**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO COMMEND MORRIS STREET BAPTIST CHURCH IN CHARLESTON FOR ONE HUNDRED FIFTY YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY AND TO EXTEND WARMEST CONGRATULATIONS ON THE OCCASION OF THE CHURCH’S ONE HUNDRED FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY.

Whereas, the members of the Senate are pleased to learn that Morris Street Baptist Church will celebrate its one hundred fiftieth anniversary this year; and

Whereas, on May 9, 1865, under the leadership of Father Jacob Legare, seventy‑three African‑American Christians organized Morris Street Baptist Church. It was one of the first African‑American churches created in South Carolina following the Civil War; and

Whereas, Father Legare led the church until his death in 1885, and Reverend J.L. Dart became the church’s second pastor. During these early days, the church was led by Reverend J.L. Dart, who grew the membership and expanded the church facilities; and

Whereas, Reverend Randall Kemp became the third pastor of the church in 1904, followed by Reverend J.C. Dunbar in 1922. Under their leadership, membership continued to increase, and at one baptismal service, ninety‑three candidates were baptized. The Sunday School and other ministries were arranged into departments, and the sanctuary was renovated in 1954; and

Whereas, following the death of Reverend Dunbar, Reverend J.J. Abney became the fifth pastor in 1958. While he was pastor, the church paid off their renovation mortgage. Reverend Alphonso R. Blake, a Charleston native, became the sixth pastor in 1960. He led the church through the Civil Rights era; and

Whereas, tragically, the church was destroyed by fire in February 1964. While the church rebuilt their building, they met at Simonton elementary School. They moved into their new building in November 1969; and

Whereas, Dr. Blake oversaw a ten‑year plan that was developed in 1975 and included the purchase of a property that is valued at more than $1 million. The sanctuary was refurbished during his tenure, and he elected the first female trustees to the board. He also ordained many new pastors and deacons; and

Whereas, the church observed its one hundred twenty‑fifth anniversary in 1990. It marked the occasion by publishing a volume that provided a complete history of the church and will serve as a permanent record for the church; and

Whereas, Reverend Leonard O. Griffin became the church’s seventh pastor on March 6, 2005. A native of Edgefield, he came to Morris Street Baptist from Southern Missionary Baptist Church in Syracuse, New York. He continues to faithfully lead his congregation; and

Whereas, Morris Street Baptist Church has been a beacon of light in Charleston for one hundred fifty years, and God‑willing, will continue its godly heritage in many more years of worship and services. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the Senate, by this resolution, congratulate Morris Street Baptist church on this extraordinary milestone.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Morris Street Baptist Church.

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