

# A resolution

adopted by *The City Council*  
of the *City of Chicago, Illinois*



Presented by ALDERMAN THOMAS TUNNEY on JULY 19, 2007

**Whereas**, On July 1, 2007, due to an advancing and debilitating medical condition, Reverend Gregory Dell retired from his pastoral post at the Broadway United Methodist Church; and

**WHEREAS**, Reverend Dell became pastor of the church, located in the East Lakeview community, in 1995 at a time when approximately 40% of its congregation's sexual orientation was gay or lesbian. As a pastor at other United Methodist churches, he had offered holy union services for gay and lesbian couples because he deeply believes in an inclusive ministry where gender orientation does not matter. He ministered to his Lakeview congregants in the same manner. However, in August 1998, the denomination's leadership ruled that ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions would be forbidden. After much soul searching, Reverend Gregory Dell decided the spiritual needs of his flock outweighed what he considered to be a man-made political decision and continued his practice; and

**WHEREAS**, In March 1999, Reverend Gregory Dell had to face the consequences of his decision of conscience and was found guilty of disobedience a denominational trial court. He was suspended from the ministry indefinitely. He had only to sign a pledge saying he would no longer conduct services for same gender unions to end the sentence but he reaffirmed that he was committed to ministering to all persons regardless of race, gender or sexual orientation. Eventually, the sentence was reduced to a one-year suspension upon appeal; and

**WHEREAS**, Reverend Gregory Dell grew up in northern Illinois with a deep-rooted desire to work for social justice. At the age of 18, he made the decision to pursue a career as a minister. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree at Illinois Wesleyan University and a Master of Divinity from Duke Divinity. Reverend Dell was appointed as pastor to several Illinois congregations before his Broadway United Methodist Church appointment. It was during this time that he became committed to issues concerning social justice that led to his stance on sexual orientation; and

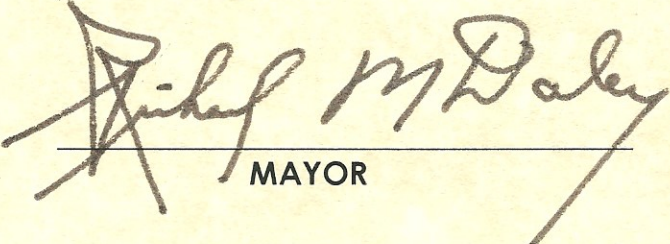
**WHEREAS**, In July 2000, the one-year suspension was at an end and Reverend Gregory Dell was reinstated to the pulpit at Broadway United Methodist Church where he has tended to the needs of his flock and expanded his social justice involvement until last summer when the first symptoms of Parkinson's disease appeared. Usually after diagnosis, the disease progresses slowly but such was not the case with Reverend Dell. In January, the tremors worsened and more symptoms suddenly appeared. By February, he had to turn over active duty to his associate pastor, Reverend Vernice Thorn. By May, it was apparent that Reverend Dell would have to take disability leave and a new pastor, Reverend Jenny Weber, has been appointed; and

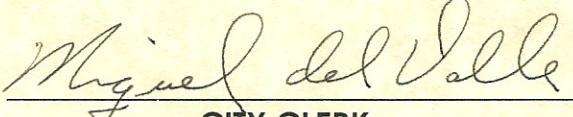
**WHEREAS**, The Honorable Thomas Tunney, Alderman of the 44<sup>th</sup> Ward, has informed this august body of the retirement of Reverend Gregory Dell; now, therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED**, That we, the Mayor and members of the City of Chicago City Council, assembled here this nineteenth day of July, 2007 A.D., do hereby salute the Reverend Gregory Dell as a man of principle, conviction and courage and wish him continued strength of courage in his battle against the debilitating disease that has taken him from his pastoral duties; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared and presented to the Reverend Gregory Dell.



  
MAYOR

  
CITY CLERK