**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND CONGRATULATE ST. JOHN’S CHAPEL OF CHARLESTON ON THE OCCASION OF ITS HISTORIC ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY‑FIFTH ANNIVERSARY AND TO COMMEND THE CHURCH FOR NEARLY TWO CENTURIES OF SERVICE TO GOD AND THE COMMUNITY.

Whereas, having been founded in 1839, St. John’s Chapel is celebrating its historic one hundred seventy‑fifth anniversary in 2014; and

Whereas, the Female Domestic Missionary Society, founded by Mrs. Sarah Dehon, widow of the venerable Bishop Theodore Dehon, rendered much service to the cause of Christ in those days, one of its landmark ministries being the carrying of the Gospel to the poor. A result of these efforts was the establishment of St. Stephen’s (1822) and St. John’s (1839), Charleston’s first two “free churches,” that is, churches in which parishioners did not have to pay rent for the use of pews; and

Whereas, St. John’s began as an outreach of St. Stephen’s. The Reverend Paul Trapier, missionary, with his assistant, the Reverend R.T. Howard, in connection with their labors centering at St. Stephen’s, began holding services in Hampstead in February 1839 in a rented schoolroom. Very soon, it was decided to build a chapel of wood. In 1831, the Society had acquired a lot in Hampstead Village and had used it in part as a burial ground for the city mission. This lot was selected as an appropriate place for the chapel, together with a contiguous lot now added. Opening for services October 12, St. John’s Chapel was located on Hanover Street a half mile north of the city wall; and

Whereas, through the blessings and challenges of the years, St. John’s grew and continued to minister the grace of God to its congregation and the surrounding area. Until the late 1930s, the chapel held services at the “almshouse,” the common name given the Charleston Home, located about two blocks from St. John’s as a refuge for Charleston’s poor and destitute. In addition, its ministers diligently served the lonely, sick, sorrowful, and spiritually needy; and

Whereas, after a long period of growth, St. John’s suffered a decline in membership in the 1950s, due to deterioration of the area in which the chapel was located, coupled with many city residents’ removal to the suburbs. Drastic steps were necessary for St. John’s to continue as a parish, so plans were made for its relocation west of the Ashley River; and

Whereas, on May 25, 1958, opening services were held in the new building on Arlington Drive, and growth returned. Disaster struck St. John’s in the early morning of November 29, 1959, when the Oakland building was totally destroyed by fire. Ministries were carried on in alternate facilities; and

Whereas, in 1962, St. John’s Chapel’s original site had become established as St. John’s Episcopal Mission Center. It became a source of life‑giving outreach ministry to Charleston’s Eastside until 1972, offering an adult night school, teenage clubs involving some sixty young people, and a daycare center manned by one woman serving thirty families. In 2006, this unique center, a church once more, commenced restoration and rebuilding; and

Whereas, St. John’s Chapel has been a beacon of light in the Charleston area for one hundred seventy‑five 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 St. John’s Chapel of Charleston on the occasion of its historic one hundred seventy‑fifth anniversary and commend the church for nearly two centuries of service to God and the community.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to the Reverend Dr. Dallas H. Wilson, Jr., vicar of St. John’s Chapel.

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