

**General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2022
Archives' Research Report**

Resolution No.: 2022-A009
Title: Revision of Existing Calendar Commemorations
Proposer: Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music
Topic: Church Calendar, Lesser Feasts/Fasts

Directly Related: (Attached)

2018-A065 Authorize Continued Use of *Lesser Feasts and Fasts* 2006

Indirectly Related: (Available in the [Acts of Convention](#) database, searchable by resolution number)

None

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1973 through 2018, selecting “direct” resolutions that have a substantive bearing on the proposed legislation. The “direct” resolutions are attached and “indirect” resolutions are available in the Acts of Convention database. Committee members who require other research assistance should contact the Archives through the [Research Request Form](#) or call 800-525-9329.

A009 - Revision of Existing Calendar Commemorations

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music

Requests New Interim Body: No

Amends C&C or Rules of Order: No

Has Budget Implications: No

Cost:

HiA: HB

Legislative Committee Currently Assigned: 12 - Prayer Book, Liturgy & Music

Completion Status: Incomplete

Latest House Action: N/A

Supporting Documents: No

Resolution Text

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring,

That the biographical materials on Absalom Jones (February 13) shall be revised as follows:

Absalom Jones, Priest, 1818

Absalom Jones was born enslaved to Abraham Wynkoop, a wealthy Anglican planter in 1746 in Delaware. He was working in the fields when Abraham recognized that he was an intelligent child and ordered that he be trained to work in the house. Absalom eagerly accepted instruction in reading. He also saved money he was given and bought books (among them a primer, a spelling book, and a bible). Abraham Wynkoop died in 1753, and by 1755 his younger son Benjamin had inherited the plantation. When Absalom was sixteen, Benjamin Wynkoop sold the plantation and Absalom's mother, sister, and five brothers. Wynkoop brought Absalom to Philadelphia, where he opened a store and joined St. Peter's Church. In Philadelphia, Benjamin Wynkoop permitted Absalom to attend a night school for black people operated by Quakers following the tradition established by abolitionist teacher Anthony Benezet.

At twenty, with the permission of their masters, Absalom married Mary Thomas, who was enslaved to Sarah King, who also worshipped at St. Peter's. The Rev. Jacob Duche performed the wedding at Christ Church. Absalom and his father-in-law, John Thomas, used their savings and sought donations and loans primarily from prominent Quakers, in order to purchase Mary's freedom. Absalom and Mary worked very hard to repay the money borrowed to buy her freedom. They saved enough money to purchase property

and to buy Absalom's freedom. Although he repeatedly asked Benjamin Wynkoop to allow him to buy his freedom, Wynkoop refused. Absalom persisted because as long as he was enslaved, Wynkoop could take his property and his money. Finally, in 1784 Benjamin Wynkoop freed Absalom by granting him a manumission. Absalom continued to work in Wynkoop's store as a paid employee.

Absalom left St. Peter's Church and began worshipping at St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church. He met Richard Allen, who had been engaged to preach at St. George's, and the two became lifelong friends. Together, in 1787, they founded the Free African Society, a mutual aid benevolent organization that was the first of its kind organized by and for black people. Members of the Society paid monthly dues for the benefit of those in need. At St. George's, Absalom and Richard served as lay ministers for the black membership. The active evangelism of Jones and Allen significantly increased black membership at St. George's. The black members worked hard to raise money to build an upstairs gallery intended to enlarge the church. The church leadership decided to segregate the black worshippers in the gallery without notifying them. During a Sunday morning service, a dispute arose over the seats black members had been instructed to take in the gallery. The ushers attempted to physically remove them by first accosting Absalom Jones. Most of the black members present indignantly walked out of St. George's in a body.

Prior to the incident at St. George's, the Free African Society had initiated religious services. Some of these services were presided over by The Rev. Joseph Pilmore, an assistant at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. The Society established communication with similar black groups in other cities. In 1792 the Society began to build the African Church of Philadelphia. The church membership took a denominational vote and decided to affiliate with the Episcopal Church. Richard Allen withdrew from the effort as he favored affiliation with the Methodist Church. Absalom Jones was asked to provide pastoral leadership, and after prayer and reflection, he accepted the call.

The African Church was dedicated on July 17, 1794. The Rev. Dr. Samuel Magaw, rector St. Paul's Church, preached the dedicatory address. Dr. Magaw was assisted at the service by The Rev. James Abercrombie, assistant minister at Christ Church. Soon thereafter, the congregation applied for membership in the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania on the following conditions: 1) that they would be received as an organized body; 2) that they would have control over their local affairs; 3) that Absalom Jones would be licensed as lay reader, and, if qualified, be ordained as a minister. In October 1794, it was admitted as the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas. The church was incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1796. Bishop William White ordained Jones as deacon in 1795 and as priest on September 21, 1802.

Jones was an earnest preacher. He denounced slavery and warned the oppressors to "clean their hands of slaves." To him, God was the Father, who always acted on "behalf of the oppressed and distressed." But it was his constant visiting and mild manner that made him beloved by his congregation and by the community. St. Thomas Church grew to over 500 members during its first year. The congregants formed a day school and were active in moral uplift, self-empowerment, and anti-slavery activities. Known as "the

Black Bishop of the Episcopal Church,” Jones was an example of persistent faith in God and in the Church as God’s instrument. Jones died on this day in 1818.

and be it further

Resolved, That the commemoration of Maryam of Qidun (October 29) be revised as follows:

Maryam of Qidun, Monastic, 4th century

Maryam of Qidun is one of the most popular Syriac Christian saints. The drama of her life story easily lends itself to fictionalized interpretations, and multiple accounts of her life were produced. There nevertheless does seem to be a historical person in the background of all of these accounts, who became the inspiration for all of these legends.

