**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR ERIK ESTEP, FOUNDING PASTOR OF VILLAGE CHURCH IN BLYTHEWOOD, AND HIS WIFE, EMILY, AND TO COMMEND THEM FOR TWENTY YEARS OF FAITHFUL SERVICE TO THEIR GOD, THE CONGREGATION, AND THE BLYTHEWOOD COMMUNITY.

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives is pleased to learn that Village Church will celebrate its twentieth anniversary of ministry in Blythewood on March 27, 2022; and

Whereas, Erik Estep grew up in Oklahoma, and moved to South Carolina as a senior in high school. He graduated from Spring Valley High School and earned a bachelor’s degree from Furman University and a master’s degree from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary; and

Whereas, Eric met his beloved wife, Emily, while he was a student at Furman. They were married in 1992, and together they have reared three fine children: Hank, Glyn, and Janie; and

Whereas, sponsored by First Baptist of Columbia, Village Church was founded by Erik and Emily Estep on March 27, 2002, and held its first services at Bethel Hanberry Elementary School and Lake Carolina Elementary School; and

Whereas, in April 2009, Village Church broke ground on its present Blythewood campus on Rimer Pond Road, and in February 2020 the congregation opened a nascent church at Park Street in downtown Columbia. The congregation has grown from a family of five worshipers to requiring three services in two locations every Sunday morning, with approximately one thousand in attendance; and

Whereas, Village Church has been committed to serving and enriching the Blythewood and greater Northeast Columbia communities through family‑oriented community events such as the church’s Easter Eggstravaganza and Lake Scareolina; and

Whereas, in order to invest in students and staff at Richland 2 elementary, middle, and high schools, Village Church has served them and their athletic departments through Fellowship of Christian Athletes and by supplying volunteers for Friday night football, Muffins for Moms, Grits for Grands, and Donuts for Dads; and

Whereas, dedicated to meeting needs for children and students, Village Church provides weekly activities, vacation Bible school, camps, retreats, and leadership training; and

Whereas, Village Church hosted its first revival at Doko Park in March 2021 with two thousand people in attendance and many coming into a relationship with Jesus for the first time; and

Whereas, as well as men’s and women’s ministries and weekly small groups, Village Church also established campus, community, civics, and care ministries known as C4 to encourage church members to engage the culture by proclaiming the name of Jesus in these arenas; and

Whereas, committed to the Great Commission mandate to reach the ends of the earth, the church began a partnership with an orphanage in Haiti following its devastating 2010 earthquake, and with missionaries from Blythewood who presently serve the Samburu people in Kenya; and

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives deeply appreciates the ministry of Erik Estep, as he has faithfully presented the gospel and its message of hope to the Blythewood community and beyond for two decades, and of Emily Estep who has devotedly and tirelessly served the congregants with him. 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 Erik Estep, founding pastor of Village Church in Blythewood, and his wife, Emily, and commend them for twenty years of faithful service to their God, the congregation, and the Blythewood community.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Pastor and Mrs. Erik Estep.

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