**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND CONGRATULATE BENNETTSVILLE FIRST CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE ON THE OCCASION OF ITS HISTORIC NINETIETH ANNIVERSARY AND TO COMMEND THE CHURCH FOR NEARLY A CENTURY OF SERVICE TO GOD AND THE COMMUNITY.

Whereas, having been founded in 1926, Bennettsville First Church of the Nazarene is celebrating its historic ninetieth anniversary in 2016, with a special celebration planned for Sunday, October 9; and

Whereas, in October 1926, services were started in Bennettsville by several interested churches and ministers, the Reverends St. Clair, W.H. Self, and Walter O’Hara being in charge. After three weeks of revival, in November 1926 an organizational meeting was held in the home of Martha F. Odom. She and several others became charter members of Bennettsville First Church of the Nazarene; and

Whereas, the first services of the newly fledged congregation were held in a house on Atkins Street. Later, a lot was obtained on the corner of Jennings and Boucher streets, where a large tabernacle was erected. The wood‑burning stove was not sufficient to keep the congregation warm in winter, nor was the building protective enough during summer to keep the sun’s rays out. However, these conditions did not dampen the spirits of the congregation. Attendance was always good, and revival seemed to be constantly in progress; and

Whereas, with sixteen charter members on the roll, the Reverend W.M. Mills accepted the call to be the church’s first pastor. New members were regularly added, and in 1931 the groundwork for a permanent building was laid. During the 1930s, the old tabernacle was removed, and the present building was started; and

Whereas, much credit is due the early Bennettsville First Church pastors and members for their faithfulness during the Great Depression. Many times the church had to pray for help to meet its obligations. Those sincere prayers were always answered; and

Whereas, in 1937, the sanctuary was completed. Plans were made to purchase more land for other buildings as needed. In the 1940s, work was started on new Sunday School facilities. In addition, Mrs. Pearson willed a substantial sum to the church. Gifts such as this gave the church a financial boost in those early years; and

Whereas, in the late 1940s, Sunday School facilities were completed, and church membership reached one hundred, with a large Sunday School attendance. Another milestone was the purchase of the property next door to the church, which served as the parsonage until 1975; and

Whereas, in the early 1960s, the church grew in spiritual strength and numbers. The fellowship hall was built, adding greatly to the overall ministry of the church. Since that time, the church has continued to grow, and many people have been brought to a new knowledge of Jesus Christ; and

Whereas, a new parsonage was purchased in 1975, releasing the old parsonage for much‑needed Sunday School space. That same year, a longtime dream became reality when the parking lot in back of the church was paved. This enhanced the value of the church property and greatly added to the convenience of entering the church; and

Whereas, Bennettsville First Church of the Nazarene has been a beacon of light and a community worship center in the Bennettsville area for ninety 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 Bennettsville First Church of the Nazarene on the occasion of its historic ninetieth anniversary and commend the church for nearly a century of service to God and the community.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Bennettsville First Church of the Nazarene.

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