



HR0726

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of Representatives are pleased to congratulate the congregation of Antioch Missionary Baptist Church on the occasion of the church's 150th anniversary; and

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WHEREAS, Antioch Missionary Baptist Church is one of the oldest and largest African-American churches in Decatur/Macon County; and

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WHEREAS, The first congregation of the Antioch Missionary Baptist Church was organized around 1854, with Maria Carr, better known as "Grandma Carr", along with Mrs. Gilbert Vernon and Mrs. Emily Stains having weekly prayer meetings in their homes; the three women sought to build a church that would edify the gospel and word of God; and

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WHEREAS, Antioch Missionary Baptist Church's first location was a small frame building located on Spring Street on land donated by Captain David L. Allen, a wealthy citizen at the time; a warranty deed for the land was titled over to the first trustees of the church on June 21, 1858; the church's first pastor was Reverend Tom Reasoner; the church housed the first school for black citizens in Decatur from 1857 to 1905; and

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1 WHEREAS, Antioch Missionary Baptist Church later moved to a
2 location at 600 Greenwood Avenue, followed by a move to 525
3 North Church Street; and

4 WHEREAS, Several ministers have served Antioch Missionary
5 Baptist Church, including the late Rev. Dr. Oscar C. Turner,
6 Jr., a faithful servant who led the congregation from 1965
7 until his death in 1995; he was the Administrative Dean of the
8 United Theological Seminary of Monroe, Louisiana and opened an
9 extension of this seminary in Decatur at Antioch; many local
10 ministers from Decatur and neighboring cities studied under Dr.
11 Turner and earned their Bachelor's and/or Master's of Theology
12 degree; lay people also obtained certification while attending
13 this school; a free food bank and clothing room was also
14 established under Dr. Turner in order to serve needy families
15 in the community, which continues to this date at a location on
16 Church Street in Decatur; Antioch Credit Union was established
17 in 1970; the church also hosts an annual free Community Health
18 Fair in the month of September and weekly worship broadcasts on
19 both radio and television stations; and

20 WHEREAS, In November of 1995, the Reverend Dr. C. D.
21 Stuart, from Arkansas, became the next Shepherd to lead Antioch
22 Missionary Baptist Church's congregation; under Dr. Stuart's
23 leadership, Antioch moved to its current location at 530 West

1 Mound Road on February 7, 1999; for a time, services were held
2 at both locations, with Antioch being known as "One Church, Two
3 Locations", with the Church Street location known as Antioch
4 South and the Mound Road location known as Antioch North; and

5 WHEREAS, On August 18, 2003, Antioch Christian Academy, a
6 vision of Dr. Stuart's, became a reality, offering a program
7 for kindergarten through second grade; the academy currently
8 offers kindergarten through sixth grade classes; and

9 WHEREAS, A mortgage burning ceremony was held on Palm
10 Sunday, March 24, 2004 for Antioch Missionary Baptist Church's
11 Antioch North location; the final worship service at Antioch
12 South was held on January 2, 2005 and Antioch South's location
13 was sold in the fall of 2006; and

14 WHEREAS, Through a collaboration with a number of
15 not-for-profit organizations and the City of Decatur, a piece
16 of Antioch Missionary Baptist Church's property, known as "the
17 blue house" on Church Street, was renovated into a homeless
18 shelter and was dedicated during a special ceremony as the
19 Antioch Safe Haven on May 17, 2006; the shelter provides
20 permanent housing and support services for up to eight
21 chronically homeless individuals; and

22 WHEREAS, In celebration of the church's sesquicentennial

1 year, the congregation of Antioch Missionary Baptist Church
2 will host a special banquet on Friday, October 12, 2007 at the
3 Decatur Club and a special anniversary service on Sunday,
4 October 28, 2007, along with many other events and special
5 services throughout 2007; therefore, be it

6 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
7 NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
8 congratulate the congregation of Antioch Missionary Baptist
9 Church on the occasion of the church's 150th anniversary and
10 wish them continued success and happiness in the future; and be
11 it further

12 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
13 presented to Reverend Dr. C. D. Stuart as a symbol of our
14 esteem and respect.