**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND CONGRATULATE SAINT MICHAEL’S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF COLUMBIA ON THE OCCASION OF ITS HISTORIC TWO HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY AND TO COMMEND THE CHURCH FOR TWO CENTURIES OF SERVICE TO GOD AND THE COMMUNITY.

Whereas, having been officially received into the North Carolina Synod on October 18, 1814, Saint Michael’s Evangelical Lutheran Church in Columbia is celebrating its historic two hundredth anniversary in 2014; and

Whereas, beginning in the 1730s, German immigrants from the Rhineland and Palatinate regions of Prussia fled Europe because of religious persecution and came to the Carolinas; and

Whereas, these intrepid pioneers came to the wild lands found where the Saluda and Broad Rivers converge, bringing their faith and their German language with them to their “Die Deutsch Fork,” now commonly known as the Dutch Fork; and

Whereas, these pioneers became patriots and fought for American Independence; and

Whereas, a small group of members from Bethel Lutheran Church, High Hill, and Zion Lutheran Church near Twelve Mile Creek in the Lexington District of South Carolina desired education and worship in the English language of their new nation. The Reverend Godfrey Dreher saw the benefit of education and worship in the English language as the future of the community and gathered these members for worship at the newly built Pleasant Spring Schoolhouse in 1812; and

Whereas, John Dreher, father of Pastor Godfrey Dreher, donated six acres of land at the schoolhouse for a new church that was built in 1814 and painted blue; thus, the new house of worship came to be called “The Blue Church.” The first Holy Communion was celebrated in the church on the fifth Sunday in June 1814; and

Whereas, the congregation’s elders, John Dreher, Thomas Shuler, Samuel Wingard, John Wyse, and Jacob Hemiter, as leaders of the recently organized and built Saint Michael’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, petitioned the delegates of the synod convention in North Carolina to receive the congregation into membership on October 18, 1814; and

Whereas, John Dreher presented a resolution to the synod in October 1814 that allowed Saint Michael’s to extend to the free and enslaved African‑Americans all necessary privileges in the gallery of the new church lately built; and

Whereas, Saint Michael’s Evangelical Lutheran Church was dedicated to the worship of the Triune God by the Reverends Paul Henkel, J.P. Franklow, and Godfrey Dreher; and

Whereas, the first ecclesiastical meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Church held in South Carolina was conducted at Saint Michael’s on April 30, 1816, with business and preaching in German held inside the building and English business and preaching held outside on the lawn; and

Whereas, the South Carolina Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church was organized on January 14, 1824, at Saint Michael’s, with Reverend Godfrey Dreher elected as the first president; and

Whereas, the members of Saint Michael’s assisted their African‑American neighbors in the community to secure land for the building of their own church in 1869, leading to the founding of Pleasant Springs African Methodist Episcopal Church. The congregation of Pleasant Springs AME is still worshipping in the Irmo community and will celebrate its one hundred forty‑fifth anniversary in 2014; and

Whereas, the second building on the site of St. Michael’s, built in 1880 in the Reformed style, doubled the size of the sanctuary. It was painted white on the exterior with a blue ceiling in the interior, thus preserving the name “The Blue Church.” The congregation’s third building was constructed in 1921 in the Carpenter‑Gothic style at a cost of eight thousand dollars, much of which was offset by donations and the labor of the members; and

Whereas, part of the Greater Columbia area, Saint Michael’s is located in the Lake Murray community very close to the Dreher Shoals Dam, which was named for some of the earliest settlers in Dutch Fork; and

Whereas, one of the first women pastors in the South Carolina Synod and the only member of the congregation to be ordained into the ministry is the Reverend Mary Williams Anderson, a sixth great‑granddaughter of both John Dreher and Thomas Shuler, two of the original elders; and

Whereas, among Saint Michael’s pastors, those still living are the Reverends David Castor, Robert Weeks, Henry Brandt, and Dwight Wessinger, the current pastor; and

Whereas, the congregation is blessed and strengthened for missions by active Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (WELCA), Lutheran Men in Mission (LMM), and Lutheran Church Youth (LCY) auxiliaries; and

Whereas, under the leadership of the Reverend Dwight Wessinger, Saint Michael’s membership has doubled in the past fifteen years, reflecting the congregation’s emphasis on evangelism to the Lake Murray and Irmo communities, with the church, cemetery, and memorial garden jointly serving as an inspirational landmark on the River Road; and

Whereas, the following pastors have served Saint Michael’s faithfully since 1814: Godfrey Dreher, 1814‑1834; John Yost Meetze, 1814‑1822; John Christian Hope, 1834; John G. Schwartz, 1835; George Haltiwanger, Sr., 1836‑1840; George Haltiwanger, Jr., 1840‑1850; James D. Stingley, 1850; Jesse B. Lowman, 1853; James H. Bailey, 1854; Daniel M. Blackwelder, 1861‑1865; J.N. Derrick, 1866‑1870; William Alexander Houck, 1871‑1873; John Eusebius Berly, 1877; Levi Bedenbaugh (supply), 1874‑1875; Jacob H. Hawkins,1876‑1878; Peter Miller, 1880‑1883; Willis Alexander Deaton, 1891; Henry Julian Mathias, 1898; Shadrack Laban Nease, 1902; Victor Clarence Ridenhour, 1905; William Pinckney Cline, 1907; Henry Maxwell Brown, 1913; M.D. Huddle, 1914; R.R. Sowers, 1919; John Wesley Magnum, 1923‑1925 and 1946‑1949; David Bittle Groseclose, 1925‑1928; Fred Louis Lineberger, 1929‑1932; John Carnahan Peery, Sr., 1932‑1939; James David Kinard, 1939‑1942; George Frederick Schott, 1942‑1944; James Kivett Cobb, 1945‑1946; Stafford LeRoy Swing, 1950‑1953; David Frederick Castor, 1955‑1959; Robert Martin Weeks, 1960‑1964; Henry Newton Brandt, 1965‑1977; and Dwight C. Wessinger 1978‑present; and

Whereas, Saint Michael’s Evangelical Lutheran Church has been a beacon of light and a community worship center in the Columbia area for two hundred years, and, God willing, will continue its godly heritage for many more years of worship and service. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring:

That the members of the South Carolina General Assembly, by this resolution, recognize and congratulate Saint Michael’s Evangelical Lutheran Church of Columbia on the occasion of its historic two hundredth anniversary and commend the church for two centuries of service to God and the community.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to Saint Michael’s Evangelical Lutheran Church.

‑‑‑‑XX‑‑‑‑