**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO CONGRATULATE AND COMMEND THE CONGREGATION OF FRANCIS BURNS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH FOR SIXTY YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE IN THE MIDLANDS AND TO CELEBRATE THE JOYOUS OCCASION OF THEIR SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives are pleased to learn that the Francis Burns United Methodist Church (FBUMC) celebrates its sixtieth anniversary in 2022; and

Whereas, in the fall of 1961, Rev. I. DeQuincey Newman, the field director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and an active member of the South Carolina Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Board of Missions of Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church initiated a survey that found a new church was needed in Northeast Columbia. The first worship service was held on January 14, 1962, at the Fairwold Elementary School in Columbia; and

Whereas, in February 1962, Rev. William M. Stokes, District Superintendent, and Rev. F. G. Dubois, pastor of Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church, conducted a chartering ceremony at Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church in which twenty‑two people were in attendance. They elected seven members to serve as officers and elected Mr. Joseph Hope, Mr. Claude McCollom, and Mr. Vernon Spells as the first members of the trustee board; and

Whereas, the name Francis Burns was chosen to honor and perpetuate the name of the first African American elected to the episcopacy of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1858, Francis Burns, a native of Albany, New York, became the first African American bishop and served as the missionary bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Liberia in West Africa; and

Whereas, the initial church services were held in the homes of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Gass and Rev. and Mrs. I. DeQuincey Newman. On April 7, 1963, they were finally able to hold an official opening service in a house at the Koon and Ames Road site; and

Whereas, with a storied history, FBUMC has been led by numerous skilled individuals including Rev. Newman, Rev. Samuel Gadsden, Rev. John W. Robinson, Rev. William M. Stokes, Rev. H. Samuel Johnson, Rev. Edward H. McDowell, Jr., Rev. Mack C. McClam, Rev. Leatha Brown, Rev. Thomas J. Bowman, Rev. Shelia Elliott, Rev. John Pearson, Rev. Ernest Etheredge, Rev. James Friday, and Rev. Luther Quick; and

Whereas, during the sixty year history of FBUMC, two beautiful edifices have been constructed, including the current site of worship which was dedicated on January 16, 1994, a parsonage was purchased, and the mortgage for each project has been fully paid through the strong dedication of the congregation; and

Whereas, in 2019, FBUMC reached a new milestone as it received its first female senior pastor, Rev. Geneva Stafford. Under her excellent leadership, the church and its more than thirty ministries have continued to flourish and provide strong Christian leadership in Columbia; and

Whereas, through God’s grace, FBUMC has established a rich heritage spanning six decades which has weathered many storms both past and present. The South Carolina House of Representatives wishes to join with the congregation as they now celebrate the church’s many victories and rich heritage of faith upon the milestone of the its sixtieth anniversary. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, congratulate and commend the congregation of Francis Burns United Methodist Church for sixty years of dedicated service in the midlands and celebrate the joyous occasion of their sixtieth anniversary.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Reverend Geneva Stafford for the Francis Burns Methodist Church.

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