**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO COMMEND AARON TEMPLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IN BENNETTSVILLE FOR NEARLY ONE AND A HALF CENTURIES OF MINISTRY IN AND SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY AND TO EXTEND WARMEST CONGRATULATIONS ON THE OCCASION OF THE CHURCH’S HISTORIC ANNIVERSARY.

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives is pleased to learn that Aaron Temple United Methodist Church is celebrating the milestone of its one hundred forty‑ninth anniversary; and

Whereas, after Emancipation, many Blacks withdrew from white churches and established the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1870, Mrs. Harriet Quick ceded an acre of land for building a place of worship in the Sandhills Community, but before the church was completed, the congregation met under a brush harbor; and

Whereas, the first wooden building housed a large bell in the steeple, used to signify the start of services or a death in the community. The church’s cornerstone reads, “Aaron’s Temple Methodist Episcopal Church, 1928 trustees: A. L. Bright, E. A. Quick, W. B. Bristow.” The Reverend H. J. Kirk was the pastor; and

Whereas, under the leadership of Reverend L. A. Gelzer in 1944, the church, a white concrete block structure with two small annex rooms, was rebuilt as a place for children, youth, and seniors to flourish spiritually through the church’s ministries; and

Whereas, the church was initially in the North Marlboro Charge servicing Aaron Temple, Shiloh, and Smyrna churches. In 1967, the church became part of the Bennettsville Circuit which included Ebenezer, Level Green, and Old Galilee churches; and

Whereas, class leaders were appointed in the Sunday school, and each class leader was assigned to specific church members to stay in contact with them for spiritual, as well as financial support; and

Whereas, the church was blessed with pastors to lead the church and to care for the souls of the congregation’s members. After Reverend Gelzer, the following pastors served the congregation: Reverends C. C. Clark; J. A. Curry; J. K. Davis in 1952; P. E. Singletary, serving two years; G. W. Wright in 1961, J. R. Clark, serving two years; M. C. Brown in 1970; Joseph McAllister, Sr., in 1972; E. W. Williams from 1979 to 1981; Thomas Campbell; Norman Brown; Major Brown III in 1988; Charles Branch; Eddie Thomas from 1995 to 2000; Jimelvia Pettiford Martin, the first female minister; Ronald Lucas; Herbert Fogle; Shawn Weeks, the second female pastor; and the current pastor, LaSheila Mack Wyatt; and

Whereas, today the facility includes a kitchen, library, pastor’s study, fellowship hall, Sunday school rooms, restrooms, and thirteen additional acres. Along with other improvements over the years, the South Carolina state flag and the Christian flag were donated; and

Whereas, the congregation of Aaron Temple UMC has a strong desire for all to hear God’s Word, the foundation on which the church was established. A variety of ministries help to ensure the spiritual growth of the members, including Bible studies taught in all Sunday school classes, annual revival services, and a Watch Night Service; and

Whereas, an outgrowth of the Sunday school program has been the annual vacation Bible school offered to all children and adults in the surrounding communities. The church continues to participate in the Relay for Life with the American Cancer Society, averaging a donation of over two thousand five hundred dollars each year. The church celebrates special community events, including Family and Friends Day, the Red and White Ball, the Annual Homecoming Celebration, and the Black History Celebration; and

Whereas, with their eyes fixed on Jesus, the members of Aaron Temple UMC value the many ministries of the church and those who volunteer to offer spiritual energy and encouragement to fulfill their mission: “to reach out to all people, accept them as they are, and nurture them to become better Christian disciples.” Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, commend Aaron Temple United Methodist Church in Bennettsville for nearly one and a half centuries of ministry in and service to the community and extend warmest congratulations on the occasion of the church’s historic anniversary.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Reverend LaSheila Wyatt.

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