**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR SMYRNA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IN BENNETTSVILLE FOR ITS MEANINGFUL IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY AND TO CONGRATULATE THE PASTOR AND THE CONGREGATION AS THEY CELEBRATE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY‑FOUR YEARS OF FAITHFUL SERVICE TO THEIR GOD.

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives is pleased to learn that Smyrna United Methodist Church (UMC) will celebrate its one hundred seventy‑fourth anniversary on October 13, 2019; and

Whereas, the first gathering of believers in the Smyrna fellowship took place in 1845 under a brush arbor built for that purpose atop a picturesque hill. Near a quiet pond three fourths of a mile from the original brush arbor, the second church was built, and another church was built in 1883. The fourth sanctuary, which is the present building, was built in 1928, an organ and pews were purchased and installed, and outdoor restrooms were built and added; and

Whereas, at Smyrna UMC’s 1974 homecoming on the second Sunday in October, nineteen cousins living in Brooklyn, New York, chartered a bus to make the trip to attend the reunion in the church of their youth. The family left the church a generous donation that enabled the congregation to complete a number of projects; and

Whereas, when a massive funnel tornado ripped through Marlboro County on the night of March 28, 1984, several parts of the church building were shattered, but Smyrna was able to meet with its sister church, St. Michael UMC, for a few months; and

Whereas, through the generosity and assistance of the South Carolina Conference, the Bennettsville Church Mission, and other churches, groups, and individuals, the congregation reentered a resurrected Smyrna UMC, and by September 1989, the church held a mortgage‑burning ceremony to celebrate the retiring of the mortgage; and

Whereas, many projects were completed to physically enhance the church, including restoration work on the Smyrna cemetery, and additional equipment was purchased for the church that included a piano and choir chairs; and

Whereas, the Sunbeam Choir was formed for children and was later renamed the Hallelujah Praise Team. Adult teams minister once a month to two nursing homes in the community, and Sunday school has become a vital part of the church’s growth; and

Whereas, church youth joined the Adopt‑A‑Highway program to keep roadways in front of the church clean and free of litter, and they started Smyrna United Methodist in Times (S.U.I.T.S.), a dance group that performs once a month during the worship service; and

Whereas, during the 2017 South Carolina Annual Conference, Smyrna UMC was awarded the Bishop’s Five Star Award for Excellence in Evangelism; and

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives celebrates with the members of Smyrna UMC on reaching one hundred seventy‑four years and wishes them many years of continued blessings in the church and the community. 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 honor Smyrna United Methodist Church in Bennettsville for its meaningful impact on the community and congratulate the pastor and the congregation as they celebrate one hundred seventy‑four years of faithful service to their God.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Reverend Ebbie Abraham, pastor of Smyrna United Methodist Church.

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