

1 house of worship; and

2 WHEREAS, as Minden grew, the Minden Baptist Church grew, slowly but steadily,
3 until a major disruption of the church membership came in 1865 and 1866 when nearly fifty
4 members of the congregation, freed slaves, were granted letters of dismissal to unite with
5 the newly formed St. Rest's Baptist Church; and

6 WHEREAS, by 1878, the church rolls listed fifty-four members, but over the next
7 decade the membership more than doubled, and it was during these years problems began
8 to surface with the church building; and

9 WHEREAS, in 1901, the new Minden Mill of the Bodcau Lumber Company opened
10 and brought a newfound prosperity and the Minden Baptist Church became financially able
11 to construct a new building, an impressive brick structure located on what is today the front
12 parking lot of the Minden Medical Center on Main Street; and

13 WHEREAS, in 1902, the church entered this building, remarkable for its indoor
14 baptistry with glass walls and the first electric lights in the church, but after entering the new
15 building, membership stabilized and actually dropped; and

16 WHEREAS, after the church built a third home in 1925, the second house of worship
17 was later remodeled and became the Rex Theatre; and

18 WHEREAS, in the years immediately after World War I, Minden and the church
19 began a period of rapid growth, and by 1924, it was clear that the Minden Baptist Church
20 had outgrown its relatively new home, only being home to the congregation for twenty-three
21 years; and

22 WHEREAS, in preparation for building a new church home, the congregation
23 reorganized in the early spring of 1924; its newly chartered name became the First Baptist
24 Church of Minden; and

25 WHEREAS, the English property at the corner of Broadway and First Street was
26 purchased as a site for the new church building, and being aided greatly by the philanthropy
27 of Joseph G. and Nancy Mullins Ferguson, the new home of the First Baptist Church was
28 completed and ready to be occupied by the end of April 1925; however, the first event in the
29 church occurred in February when church organist Miss Lavinia Shealy was married to Mr.
30 Bert David in the unfurnished church; and

1 WHEREAS, the first event in the church after completion was the funeral of former
2 United States Congressman John T. Watkins of Minden, a former president of the Louisiana
3 Baptist Convention; and

4 WHEREAS, the church increased its membership more than one hundred percent in
5 eight years, a rapid growth which continued unchecked over the next few years; and

6 WHEREAS, by 1939, the church boasted over one thousand eight hundred members
7 and was one of the largest Southern Baptist churches in Louisiana, the all-time peak
8 membership being recorded four years later in 1943 when the church roll included the names
9 of two thousand two hundred forty-six persons; and

10 WHEREAS, in 1944, the First Baptist Church of Minden celebrated its centennial
11 and also played host to the annual meeting of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, the fifth
12 time the church served as host; and

13 WHEREAS, in the years after the war, resident membership continued to boom,
14 peaking in 1949, but over the next few years the membership dropped off a little as the
15 religious community in Minden grew; and

16 WHEREAS, the Sibley Road Mission of the First Baptist Church was established,
17 taking members from the mother congregation, and that church later became the Southside
18 Baptist Church and is today the North Acres Baptist Church; and

19 WHEREAS, one other local church, the Germantown Baptist Church, began as a
20 mission of First Baptist and, in addition, other Southern Baptist churches were established
21 in Minden, so although Minden was growing, the membership at FBC did not keep pace; and

22 WHEREAS, during the 1960s, growth began again at First Baptist as Dr. Ronald
23 Prince was called as pastor in November 1966, and his dynamic leadership sparked a new
24 time of increase; resident membership climbed back over the one thousand six hundred mark
25 for the first time in nearly a decade in 1969, and by the time Dr. Prince retired from the
26 pulpit in 1987, had reached one thousand eight hundred twenty-two; and

27 WHEREAS, under the leadership of the Rev. Wayne Dubose, pastor from
28 2001-2009, the church enjoyed a new period of growth and continues to prosper under its
29 current pastor, Rev. Leland Crawford and his wife Rose; and

30 WHEREAS, the success of the state of Louisiana, the strength of our communities,

