**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND CONGRATULATE BETHEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF MARION ON THE OCCASION OF ITS HISTORIC ONE HUNDRED FORTY‑SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY AND TO COMMEND THE CHURCH FOR NEARLY A CENTURY AND A HALF OF SERVICE TO GOD AND THE COMMUNITY.

Whereas, having been founded in 1867, Bethel United Methodist Church (Bethel UMC) of Marion is celebrating its historic one hundred forty‑seventh anniversary in 2014; and

Whereas, Bethel UMC, originally Bethel Methodist Church, was organized in the blacksmith shop located several feet from the present structure. The Reverend T.W. Lewis, first elder of the church, paid E.T. Haynes three hundred dollars for the land, and the deed was held by the trustees; and

Whereas, in 1896, two acres of land, the Durant Cemetery, were purchased from the Durant Estate. The current church structure is the third to be erected on the present site, which also holds the church’s third parsonage; and

Whereas, Bethel Methodist Church was renamed Bethel United Methodist Church when the 1866 black conference and 1785 white conference merged in 1972 to form the South Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church; and

Whereas, over the years, the church has enjoyed numerous improvements to its facilities, such as a heating and cooling system, parking lot, piano and organ, and carpeting. Programs include All Saints’ Day, Disciple Bible Study, and year‑long programs in association with First UMC such as Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength, funded by the Duke Foundation and designed to improve community relationships; and

Whereas, on Sunday, September 21, 2014, the grateful congregation of Bethel UMC will celebrate its anniversary commemoration with a special afternoon service at which the speaker will be the Honorable Bishop L. Jonathan Holston, resident bishop of the South Carolina Annual Conference. A picnic on the grounds with games will follow the service; and

Whereas, standing on the faith and strength of its early pastors and members, Bethel UMC’s present congregation “presses toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14), continuing to preach and teach the Word of God; and

Whereas, Bethel UMC has been a beacon of light in the Marion area for almost one hundred and fifty years, and, God willing, will continue its godly heritage for many more years of worship and service. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, recognize and congratulate Bethel United Methodist Church of Marion on the occasion of its historic one hundred forty‑seventh anniversary and commend the church for nearly a century and a half of service to God and the community.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to the Reverend J. Elbert Williams as pastor of Bethel United Methodist Church.

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