**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO CONGRATULATE GILL CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH OF RICHLAND COUNTY ON THE OCCASION OF ITS HISTORIC ONE HUNDRED FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY AND TO COMMEND THE CHURCH FOR A CENTURY AND A HALF OF SERVICE TO GOD AND THE COMMUNITY.

Whereas, founded in 1871, Gill Creek Baptist Church of Richland County, led by Reverend James C. Woodley, is celebrating its one hundred fiftieth anniversary of Gospel ministry in 2021; and

Whereas, the church originates from Macedonia Baptist Church, where, before it was burned by soldiers in the Civil War, a mixed congregation worshipped. In 1870, as new freedoms were being realized through legislation, the black membership of Macedonia Baptist Church decided to secede and form their own place of worship. Led by Reverend Huriah Calvin Bynum, who was ordained through the Macedonia Baptist Church, the church began in a log cabin on property donated by Mr. William Mingo Geiger and his wife, Mrs. June Portee Geiger. It was named after the nearby creek known as Gills Creek; and

Whereas, in 1942, after many years of successful and devout worship as the congregation grew in both faith and in number, the church had to be relocated, as the federal government needed the property for Fort Jackson Military Base. After some negotiation, Mr. Simon Faust donated property for the church, and the federal government purchased property from Dr. H. D. Monteith for the relocation of the church cemetery; and

Whereas, after many years of continued worship, now under the leadership of Reverend James P. Neal, Jr., the fourteenth pastor of Gill Creek Baptist, the congregation broke ground for a new sanctuary on July 8, 1984. The official move into the new sanctuary occurred on Sunday, March 31, 1985, as the congregation marched from the old church into the new sanctuary; and

Whereas, during the tenure of Reverend Samuel T. Ross‑Lee, the fifteenth pastor, the deacons ministry was restructured and, for the first time in the history of the church, women were ordained as deacons. Under his guidance, the church also began several key programs, including a ministerial intern program, a summer youth recital, as well as the establishment of a minister of music, new members orientation classes, the Christian Youth Fellowship, and the annual Family and Friends Fun Day; and

Whereas, the sixteenth pastor of Gill Creek Baptist, Reverend Reginald T. Byrden, began his pastorate on May 30, 2004. Continuing the rich tradition of faithful worship, he installed new programs which served to connect the church and the community, including the annual “Trunk or Treat,” the annual feeding of the homeless during Thanksgiving, and the annual “State of the Church” address; and

Whereas, after a period of transition, Reverend James C. Woodley became the seventeenth pastor of Gill Creek Baptist. In his current role, he presides over a congregation who has a strong foundation of faith, worship together as a family, spread the gospel, work hard, and provide much needed assistance in their community; and

Whereas, through God’s grace, Gill Creek Baptist’s history has spanned more than one hundred fifty years, and its congregation, having weathered the storms and triumphantly celebrated the victories the years have brought, continues to pass on a rich heritage of faith. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, congratulate Gill Creek Baptist Church of Richland County on the occasion of its historic one hundred fiftieth anniversary and to commend the church for a century and a half of service to God and the community.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Gill Creek Baptist Church.

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