

2015 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 39

BY SENATOR JOHNS

COMMENDATIONS. Commends Greater St. Mary Missionary Baptist Church upon its history and accomplishments.

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To commend the Greater St. Mary Missionary Baptist Church of Lake Charles upon its
3 history and accomplishments.

4 WHEREAS, in 1939, God spoke to Dr. R. B. House to build a church in the home
5 of Sister Duhon, and Greater Saint Mary Missionary Baptist Church was organized with the
6 help of two ministers, Dr. N. P. Jones and Dr. W. C. Clark; and

7 WHEREAS, on March 8, 1939, the pastor and nine members leased land and built
8 a small church at 102 Adams Street, which in the beginning was blessed with one Deacon
9 and one Deaconess, Bro and Sis Eddy Watts; and

10 WHEREAS, in 1940 with seventeen members, the church moved to Simmons Street
11 consisting of three deacons, Mother Duhon, Sis Eddy Watts and Sis Sam Blue, the first
12 secretary Sis Artie Blue, and witnessed its first baptism; and

13 WHEREAS, in 1945, the John Nash family united with the church, and, in 1946,
14 other deacons were added, John Nash, C. Goins, Sam Jenkins and Tom Ford, bringing the
15 number of deacons to seven, and later the Retel Nash family placed their membership with
16 the church; and

17 WHEREAS, in 1947, the church temporarily moved from Simmons Street to a
18 location on a lot purchased from Lumberman Supply Company, during which time the pastor

1 and members purchased two more lots from the Pauley Agency where the church was built
2 at 1917 Harless Street; and

3 WHEREAS, a fire destroyed the church in 1959 and services were held in the
4 pastor's home at 2009 Medora Street and in a tent while the church was being rebuilt in 1960
5 with Sis Fannie Breaux serving as Building Fund Chairperson; and

6 WHEREAS, during the period of 1969 to 1983, four air conditioners were purchased;
7 several classrooms, a larger choir stand and new restrooms were added; a Hammond Organ
8 was purchased; new stained glass windows, two front glass doors were purchased and
9 installed; a new church steeple and an outdoor bulletin board were added; a public
10 announcement system, pastor's office, secretary and usher rooms were purchased; new
11 church lights were installed; new carpet was purchased; two church buses were purchased;
12 new pews, pulpit set, and Lord's Supper table were purchased; a new piano was purchased;
13 new parking lots were added; and a set of drums was purchased; and

14 WHEREAS, Dr. R. B. House passed away on Sunday, December 4, 1983, ending
15 forty-four years of leadership at Greater St. Mary Missionary Baptist Church; and

16 WHEREAS, on February 3, 1984, Reverend Samuel C. Tolbert Jr. became the pastor
17 while still a student at Bishop College in Dallas, Texas, as he commuted until July 1986
18 when he received his bachelor of arts degree; and

19 WHEREAS, having been led, taught and trained by Dr. R. B. House, Pastor Tolbert
20 kept building on a solid foundation and the church flourished under his leadership; and

21 WHEREAS, in the 1980s, sidewalks and concrete slabs for the pastor's parking were
22 added, the Dr. R. B. House Memorial Library on Harless Street was dedicated, five lots were
23 purchased; the Bus Ministry, Sick & Shut-In Ministry, Nursing Home Visitation, Christian
24 Education Department, and Scholarship Programs were instated, a copy machine was
25 purchased, the church's first full-time secretary, Sis Dorothy Moore, began working on a
26 daily basis, new carpet was installed, repair work was done to the sanctuary, lots were
27 cleared and leveled for a parking lot, the first church van was purchased, and renovations to
28 the fellowship hall and two additional bathrooms were added; and

29 WHEREAS, in the 1990s, a house on the west side of the church was purchased and
30 has since been turned into the Administrative Education Annex; Rev. Freddie Thomas was

