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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2           WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of  
3 Representatives are pleased to congratulate the First  
4 Presbyterian Church of Vandalia on its long and storied  
5 history; and

6           WHEREAS, In 1823, the Illinois General Assembly donated 5  
7 lots to the City of Vandalia so that the capital city could  
8 have a church; Vandalia city leaders sold 4 of the lots and  
9 built the little House of Divine Worship on the 5th lot with  
10 the remaining money; and

11           WHEREAS, The American Home Missionary Society sent the  
12 Reverend Solomon P. Hardy to organize the new church; the first  
13 members of the church included Jeremiah Abbott, his wife,  
14 Betsy, Mrs. Ruth Russell, Mrs. Amy Davidson, and Mrs. Martha  
15 Gorin on certificate; Mr. Samuel Russell and Miss Ruth Russell  
16 were on examination; and

17           WHEREAS, Following the completion of the House of Divine  
18 Worship, all people were invited to worship there, although it  
19 was used primarily by Presbyterians and Methodists; the House  
20 of Divine Worship was also used as a school; and

21           WHEREAS, Many important government officials and

1 outstanding members of the community were members of the House  
2 of Divine Worship of Vandalia and it is believed that Abraham  
3 Lincoln worshipped there; and

4 WHEREAS, One of the most revered artifacts of the early  
5 Presbyterian Church and Vandalia was donated to the church  
6 after a Philadelphia department store owner and extensive land  
7 owner, Romulus Riggs, read an article about the poor little  
8 Presbyterian Church way out in the Wilderness Capital of  
9 Illinois; Mr. Riggs sent a bell in honor of his newly-born  
10 daughter, who was named Illinois; and

11 WHEREAS, In 1837, legislators voted to move the capital to  
12 Springfield; since Vandalia was built as the seat of the State  
13 government in 1839, many Vandalia citizens moved to  
14 Springfield, which caused the population to drop greatly; as a  
15 result, the church's membership dropped to 5 people; and

16 WHEREAS, Five people could not support the House of Divine  
17 Worship; therefore, the church was rented to a farmer who  
18 raised sheep on the premises until 1848, when it was  
19 reestablished by Reverend Joseph Gordon; and

20 WHEREAS, In the early 1860s, a maiden lady of the church  
21 passed away and left \$800 in her will to the church, requesting  
22 that the money be used to build a new church; and

1           WHEREAS, In 1867, the House of Divine Worship land was  
2 purchased for \$500 by the trustees of the Presbyterian Church,  
3 which included Trustee James Hall, who is known as the first  
4 man of letters in Illinois; and

5           WHEREAS, The women of the church hosted strawberry  
6 festivals to raise money and with the help of Matthias Fehren's  
7 donation of \$4,000, Fred Remann, Sr.'s donation of \$3,000, and  
8 Dr. J. N. and Calvin McCord's donation of \$1,000, the new  
9 Presbyterian church was built on the corner of Main St. and 3rd  
10 St. at a cost of \$15,000; and

11           WHEREAS, The House of Divine Worship was moved to the back  
12 of the lot during construction and was later sold to the First  
13 Christian Church; and

14           WHEREAS, After the First Christian Church built a new  
15 church, the House of Divine Worship became a private residence;  
16 and

17           WHEREAS, In 1970, the Presbyterians built a new church;  
18 Historical Vandalia, Inc. purchased the old building, with  
19 plans to open a museum on the first floor; on June 10, 1979,  
20 the Fayette County Museum was opened to the public for the  
21 first time; and

1           WHEREAS, In March of 1982, the old Presbyterian Church  
2 building joined the National Register of Historic Places; and

3           WHEREAS, The Fayette County Museum is now one of Vandalia's  
4 major tourist attractions; the museum is staffed by volunteers  
5 and operates on donations; each year, thousands of school  
6 children and tourists have the opportunity to view artifacts  
7 dating back to the days when Vandalia was the capital of  
8 Illinois from 1820 to 1839; therefore, be it

9           RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
10 NINETY-EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
11 we congratulate the Vandalia Presbyterian Church on its  
12 enriching role in Illinois history and wish the church's  
13 congregation success and happiness in the future; and be it  
14 further

15           RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
16 presented to the Vandalia Presbyterian Church as a symbol of  
17 our esteem and respect.