



1 house of worship; and

2 WHEREAS, as Minden grew, the Minden Baptist Church grew, slowly but steadily,  
3 until a major disruption of the church membership came in 1865 and 1866 when nearly fifty  
4 members of the congregation, freed slaves, were granted letters of dismissal to unite with  
5 the newly formed St. Rest's Baptist Church; and

6 WHEREAS, by 1878, the church rolls listed fifty-four members, but over the next  
7 decade the membership more than doubled, and it was during these years problems began  
8 to surface with the church building; and

9 WHEREAS, in 1901, the new Minden Mill of the Bodcau Lumber Company opened  
10 and brought a newfound prosperity and the Minden Baptist Church became financially able  
11 to construct a new building, an impressive brick structure located on what is today the front  
12 parking lot of the Minden Medical Center on Main Street; and

13 WHEREAS, in 1902, the church entered this building, remarkable for its indoor  
14 baptistry with glass walls and the first electric lights in the church, but after entering the new  
15 building, membership stabilized and actually dropped; and

16 WHEREAS, after the church built a third home in 1925, the second house of worship  
17 was later remodeled and became the Rex Theatre; and

18 WHEREAS, in the years immediately after World War I, Minden and the church  
19 began a period of rapid growth, and by 1924, it was clear that the Minden Baptist Church  
20 had outgrown its relatively new home, only being home to the congregation for twenty-three  
21 years; and

22 WHEREAS, in preparation for building a new church home, the congregation  
23 reorganized in the early spring of 1924; its newly chartered name became the First Baptist  
24 Church of Minden; and

25 WHEREAS, the English property at the corner of Broadway and First Street was  
26 purchased as a site for the new church building, and being aided greatly by the philanthropy  
27 of Joseph G. and Nancy Mullins Ferguson, the new home of the First Baptist Church was  
28 completed and ready to be occupied by the end of April 1925; however, the first event in the  
29 church occurred in February when church organist Miss Lavinia Shealy was married to Mr.  
30 Bert David in the unfurnished church; and

1           WHEREAS, the first event in the church after completion was the funeral of former  
2           United States Congressman John T. Watkins of Minden, a former president of the Louisiana  
3           Baptist Convention; and

4           WHEREAS, the church increased its membership more than one hundred percent in  
5           eight years, a rapid growth which continued unchecked over the next few years; and

6           WHEREAS, by 1939, the church boasted over one thousand eight hundred members  
7           and was one of the largest Southern Baptist churches in Louisiana, the all-time peak  
8           membership being recorded four years later in 1943 when the church roll included the names  
9           of two thousand two hundred forty-six persons; and

10          WHEREAS, in 1944, the First Baptist Church of Minden celebrated its centennial  
11          and also played host to the annual meeting of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, the fifth  
12          time the church served as host; and

13          WHEREAS, in the years after the war, resident membership continued to boom,  
14          peaking in 1949, but over the next few years the membership dropped off a little as the  
15          religious community in Minden grew; and

16          WHEREAS, the Sibley Road Mission of the First Baptist Church was established,  
17          taking members from the mother congregation, and that church later became the Southside  
18          Baptist Church and is today the North Acres Baptist Church; and

19          WHEREAS, one other local church, the Germantown Baptist Church, began as a  
20          mission of First Baptist and, in addition, other Southern Baptist churches were established  
21          in Minden, so although Minden was growing, the membership at FBC did not keep pace; and

22          WHEREAS, during the 1960s, growth began again at First Baptist as Dr. Ronald  
23          Prince was called as pastor in November 1966, and his dynamic leadership sparked a new  
24          time of increase; resident membership climbed back over the one thousand six hundred mark  
25          for the first time in nearly a decade in 1969, and by the time Dr. Prince retired from the  
26          pulpit in 1987, had reached one thousand eight hundred twenty-two; and

27          WHEREAS, under the leadership of the Rev. Wayne Dubose, pastor from  
28          2001-2009, the church enjoyed a new period of growth and continues to prosper under its  
29          current pastor, Rev. Leland Crawford and his wife Rose; and

30          WHEREAS, the success of the state of Louisiana, the strength of our communities,

1 and the overall vitality of American society depend, in great measure, upon the faithful  
2 dedication of people like the founders, forefathers, and members of churches like the First  
3 Baptist Church of Minden.

4           THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby  
5 commend and congratulate the First Baptist Church of Minden for its rich history and the  
6 faithful foundation upon which it was built, and does hereby extend best wishes for  
7 continued growth and prosperity.

8           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to  
9 Reverend Leland Crawford.

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The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part  
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Jerry J. Guillot.

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SCR 28 Original

DIGEST  
2018 Regular Session

Gatti

Commends the First Baptist Church of Minden for its rich history and the faithful foundation upon which it was built.