**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND CONGRATULATE OLIVE BRANCH BAPTIST CHURCH OF BATESBURG‑LEESVILLE ON THE OCCASION OF ITS HISTORIC ONE HUNDRED THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY, AND TO COMMEND THE CHURCH FOR MORE THAN ONE AND A QUARTER CENTURIES OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY.

Whereas, having been founded in 1880, Olive Branch Baptist Church of Batesburg‑Leesville will celebrate its historic one hundred thirtieth anniversary on March 21, 2010; and

Whereas, more than one and a quarter centuries ago on the east side of Batesburg, Olive Branch Baptist Church was organized under the leadership of Reverend J.W. Williams, Deacon Robert Gunter, and Deacon Edward Mosley; and

Whereas, Sister Rachel Bouknight, whose life spanned one hundred fourteen years, was the driving force of the church’s origin. A simple picnic and the determination of a few developed into a Sunday School and evolved into the present‑day church; and

Whereas, since its inception, the church has held continuous worship services, with twenty‑five ministers bringing the Gospel of the grace of God to the world; and

Whereas, circumstances making it necessary for the church to be moved, the congregation selected a new site. Some years later, that structure was destroyed by fire. The church’s current facilities, constructed under the leadership of Reverend E. E. Bowens, are located on South Oak Street in Batesburg‑Leesville; and

Whereas, after construction of the new church, members made several improvements to their facilities, including brick‑veneering the church, remodeling the interior, laying a cornerstone, and installing central heat, stained‑glass windows, a sound system, hardwood floors, carpet, and new pews; and

Whereas, in 1985, the congregation purchased land west of the church and built a fellowship hall. In 2000, they purchased and furnished a parsonage; and

Whereas, standing on the faith and strength of its early pastors and members, Olive Branch Baptist Church’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, Olive Branch Baptist Church has been a beacon of light and a community worship center in Batesburg‑Leesville for one hundred thirty years, and, God willing, will continue its godly heritage in many more years of worship and service. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, recognize and congratulate Olive Branch Baptist Church of Batesburg‑Leesville on the occasion of its historic one hundred thirtieth anniversary, and commend the church for more than one and a quarter centuries of service to the community.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to Olive Branch Baptist Church.

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