



# Office of the City Clerk



R2013-244

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## City Council Document Tracking Sheet

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	2/13/2013
<b>Sponsor(s):</b>	Mitts, Emma (37)
<b>Type:</b>	Resolution
<b>Title:</b>	Congratulations extended to Original Providence Baptist Church on 150th Anniversary.
<b>Committee(s) Assignment:</b>	

# Resolution Original Providence Baptist Church

## ***ADOPTED BY***

### ***The City Council of the City of Chicago, Illinois***

#### ***Presented by Alderman Emma Mitts on February 13, 2013***

**WHEREAS**, in 1863, during the same year that the Emancipation Proclamation was signed, the City of Chicago witnessed the founding of Original Providence Baptist Church; and

**WHEREAS**, during 2013, the Original Providence Baptist Church will celebrate its Sesquicentennial Anniversary, representing One Hundred-and Fifty years of committed spiritual service to GOD, the city's west side and its loyal congregation; and

**WHEREAS**, The Original Providence Baptist Church is historically recognized as the oldest African-American Baptist Church on the west side of Chicago; and

**WHEREAS**, The Original Providence Baptist Church began as an endeavor of a small band of seventeen committed Black people with a determined dream of personal and religious freedom; and

**WHEREAS**, the strong desire for independence and freedom had led them to Chicago by way of the Underground Railroad. A few had purchased their freedom in previous years, but the majority of these original church founders had willingly dropped their chains to follow a "star" named Harriett Tubman, in order to fully live according to the dictation of their conscience; and

**WHEREAS**, The little Original Providence Baptist Church began its mission under the name of Providence Baptist Church, at 26 North Irving Avenue as the fulfillment of the hopes and dreams of a few fugitives bravely unshackled from the indignity and indentured servitude of slavery; and

**WHEREAS**, this beloved church was organized under the name of "Providence" Baptist Church, because the term suggested divine guidance by GOD. Over the years, the name of the church was formally changed to the Original Providence Baptist Church, and this house of worship has continued to flourish to this day; and

**WHEREAS**, within a few years, the founders were joined by other faithful souls who united with them to form a band of nearly three hundred. The Original Providence Baptist Church in 1911 erected a larger church facility at 217 North Leavitt Street; the congregation subsequently moved several times over the ensuing years: first, from Leavitt Street to Jackson Boulevard, then to Washington Boulevard, and finally their journey came to an end as they moved to the present location, 515 North Pine Avenue; and

**WHEREAS**, the spiritual growth of Original Providence Baptist Church has been overseen by a succession of strong Pastoral men of GOD: Thomas L. Johnson, William Belay, R.E. Jackson, B.B. Hillman, John Pope, A. Newsome, A.L. Harris, and Robert Darden. Significantly, the Rev. A.L. Harris holds the distinction of having served as pastor during two different periods. The Rev. Francis' pastorate ended in 1915. He was succeeded by the Rev. Boston Prince and Rev. J. Wesley Carter; the latter of whom served from 1922 until 1929. The Rev. R. Wendell Phillips served as pastor from 1929 to 1957. In June of 1958, Rev. Edgar T. Thornton took over the helm of this great ship; and

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Thornton served faithfully as Pastor of the church from 1958 until his retirement on June 30, 1996. The Rev. James A. Missick came to pastor Original Providence Baptist Church from New Central Baptist Church of Norfolk, Virginia. He served as pastor from February 1999 until December 2008; and


**WHEREAS**, On the auspicious date of October 18, 2009, the Rev. Cleophus J. Lee officially took leadership of the pulpit of the Original Providence Baptist Church, becoming its spiritual shepherd; and

**WHEREAS**, Today under Rev. Lee's skillful leadership, with the benefit of his vision and dedication, the Original Providence Baptist Church is becoming a "Great Commission" Church, seeking to introduce a dying world to a Risen Savior; and

**WHEREAS**, The Honorable Emma Mitts, Alderman of the 37<sup>th</sup> Ward, has apprised this august body of the significant Sesquicentennial [150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary] milestone achieved by this venerable and historic African-American Baptist Church located on Chicago's west side; now, therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED**, That we, the Mayor and members of the City of Chicago Council, gathered together this 13th day of February 2013 A.D., do hereby salute the Original Providence Baptist Church on the honored occasion of its 150<sup>th</sup> Sesquicentennial celebration, and thereby further express our very best wishes for continued successful service of this iconic and historic church; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared and presented to the Pastor and congregation of the Original Providence Baptist Church with the deep respect and appreciation on behalf of the citizens of the City of Chicago.

  
Emma Mitts, Alderman – 37<sup>th</sup> Ward

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