

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

**Resolution No.:** 2022-A010  
**Title:** Lesser Feasts and Fasts Revision Principles  
**Proposer:** Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music  
**Topic:** Church Calendar

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### **Directly Related:** (Attached)

2015-A056 Authorize A Great Cloud of Witness and Weekday Eucharistic Propers

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

2009-A098 Approve Guidelines and Procedures for Alteration of the Church Calendar  
2006-A057 Approves New Principles of Revision for *Lesser Feasts and Fasts*

*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.*

# A010 - Lesser Feasts and Fasts Revision Principles

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**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

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## Resolution Text

*Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring,

That the following Principles of Revision be approved by the 80th General Convention and substituted for the previous Principles most recently affirmed by the 76th Convention (2009) and published in *Holy Women, Holy Men*.

### Principle of Revision

The qualifications and benchmarks for inclusion in the church calendar are as follows.

1. **Historicity:** Christianity is a radically historical religion, so in almost every instance it is not theological realities or spiritual movements but exemplary witness to the Gospel of Christ in lives actually lived that is commemorated in the Calendar.
2. **Christian Discipleship:** The death of the saints, precious in God's sight, is the ultimate witness to the power of the Resurrection. What is being commemorated, therefore, is the completion in death of a particular Christian's living out of the promises of baptism. Baptism is, therefore, a necessary prerequisite for inclusion in the Calendar.
3. **Significance:** Those commemorated should have been in their lifetime extraordinary, even heroic servants of God and God's people for the sake, and after the example, of Jesus Christ. They may also be people whose creative work or whose manner of life has glorified God, enriched the life of the Church, or led others to a deeper understanding of God. In their varied ways, those commemorated have revealed Christ's presence in, and Lordship over, all of history; and continue to inspire us as

we carry forward God's mission in the world. Commemoration thereby reminds us of our participation in the great cloud of witnesses: our own membership in a timeless community that surrounds and supports us, equipping us for ministry in the world, and moving us toward maturity in Christ.

4. **Memorability:** The Calendar should include those who, through their devotion to Christ and their joyful and loving participation in the community of the faithful, deserve to be remembered by the Episcopal Church today. However, in order to celebrate the whole history of salvation, it is important also to include those “whose memory may have faded in the shifting fashions of public concern, but whose witness is deemed important to the life and mission of the Church” (Thomas Talley).
5. **Range of Inclusion:** The Calendar especially includes Episcopalians and other members of the Anglican Communion. Focusing above all on principles of Christian witness and discipleship, and honoring the movement of the Holy Spirit in the establishment of local observance, the Calendar seeks to represent the full breadth and depth of the Body of Christ.
6. **Local, Organic Observance:** Similarly, it should be the case that significant commemoration of a particular person already exists at the local and regional levels before that person is included in the Calendar.
7. **Perspective:** It should normatively be the case that a person be included in the Calendar only after two generations or fifty years have elapsed since that person's death. The passage of time permits the testing and flowering of their Christian witness.
8. **Levels of Commemoration:** Principal Feasts, Sundays and Major Holy Days have primacy of place in the Church's liturgical observance. It does not seem appropriate to distinguish between the various other commemorations by regarding some as having either a greater or a lesser claim on our observance of them. Each commemoration should be given equal weight as far as the provision of the liturgical propers is concerned (including the listing of three lessons).
9. **Distribution of Commemorations:** Normally, joint commemoration will arise through shared Christian witness or date of death. In some cases, unrelated commemorations will occur on the same date. In the observance of lesser feasts, the preference of the local community may be exercised.

## **Explanation**

The Principles of Revision of the Calendar (aka Criteria for calendar inclusion) were last revised by the SCLM in 2015 and passed by the 78th General Convention (2015-A056). Within the work of the Calendar Committee, further clarification of the Principles was done, and the SCLM presents this revision within the context of ongoing requests to add commemorations to the Calendar, many of which do not meet the criteria. We hope that individuals and dioceses will use these Principles when deciding whether to propose their revision.



