

1 A RESOLUTION recognizing February 21, 2026, as Historic St. Paul A.M.E.
2 Church National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Day in the Commonwealth
3 of Kentucky.

4 WHEREAS, the National Park Service has officially designated Historic St. Paul
5 African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church as a site on the National Underground
6 Railroad Network to Freedom. Historic St. Paul A.M.E. is located at 251 North Upper
7 Street in Lexington, Kentucky; and

8 WHEREAS, built in 1826, Historic St. Paul served as an active Underground
9 Railroad station, featuring a concealed upper room and a stairwell behind the pulpit
10 where freedom seekers found refuge; and

11 WHEREAS, to help prevent freedom seekers from being discovered by tracking
12 dogs, the church purchased the adjacent city stray pen in order to mask human scent; and

13 WHEREAS, oral tradition affirms that Lewis Garrard Clarke, Lewis Hayden, and
14 others were aided through this network of protection and faith; and

15 WHEREAS, after escaping enslavement in Madison County, Lewis Garrard Clarke
16 became an internationally recognized abolitionist, freedom seeker, lecturer, and author
17 whose firsthand accounts of slavery helped shape nineteenth century antislavery thought
18 in both America and Europe; and

19 WHEREAS, Lewis Garrard Clarke spoke at Historic St. Paul A.M.E. Church in
20 1892; and

21 WHEREAS, documented newspaper accounts have established a connection
22 between Lewis Garrard Clarke and Historic St. Paul A.M.E. Church, affirming the
23 church's role within the broader freedom network. This was a key contributing factor in
24 the National Park Service's approval of Historic St. Paul's designation; and

25 WHEREAS, the Historic St. Paul A.M.E. Church served as the site of the 1897
26 funeral for Lewis Garrard Clarke. His life inspired the character George Harris in Harriet
27 Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; and

1 WHEREAS, at the time of his death, Lewis Garrard Clarke received unprecedented
2 honors. By order of then-Governor William O'Connell Bradley, his body lay in state at
3 the Lexington City Auditorium (now the Lexington Opera House), the first tribute of its
4 kind ever accorded to an African American in the Commonwealth of Kentucky; and

5 WHEREAS, on February 21, 2026, the church will host a Community
6 Commemoration Service featuring Dr. Carver Clark Gayton, historian, descendant-
7 scholar, and great-grandson of Lewis Garrard Clarke, to celebrate this prestigious
8 national designation; and

9 WHEREAS, today, Historic St. Paul A.M.E. remains one of Kentucky's few
10 surviving Underground Railroad-era sites, preserving tangible links to faith, resistance,
11 and freedom;

12 NOW, THEREFORE,

13 ***Be it resolved by the Senate of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of***
14 ***Kentucky:***

15 ➔Section 1. The members of the Senate hereby recognize February 21, 2026, as
16 Historic St. Paul A.M.E. Church National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom
17 Day in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

18 ➔Section 2. When the Senate adjourns this day, it does so in honor, recognition,
19 and celebration of Historic St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church being officially
20 designated by the National Park Service as a site on the National Underground Railroad
21 Network to Freedom.

22 ➔Section 3. The Clerk of the Senate is directed to transmit a copy of this
23 Resolution to Senator Reginald Thomas for delivery.