**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR ST. MATTHEW BAPTIST CHURCH UPON THE OCCASION OF ITS ONE HUNDRED FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY, AND TO COMMEND THE CONGREGATION AND THE PASTOR FOR A CENTURY AND A HALF OF SERVICE TO GOD AND OF MINISTERING TO THE SPIRITUAL NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY.

Whereas, the South Carolina Senate is pleased to learn that the members of St. Matthew Baptist Church in Reevesville will celebrate its sesquicentennial anniversary in 2016; and

Whereas, St. Matthew Baptist Church was brought into existence in 1866 as a daughter of Jericho Baptist Church, also located in Reevesville, through the vision of Mr. H. Joyner, Mr. W. Bryant, and Mr. W. Brown, who first ventured to find land where they could build a place of worship; and

Whereas, Mr. Heaton donated land for the meeting place in Reevesville where the members constructed the first meeting place known as a brush arbor, but the membership grew rapidly, and the structure soon was not large enough to house the members; and

Whereas, the pastor, Reverend J. T. Green, and the original three men asked Mr. Heaton for more space in the same area, which he could not provide, but he offered them two acres of land on the other side of Reevesville called Long Corner; and

Whereas, it was on this property that the first frame church was erected and the first cemetery established. The property would be theirs in perpetuity, but they could not have the papers to it; and

Whereas, within a few years the pastor and the deacons wanted papers so they could obtain a title, and the Church continued to pray that one day they would be able to purchase their own land; and

Whereas, men from the church went to the Dorchester County Courthouse in St. George where they met the superintendent of the Southern Railroad who took them to the clerk of courts. He related to the clerk that the men were there in search of a piece of property to build a church in Reevesville; and

Whereas, they found land in Reevesville, and the clerk recorded the information, but three months later, before the purchase could be completed, the superintendent died; and

Whereas, after the death of the railroad superintendent, the president of the Southern Railroad came to Saint George, and the clerk informed him what the superintendent had been working on prior to his death. The president met with leaders from the church and told them they could have the property for forty dollars; and

Whereas, with confidence in God’s providence, a church was built in 1868 on the newly acquired land and named the Steeple Church due to its high steeple but was later named St. Matthew Baptist; and

Whereas, church pastors have included Reverend J. T. Green, Reverend Heward, Reverend Corbert, Reverend S. S. Tucker, Reverend Coger, Reverend Parker, Reverend Williams, Reverend Marshall, Reverend C. A. Zeigler, Reverend M. Tyler, Reverend D. J. Jones, Reverend Harold J. Mack; and

Whereas, in 1955, the block church was built under the leadership of Reverend D. J. Jones and presently serves as the church’s dining hall. As the congregation continued to grow, Reverend Jones oversaw the construction of the new brick church in 1978; and

Whereas, knowing that the foundation of their church is Jesus Christ, the members remain steadfast and true to the church’s theme, “Building on a Solid Foundation.” Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, recognize and honor St. Matthew Baptist Church, upon the occasion of its one hundred fiftieth anniversary, and commend the congregation and the pastor for a century and a half of service to God and of ministering to the spiritual needs of the community.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Reverend Bellinger W. Folk, Jr., the thirteenth pastor of St. Matthew Baptist Church.

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