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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois Senate are saddened to learn of the death of Reverend Thomas B. "Tom" Christell Jr. of Springfield, who passed away on April 14, 2023; and

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WHEREAS, Rev. Christell was born to Thomas B. and Viola Arline (Evans) Christell Sr. in Chicago on May 16, 1951; he married Patricia Chelgren on June 16, 1973; and

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WHEREAS, Rev. Christell retired from Grace Lutheran Church after 29 years of service; he previously served at St. Peter's Church in Arenzville for seven years; and

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WHEREAS, During his time at Grace Lutheran Church, Rev. Christell traveled with adults and youth to the Boundary Waters for fishing, canoeing, and fellowship; he was committed to working with the youth of his church and served as a mentor to young members, attending many trips, retreats, and other adventures; and

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WHEREAS, Rev. Christell participated in Confirmation Camp for all 36 years of his ministry; while providing oversight of the Central Southern Illinois Synod Lutheran Youth Organization, he organized and operated many youth conventions and gatherings, and he was an integral part of the Leadership

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1 Lab program for decades; after serving as coordinator of the
2 Advanced Level of Leadership Lab for several years, he became
3 the co-director in 2000; during his tenure, he prided himself
4 on creating scholarship funding for kids to attend the
5 Leadership Lab; and

6 WHEREAS, Rev. Christell expanded the Grace Lutheran Food
7 Pantry to be one of the largest in Springfield, taking pride in
8 the fact that he never used administrative funds for the food
9 pantry as it was a self-sufficient program that ran on
10 donations, volunteers, and the desire to help those in need;
11 and

12 WHEREAS, Rev. Christell served many charities and
13 organizations outside the parish, including Lutheran Social
14 Services in Illinois, Habitat for Humanity, the Springfield
15 Choral Society, and Downtown Springfield Incorporated; he also
16 took part in the Lincoln Funeral reenactment and procession
17 from the train station to Oakridge Cemetery in 2015; and

18 WHEREAS, Rev. Christell loved golfing, fishing, and
19 watching the Chicago Cubs; and

20 WHEREAS, Rev. Christell loved being a grandfather and was
21 very proud of his grandchildren; he enjoyed spending time
22 playing and laughing with his grandchildren and

1 great-grandchild; and

2 WHEREAS, Rev. Christell was preceded in death by his
3 parents and his son, Matthew Charles Christell; and

4 WHEREAS, Rev. Christell is survived by his wife of 49
5 years, Patti; his children, Thomas B. "Chip" (Erica) Christell
6 III, Amy (Jason) Harshman, Stephen (Katie) Christell, and
7 Katie (Gabriel) Gonzalez; his grandchildren, Collin, Nathan,
8 Addison, Chase, Owen, Emily, Max, Jacob, Hallie, Sofia, David,
9 and Benjamin; his great-grandson, Zane; his brothers, Kevin
10 (Linda) Christell and Craig (Michelle) Christell; and several
11 nieces, nephews, and cousins; therefore, be it

12 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL
13 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
14 Reverend Thomas B. "Tom" Christell Jr. and extend our sincere
15 condolences to his family, friends, and all who knew and loved
16 him; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
18 presented to the family of Rev. Christell as an expression of
19 our deepest sympathy.