**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND COMMEND EVANS METROPOLITAN AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH OF BENNETTSVILLE FOR ITS MANY YEARS OF FAITHFUL SERVICE TO GOD AND THE COMMUNITY AND TO EXTEND BEST WISHES TO EVANS METROPOLITAN FOR MANY MORE YEARS OF JOY IN SERVING.

Whereas, as reported by church historians, “Early worshippers [of what was to become Evans Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Zion Church of Bennettsville] organized in 1867, shortly after being freed from slavery. Colonel Dudley gave them a cabin for worship services. This structure was called the Community Building and was located on the corner of Marshall and Hudson streets”; and

Whereas, the date of the actual establishing of Bennettsville (later Evans Chapel) AME Zion Church, as it was first called, is unknown. The earliest known pastor was the Reverend S.W. Graham in 1908, and the first known structure was built in 1911. A short time later, it was destroyed by fire but was rebuilt in 1915; and

Whereas, five years later, once again the church suffered destruction of its building by fire. In 1935, the present structure was built, and since that time, the congregation has enjoyed eighty‑five years of worship and service as unto the Lord in that holy place. Under the leadership of the Reverend Dr. John R. Funderburk, presiding elder of the Cheraw‑Bennettsville District, the cornerstone was laid, and the church’s name was changed from Evans Chapel to Evans Metropolitan; and

Whereas, following Elder Funderburk’s service as pastor, the Reverend V.O. Jefferies was appointed in 1953 as the first female pastor of the church. Under her leadership, the church’s dining facilities were remodeled, new pews were installed, and a new organ was·purchased. In 1971, the Reverend Carl Glenn was appointed as pastor. He led the church in the installing of new windows and a central heating and air system. The church’s next pastror was the Reverend R.C. Scotti, followed by the Reverend J.W. Greene, who led the church in remodeling the fellowship hall. Over the years, the members of the congregation saw other repairs and renovations take place and began pushing toward liquidating their mortgage. They accomplished that goal under the leadership of the Reverend Willie Frances Davis, named pastor in 2005; and

Whereas, presently led by the Reverend John L. York, who took up his duties as pastor in 2018, Evans Metropolitan continues to repair and renovate its facilities and strives to go forward, serving in the Lord’s name; and

Whereas, Evans Metropolitan AME Zion Church has been a beacon of light and a community worship center in the Bennettsville area for generations, and, God willing, will continue its godly heritage for generations yet to come. 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 commend Evans Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church of Bennettsville for its many years of faithful service to God and the community and extend best wishes to Evans Metropolitan for many more years of joy in serving.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Evans Metropolitan AME Zion Church.

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