



HR0446

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2           WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of  
3 Representatives are pleased to congratulate the pastor and  
4 congregation of Bethel Baptist Church in Caseyville on the  
5 200th anniversary of the church; and

6           WHEREAS, Bethel Baptist Church was formed in 1809; the  
7 early church members and the first pastor were strong  
8 abolitionists, and the early church constitution stated that  
9 members could not own slaves or hold a pro-slavery position;  
10 and

11           WHEREAS, The first pastor, James Lemen Sr., was an  
12 important figure in the abolitionist movement in the early days  
13 of Illinois history, and the early church was an important link  
14 in the Underground Railroad; and

15           WHEREAS, John Mason Peck, another early pastor of the  
16 church, helped John Meachum teach African-Americans to read and  
17 write on a barge on the Mississippi River; he founded Shurtleff  
18 College as Alton Seminary in 1827, and was the author of  
19 several books; and

20           WHEREAS, Bethel Baptist Church has a full and rich history  
21 and has truly reached a milestone with this bicentennial

1 anniversary which will be celebrated on October 4, 2009;  
2 therefore, be it

3       RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
4 NINETY-SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we  
5 congratulate the pastor and congregation of Bethel Baptist  
6 Church and wish them continued blessings in the years to come;  
7 and be it further

8       RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
9 presented to Reverend Michael Evans, Pastor of Bethel Baptist  
10 Church, as a symbol of our respect.