Maryam grew up in a Christian family and was orphaned at the age of seven. Her only living relative was an uncle named Abraham who lived as a hermit in the desert near Qidun, a village outside of Edessa. Despite the seeming oddity of an anchorite serving as the guardian for a young girl, therefore, she was given to him to raise. For twenty years, she lived an ascetic life in her own room in his dwelling, growing deeply in holiness and prayer, teaching those who came to seek her wisdom through a window, and being praised and admired by all who met her.

However, there was a monk who desired her, and who used to come to the hermitage every day on the pretext of speaking with Abraham in order to see her. One day, when Maryam’s uncle was away, the monk raped her. Maryam fell into despair about the possibility of her salvation, for she had always been admired for her purity and holiness. Deeply shaken, she questioned, “How can I ever again raise my eyes up to heaven when I cannot even bring myself to look at my uncle?” Rather than face him and confess to him what she believed to be a sin, she ran away to the city, trapped by societal judgment and working as a prostitute in a tavern.

After two years of frantic searching, her uncle discovered where she was living, and he borrowed a soldier’s uniform and a horse. He covered his face with the helm and set off for the tavern. When he saw her dressed as a prostitute and flirting with the customers he nearly wept, but he concealed his emotions lest she recognize him and run away. Although he had not touched wine or cooked food in nearly fifty years, he feasted and drank and joked as though he were truly a soldier. But when the girl led him back to her bedroom he took off his helm and said, “My daughter Maryam, don’t you know me? Whatever has happened to you? Why did you not just tell me when you had sinned? I would not have been angry with you, for who is without sin, except for God alone? I would have done penance for you myself, yet instead you have left me all alone in unspeakable sadness and grief.”

As he spoke these words, she was motionless like a stone, too ashamed and afraid to speak or even to raise her eyes to his. But he spoke words of comfort and compassion to her all night, and in the morning, she allowed him to lead her home.

In one way, Maryam's story demonstrates that, regardless of how she first perceived the value of her virginity, God's grace proved to be far wider than she imagined. And in another way, Maryam's story demonstrates that "neither death, nor life...nor things present, nor things to come...nor anything else in all creation," including the evils that ensnared her and defamed her, could separate her from "the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Collects

I. O God of holiness and strength, rescue us from the sins that ensnare us and destroy the evils that defame us, that, like thy servant Maryam of Qidun, we may find our own selves inseparable from thy love made known in Christ Jesus our Lord; who with thee and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.

II. O God of holiness and strength, rescue us from the sins that ensnare us and destroy the evils that defame us, that, like your servant Maryam of Qidun, we may find our own selves inseparable from your love made known in Christ Jesus our Lord; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.

Lessons and Psalm

Romans 8:31-39

Psalm 31:15-24

John 8:1-11

Preface of Holy Week

And be it further

Resolved, That the commemoration of The Martyrs of Japan (February 5) be revised as follows:

The Martyrs of Japan, 1597

The introduction of Christianity into Japan in the sixteenth century, first by the Jesuits under Francis Xavier, and then by the Franciscans, has left records of heroism and self-sacrifice in the annals of Christian witness. It has been estimated that by the end of that century there were about 300,000 baptized believers in Japan.

Unfortunately, these initial successes were compromised by rivalries among the religious orders, and the interplay of colonial politics, both within Japan and between Japan and the Spanish and Portuguese, aroused suspicion about Western intentions of conquest. After a period of ambiguous support by shoguns Nobunaga and Hideyoshi in the last half of the century, the Christian enterprise began to suffer cruel persecution and suppression, culminating in nationwide edicts banning Christianity under the Tokugawa shogunate at the beginning of the Edo era in 1603.

The first victims were six Franciscan friars and twenty of their converts, who were crucified at Nagasaki, February 5, 1597. In his powerful novel *Silence*, based on the event, Shusaku Endo writes:

“They were martyred. But what a martyrdom! I had long read about martyrdom in the lives of the saints—how the souls of the martyrs had gone home to Heaven, how they had been filled with glory in Paradise, how the angels had blown trumpets. This was the splendid martyrdom I had often seen in my dreams. But the martyrdom of the Japanese Christians I now describe to you was no such glorious thing. What a miserable and painful business it was! The rain falls unceasingly on the sea. And the sea which killed them surges on uncannily—in silence.”

By 1630, what was left of Christianity in Japan was driven underground. Yet it is remarkable that two hundred and fifty years later there were found many men and women, without priests or sacraments, who had preserved through the generations a vestige of Christian faith.

And be it further

Resolved, That the 80th General Convention authorize the deletion of William Porcher DuBose from the Calendar of the Church and liturgical propers set forth in *Lesser Feasts and Fasts, 2018*.

Explanation

During the 2018-2021 triennium, information was made available to the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music which impressed on the Commission the necessity of revising certain portions of *Lesser Feasts and Fasts 2018*.

These revisions are proposed for authorization in the volume *Lesser Feasts and Fasts 2018*.



Resolution Number: 2018-A065
Title: Authorize Continued Use of Lesser Feasts and Fasts 2006
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Substituted and Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention authorize the continued use of Lesser Feasts and Fasts 2006; and be it further

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention commend the continued availability of Great Cloud of Witnesses 2015 for the 2018-2021 triennium; and be it further

Resolved, That the new commemorations in Lesser Feasts and Fasts 2018 proposed by the SCLM be authorized for trial use and be included in the calendar for the 2018-2021 triennium, under Article X(b); and be it further

Resolved, That the SCLM provide the 80th General Convention with a clear and unambiguous plan for a singular calendar of Lesser Feasts and Fasts.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Austin, 2018* (New York: General Convention, 2018), p. 679.