**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR THE MEMBERS OF FERRY FIELD MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH IN CHARLESTON COUNTY ON THE OCCASION OF ITS HISTORIC ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY‑FIFTH ANNIVERSARY IN 2020, TO COMMEMORATE THEIR MORTGAGE BURNING CEREMONY, AND TO COMMEND ITS LEADERSHIP AND CONGREGATION FOR THEIR MANY YEARS OF SERVICE TO GOD AND THE COMMUNITY.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives are pleased to learn that Ferry Field Missionary Baptist Church will celebrate its one hundred and thirty‑fifth anniversary on July 18, 2020; and

Whereas, Ferry Field’s origins date back to 1885, when the church was founded as Bare Foot Baptist Church. Moses Pinckney, Kitt Simmons, Robert Boston, and Ben Visit, the committee for Bare Foot Baptist Church, purchased three acres of land for forty‑five dollars. Services overseen by the first elected pastor, Reverend Polly, were held in a bush tent. During his pastorate, a small wooden church was built; however, after its destruction by fire in 1911, it was rebuilt as a cinder block church under the name Ferry Field Baptist Church in honor of Ferry Field Plantation from which the land was divided; and

Whereas, the church was served from 1947 until 1970 by Reverend Isaac John Godfrey and his wife, Elizabeth “Lizzie” Godfrey. During this period, Reverend Godfrey pastored both Ferry Field and its sister church, Springfield Baptist. He also oversaw the improvement of church facilities, including the installation of an indoor baptismal pool as a response to near drownings in the Stono River of baptismal candidates from a neighboring church; and

Whereas, Reverend Jeronica Gadsden was elected pastor in 1971, and led the church until 1991, serving with his wife, Mae Gadsden. During his pastorate, Ferry Field experienced its largest growth in membership. Under his watchful guidance and with the exceptional participation of the congregation, a vast array of major renovation projects took place to improve existing facilities so they might better serve the many needs of the community; and

Whereas, the leadership of Ferry Field passed to Reverend Edward Gilliard, Sr., upon his election in 1992. He served the congregation along with his wife, Celestine Gilliard, until 2007. During his tenure, construction of a new brick church building began in 2002, after much deliberation, planning, and eventual approval by the congregation. Upon completion, the new structure was consecrated and dedicated on Saturday, October 4, 2003; and

Whereas, Reverend James R. Townes was elected in 2009, and continues to serve Ferry Field along with his wife, Dr. Faye Hicks Townes. Under his leadership, “Missionary” was added to the name of the church to clearly identify Ferry Field’s purpose; and

Whereas, from its humble beginnings, Ferry Field Missionary 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. As a strong and devoted congregation, Ferry Field has weathered the storms and triumphantly celebrated victories that time has delivered through God’s grace; and

Whereas, Ferry Field Missionary Baptist, led by Reverend James R. Townes, celebrates its one hundred and thirty‑fifth 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 Ferry Field Missionary Baptist Church in Charleston County on the occasion of its historic one hundred and thirty‑fifth anniversary in 2020, commemorate their mortgage burning ceremony, and commend the leadership and congregation for their many years of service to God and the community.

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

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