

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 532

By Norris

A RESOLUTION to recognize Gray's Creek Church upon the occasion of its 175th anniversary.

WHEREAS, the many fine churches across this State constitute an institutional foundation for an orderly and just society for all Tennesseans, and their dedicated service to God and humanity is the bedrock upon which our State and nation are founded; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that we should recognize those venerable religious institutions and their congregations who, through their unflagging capacity for love, dedication of spirit, and faith in God, strive to enrich the lives of people in their communities; and

WHEREAS, one such dynamic and historic community of faith is Gray's Creek Church, whose members will celebrate the church's 175th anniversary in February of this year; and

WHEREAS, the oldest established African-American church in Shelby County, Gray's Creek Church was founded in February 1843 by two former slaves, Simon Price and Joseph "Free Joe" Harris; and

WHEREAS, after slavery was abolished in the United States, the church served as a school for African Americans until 1918, when the first public schools for African Americans were established; and

WHEREAS, throughout its illustrious history, Gray's Creek Church has been blessed with the leadership of several devoted, inspired pastors, including Pastor E.V. Jones, who served for forty years, and Pastor Wylie Harris, who served for thirty-five years; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Patrick Tucker, who currently leads the flock at Gray's Creek, commenced his pastorate in September 2012; during his tenure, the church has incurred and bestowed many blessings, foremost among them the advent of several church and outreach ministries; and

WHEREAS, under Pastor Tucker's continued leadership, Gray's Creek Church continues to thrive as a growing body of believers in Jesus Christ; the congregation is a diverse group, composed of individuals of various ages, races, and backgrounds who pray together, worship as one body of believers, and strive to increase their mission outreach as they focus their faith in the word of God; and

WHEREAS, Gray's Creek Church has become one of the great religious institutions and catalysts for positive spiritual change in our State and nation, as it has stood on the rock-solid foundation of Christian belief, service, and love for 175 years; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we join in celebrating the 175th anniversary of Gray's Creek Church, thank the good people of this remarkable congregation for their notable service to their Lord and this State, and wish them much continued success and happiness in the future.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.