**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO CONGRATULATE SMYRNA BAPTIST CHURCH UPON THE OCCASION OF ITS 145TH ANNIVERSARY, TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR THE CHURCH FOR ITS DEEP HERITAGE IN SPRINGFIELD, AND TO COMMEND ITS LEADERSHIP AND CONGREGATION FOR THEIR MANY YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina Senate are pleased to recognize and honor Smyrna Baptist Church as it celebrates this milestone on April 8, 2018; and

Whereas, during the days of slavery, the African American members of the Springfield community were permitted to join the white congregation of Tabernacle Baptist Church in their balcony. They lifted their voices to God in prayers, praises, and songs both in church and while laboring, sometimes from dawn to dusk; and

Whereas, approximately ten years after being freed, these members set out to organize a new church, with letters given to Brothers Charles Staley and George Kitchings; Sisters Harriet Evans, Mary Ann Coleman, Fannie Henderson, and Frances Pontoo; and a few others. Ten acres of land were donated by a member of Tabernacle Baptist Church, Mr. James “Bub” Kitchings Brodie. The land’s nearby location was ideal, as the majority of the African American community lived in the area, and the property included a beautiful stream of water suitable for developing a baptismal pool; and

Whereas, Smyrna Baptist Church was officially organized in 1873, with regular service scheduled for the second Sunday in each month. Reverend William Dukes from Barnwell County was the church’s first pastor, and Brothers George Kitchings and Charles Staley were its first deacons. Jacob P. Posey served as clerk. Reverend J. E. Zeigler, a white minister, served as moderator and his son, Felder, as clerk; and

Whereas, Smyrna has been blessed with a number of outstanding pastors over the years, including Reverends R. D. Rice, P. P. Watson, A. B. Brodie, J. T. Barnes, G. W. Raiford, R. W. Baylor, W. P. Jones, J. E. Kirkland, J. D. Brooks, J. A. Myers, Boizer, W. B. Coleman, Ruben Dix, C. L. Cherry, P. W. Drumming, Willie L. Watson, L. Jones, B. Dingle, Grady F. Fulmer, E. L. White, Jimmy Flowers, and Ivery Burnette, Jr. Maxwell Goodman currently serves as pastor; and

Whereas, since Smyrna was organized, several hundred members have confessed Christ as their Lord. In honor of the church’s rich heritage, it now houses a time capsule in its baptismal pool, prepared on December 30, 1999 and to be opened in December 2050. The capsule includes a history of the church; an installation service bulletin; a newsletter; the names, addresses, and birthdays of several members; a copy of the minutes of the Beaver Creek Baptist Association; and several other religious items; and

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina Senate are grateful for the ministry of Smyrna Baptist Church and its service to the community of Springfield and the State of South Carolina. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, congratulate Smyrna Baptist Church upon the occasion of its 145th anniversary, recognize and honor the church for its deep heritage in Springfield, and commend its leadership and congregation for their many years of service to the community.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Smyrna Baptist Church.

‑‑‑‑XX‑‑‑‑