

**A Proclamation
By
Governor Ronnie Musgrove**

WHEREAS, in the years following the Civil War, there was an enormous amount of church growth, as a result, Pope Baptist Church was organized in 1872 with the congregation worshipping in members' homes and other available places until they were able to build the first church.

WHEREAS, the church struggled along with one service per month and no Sunday School until 1911 when J.J. Packer organized a Sunday School and served as its superintendent—at some point during these years, a box type church was built on the property where the church stands today—by 1887, the church membership was up to 65; and

WHEREAS, Pope Baptist Church's growth reflected the economy of the region and the country—the 1880's saw a rise in wealth for many, but by 1890 the country was on its way into an economic depression—even though the church's membership fell in 1882 and in 1883, the Sunday School prospered; and

WHEREAS, in the early 1900's the church's economy and enrollment were on the upswing—after the wind damaged the church building in 1915, the congregation worshipped with the Methodists until a newly rebuilt church including four Sunday School rooms was completed in 1924; and

WHEREAS, in the years following the Great Depression, the church continued to prosper in both membership and contributions—in 1945, the church was up to 75 members and organized with Liberty Hill Baptist Church to start full-time worship services; and

WHEREAS, during the 1970's, a four-bedroom parsonage was built on Pear Street in downtown Pope, more Sunday School rooms and other facilities were added, and by 1978, the membership reached 220; and

WHEREAS, Pope Baptist Church continued to grow throughout the 1980's—the sanctuary was enlarged to accommodate 300 people; the church was bricked; and several classrooms, offices, and a fellowship hall were added, bring the total number of Sunday School rooms to 14—in 1989, the church began building a 6,000 square foot activities building with a larger kitchen and fellowship hall, as well as a gym; the building was dedicated on September 29, 1991, with a homecoming celebration—in the year 2002, total membership is over 300; and

WHEREAS, God has blessed the Pope Baptist Church over the last 130 years and the church continues to praise Him for His blessings during this great celebration:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Ronnie Musgrove, Governor of the State of Mississippi, hereby proclaim September 29, 2002, in honor of

POPE BAPTIST CHURCH

and their love and dedication to an awesome God, their community and the State of Mississippi.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Mississippi to be affixed.

DONE in the City of Jackson, September 25, 2002, in the two hundred and twenty-sixth year of the United States of America.

RONNIE MUSGROVE
GOVERNOR