**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND CONGRATULATE JOHN WESLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF GREENVILLE ON THE OCCASION OF ITS HISTORIC ONE HUNDRED FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY AND TO COMMEND THE CHURCH FOR ITS MANY YEARS OF SERVICE TO GOD AND THE COMMUNITY.

Whereas, having been founded in 1866, John Wesley United Methodist Church of Greenville is celebrating its historic one hundred fiftieth anniversary in 2016; and

Whereas, after the Civil War, a former slave and Christian preacher known only as Jim took the name James R. Rosemond and soon gathered a group of black Methodists in Greenville to establish a church. According to one account, the group first met at a member’s house and agreed to pay the trustees of the Greenville Methodist Church one hundred dollars a year to meet there weekly; and

Whereas, when the Freedmen’s Bureau School opened, the black congregation began to meet at the schoolhouse. This church was organized sometime between 1851 and 1854 and was founded in 1866 under the name Silver Hill Methodist Episcopal Church. The oldest black United Methodist Church in Greenville, it was one of the first of more than two dozen churches in at least six counties that Reverend Rosemond was instrumental in establishing; and

Whereas, the church retained the Silver Hill name until the present church was built between 1899 and 1903, after which the name was changed to John Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church in 1902. This name continued until 1939, when unification of three Methodist bodies took place. In 1968, at the general conference, the Evangelical United Brethren Church and the Methodist Church merged, and this merged congregation was known as John Wesley United Methodist Church from that time; and

Whereas, in 1866, T. Willard Lewis, one of the white leaders sent to South Carolina by the Methodist Episcopal Church, purchased a lot from Alexander McBee for the new church, and by February 1869 a building seating five hundred had been constructed. The church’s three hundred members held three services on Sundays and a weekly prayer meeting. Constructed in the Gothic Revival style, the church is cruciform in shape, with four gable ends and a bell tower; and

Whereas, the church underwent a major restoration and renovation project from 1978 to 1980. At the front entrance are plaques denoting the church’s entry into the National Register of Historic Places, the South Carolina Historical Society, and the United Methodist Historical Society. The church is also recognized by the City of Greenville as a historic landmark; and

Whereas, John Wesley United Methodist Church has had the joy of seeing more than ten members become United Methodist pastors in the annual conferences to which they were admitted. In addition, three Methodist churches within the City of Greenville have been birthed from this church, which also has contributed greatly to the education of Greenville’s children; and

Whereas, to mark its milestone one hundred fiftieth anniversary, the church will set apart a special celebratory time on Sunday, November 13, 2016; and

Whereas, John Wesley United Methodist Church has been a beacon of light and a community worship center in the Greenville area for a century and a half, 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 John Wesley United Methodist Church of Greenville on the occasion of its historic one hundred fiftieth anniversary and commend the church for its many years of service to God and the community.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to John Wesley United Methodist Church.

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