**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO CONGRATULATE OLD MOUNT ZION BAPTIST CHURCH ON THE OCCASION OF ITS HISTORIC ONE HUNDRED SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY AND TO COMMEND THE CHURCH FOR MORE THAN A CENTURY AND A HALF OF SERVICE TO GOD AND THE COMMUNITY.

Whereas, founded in 1861, Old Mount Zion Baptist Church will gather to celebrate its one hundred sixtieth anniversary of gospel ministry on Sunday, August 8, 2021. Old Mount Zion, led by the Reverend Dr. Danny R. Webb since 2008, has sought to carry out the Great Commission with faithfulness and dedication; and

Whereas, Old Mount Zion Baptist Church had its inception under a bush harbor in 1861. In prior days, both white and black worshipped at Fellowship Baptist Church, which was located about one and a half miles north of Old Mount Zion’s present location in the Epworth Community of Greenwood County. Past and present church generations owe the Kinard family a debt of gratitude for donating the first plot of land for the first church and for selling enough land to expand the church facilities to accommodate a place for a school and burial grounds; and

Whereas, the first permanent church, which was destroyed by fire, was rebuilt in 1880. Old Mount Zion experienced some challenging times during this period, but the church continued to survive and thrive under the leadership of its first pastor, the Reverend Ned Starks, whose tenure lasted from 1861 to 1886. Between 1870 and 1887, four daughter churches of Old Mount Zion developed within a radius of five to twenty miles: Young Mount Zion, Mount Olive, Marshall Chapel, and Enoree Zion; and

Whereas, the Reverend James Foster Marshall was elected pastor of Old Mount Zion Baptist Church in 1886, just as the church was beginning to experience rapid growth. A deacon board was organized during his first year as pastor, and a few years later during the early 1900s the facility was enlarged by the addition of a wing on each side of the church. This increased seating capacity to seven hundred fifty people; and

Whereas, the Reverend G. “Ernest” Goode was headmaster of the Old Mount Zion Elementary Church School, grades one through eight, located on the church premises; and

Whereas, seventy‑one years out of slavery, Old Mount Zion Baptist Church celebrated seventy‑five years of continuous service since its inception. Over the years, the church’s facilities underwent various improvements; and

Whereas, in the twentieth century, Old Mount Zion experienced extended growth in auxiliaries, services, and facilities, and this growth has continued. In the early 1970s, the church began having full services twice a month, second Sunday morning and fourth Sunday evening. In 1974, plans were made for a new church building, which was completed in 1976, with Reverend Henry J. Dicks as pastor. During the 1990s, Old Mount Zion continued to evolve, including with the election of the first female trustees by church members in 1992; and

Whereas, in the twenty‑first century, Old Mount Zion became affiliated with the Congregational Nurse Program, sponsored by Self Memorial Hospital to provide health screenings. In 2012, Pastor Webb led the initiative to establish the church’s website, and a committee was formed to establish a church scholarship fund; and

Whereas, Old Mount Zion Baptist Church has been a beacon of light and a community worship center in Greenwood County for one hundred sixty years, and, God willing, will continue its godly heritage for many more years of worship and service. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, congratulate Old Mount Zion Baptist Church on the occasion of its historic one hundred sixtieth anniversary and commend the church for more than a century and a half of service to God and the community.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Old Mount Zion Baptist Church.

‑‑‑‑XX‑‑‑‑