

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS
COUNTY OF ESSEX

RESOLUTION NO. _____
PROPOSED BY: FREEHOLDERS TIMBERLAKE, BOBADILLA,
JOHNSON & RICHARDSON
SUBJECT:

AUTHORITY FOR RESOLUTION N.J.S.A. 40:41A-38(g)
AUTHORITY FOR ACTION C.C.E 2-29 (B)

#31

COMMENDATION

HONORING ABYSSINIAN BAPTIST CHURCH
FOR ITS 100TH ANNIVERSARY – SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2017

WHEREAS, Abyssinian Baptist Church will commemorate its 100th Anniversary on Saturday, February 4, 2017, which will take place at the Robert Treat Hotel in Newark, New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, Abyssinian Baptist Church was organized in 1917 by several Christians who were members of Hopewell Baptist Church and was originally named Friendship Baptist Church. Rev. D.C. McCoy became the first pastor, and later, Rev. Osborne served as the second pastor until 1923. The third pastor was Rev. Robert Daniel Ponder, a native of Camilla, Georgia, who served for 11 years. Rev. Burr served the church after Rev. Ponder suffered a stroke in 1933 and was later terminated, but despite his ailing health, Rev. Ponder returned and served as pastor until he resigned in 1934; and

WHEREAS, following Rev. Ponder, Abyssinian Baptist Church was led by Rev. Jackson and Rev. Reavis as the fourth and fifth pastors, respectively. Rev. Reavis resigned in 1939 and took the name "Friendship Baptist Church" with him. Consequently, in 1939, a meeting was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. James Allen and the church was reorganized and renamed to Norfolk Baptist Church with the Assistant Pastor, Rev. Bounty, serving as supply minister; and

WHEREAS, in 1939, Abyssinian Baptist Church, then titled Norfolk Baptist Church, was led by Rev. Raphus P. Means, a native of Spartanburg, South Carolina, from 1940 until May 1961. Under his leadership, the church flourished and was noted as one of the greatest Black churches in the nation. Soon after, the church purchased a new church home, and on February 2, 1947, 224-228 West Kinney Street in Newark became the new church home and Norfolk Baptist Church became the Abyssinian Baptist Church; and

WHEREAS, after Rev. Means resigned, Abyssinian Baptist Church was led by Rev. Horace P. Sharper who launched a new era under his pastorate. New auxiliaries and support programs were established, the edifice of the church underwent changes and remodeling was done to meet the needs of the congregation and community. Rev. Sharper resigned in November 1972, but his pastorate didn't expire until February 1973; and

WHEREAS, after February 1973, Abyssinian Baptist Church was led by Rev. Ester Ivy, the supply minister, until February 1975. His efforts had not gone unnoticed, for later, during the tenure of Rev. Dr. Perry Simmons, Jr., Broom Street was renamed to Rev. Ester Ivy Boulevard. After Rev. Ivy's death, Rev. Elton T. Byrd pastored the church for 7 years and resigned in May 1982. Rev. Byrd emphasized programming for youth and the revitalization of the church's Building Fund; and

WHEREAS, in 1982, Abyssinian Baptist Church was led by Rev. Dr. Perry Simmons, Jr., its 9th pastor. Under Rev. Simmons Jr., many programs and ministries were added, including: Youth Institute, Striving for Excellence, Praise Dancers, Mimes, Step Team, Men-to-Boyz, and Sisters United. The church also has established the Department of Christian Education, a Singles Ministry, a Couples Ministry, a Prison Ministry, a Women's Ministry, a Laymen's Ministry, and a Gifted & Anointed for Purpose Ministry (ages 18 – 40); and

WHEREAS, Abyssinian Baptist Church has full participation in all phases of Baptist work, and more than 1,900 new souls have been added to the Body of Christ. In addition, a Drug Prevention Program, Drug Anonymous Group, and other community outreach programs have been added to the church. The church has become a 100% tithe and offering supportive church and serves as a purpose driven church for the 21st century that impacts the community, city, state, and nation for Christ through the teaching and preaching of its Pastor, Rev. Dr. Perry Simmons, Jr.; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders hereby commends Abyssinian Baptist Church and congratulates them on the occasion of their 100th Church Anniversary Celebration; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution be presented to Abyssinian Baptist Church.

Michel J. Portantino

Approved as to form and legality _____
Freeholder Counsel

RECORD OF VOTE (X=Vote N.V.=Abstention ABS=Absent)

Moved by Freeholder _____
Second by Freeholder _____

Freeholder	Yes	No	N.V.	ABS	Freeholder	Yes	No	N.V.	ABS
BOBADILLA					RICHARDSON				
GILL, V.P.					SEBOLD				
JOHNSON					TORO				
JONES									
LUCIANO					TIMBERLAKE, PRES.				

It is hereby certified that the foregoing Resolution was () adopted () defeated () tabled by roll call vote at a _____ meeting of the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Essex, New Jersey held on _____

Is Publication Required () Yes () No

Date Published _____

Britnee N. Timberlake, President