

**GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH 2009
ARCHIVES' RESEARCH REPORT**

RESOLUTION NO.: 2009-C066
TITLE: James Solomon Russell to LFF
PROPOSER: Diocese of Southern Virginia
COMMITTEE: Prayer Book, Liturgy & Church Music

Directly Related: (attached)

None

Indirectly Related:

1991-D149 Endorse Bicentennial Celebration of the Black Presence in the Episcopal Church
1982-B054 Commend the Work of the Members of the Association of Episcopal Colleges

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C&C PAGE:

BB PAGE:

1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 76th General Convention direct the
2 Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music to undertake the revision of Lesser Feast and
3 Fasts by including The Venerable Archdeacon James Solomon Russell, on March 28, the
4 date of the end of his earthly life; and be it further

5
6 *Resolved*, That the following propers be considered for that feast day:

7
8 Traditional Collect

9
10 Almighty God, in thy wisdom thou gavest to thy servant James Solomon Russell
11 the courage to establish a college in which the lives of many are enriched and the truth of
12 thy word is heard: Help us, we pray, to know and trust the power of thy love and follow
13 faithfully where thou dost lead; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who livest and reignest
14 with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

15
16 Contemporary Collect

17
18 Almighty God, in your wisdom you gave your servant James Solomon Russell the
19 courage to establish a college in which the lives of many are enriched and the truth of
20 your word is heard: Help us, we pray, to know and trust the power of your love and
21 follow faithfully where you lead; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns
22 with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen

23
24 Propers:

25
26 First Lesson: 1 Kings 5:1-12

27 Psalm 127

28 Gospel: John 14:8-14

29
30 Preface of a Saint 1

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EXPLANATION:

James Solomon Russell was born into slavery on December 20, 1857 near Palmer Springs and the Roanoke River in Virginia. He became known as the father of St. Paul's College, Lawrenceville, VA (one of the three historically Black Episcopal Colleges), was the founder of numerous congregations, a missionary, writer, and unique figure in the Virginia Episcopal Church. He was the first student of the Bishop Payne Divinity School located at St. Stephen's, Petersburg, Virginia. For 52 years of ordained ministry in the Diocese of Southern Virginia, he worked tirelessly to encourage black candidates to enter Holy Orders so that they could care for the growing numbers of black Episcopalians. In 1893, Russell was named the first Archdeacon for Colored Work. Southern Virginia had the largest population of black Episcopalians in the United States thanks in large measure to the evangelistic efforts of The Rev. James S. Russell. In 1900 there were 30 Black Congregations. In 1927, Dr. Russell was the first African American elected Bishop in the Episcopal Church; however, he declined election as Suffragan Bishop of Colored Work in both the Dioceses of Arkansas and North Carolina, and was glad that his action helped defeat the idea of subordinate racial bishops. Dr. Russell was the first African American to be elected a member of a Department of the National Council of the Episcopal Church. Near the end of his life, Virginia Seminary, which he was not allowed to attend in his early years, conferred an honorary degree on him. His ministry continued until his death on March 28, 1935. James Solomon Russell's devotion to Christ's ministry, in times and circumstances far from ideal, was an inspiration to the thousands of lives he touched.