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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 St. Peter African Methodist Episcopal Church on the  
5 occasion of the church's 150th anniversary; and

6           WHEREAS, The St. Peter African Methodist Episcopal Church  
7 was organized in May 1857 by Rev. Philip Ward and Rev. E. C.  
8 Joyner in the old Masonic Temple on the corners of North Park  
9 and North Water Streets in Decatur; the church had 8 charter  
10 members and with a 3-member trustee board, which was elected in  
11 1864; and

12           WHEREAS, The St. Peter A.M.E. Church's first building was  
13 completed in 1865 on 2 lots located on the east side of  
14 Greenwood Avenue, running east to South Main Street in Decatur;  
15 after the original building burned down, a second church was  
16 built on the same site, followed by a third; a fourth church  
17 was later built to accommodate a school due to a lack of State  
18 or City provisions for the education of black children; the  
19 school which was formerly conducted at Antioch Baptist Church  
20 was moved to St. Peter's in 1865, remaining there until  
21 integrated schools were opened in 1874; the church's first  
22 Sunday School was organized in 1866; and

1           WHEREAS, The Reverend J. H. Sydes arrived in Decatur in  
2 1918; soon after his arrival, he began a building fund for a  
3 new St. Peter church; the new church building was dedicated by  
4 Bishop W.T. Vernon in September of 1927; the last bank note due  
5 on the church building was paid in June 1945 from money raised  
6 under the leadership of Reverend H. J. Parker; and

7           WHEREAS, Under the direction of Reverend Readye, St. Peter  
8 A.M.E. Church became actively involved in the Decatur  
9 community, with Reverend Readye becoming the first  
10 African-American member of the Decatur Board of Education and  
11 the Association of Commerce; and

12           WHEREAS, The Reverend William Newell Guy came to St. Peter  
13 A.M.E. Church as pastor in 1960; under his leadership, the  
14 church acquired a new parsonage in the Greenwood Urban Renewal  
15 area at 568 South Hayworth in Decatur; the new parsonage of St.  
16 Peter African Methodist Episcopal Church was dedicated on March  
17 25, 1962 by Reverend Joseph Gomes; in 1966, several lots  
18 adjoining the church were bought, which were used to erect a  
19 parking lot, with space remaining for the George A. Coates  
20 Educational Building, which was built in 1988; and

21           WHEREAS, Under the leadership of Reverend Carey A. Grady,  
22 who was installed as pastor in January 2004, the church has  
23 expanded greatly; the church instituted several new outreach

1 ministries, fellowships, and worship services, including a  
2 Christmas Gala, Greek Sunday, Homecoming and Back to School  
3 Giveaway, Media Ministry, Men's Empowerment Month, Women's  
4 Empowerment Month, Son's of Allen Prayer Breakfast, Nia  
5 After-School Program, Neighborhood Sunday, Stewardship  
6 Revival, Prayer Phone Line, Radio Broadcast, St. Peter Hilltop  
7 Newsletter, Sunday Breakfast, Wednesday, Word and Worship,  
8 Youth and Young Adult Revival, Youth Empowerment Month, Youth  
9 Empowerment Prayer Breakfast; the church also sponsors the  
10 Inspirational Spoken Word, a program that showcases local and  
11 regional talent, as well as the Decatur Council for Fostering  
12 Male Development, a male mentoring agency for African-American  
13 males; Reverend Grady has also helped foster a renewed interest  
14 and excitement in young people as well as adults by his unique  
15 expository preaching and teaching of the word of God; and

16 WHEREAS, The dedication and generosity of the congregation  
17 of the St. Peter African Methodist Episcopal Church make them  
18 role models for the people of the State of Illinois; therefore,  
19 be it

20 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
21 NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we  
22 congratulate the congregation of the St. Peter African  
23 Methodist Episcopal Church on the occasion of the church's  
24 150th anniversary and wish them continued success and happiness

1 in the future; and be it further

2       RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
3 presented to Reverend Carey A. Grady as a symbol of our esteem  
4 and respect.