

Senate Resolution 420

By: Senators Rhett of the 33rd, James of the 35th, Hill of the 32nd, Thompson of the 14th Hill of the 6th, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing and commending Turner Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church on the
2 occasion of its 150th anniversary; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, Turner Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church's congregation began with
4 no name and had its first religious meeting in 1853, shortly after the settlement of Marietta;
5 during this time, a group of 37 African Americans met for prayer and worship in a log cabin
6 on Task Street near an abandoned Coca-Cola battery plant and tobacco cigar factory; and

7 WHEREAS, in 1839, the Presbyterian Church on the corner of Waddell and Lawrence
8 Streets in downtown Marietta vacated its building and offered it to Turner AME Chapel's
9 congregation, which was referred to as "Trinity Church for Negroes and Indians" at that time;
10 during that time, the church operated under the direction of First United Methodist Church,
11 which supplied its pastors until 1865; during the Civil War, it was also used as a hospital for
12 the Union soldiers; and

13 WHEREAS, upon Henry McNeal Turner's arrival in Marietta in 1865, he saw former slaves
14 worshiping without ministerial leadership, so he organized the church under the AME
15 Church and became Trinity's first Negro pastor; and

16 WHEREAS, on July 6, 1867, the trustees of the First Methodist Church transferred the
17 property deed to the trustees of Trinity African Methodist Episcopal Church, and in 1891,
18 the church was rebuilt and the name was changed to Turner Chapel in honor of Bishop Henry
19 McNeal Turner; and

20 WHEREAS, Turner Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church was forced to relocate as
21 a result of urban renewal and revitalization efforts in downtown Marietta; the property on
22 Lawrence Street was purchased from the City of Marietta on December 6, 1971, and a
23 contract to begin work was issued on September 12, 1972; and

24 WHEREAS, the first services at the new location were held on March 3, 1975, under the
25 administration of Reverend H.H. Kenner; and

26 WHEREAS, in 1988, a new wing was added to include a pastor's study, choir room,
27 classrooms, library/conference room, communion room, and storage space, as the church
28 grew to have several new ministries and a membership of more than 400 individuals; and

29 WHEREAS, in June, 1988, Reverend Kenneth Marcus became the pastor of Turner Chapel,
30 and he and his wife, Reverend Cassandra Marcus, grew the church's staff, resources, and
31 membership to 482 people; they also purchased land for the new Turner Chapel site; and

32 WHEREAS, in 1993, Pastor Marcus agreed to include a new sanctuary, multipurpose center,
33 educational facility, activity center, and childcare facilities; and

34 WHEREAS, in January, 1996, the Church Expansion Committee addressed the needs for
35 more worship space and began services in Wheeler High School's 450-seat gymnasium; and

36 WHEREAS, on July 18, 1999, Turner Chapel opened the new Turner Chapel Recreation
37 Center and let it serve as a "temporary home" to more than 4,000 members while a new
38 sanctuary was under construction; and

39 WHEREAS, on March 20, 2005, members and friends from as far as Port-au-Prince,
40 Trinidad, and New York City entered the brand new Cathedral of Turner Chapel African
41 Methodist Episcopal Church; and

42 WHEREAS, since its 1865 inception, Turner Chapel has had 51 pastors, three of whom were
43 elected to Bishopric: Henry McNeal Turner, William A. Fountain, Sr., and Harold I.
44 Bearden; and

45 WHEREAS, Henry McNeal Turner served as Morris Brown College's First President, and
46 Bishop William A. Fountain, Sr., and Reverend William A. Fountain, Jr., both served as
47 Presidents of Morris Brown College. In addition, a number of former pastors, including Dr.
48 D.W. Wiggs, Dr. J.S. Downs, Dr. J.R. Hurley, Dr. D.S. Saunders, and Dr. A.J. Harris, have
49 served as Presiding Elders; and

50 WHEREAS, since 1865, Turner Chapel has grown to have more than 6,000 members, 100
51 ministries, and 46 parcels of land.

52 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that members of this body
53 recognize March 15, 2015, as the 150th anniversary of Turner Chapel African Methodist
54 Episcopal Church and commend its dedicated efforts to its congregation and the community
55 of Marietta.

56 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
57 to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to Turner Chapel
58 African Methodist Episcopal Church.