

1 [Initiating Landmark Designation Amendment - St. James Presbyterian Church]

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3 **Resolution initiating an amendment to the landmark designation of 240 Leland Avenue**  
4 **(aka St. James Presbyterian Church), Assessor’s Parcel Block No. 6246, Lot No. 012,**  
5 **under Article 10 of the Planning Code.**

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7 WHEREAS, Under Planning Code, Section 1004.1, the Board of Supervisors (Board)  
8 may by Resolution initiate a Landmark designation; and

9 WHEREAS, The St. James Presbyterian Church, located in the Visitacion Valley  
10 neighborhood, at 240 Leland Avenue, Assessor’s Parcel Block No. 6246, Lot No. 012, was  
11 built in 1923 by renowned architect Julia Morgan; and

12 WHEREAS, The St. James Presbyterian Church has its roots in the first few years of  
13 Visitacion Valley’s history as a city neighborhood; and

14 WHEREAS, In 1906, a group came from the University Mound Presbyterian Church in  
15 the Portola neighborhood and started a Sunday School in Visitacion Valley at the Bayshore  
16 Hall, located at the present-day Visitacion Valley Branch Library; and

17 WHEREAS, On April 26, 1908, the congregation formed with 69 original members and  
18 has been a part of the cultural and spiritual life of Visitacion Valley since; and

19 WHEREAS, The St. James Presbyterian Church is one of the oldest religious  
20 congregations in Visitacion Valley and was where the family of the first American Governor of  
21 California worshipped; and

22 WHEREAS, After outgrowing its modest original building, the congregation  
23 commissioned Julia Morgan, one of California’s most heralded master-architects and  
24 engineers, to design the current church; and

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1           WHEREAS, Designed in Arts and Crafts styles, the current St. James Presbyterian  
2 Church building was dedicated on March 13, 1923, and will celebrate its centennial next year  
3 in 2023; and

4           WHEREAS, The prominent stained glass window on the church’s façade, a long time  
5 symbol of the St. James community, depicts the Parable of the Sower and was reportedly  
6 relocated from a church in the Sierra Nevada foothills; and

7           WHEREAS, In 1947, the men of the church were organized as the Valley Churchmen  
8 and carried the heaviest part of the load of repairing and improving the church property  
9 through their volunteer labor; and

10          WHEREAS, St. James was designated the first Filipino Presbyterian ministry by the  
11 Presbytery of San Francisco in the late 1980s; and

12          WHEREAS, Through decades of demographic and generational changes and now  
13 recovering from the COVID pandemic of 2020, a small congregation of mostly Filipino families  
14 continues to this day persevering as a church just like the group did in 1908; and

15          WHEREAS, In partnership with the Visitacion Valley History Project, community  
16 worked on identifying preservation projects to address the neighborhood’s  
17 underrepresentation in the city’s official inventory of historic buildings; and

18          WHEREAS, Visitacion Valley currently has no designated city-landmarks and through a  
19 month-long campaign to identify the neighborhood’s first city landmark designation, residents  
20 and community members voted for St. James Presbyterian Church; now, therefore, be it

21          RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors hereby initiates an amendment to the  
22 landmark designation of the St. James Presbyterian Church, located at 240 Leland Avenue  
23 (Assessor’s Parcel Block No. 6246, Lot No. 012); and, be it

24          FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors requests that Planning  
25 Department prepare a Landmark Designation Report to submit to the Historic Preservation

1 Commission for its consideration of the full historical, architectural, aesthetic, and cultural  
2 interest and value of the St. Presbyterian Church; and, be it

3 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors requests that the Historical  
4 Preservation Commission consider what amendments to the landmark designation are  
5 warranted to capture the property's full historical significance, and submit its recommendation  
6 to the Board of Supervisors, according to Article 10 of the Planning Code.

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