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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2           WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of  
3 Representatives are pleased to congratulate the members and  
4 staff of Covenant United Church of Christ on their 16th  
5 anniversary; and

6           WHEREAS, Formally established in 1996, the vision behind  
7 Covenant United Church of Christ (UCC) was first conceived of  
8 in 1995 when the former Thornridge UCC closed its doors in the  
9 same location; having dwindled to 8 members, the church held  
10 its final service Easter Sunday morning; and

11           WHEREAS, The Illinois Conference of the United Church of  
12 Christ set out to fill the void with a new church; Reverend  
13 Ozzie E. Smith, Jr. had a vision that the new church would be a  
14 church always in the mode of "becoming a new thing" (Isaiah  
15 43:19); it would not be a church weighed down by anchors of  
16 tradition; it would be a people-friendly, biblically literate,  
17 Christ-centered, spirit-filled church that lived out in its  
18 ministry, the tangible fruits of its mission statement: "to be  
19 a people of Afro-sensitive faith empowered by Christ, embracing  
20 its culture in shared ministry"; and

21           WHEREAS, Based upon this vision, Reverend Dr. Ozzie E.  
22 Smith, Jr. was called to organize, develop, and pastor Covenant

1 United Church of Christ; on Easter Sunday, April 7, 1996, one  
2 year from the time Thornridge UCC had closed its doors,  
3 Covenant United Church of Christ opened its doors; and

4 WHEREAS, That first Sunday 24 members joined; during that  
5 year the choir was organized, the first Associate Pastor was  
6 added to the staff, a 3 night Vacation Bible School was held, 2  
7 \$500 college scholarships were awarded, 125 Thanksgiving  
8 baskets were given away, and 40 families were adopted for  
9 Christmas; and

10 WHEREAS, In April of 1997, the church celebrated its first  
11 anniversary and the official Installation Service for its  
12 Pastor, Reverend Dr. Ozzie E. Smith, Jr.; that same year, the  
13 church experienced phenomenal growth, a second service was  
14 added, the parking lot was expanded, 7 deacons were ordained,  
15 and the first confirmation class was confirmed; and

16 WHEREAS, After 5 years of prayer, praise, and faithful  
17 giving, ground was broken for the new sanctuary in 2001; on  
18 Easter Sunday, March 31, 2002, with a membership of over 1,200,  
19 the congregation moved into the new sanctuary; and

20 WHEREAS, Now with over 2,500 members and almost 40  
21 ministries, Covenant is the fastest growing congregation in the  
22 United Church of Christ and one of the fastest growing in the

1 Chicagoland area; the mortgage was burned on December 31, 2007;  
2 a Family Life Center is being planned; and adjacent property  
3 was acquired, known as CUCC North; therefore, be it

4 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
5 NINETY-SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
6 we congratulate the members and staff of Covenant United Church  
7 of Christ on this occasion and wish them the best for years to  
8 come; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
10 presented to Reverend Dr. Ozzie E. Smith, Jr., on behalf of the  
11 members of Covenant United Church of Christ, as a symbol of our  
12 respect and esteem.