**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO CONGRATULATE THE CONGREGATION AND PASTOR OF GREATER ST. JAMES MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH AS THEY CELEBRATE THE MILESTONE OF THE CHURCH’S ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY AND TO COMMEND THEM FOR THEIR MEANINGFUL IMPACT ON THE BENNETTSVILLE COMMUNITY.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives are pleased to learn that Greater St. James Missionary Baptist Church of Marlboro County is celebrating its centennial anniversary in 2016; and

Whereas, guided by the Holy Spirit, Greater St. James is known for developing Christian character in its members and wielding significant influence throughout the Bennettsville area; and

Whereas, in a house only a few hundred feet from the location of the current sanctuary, Reverend S. L. Williams, Deacon F. B. Bridges, and Deacon J. W. Cooper organized the church in 1916. After the land was purchased in 1918, construction of the church building was completed in 1919, and the nascent church was called St. James Missionary Baptist Church; and

Whereas, the first pastor, Reverend S. L. Williams, lived near the church in a house donated by the members. Other ministers who served as pastor include Reverend S. S. Youngblood, Reverend W. McMillian, Reverend W. M. Powe, Reverend W. M. Mackey, Reverend G. W. Ware, and Reverend N. T. Robinson, Jr.; and

Whereas, under the leadership of Reverend Ware, who served the congregation faithfully for fifteen years, the old church structure was partially replaced. Several improvements to the physical structure and to the campus grounds of the church were made during the tenure of Reverend Robinson, and under his leadership, the church name was changed to Greater St. James; and

Whereas, many members of Greater St. James have been called to preach the Gospel, and numerous ministries were started while Reverend Robinson served as pastor, such as the Gospel Choir, Adult Spiritual Choir, Junior Choir, Male Chorus, Mass Choir, Youth Choir, Tot Choir, Pastor’s Aide, Willing Workers, and Layman’s League; and

Whereas, the church holds membership in the Berea Missionary Baptist Association, South Carolina Baptist Educational and Missionary Convention; Pee Dee Union; Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.; South Carolina Baptist Brotherhood; and South Carolina Sunday School Congress; and

Whereas, with a desire to encourage the church members to greater service for God, Reverend James E. Smith became pastor of Greater St. James in 2002 and believes that the primary mission of the church is to tell others about their Savior, Jesus Christ; and

Whereas, under Reverend Smith’s leadership, church membership has increased, souls have been saved, many have been baptized, improvements have been made to existing church ministries, and additional ministries have been added to Greater St. James; and

Whereas, in 2012, the church began a renovation and expansion project, that included a new pulpit, choir, baptistery, restroom facilities, Sunday school classes, dining hall, kitchen, finance room, church office, and pastor’s study; and

Whereas, as the church continues to grow and worship God in spirit and in truth, the South Carolina House of Representatives applauds the service that Greater St. James has given over the past century to point the way for others to serve the true and living God and to follow where the Holy Spirit leads. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, congratulates the congregation and pastor of Greater St. James Missionary Baptist Church as they celebrate the milestone of the church’s one hundredth anniversary and commends them for their meaningful impact on the Bennettsville community.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Reverend James E. Smith.

‑‑‑‑XX‑‑‑‑