

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The Original Providence Baptist Church, founded in 1863 on Chicago's Westside, celebrates its 160th anniversary on June 25, 2023; and

WHEREAS, The Chicago City Council has been informed of this auspicious occasion by the Honorable Emma Mitts, Alderman of the 37th Ward; and

WHEREAS, In 1863, the creation of the Original Providence Baptist Church was the fulfillment of the hopes and dreams of a group of fugitive slaves, with a desire for independence and freedom that led them to Chicago by way of the Underground Railroad; and

WHEREAS, The group organized under the name of "Providence" Baptist Church with intention because the term suggested divine guidance; and

WHEREAS, Within a few years, the founders were joined by others who united with them to form a band of nearly three hundred – together they were able to raise enough money to purchase a lot and build their first church; and

WHEREAS, The church's first documented pastor was Rev. Thomas L. Johnson, who had been a slave for 28 years of his life, gaining his freedom after the Civil War; Rev. Johnson became the pastor in 1873 and served for 3 years until August 6, 1876, before setting sail with his wife Henrietta to England where he studied at the Pastor's College before he and his wife became Missionaries in Africa; and

WHEREAS, By 1911, a larger building was built at 217 North Leavitt Street under the pastorate of the Rev. S. L. Frances, who served until 1915;

WHEREAS, The Original Providence Baptist Church parishioners' "mind to work" was on display not just in the physical things such as the edifice of the church, but also through the spiritual growth of Providence Baptist Church led by the following pastors: Thomas L. Johnson, William Belay, R.E. Jackson, B.B. Hillman, John Pope, A. Newsome, A.L. Harris, and Robert Darden; and

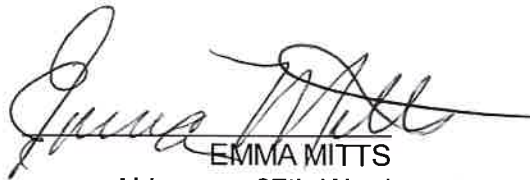
WHEREAS, The church continued to move to various locations over the years, before settling in their current location – 515 North Pine Avenue in 1972; and

WHEREAS, Original Providence Baptist Church has continuously sought to equip the Body of Christ for wholistic ministry by bringing The Gospel through a variety of ways with a history of well-trained pastors, with this tradition continued by the current pastor, Rev. Victor L. Roland; and

WHEREAS, The church stands as a monument to the cause of Christians in the immediate community and in the City of Chicago; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, gathered here this nineteenth of July, 2023, do hereby recognize the 160th anniversary of the Original Providence Baptist Church and wish them many more wonderful years; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to the Original Providence Baptist Church.


EMMA MITTS
Alderman, 37th Ward