

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 560

By Goins

A RESOLUTION to recognize and congratulate the Morristown First Presbyterian Church on the occasion of its 150th anniversary.

WHEREAS, the many fine churches across this State constitute an institutional foundation for an orderly and just society for all Tennesseans, and their dedicated service to God and humanity is the bedrock upon which our State and nation are founded; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that we should recognize those venerable religious institutions and their congregations who, through their unflagging capacity for love, dedication of spirit, and faith in God, strive to enrich the lives of people in their communities; and

WHEREAS, one such dynamic and historic community of faith is the Morristown First Presbyterian Church, whose members are this year celebrating the church's 150th anniversary; and

WHEREAS, divisions created during the Civil War caused a rift between members at Bethesda Presbyterian Church, thus precipitating the establishment of a new church in Morristown; the Morristown Presbyterian Church was organized on May 18, 1867, at a time when, as records indicate, only two Presbyterians were living in Morristown; and

WHEREAS, during the church's sesquicentennial celebration, former and current members will have the opportunity to reflect on Morristown First Presbyterian's history and influence over the years, from service projects and the founding of much needed organizations to housing college classes for an up-and-coming college campus; and

WHEREAS, on Sunday, April 30th, the congregation enjoyed a sermon delivered by guest speaker Reverend Laura Hollandsworth Jernigan, a graduate of the Union Presbyterian Seminary in Virginia and current associate pastor at Northwest Presbyterian Church in Atlanta,

Georgia; she is the daughter of former First Presbyterian pastor Reverend Dr. Ned

Hollandsworth, who served from 1984 to 1994; and

WHEREAS, the celebration continued into Sunday afternoon, with a church-wide lunch in the Family Life Center, followed by an open house that featured tours of the church and the opportunity to meet and greet current church staff; and

WHEREAS, Wednesday night programs celebrating and facilitating the study of the church's history began in April and continue through May; on one of these Wednesday evenings, congregants traveled to Bethesda Presbyterian Church, the mother church of Morristown First Presbyterian Church, to enjoy homemade ice cream and reflect on life in the 1860s. As the official organization date of the Morristown First Presbyterian Church is May 18th, the final Wednesday night program will occur on May 17th, bringing to a close the celebratory series; and

WHEREAS, throughout the church's sesquicentennial year, members of the congregation will participate in the 150 Acts of Kindness campaign, a program designed to bring attention to the importance of everyday acts of love, regardless of size; these acts of kindness might include smiling at a stranger, holding a door for someone in need, or volunteering at a community nonprofit organization; and

WHEREAS, under the current leadership of Reverend Dr. Gary Kelly, the Morristown First Presbyterian Church continues its impressive legacy of devoted fellowship and worship, serving as a testament to the enduring power of faith in action; and

WHEREAS, the Morristown First Presbyterian Church has become one of the great religious institutions and catalysts for positive spiritual change in our State and nation, as it has stood on the rock-solid foundation of Christian belief, service, and love for 150 years; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby join in celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Morristown First Presbyterian Church, thank Reverend Dr. Gary Kelly and the good people of this remarkable

congregation for their notable service to their Lord and this State, and wish them much continued success and happiness in the future.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.