

Legislation Text

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Recognizing and Honoring Bethany African Methodist Episcopal Church on the Occasion of its 200th Anniversary

WHEREAS, Bethany African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church was built by Elias Chase and was founded in 1817; and

WHEREAS, According to census records, several African American landowners lived in the vicinity of what is now Ashton Road. Many of the people in the area were sharecroppers and freed slaves. They pooled their modest resources to build Bethany A.M.E. Church in 1817. The ground on which Bethany A.M.E. Church is built was donated by Quakers; and

WHEREAS, The African American community which worshiped at Bethany A.M.E. Church at its founding was one of the first black communities in Northeast Philadelphia. This community was known in past years as Harrisburg and Guinea Hill; and

WHEREAS, While little is known about Harrisburg and Guinea Hill, and some of Bethany A.M.E. Church's history has been lost, members of the Northeast Philadelphia History Network are piecing together a story of these neighborhoods and the early members of Bethany A.M.E. Church; and

WHEREAS, The church is a wooden-frame structure with a bright red front door. It is surrounded by gravesites of former congregants, illustrating the history and tradition of Bethany A.M.E. Church; and

WHEREAS, 200 years after its founding, the church fondly referred to as "the little church on the hill" remains a tight-knit community. Bethany A.M.E. Church meets every Sunday and operates several outreach programs that provide food for the needy and knowledge to the community about health issues; and

WHEREAS, Bethany African Methodist Episcopal Church's 200th Anniversary is an occasion for the City of Philadelphia to celebrate its heritage as a place where communities of faith thrive and its members promote freedom, goodwill, and peace. Bethany A.M.E. Church has been one such community for two centuries, and it shall continue to be one as it enters its third century of existence; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby recognize and honor Bethany African Methodist Episcopal Church on the occasion of its 200th Anniversary.

RESOLVED FURTHER, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Bethany African Methodist Episcopal Church, evidencing the sincere admiration and respect of this legislative body.