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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives are pleased to congratulate the congregation
4 of the Main Baptist Church in Aurora on the occasion of the
5 church's 142nd anniversary in June of 2009; and

6 WHEREAS, The Main Baptist Church had its beginnings in the
7 Park Place Baptist Church, which was instrumental in the
8 transportation of slaves to Aurora by way of the Underground
9 Railroad during the Civil War; after the emancipation of the
10 slaves, many African-Americans migrated to the North, with some
11 choosing to settle in Aurora; many of these ex-slaves chose to
12 worship at the Park Place Baptist Church, which manifested its
13 concern by welcoming them as part of its congregation; as the
14 new members grew in numbers and met in their homes for prayer
15 meetings, they felt the need for their own place of worship;
16 through the help of Reverend Buttons, the Pastor of Park Place,
17 and Reverend Barnett, the leader of the African-American
18 membership, the Colored Baptist Church of Aurora came into
19 being in June of 1867; and

20 WHEREAS, Around the 1890's, a frame church was erected on
21 the Main Baptist Church's current site, utilizing property
22 given as a gift to the church from a prominent Aurora citizen;
23 at the time, services were held in the basement and the name of

1 the church became the Third Baptist Church; and

2 WHEREAS, During the Main Baptist Church's first 48 years,
3 many pastors were called to serve the congregation; the church
4 also started numerous organizations, including a choir, a
5 quartet, Sunday School, Missionary Society, and Baptist Young
6 People's Union; in addition, an envelope system of paying
7 church dues and the tithing method of supporting the church
8 were introduced; and

9 WHEREAS, On November 24, 1924, the Third Baptist Church was
10 torn down and worship services were held in the Grand Army of
11 the Republic Memorial Hall, the Aurora City Hall, and the Labor
12 Temple, among other places; on August 23, 1925, the Reverend G.
13 W. Alexander preached the sermon for the "Laying of the
14 Cornerstone" and the church was renamed the Main Street Baptist
15 Church; and

16 WHEREAS, In November of 1949, Reverend Joseph L. Griffin of
17 Chicago accepted the call to serve as Pastor of the Main Street
18 Baptist Church; the church added many new organizations at that
19 time, including the Junior Missionary Society, the Volunteer
20 Service Guild, and the Willing Workers Club; in addition,
21 observance programs of the Pastor's Anniversary, Women's Day,
22 and Men's Day were started, along with the purchase of the
23 parsonage at 21 N. East Avenue in Aurora and the establishment

1 of a Scholarship Fund; the church's membership increased
2 greatly through gospel preaching, revivals, and faithful
3 witnessing; and

4 WHEREAS, In April of 1955, after a short period without a
5 pastor, the Reverend Robert Wesby became the Pastor of the Main
6 Street Baptist Church, with the Reverend Churchill Cowherd
7 serving as Assistant to the Pastor; during his pastorate, the
8 Children's Church, the Pathfinders, Silent Helpers, and the
9 Credit Union were organized; during this time, the church also
10 started the Sunday evening broadcast over WMRO and purchased
11 property at 818 E. Galena Blvd. in Aurora; in November of 1963,
12 Rev. Wesby resigned as pastor and Rev. Churchill Cowherd served
13 as the church's Interim Pastor; and

14 WHEREAS, On May 14, 1964, the congregation of the Main
15 Street Baptist Church enthusiastically welcomed Reverend
16 Robert Edward Morgan as their Spiritual Commander; during his
17 tenure, he added many new Deacons and Trustees, including the
18 church's first women trustees, Sisters Estella Smith, Martha
19 Dade, Tommie Wells, Eunice Tresenwriter, and Donna Williams; he
20 was also instrumental in the organization of the Pastor's Aid,
21 the Men's Club, the Church Council, the Christian Education
22 Board, the Deaconess, the Mothers' Board, the Nurses' Aid
23 Guild, and a Youth Fellowship; due to the changing of the names
24 of many of the streets in Aurora, it became necessary for a

1 church name change; by popular vote, the church became the Main
2 Baptist Church in 1964; and

3 WHEREAS, During the third year of Rev. Morgan's pastorate,
4 the Main Baptist Church launched its comprehensive building and
5 expansion program to meet its educational and sanctuary needs;
6 in the fall of 1972, Rev. Morgan resigned his pastorate and
7 Rev. Churchill Cowherd once again served as Interim Pastor; on
8 August 12, 1973, the Reverend Dezo McGill became pastor of the
9 church; Rev. McGill's first endeavor was to advance the Sunday
10 School hour and add Baptist Training Union workshops before the
11 Sunday morning worship hour; a nursery during morning worship
12 was instituted as well, with Sister Dorothy Walton directing;
13 in September of 1974, a church library was established and
14 dedicated honoring the labor of Rev. Robert E. Morgan and the
15 Hostess committee was organized to greet members and visitors
16 each Sunday; in December of 1980, an additional Worship Service
17 at 7:30 A.M. was instituted in to eliminate overcrowding at the
18 church's 11:00 A.M. Worship Service; and

19 WHEREAS, On June 8, 1980, the Main Baptist Church's
20 mortgage was burned in the presence of Reverend Dezo McGill,
21 Reverend Robert E. Morgan, Reverend Wallace S. Hartsfield,
22 Aurora city officials, and the congregation-at-large; and

23 WHEREAS, Under the inspired leadership of Reverend Dezo

1 McGill, the Main Baptist Church added many ministries and
2 organizations to its church program, including the Golden Agers
3 Ministry, Family Night, the Tape Ministry, Mission II, the
4 Women's Bible Study and Prayer Group, The Adventures of the
5 3R's Summer Learning Program, the Evangelistic Committee, the
6 Men's Ministry, the Singles Ministry, the Marriage Ministry,
7 Toastmasters, the New Members Class, and a part-time Children's
8 Church Pastor and assistants; in the fall of 1993, property was
9 purchased and renovated at 808 E. Galena Blvd. for the church's
10 education annex; and

11 WHEREAS, In October of 2006, Reverend McGill announced his
12 retirement after 32 years; the church's Deacons' Ministry,
13 chaired by Deacon Hase Phillips, established a Pulpit
14 Committee, which faced an awesome task of searching, screening,
15 and presenting candidates seeking to serve as Pastor; on June
16 2, 2007, Dr. Julian E. Spencer of Tracy, California accepted
17 the call to lead the Main Baptist Church; and

18 WHEREAS, Today, the congregation of the Main Baptist Church
19 continues its mission of being an effective, spiritual pillar
20 in its community, striving for the advancement of the Kingdom
21 of God by proclaiming the Word of God, leading lost souls to
22 Christ, and ministering to the needs of the saved and unsaved
23 in the church congregation, local community, across the nation,
24 and throughout the world; therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
2 NINETY-SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
3 congratulate the congregation of the Main Baptist Church in
4 Aurora on the occasion of the church's 142nd anniversary and
5 wish them continued success and happiness in the future; and be
6 it further

7 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
8 presented to Dr. Julian E. Spencer, Pastor of the Main Baptist
9 Church, as a symbol of our esteem and respect.