign be placed.

The support letter will be received from the Battery Park Civic Association.

Thanks so much for your consideration for a great man who served the Richmond Community well!