

PROCLAMATION

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MARION COUNTY, FLORIDA

WHEREAS, the Second Bethlehem Baptist Association was founded in 1874 under the visionary leadership of Reverend Samuel Small at Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist Church, marking the beginning of a religious organization that would profoundly impact the spiritual and communal life of its members; and

WHEREAS, the Second Bethlehem Baptist Association has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to religious education, community engagement, and social issues, as evidenced by its historical activities, including the establishment of its own building in 1916 and active participation in social movements such as the prohibition movement; and

WHEREAS, strong and dedicated leadership has guided the Second Bethlehem Baptist Association, including the notable contributions of Moderators such as Rev. J.E. McCrary, Rev. Oliver Van Pinkston, and Rev. Fred Maeweathers, who have played pivotal roles in the growth and expansion of the association's influence and facilities; and

WHEREAS, the Second Bethlehem Baptist Association has continued to serve as a beacon of faith, education, and community service under the current leadership of Reverend Standley Gillings, Sr., building on the foundations laid by his predecessors, including the late Reverend Keith Eugene Blunt, whose legacy lives on through the Blunt Benevolence Community Program; and

WHEREAS, the Second Bethlehem Baptist Association celebrates its 150th anniversary, standing as a testament to the enduring faith, leadership, and commitment of its members to spiritual guidance, education, and community service for over a century and a half;

NOW THEREFORE, the Board of County Commissioners of Marion County, Florida, by virtue of the authority vested in us, do hereby recognize and honor the Second Bethlehem Baptist Association for its significant contributions to the community and celebrates its 150 years of faith, leadership, and service.

DULY PROCLAIMED this 17th day of **September, 2024**.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MARION COUNTY, FLORIDA**

MICHELLE STONE, CHAIR

KATHY BRYANT, VICE CHAIR

CARL ZALAK, III, COMMISSIONER

ATTEST:

CRAIG CURRY, COMMISSIONER

GREGORY C. HARRELL, CLERK

MATT MCCLAIN, COMMISSIONER