

SENATE RESOLUTION 178

By Akbari

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Reverend Dr. Gina M. Stewart upon her twenty-fifth anniversary as pastor of Christ Missionary Baptist Church.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we should honor those individuals who have answered a divine call to the ministry and who have served with dedication, vigor, and enthusiasm to perform God's work for their congregations and their communities; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Dr. Gina M. Stewart is one such stalwart servant of the Lord, who ably serves as the pastor of Christ Missionary Baptist Church in Memphis and is celebrating her twenty-fifth pastoral anniversary this year; and

WHEREAS, born on January 18, 1960, Gina Marcia Stewart is one of four children born to Lepolia and Annie Stewart and a 1978 graduate of Memphis Catholic High School; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Dr. Gina Stewart holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in Marketing from the University of Memphis, a Master of Education degree in Administration and Supervision from Trevecca Nazarene University, a Master of Divinity degree from Memphis Theological Seminary, and a Doctor of Ministry degree from the Interdenominational Theological Center. She is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in African American preaching at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, Indiana; and

WHEREAS, a daughter of the church, Reverend Dr. Stewart was baptized and mentored for ministry at Christ Missionary Baptist Church by her predecessor and former pastor, Reverend Eddie L. Currie; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Dr. Gina Stewart was elected by a majority vote to serve as pastor of Christ Missionary Baptist Church on March 4, 1995; she is the first African-American

woman elected to serve in an established African-American Baptist congregation in Memphis and Shelby County; and

WHEREAS, as the pastor of Christ Missionary Baptist Church, Reverend Dr. Gina Stewart has demonstrated excellence in her calling as a woman of God; the members of her congregation are proud to call her their pastor, leader, and friend and look forward to her continued spiritual guidance for many years to come; and

WHEREAS, during her twenty-five years of ministry, Christ Missionary Baptist Church has experienced significant growth and purchased several additional properties to accommodate the increasing membership; more than fifty ministries are offered to congregants; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Dr. Stewart is the founder of Greater Works, Inc., and a visiting professor of practical theology for the Samuel Dewitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University, having previously served as an adjunct faculty member at Memphis Theological Seminary and a faculty member for the United Theological Seminary Doctor of Ministry program; and

WHEREAS, she serves on the national board of the NAACP and is first vice president of the Lott Carey Foreign Mission Convention, a member of the advisory council for the Samuel Dewitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University, co-convener for the Women in Ministry Conference, and a trustee for the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Pastors' Conference; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Dr. Stewart is a prolific writer who released her first book, *We've Got Next: HERstory in HIStory* in 2015; her work has been featured in numerous books and publications, including *Audacity of Faith: Christian Leaders Reflect on the Election of Barack Obama*, *What We Love about the Black Church: Can We Get A Witness?*, *Black Practical Theology*, and *The African American Pulpit*, among others; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Dr. Gina Stewart has lent her time and talents to the advisory board for *The African American Pulpit*, the National Civil Rights Museum, Bread for the World, and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to honors and awards, Reverend Dr. Stewart has been inducted into the Martin Luther King Board of Preachers and was the first woman to receive the prestigious Carter G. Woodson Award. She is the recipient of the Pastor of the Year award, the Women of Excellence Award, the Lifetime Achievement Award, the Reverend Dr. Cynthia L. Hale Visionary Enthusiast Award, the Woman of Courage Award, and the Sister with Soul-Thought Leader and Innovator in Faith Award; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Dr. Stewart's commitment to God, her spiritual leadership, and her love for people, as demonstrated throughout her numerous years of service, are worthy of our respect and admiration; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we honor and commend Reverend Dr. Gina M. Stewart for her twenty-five years of service to Christ Missionary Baptist Church, wish her a happy sixtieth birthday, and extend to her our best wishes for every future success.

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