**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO CELEBRATE THE JOYOUS OCCASION OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWENTY‑SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NEW ST. MATTHEW MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH AND TO CONGRATULATE AND COMMEND REVEREND FRANKLIN WASHINGTON AND THE CONGREGATION FOR THEIR YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE TO THE BENNETTSVILLE COMMUNITY.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives are pleased to learn that the New St. Matthew Missionary Baptist Church will celebrate its one hundred twenty‑seventh anniversary this year; and

Whereas, 1890 is believed to be the year of birth for New St. Matthew Missionary Baptist Church. It is thought that the church began as a brush harbor, a make shift church. Legend has it that the brush was called “Cashaway Ferry Brush Harbor” after the name of the road that ran past it. The brush was located about a mile east of the present location of St. Matthew; and

Whereas, the first pastor was Reverend Walter S. Sanders in 1896. Reverend J. R. Prince became the pastor in 1910. Documents show that a purchase of land was made on November 13, 1897. The deed was later recorded in February 1902; and

Whereas, Reverend A. T. Campbell was the third pastor, followed by Reverend Mack Lester. Reverend J. A. Alsbrook became the fifth pastor and served for twenty‑two years. Reverend E. B. Mason followed in 1955, and Reverend Solomon was his successor, both serving short terms. In 1958, Reverend Grady Ware became pastor, and under his administration, the church, which originally had two steeples, was renovated and reduced to one steeple; and

Whereas, Deacons W. M. (Will) Johnson, William Henry Clark, W. M. (Bill) Miller, and John Stackhouse are some legendary names that remain in the hearts of the older and younger generations; and

Whereas, when the church was founded, it was called St. Matthew Chapel, potentially due to its use as a place for public assembly such as school events; and

Whereas, in 1973, Reverend W. C. Graham began his tenure. Under his charge, the church’s appearance changed once again to a brick structure, adding three Sunday School rooms, a pastoral study, dining and cooking area, two choir areas, nurses station, playroom, and new lighting; and

Whereas, following Reverend Graham, Reverend Harry McGill, Jr., became pastor. In 1984, Reverend J. W. Cannady commenced his time as pastor and erected the present structure of St. Matthew. He also installed the first woman trustee and formed the first mass choir, subsequently named The J. W. Cannady Mass Choir; and

Whereas, Reverend Rufus Johnson, Jr., succeeded Reverend Cannady. He established the R. J. Johnson scholarship, which a short time later became the New St. Matthew, Johnsons Scholarship. After approximately four years, he was called home to the Lord, and Reverend Markel Graham became pastor. He served for three years and was followed by Reverend George Washington, who added the baptismal pool; and

Whereas, in 2014, a new church sign was added, and in 2015, Reverend Franklin Washington took the helm as pastor and spiritual leader; and

Whereas, the House of Representatives is pleased to honor the legacy celebrated by the New St. Matthew Missionary Baptist Church and wishes the congregation many more glorious anniversaries to come. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, celebrate the joyous occasion of the one hundred twenty‑seventh anniversary of the New St. Matthew Missionary Baptist Church and congratulate and commend Reverend Franklin Washington and the congregation for their years of dedicated service to the Bennettsville community.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to the New St. Matthew Missionary Baptist Church.

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