**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO EXPRESS THE PROFOUND SORROW OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY UPON THE PASSING OF THE NINE MEMBERS OF MOTHER EMANUEL AME CHURCH IN CHARLESTON WHOSE LIVES WERE TRAGICALLY CUT SHORT, TO CELEBRATE THEIR LIVES, AND TO EXTEND THE DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO THEIR FAMILIES AND MANY FRIENDS.

Whereas, the South Carolina General Assembly is deeply saddened by the untimely deaths of the nine members of Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston who on June 17, 2015, were attacked and slain by a gunman during a Wednesday night prayer meeting and Bible study at the church; and

Whereas, the General Assembly realizes that words are inadequate to express fully the grief of this State and nation concerning the tragedy that took place that night at Mother Emanuel. Nor can mere words bring full comfort to those most affected by this horrific loss. However, the families and friends of the victims may take comfort in the Word of God as recorded in Psalm 116:15 (KJV), “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints,” as well as in knowing that the nine who were taken from us were prepared to meet the Lord at any time, all of them being believers in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior. We remember them today, utilizing the words of United States Senator Tim Scott of South Carolina, spoken before his colleagues on the Senate floor on June 24, 2015:

We honor the Reverend Sharonda Coleman‑Singleton, a beloved teacher and coach at Goose Creek High School. Her son Chris has shown us all what an amazing mother she was through his strength over the past six days.

We honor Cynthia Hurd, whose love for education has been shared with so many over her thirty‑one years as a librarian in the public library system.

We honor Susie Jackson, who at eighty‑seven years young still offered her beautiful voice to the choir and had recently returned from visiting her family in Ohio.

We honor Ethel Lee Lance, who served her church with pride and whose daughter calls her the ‘strong woman who just tried to keep her family together.’

We honor Depayne Middleton‑Doctor, who dedicated her life to serving the poor and helping her students as an enrollment counselor at Southern Wesleyan University.

We honor [our] good friend, Reverend Clementa Pinckney, an amazing man of faith…, a wonderful father and husband, and a respected South Carolina state senator.

We honor Tywanza Sanders, beloved son of Tyrone and Felicia, whose warmth and heartfelt spirit have kept us moving.

We honor the Reverend Daniel Simmons, Sr., whose granddaughter said, ‘My granddaddy was an amazing man. It seemed like every time he spoke, it was pure wisdom.’

We honor Pastor Myra Thompson, who served the Lord with grace and dignity. She loved her children, her grandchildren, and her great‑grandchildren; and

Whereas, we do not limit our thoughts on this unspeakable calamity to the event itself; rather, we rejoice in the wonderfully astonishing, even miraculous, outpouring of reconciliation, forgiveness, love, and generous giving that have followed an action meant to cause racial division. A few examples of this marvelous deluge of grace must suffice to show the whole; and

Whereas, uncounted prayer meetings for the church, the families of the victims, and the City of Charleston have been held throughout this nation, and compassionate expressions of sympathy, encouragement, and admiration have poured in from people across America and beyond; and

Whereas, to show their support for Mother Emanuel AME Church, thousands of Charleston residents of all faiths, races, and ages formed a “Bridge to Peace” unity chain that extended all the way across the Arthur Ravenel Bridge; and

Whereas, about twenty members of the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) Environmental Services Department, who are trained in cleaning up operating rooms and trauma units, volunteered to clean Mother Emanuel’s fellowship hall, the site of the tragedy, and MUSC donated the supplies; and

Whereas, numerous groups and individuals have contributed, as of June 29, 2015, nearly a million dollars to the Mother Emanuel Hope Fund, set up by the City of Charleston to help defray funeral costs for the families of the victims and other expenses; and

Whereas, most inspiring of all, the immediate forgiveness extended to the gunman by the victims’ families, even in the face of great pain and loss, has loosed a mighty wind of reconciliation in this land like nothing we have witnessed in living memory. It has brought forth a nationwide desire to take action that proves this reconciliation is heart‑deep commitment, not merely words. For these blessings, we give thanks to Almighty God, and we pray He will increase this new spirit within us in the days ahead as we continue our earnest prayers for the families of the victims and Mother Emanuel AME Church; and

Whereas, these responses to the tragedy of nine families and Mother Emanuel AME Church showed South Carolina at its very best and, again, in the words of Senator Tim Scott, “was absolutely the best of who we are as Americans.” Mother Emanuel AME and the families of the Mother Emanuel Nine have led us to this place, and we bless them for it. 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, express their profound sorrow upon the passing of the nine members of Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston whose lives were tragically cut short, celebrate their lives, and extend the deepest sympathy to their families and many friends.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to the families of the Reverend Sharonda Coleman‑Singleton, Cynthia Hurd, Susie Jackson, Ethel Lee Lance, Depayne Middleton‑Doctor, the Reverend Clementa Pinckney, Tywanza Sanders, the Reverend Daniel Simmons, Sr., and Pastor Myra Thompson.

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