**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR THE MEMBERS OF SAWMILL BAPTIST CHURCH IN MARLBORO COUNTY ON THE OCCASION OF ITS HISTORIC BICENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY IN 2020 AND TO COMMEND THE CHURCH FOR MORE THAN TWO CENTURIES OF SERVICE TO GOD AND THE COMMUNITY.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives are pleased to learn that Sawmill Baptist Church will celebrate its two hundredth anniversary on December 29, 2020; and

Whereas, Sawmill Baptist origins date back to 1738, when the Welsh Neck Church was established by Welsh settlers about twelve miles west of Bennettsville near the road leading from Bennettsville to Society Hill. Having laid the foundation for a prosperous Church, this devoted company of believers established several churches following Baptist principles, including Cheraw in 1782, Brownsville in 1788, and Salem in 1793. Members of the Cheraw church living on the east side of the Pee Dee River would later be dismissed to organize Sawmill Baptist Church in 1820, on account of the traveling difficulties posed by bad roads and having to cross the river to reach Cheraw. Joshua Lewis was the first pastor of Sawmill Baptist; and

Whereas, the Welsh Neck was one of the four churches to form the Charleston Association on October 21, 1751. By November, 1821, the Charleston Association had expanded to include fifty‑two churches, with Sawmill Baptist being among them; and

Whereas, in 1832, Sawmill Baptist began to undergo a change, as families of the original white congregation decided to follow the community as it began to move from the riverside toward higher ground, organizing and building Thomas Memorial Baptist Church in Bennettsville. These former members of Sawmill Baptist left the church to the remaining African American members of the congregation, on the condition the original Baptist faith would remain the same. The pastor at the time, Reverend W.Z. Beatie, continued to serve the congregation of Sawmill, where he dedicated forty‑two years of his life serving at Thomas Memorial Baptist Church from 1837 until 1852; and

Whereas, from its humble beginnings, Sawmill Baptist has enjoyed a rich history of ministry from many fine Christian souls who have devoted themselves to God, as well as to the betterment of the Church and its people. Surviving a fire which destroyed the building during Reverend J.J. Harrison’s tenure, and flourishing while under the leadership of Reverend Edward McKeiver Booker and Reverend Moultrie George Barr, Sawmill has weathered the storms and triumphantly celebrated victories that time has delivered through God’s grace; and

Whereas, Sawmill Baptist, now led by South Carolina native Reverend James J. Anderson, celebrates its two hundredth year serving God and passing on a prolific heritage of faith. 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 the members of Sawmill Baptist Church in Marlboro County on the occasion of its historic bicentennial anniversary in 2020 and to commend the church for more than two centuries of service to God and the community.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Reverend James J. Anderson.

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