

SALUTE TO DR. STEPHEN JOHN THURSTON ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT

WHEREAS Dr. Stephen John Thurston, an outstanding spiritual leader and member of his community, has retired as pastor on Easter Sunday, March 31, 2024, marking the end of an era in the history of New Covenant Missionary Baptist Church in this city's Park Manor neighborhood, with his son, Rev. Stephen John Thurston II, poised to carry forward the mantle of leadership, continuing the family's legacy as the fourth generation to guide this congregation; and

WHEREAS Dr. Thurston's journey to ministry began in his earliest days, steeped in the rich tradition of his family's commitment to serving the Gospel, with his late grandfather, Rev. Elijah Thurston, and his late father, Rev. John Thurston, guiding his path. His dedication to the New Covenant congregation led him to diligent and decades-long service, culminating in his ordination and appointment as Assistant Pastor, and his subsequent pursuit of higher religious education, earning a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Religion at Bishop College in Dallas, Texas, all while being elected Co-Pastor and eventually ascending to the role of Pastor of New Covenant Missionary Baptist Church in 1979, continuing the legacy of leadership for three generations; and

WHEREAS in testament to his commitment of fostering spiritual, emotional, physical, and educational growth within his community, Dr. Thurston's visionary stewardship over the span of 44 years transformed New Covenant Missionary Baptist Church into a beacon of hope and spiritual nourishment, fostering growth and outreach that touched the lives of countless individuals locally and globally, overseeing the construction of the \$13 million Worship Center in 2008; and

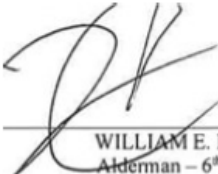
WHEREAS Dr. Thurston's impact extended well beyond the walls of the church, as demonstrated by his involvement in various religious, civic, and social organizations, including his significant roles as President of the National Baptist Convention of America International and President of the Illinois National Baptist State Convention, as well as his service as an Executive Board Member of Trustees at Florida Memorial University; and

WHEREAS Dr. Thurston further advanced his leadership skills and spiritual growth by earning a Master of Divinity degree in 2013 and a Doctor of Ministry degree in 2023 from Payne Theological Seminary in Wilberforce, Ohio. He married his childhood classmate, Joyce, and together they raised four children, Stephen II, Nicole, Teniece, and Christon, with whom he shares a deep sense of pride and love; and

WHEREAS the Honorable William E. Hall, Alderman of the 6th Ward has informed this august body of the significant milestone in the life of this remarkable pastor and exemplary member of his community, now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that we, the mayor and members of the City of Chicago City Council, gathered this 17th day of April 2024, extend our heartiest congratulations on the occasion of Dr. Stephen John Thurston's well-deserved retirement and express our very best wishes for his continued health, happiness and success in all his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared and presented to Dr. Stephen John Thurston.



WILLIAM E. HALL
Alderman - 6th Ward