**Resolution Number:** 2015-A056  
**Title:** Authorize A Great Cloud of Witness and Weekday Eucharistic Propers  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the 78th General Convention make available for publication and distribution by individuals and in congregations and other church groups for devotional or catechetical use, or use in public worship subject to the provision for optional commemorations on page 18 of the Book of Common Prayer, the liturgical resource entitled, “A Great Cloud of Witnesses: A Calendar of Commemorations” (GCW) as outlined in the Supplemental Materials: Appendices of the Report of the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, pp. 174-219 revising and renaming Holy Women, Holy Men; and be it further*

*Resolved, That A Great Cloud of Witnesses be revised to conform to the commemorations in Holy Women, Holy Men and any changes to liturgical commemorations made at this Convention; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the General Convention affirm the following criteria for further additions to this resource:*

**Criterion 1**

**Historicity:** Christianity is a radically historical religion, so in almost every instance it is not theological realities or spiritual movements, but exemplary witness to the Gospel of Christ in lives actually lived that is remembered in our family story. Like all families, however, our family includes important matriarchs and patriarchs about whom little verifiable information is known, yet whose names and influence still exert influence on how we understand ourselves in relation to them.

**Criterion 2**

**Christian Discipleship:** The family story captured here is uniquely and identifiably a Christian story. This set of stories commemorates the ways particular Christians live out the promises of baptism. A worthy summary of these promises is captured in our Baptismal Covenant, including a commitment to the Triune God as captured in the Apostles’ Creed; continuing in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers; resisting evil and repenting when necessary; proclaiming by word and example the Good News of God in Christ; seeking and serving Christ in all persons; and striving for justice and peace among all people. Rather than being an anachronistic checklist, these should be considered general guidelines for considering holistic Christian life and practice. There may be occasional exceptions where not all of these promises are successfully kept, or when the person in question is not a Christian, yet the person’s life and work exemplify Christ, significantly impacting the ongoing life of the Church and contributing to our fuller understanding of the Gospel.

**Criterion 3**

**Significance:** Those remembered should have been in their lifetime extraordinary, even heroic servants of God and God’s people for the sake, and after the example, of Jesus Christ. They may also be people whose creative work or whose manner of life has glorified God, enriched the life of the Church, or led others to a deeper understanding of God. In their

varied ways, those remembered have revealed Christ's presence in, and Lordship over, all of history; and continue to inspire us as we carry forward God's mission in the world.

**Criterion 4**

**Range of Inclusion:** Particular attention should be paid to Episcopalians and other members of the Anglican Communion. Attention should also be paid to the inclusion of people of different genders and races, of lay people (witnessing in this way to our baptismal understanding of the Church), and of ecumenical partners and people who have had their own distinctive influence upon us. In addition to the better-known, it is important also to include those "whose memory may have faded in the shifting fashions of public concern, but whose witness is deemed important to the life and mission of the Church" (Thomas Talley).

**Criterion 5**

**Local Observance:** Normally, significant remembrance of a particular person already exists within the Church at the local and regional levels before that person is included in the Church's larger story.

**Criterion 6**

**Perspective:** The introduction of new names should be done with a certain economy lest the balance of the whole be overwhelmed. In the cases of those departed less than forty years ago — particularly in the case of controversial names — care should be given to seeing them from the perspective of history. Names added should show a broad influence upon the Church and should result from a widespread desire expressed across the Church over a reasonable period of time.

**Criterion 7**

**Combined Remembrances:** Not all those included need to be remembered "in isolation." Where there are close and natural links between persons to be remembered, a joint commemoration would make excellent sense (e.g., the Reformation martyrs, Latimer and Ridley; and two bishops of Lincoln, Robert Grosseteste and Hugh); and be it further

*Resolved,* That the General Convention authorize for trial use the liturgical resource entitled, "Weekday Eucharistic Propers 2015," as outlined in the Blue Book, replacing Holy Women, Holy Men; and be it further

*Resolved,* That this General Convention direct the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music to review the list of names in "A Great Cloud of Witnesses" in light of these criteria and recommend revisions to the 79th General Convention, with a full explanation for any revisions; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the General Convention direct the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music to gather feedback from congregations, seminaries, religious orders, and other eucharistic communities on "A Great Cloud of Witnesses" and "Weekday Eucharistic Propers 2015" and to report to the next General Convention; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the General Convention direct the Secretary of General Convention, in consultation with the outgoing Chair of the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music and the Chairs of the Legislative Committees to whom this legislation is referred, to finalize and arrange for the publication of the material contained in "A Great Cloud of Witnesses" and in "Weekday Eucharistic Propers 2015" as approved by the 78th General Convention.

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), pp. 332-333.