**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND CONGRATULATE ROCKY MOUNT MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH OF GREENVILLE 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, Rocky Mount’s beginnings go back to 1844 when its founders were part of Berea White Baptist Church. Because it was the only church serving the area, Berea accepted black slaves as members of their congregation. In 1870, Henry Hunt became the first black to be ordained a minister of the Baptist faith in Berea Baptist Church by Dr. Furman and the Reverend B.F. Miller; and

Whereas, in 1876, Rocky Mount’s founders organized their brush arbors into a church in Mr. and Mrs. Bub Walker’s yard. The Reverend Gabriel Poole, pastor of Greenville’s Springfield Baptist Church, organized the new Rocky Mount Missionary Baptist Church, assisted by the Reverend Jeff Young and thirty members. Pastored by the Reverend A. Fuller, the fledgling congregation was blessed by the Lord in many ways, and two acres of land were purchased for the church’s future growth; and

Whereas, in 1891, the old edifice of Berea White Baptist Church was given to Rocky Mount. The structure was rolled down the road to become Rocky Mount Missionary Baptist Church’s first building. It reputedly was made from hewn framework with homemade boards for roofing. The ceiling was made of hand‑dressed planks. The dimension of the building, which was held together with wooden pegs, was thirty or forty feet. Planks held together with wooden pegs also served as pews; and

Whereas, since those early days, many improvements and additions have been incorporated into the church’s facilities and numerous ministries instituted. The Women’s Missionary Society, Baptist Training Union, various choirs, Vacation Bible School, and full‑time worship services are among the ministries inaugurated along the way, and facility improvements have included carpeted floors, indoor restrooms, an organ, a baby grand piano, stained glass windows, central heating and air, and a church library; and

Whereas, in February 1973, the Reverend Otis O. Pickett, Sr., was elected pastor. The current building that houses Rocky Mount Missionary Baptist Church was built under his leadership; and

Whereas, in June 2007, the church’s present undershepherd, Pastor LaVelle McCray, took up his duties at Rocky Mount. Under the leadership of this young, energetic pastor, the church has purchased the land next door and established a leadership council, praise team, and other new ministries; and

Whereas, on Sunday, May 25, 2014, the grateful congregation of Rocky Mount Missionary Baptist will hold a special commemorative service to celebrate God’s faithfulness to the church, both spiritually and materially, over more than a century and a half; and

Whereas, standing on the faith and strength of its early pastors and members, Rocky Mount’s present congregation “presses toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14), continuing to preach and teach the Word of God; and

Whereas, Rocky Mount Missionary Baptist Church has been a beacon of light in the Greenville area for one hundred sixty years, and, God willing, will continue its godly heritage in many more years of worship and service. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, recognize and congratulate Rocky Mount Missionary Baptist Church of Greenville 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 provided to Rocky Mount Missionary Baptist Church.

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