1 appointed as the first full-time Director of Evangelism/Discipleship Ministry by Pastor
2 Tolbert and began working on March 25, 1991; twenty-three acres of land in the Lebleu
3 Settlement off of Ira Breaux Road was acquired to be developed into the Prospect 2000
4 Retreat and Retirement Center; a building for a Day Care and Learning Center at 603 Blake
5 Street was purchased, three houses were donated to the church - "Bartie House" by Barbara
6 Johnson and Julia Barker, "Elton & Maude LEMONIA House" by Deacon Harold and
7 Deaconess Jocelyn Duhon, and "C. N. Frank House" by Pastor Samuel and Sis Matilda
8 Tolbert; and

9 WHEREAS, in 1997, the "On Patrol for Jesus" ministry, an Evangelism movement
10 held from 9 p.m. to 12 midnight every Saturday night, was instituted; and

11 WHEREAS, in the 2000s, a 4.5-acre tract of land with four buildings totaling over
12 40,000 square feet was purchased and named Greater St. Mary Complex; a twelve-unit
13 apartment complex by the name of Amber Gardens was donated and renamed "Pearl Pines
14 Apartments"; and a house at 613 Jackson Street was donated, which became known as "The
15 Homeowners Project 2000"; and

16 WHEREAS, as of 2001, the church had fourteen main ministries - Evangelism, New
17 Members, Christian Education, Women Mission, Service, Music, Seasoned Saints, Youth,
18 Children, Administrative, Prospect 2000, Recreation, GSM Community Development, and
19 Small Groups; and

20 WHEREAS, on January 7, 2001, during the 11 a.m. worship service, Pastor Tolbert
21 gave a message entitled "The Next Level Vision" based on Habakkuk 2:1-3, which tells
22 God's people to write the vision, read vision, run with the vision, and wait for the vision, and
23 "The Next Level Vision" is in writing and available for each family at the church; and

24 WHEREAS, the vision became reality as in early 2002, the church launched the
25 "Move in with Us" campaign as the congregation moved into the church gym, considered
26 Phase I; and

27 WHEREAS, the Greater St. Mary Missionary Baptist Church participated with 1,532
28 other churches in the Forty Days of Purpose fall campaign, which moved the church into the
29 Purpose Driven church strategy; and

30 WHEREAS, the church's mission statement was developed using five key words to

1 summarize Christ's five purposes for His Church - magnify, mission, membership, maturity
2 and ministry; and

3 WHEREAS, colors were selected for each purpose and displayed two months each
4 year, the Circles of Commitment were developed (a movement of people from the outer to
5 the inner circle), Saints Advance Leadership Training (SALT) Classes were organized, and
6 the Life Development Process (Curriculum 101-401) was used to apply the five purposes;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, in 2003 Pastor Tolbert was elected General Secretary of the National
9 Baptist Convention of America, Inc., and in 2005 he became the president of the Louisiana
10 Home and Foreign Mission Baptist State Convention; and

11 WHEREAS, in January 2006, Pastor Tolbert presented GSM's Goals/Vision for the
12 year alining them with the five purposes of the church and led the church into a "Debit
13 Retirement Campaign" using the Small Groups structure and appointed Bro Roy and Sis
14 Audrey Guillory to coordinate the activity; and

15 WHEREAS, in December 2006, the remaining debt was paid off, and on December
16 31, 2006, a Mortgage Burning Ceremony was held during Watch Night Service; and

17 WHEREAS, in 2008, an eight-acre tract of land was purchased for a future
18 community development initiative; and

19 WHEREAS, the Greater St. Mary Missionary Baptist Church is an inspiration not
20 only to its members, but also to the entire Lake Charles community and merits a special
21 measure of commendation.

22 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana
23 does hereby commend St. Mary Missionary Baptist Church of Lake Charles for over
24 seventy-five years of growth and the church members and leaders in their creation of a
25 loving and dedicated spiritual community and does hereby wish them full measures of
26 success, happiness, and richest blessings in all of their future endeavors.

27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to
28 Reverend Samuel C. Tolbert Jr.

