

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 863

By Sparks

A RESOLUTION to celebrate the 143rd anniversary of Bethel Missionary Baptist Church and the thirtieth pastoral anniversary of F.B. Carpenter, Jr.

WHEREAS, the churches of our nation have been an integral part of our history as a people and have had an unparalleled impact in forming and maintaining a stable and just society; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this General Assembly should recognize those venerable religious institutions and their congregations that, through their unflagging capacity for love, dedication of spirit, and faith in God, strive to enrich the lives of people in their communities; and

WHEREAS, one such dynamic and historic community of faith is Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, the members of which are celebrating the church's 143rd anniversary and Pastor F.B. Carpenter, Jr.'s thirtieth pastoral anniversary; they will host a Pastor's Gala on March 16, 2018, and a grand finale anniversary celebration on March 18, 2018; and

WHEREAS, originally named El' Bethel, Bethel Missionary Baptist Church was organized in 1875 on Old Rocky Hill Road on the Richard Crawford property by spirited visionaries Richard Crawford, Jim Buck Randolph, Will Wade, Marshall Bell, Sam Crawford, and Jeff Johns; the church became a haven for worship, education, and leadership within the Walter Hill community; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Neil Crutcher was called to lead the church from 1877 until 1926, followed by Reverend Charles Evans, who pastored the church from 1928 until 1952; during that time, church members moved to a new building down the narrow road to the right of their church and renamed it Little Bethel, where they worshipped until 1958; and

WHEREAS, church members and the United Sons of Relief Lodge bought a tract of land from Peter T. Vaughn to build a public schoolhouse, Bethel School, for African-American students; when the school burned down in 1953, school was held in Bethel Church for two years until the new school building was constructed; and

WHEREAS, following Bethel School's closing in 1966, Bethel Missionary Baptist Church purchased the school from the Rutherford County Board of Education; the building was used for homecoming, vacation Bible school, and other events for several years before it was torn down to expand the parking lot; and

WHEREAS, throughout the following decades, a number of ministers led Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, including Reverend Roosevelt Evans from 1954 until 1980, who oversaw the church's move to 762 Holly Grove Road; Reverend Wallace Evans, who served as co-pastor for five years and pastor from 1980 until 1982; and Reverend Gerald Dickson, who led the church from 1983 until 1987; and

WHEREAS, Pastor F.B. Carpenter, Jr., became the pastor of Bethel Missionary Baptist Church in 1988, and he is currently the church's second-longest-serving pastor; during his thirty years of leadership, more than twenty ministries and auxiliaries have been implemented, including the children's department, teen worship service, health awareness team, pastoral planning, music ministry, dance ministry, and mission ministry; and

WHEREAS, with the mission to seek, save, and bring members to Christian discipleship, Pastor Carpenter has led the congregation through many studies to enrich their lives and to become better Christians, including Facing Your Giants, Purpose Driven Church, I Am A Church Member, and Connected: My Life in the Church; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Carpenter oversaw the construction of two new church buildings at the Holly Grove Road location in 1993 and 2008, and he has supported, mentored, and guided many associate pastors and served in a number of positions within the Smithfork District Association, the Missionary Baptist State Convention of Tennessee, and the National Baptist Convention of America, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, a loving husband, Pastor F.B. Carpenter, Jr., is grateful for the love and support he shares with his wife, First Lady Melba Carpenter; and

WHEREAS, Pastor F.B. Carpenter, Jr., and the devout members of the congregation of Bethel Missionary Baptist Church have faithfully striven to carry out God's work in the world; and

WHEREAS, as a powerful tool in the service of the Kingdom of God, Bethel Missionary Baptist Church is truly one of the great religious institutions and catalysts for positive spiritual change in our State and Nation, and Pastor F.B. Carpenter, Jr., and the members of this exceptional congregation should be appropriately honored for their exemplary service to their fellow Christians and to the good people of Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we join in the celebration of the 143rd anniversary of Bethel Missionary Baptist Church and the thirtieth pastoral anniversary of F.B. Carpenter, Jr., thank the good people of this historic congregation and their ministers for their notable service to their Lord and the State of Tennessee, and wish them much continued success and happiness.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.