**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND CONGRATULATE SHILOH BAPTIST CHURCH OF BENNETTSVILLE ON THE OCCASION OF ITS HISTORIC ONE HUNDRED FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY AND TO COMMEND THE CHURCH FOR A CENTURY AND A HALF OF SERVICE TO GOD AND THE COMMUNITY.

Whereas, having been founded in 1867, Shiloh Baptist Church of Bennettsville is celebrating its historic one hundred fiftieth anniversary in 2017; and

Whereas, the Shiloh Baptist Church family began two years after the Emancipation Proclamation, when a few newly freed people sought a place to worship. Colonel Dudley, one of the earliest immigrants to America, gave them a cabin for religious services. This cabin was called the Community Building and served three groups: Baptist, Methodist, and Zion; and

Whereas, in 1870, the Reverend Caesar Munnerlyn led the Baptists to a baptismal service at Boldin Mill Pond. After this service, the group moved to a schoolhouse on Market Street known as the Old Bradford House. There, the foundation for Shiloh Baptist Church was laid. Reverend Munnerlyn, a man of great inspiration and determination, remained at Shiloh until September of 1878; and

Whereas, the Reverend Jesse Campbell succeeded Reverend Munnerlyn as pastor in October 1878. One year later, the Reverend Fleming W. Prince, his wife, and three children came to Shiloh. Reverend Prince, one of the first graduates of the University of South Carolina, was chosen to preach the second and fourth Sundays at Shiloh. Under his leadership, in late 1880 the present site of the church was sold by Mr. James B. Breeden for the sum of six hundred dollars to the church. In 1886, the congregation constructed a substantial frame building for the first Shiloh on this land; and

Whereas, following the enormously productive ministry of Reverend Prince, a number of other godly men served Shiloh Baptist as pastor. During this time, the original Shiloh burned, and the church family met at the former Marlboro County Training and High School on King Street. The church’s youth, children’s, and adult ministries were enlarged to include Vacation Bible School, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Sunshine Band, the church playground, Men’s Bible Class, Sunday School Forum, and a pastoral ministry to the elderly. In addition, the mortgage on the new parsonage and educational building was paid off. Yet more ministries were inaugurated: the Good Samaritan Club, Young Women’s Auxiliary, Male Chorus, Youth Usher Board, and Young Adult Choir. Later, the church added the Family Life Center, Arts and Crafts Program, Gospel Choir, Wednesday Night Bible Study, the property of Shiloh Park, a new church roof, and the Smith property; and

Whereas, the Reverend Dr. Coley Mearite of Clio accepted the call to serve as Shiloh’s fourteenth pastor in August 1996, and he continues to serve the present congregation. Dr. Mearite, as a man of vision, has led the church in making numerous improvements. These include purchasing a fifteen‑passenger Dodge Ram van, establishing the *Shiloh Informer*, organizing a brotherhood, establishing a scholarship fund, purchasing several plots of land across the street from Shiloh, and purchasing the building of the former Maggie Wright Nursing Home; and

Whereas, having grown over the years from about seventy to more than three hundred members, Shiloh Baptist Church has been a beacon of light and a community worship center in the Bennettsville area for one hundred 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 Shiloh Baptist Church of Bennettsville on the occasion of its historic one hundred fiftieth anniversary and commend the church for a century and a half of service to God and the community.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Shiloh Baptist Church.

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