



HR1577

LRB096 24702 GRL 44683 r

1

HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives are pleased to congratulate the congregation
4 of the Willow United Methodist Church on the occasion of the
5 church's 150th anniversary; and

6 WHEREAS, Religious meetings in the Willow community were
7 first held in storefronts, schoolhouses, and private homes by
8 circuit riders of the Mormon and Methodist churches shortly
9 after the area was settled in 1833; and

10 WHEREAS, The construction of the Willow Methodist
11 Episcopal Church was begun in the fall of 1860 on land donated
12 by the family of James Parkinson; the construction was only
13 just beginning in April of 1861 when the American Civil War
14 began, and many of Willow's young men left to serve their
15 country and never returned to see a service held in the
16 finished church; and

17 WHEREAS, On December 19, 1861, a declaration was filed at
18 the courthouse in Galena making the "Willow First Methodist
19 Episcopal Church, Morseville Circuit, Freeport District, Rock
20 River Conference" official; the church's first service of
21 record was preached in the newly completed Willow church by
22 Reverend F. Winslow; and

1 WHEREAS, The Willow United Methodist Church has served the
2 people of Willow continuously since 1861; the axe markings on
3 the hand-hewn timbers laid for the foundation of the church are
4 still visible today in the open ceiling of the basement
5 Community Room; physical improvements to the church building
6 have been ongoing over the century and a half of its existence,
7 including a bell installed in the bell tower in 1882,
8 electricity run from a neighbor's Delco Battery Farm Plant in
9 1920, a basement that was begun in 1923 and completed in 1936,
10 and a Narthex addition in 2007; and

11 WHEREAS, Over 80 different Pastors have served the Willow
12 United Methodist Church, beginning with the Reverend F.
13 Winslow, and including the Reverend George Gable, who served 3
14 separate tenures from 1897 to 1931, all the way up to the
15 church's current Pastor, the Reverend Mike Jones; and

16 WHEREAS, Service to the people of Willow and their extended
17 community has always been a prime focus of the Willow United
18 Methodist Church; during the Great Depression, the Ladies Aid
19 Society canned fruits and vegetables and donated them, along
20 with hand-made pillows and quilts and dozens of eggs, to
21 Freeport's Wesley Memorial Hospital; at the onset of World War
22 II, the women volunteered their services at the USO club in
23 Savanna, and shipped packages, in June and again in December,

1 to each of the 15 local boys who were serving in the Armed
2 Forces; the Willow Valley Folk Festival was begun in 1968 as a
3 fundraising tool to keep the doors of the church open during a
4 time of financial crisis; the festival has since become a much
5 anticipated annual event for the church, hosting thousands each
6 year and allowing the Willow Methodist Church to continue its
7 mission of service to its community and the world at large; and

8 WHEREAS, The Willow United Methodist Church and its
9 congregation serves as models of hard work, integrity, and
10 dedication for the people of the State of Illinois; therefore,
11 be it

12 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
13 NINETY-SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
14 congratulate the congregation of the Willow United Methodist
15 Church on the occasion of the church's 150th anniversary and
16 wish them continued success and happiness in the future; and be
17 it further

18 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
19 presented to Reverend Mike Jones, Pastor of the Willow United
20 Methodist Church, as a symbol of our esteem and respect.