

By: Cole

H.R. No. 20

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The members of Ebenezer Third Baptist Church in
2 Austin are celebrating the 150th anniversary of their church's
3 founding on February 16, 2025; and

4 WHEREAS, Third Baptist Church, as it was originally known,
5 was organized in 1875 by the Reverend C. Ward and 18 charter
6 members, who first met in the home of Elisa Hawkins; after the
7 congregation outgrew its first frame structure, a brick sanctuary
8 was erected in 1885 at the church's current location at East 10th
9 and San Marcos Streets; in the decades that followed, Ebenezer was
10 expanded, and the present building and education complex, a
11 parsonage, and various adjacent properties were added; and

12 WHEREAS, In 1938, under the direction of Virgie
13 Carrington-Dewitty, the church's Bright and Early Choir became the
14 first African American choir to perform on a commercial radio
15 program in Texas; today, members of all ages perform in six vocal
16 choirs and in a handbell choir, carrying on the congregation's
17 proud musical heritage; the church was recognized with the
18 placement of a Texas Historical Marker in 1976; and

19 WHEREAS, This venerable religious institution has played a
20 vital role in the community, providing its members with myriad
21 opportunities for spiritual growth, fellowship, and outreach; the
22 congregation has benefited from the able leadership of a number of
23 dedicated pastors, including the Reverend Dr. Marvin C. Griffin,
24 who served the congregation for more than four decades and oversaw

1 the church's mortgage burning ceremony during its centennial
2 celebration; today, that tradition of service is continued by the
3 Reverend Dr. Ricky Freeman; and

4 WHEREAS, Ebenezer Third Baptist Church has long served as a
5 source of inspiration and guidance to those who worship there, and
6 its continued existence is a testament to the unwavering commitment
7 of its members and clergy, both past and present; now, therefore, be
8 it

9 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 89th Texas
10 Legislature hereby commemorate the 150th anniversary of Ebenezer
11 Third Baptist Church and extend to the congregation sincere best
12 wishes for the future; and, be it further

13 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
14 prepared for the church as an expression of high regard by the Texas
15 House of Representatives.