**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR BETHEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF YORK COUNTY, UPON THE CELEBRATION OF ITS TWO HUNDRED FIFTY YEAR ANNIVERSARY AND TO COMMEND THE LONG AND BENEFICIAL IMPACT THAT THE CHURCH HAS HAD ON ITS COMMUNITY, STATE, AND NATION.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina General Assembly are pleased to learn that Bethel Presbyterian Church in Clover is celebrating its two hundred fiftieth anniversary of ministry; and

Whereas, founded in 1764, the church with its rich history predates the Revolutionary War and the United States itself; and

Whereas, many of Bethel’s members enjoy family lineage dating back to the late eighteenth century, and some have ancestors who were buried as early as the late 1700s in the adjoining cemetery; and

Whereas, the church had existed just over a decade at the onset of the Revolutionary War, which divided the State politically. Although support for the war in the Upstate was riddled with conflict, Bethel’s congregation unanimously stood in opposition to British rule; and

Whereas, before the Civil War, the church roster included almost one hundred slaves, and several black church members learned how to read the Bible at Bethel despite statewide laws that banned slaves from becoming literate; and

Whereas, on Sunday, January 12, 2014, the church began the year‑long celebration of its sestercentennial anniversary, which will feature several events, concluding in November; and

Whereas, for the commencement of the festivities, longtime church members donned the traditional garb of the church’s founders and dedicated a new roadside marker in front of the church’s main building along Highway 557 near Clover; and

Whereas, the marker details the church’s history as the oldest Presbyterian church in York County, founded when traveling conditions and population scarcity made formal worship houses rare in rural areas; and

Whereas, the church’s current white building, constructed in 1873, is the fourth in its history after previous buildings were lost due to fire or were updated. The church cemetery cradles the graves of fifty-two Revolutionary War soldiers, as well as seventy-six Civil War soldiers and dozens of other final resting sites for veterans of wars from World War I forward; and

Whereas, in 1980, the church was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The church has played a formidable role in shaping the greater community with the creation of several daughter churches in the county, as well as in Gaston County, North Carolina. The church has also expanded across the nation’s border into Monterrey and other cities across northern Mexico; and

Whereas, the South Carolina General Assembly appreciates the meaningful legacy that Bethel Presbyterian Church has had on the Palmetto State for a quarter of a millennium and celebrates with the congregants and church leaders as they continue its rich history. Now, therefore,

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

That the members of the South Carolina General Assembly, by this resolution, recognize and honor Bethel Presbyterian Church of York County, upon the celebration of its two hundred fifty year anniversary, and commend the long and beneficial impact that the church has had on its community, State, and nation.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to Reverend John Gess, pastor of Bethel Presbyterian Church.

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