

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

**Resolution No.:** 2022-A011  
**Title:** Develop Local Commemorations  
**Proposer:** Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music  
**Topic:** Church Calendar

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

2009-A098 Approve Guidelines and Procedures for Alteration of the Church Calendar  
1994-A074 Adopt Procedures for Alteration of the Church Calendar  
1991-A119 Authorize Standards and Processes for Considering Amendments to the Calendar  
1988-A097 Endorse Criteria for Adding Commemorations to the Church Calendar

**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.*

# A011 - Develop Local Commemorations

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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 80th General Convention affirm the following process and guiding questions for developing and nurturing local commemorations; and be it further

*Resolved*, that this process shall be included in the Appendices to *Lesser Feasts and Fasts 2018*.

### Crafting Liturgical Commemorations

History demonstrates that liturgical commemorations originate in the local community. Indeed, all proposed additions to the Calendar of the Church ought to begin as local commemorations. Included below is a process for developing such local observances, as well as some guiding questions that might help the local community through the process.

*The Book of Common Prayer* (pp. 13, 18, 195, and 246) permits memorials not listed in the Calendar, provides collects and readings for them (the Common of Saints), and recognizes the bishop's authority to set forth devotions for occasions for which no prayer or service has been provided by the Prayer Book. Although the Prayer Book does not require the bishop's permission to use the Common of Saints for memorials not included in the Calendar, it is appropriate that the bishop's consent be requested.

While these guidelines are general in nature, and not exhaustive in scope or situation, this process is suggested for initiating local, diocesan, or regional memorials.

1. Establishment: A congregation, diocese, other community or organization establishes a commemoration for a specific person/occasion, on a specific day.

- Who/what is being commemorated? Why is this commemoration beneficial to the local community's liturgical life? What would be lost if the commemoration were not observed? (See the most recent set of criteria for inclusion in the Calendar of the Church; and the set of Holy Days, BCP p. 16, that take precedence on their dates.)

2. Collects and Readings: A collect and readings from the Common of Saints are chosen and used. Perhaps a new collect may be composed, and a new collection of readings assigned for use in the commemoration. The Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music and local diocesan liturgical bodies are available for consultation.

- How might selections from Holy Scripture and the chosen, or new, collect communicate the reason for observing the commemoration? What selections of Holy Scripture will help the congregation to better understand the commemoration? What do we need to pray for in the collect to better understand the commemoration?

3. Observance: The congregation, diocese, province, or organization proceeds to annually observe the commemoration in their regular liturgical life.

- How might you invite others to join the celebration? Does it make sense to invite the local community? Nearby congregations? The diocese? The province?

4. Evaluation: The local community should engage in ongoing evaluation of the commemoration. The evaluation should include conversation with members of the community and with participants in the observance. Earlier steps should be revisited if necessary.

- How has your thinking in previous steps evolved through your observance of the commemoration? What have you learned? What feedback have you received? What has surprised you as you've observed the commemoration? To what extent has the local community embraced the observance? Does anything need to change? How might the readings and collect need to be adapted?

5. Wider Recognition: Those interested in promoting a wider commemoration then begin to share the developed materials with others, suggesting that they also adopt the commemoration. If at some time it is desired to propose it for optional observance by the wider Church, documented evidence of the spread and duration of local commemoration is essential to include in the proposal to the General Convention.

- Why should the commemoration be observed by the wider Church? What would the wider Church lose if it did not observe this commemoration? How would this commemoration strengthen or balance the Calendar of the Church? (See the most recent set of criteria for inclusion in the Calendar of the Church.)

Some commemorations, perhaps many, will remain local, diocesan, or regional in character. This in no way reduces their importance to those who revere and seek to keep alive the memory of beloved and faithful witnesses to Christ. Regardless of local or Church-wide use, The Book of Common Prayer welcomes regular, local commemorations in the liturgical life of the Church.

## **Explanation**

The earliest, liturgical recognition of an extraordinary witness to Jesus Christ happens at the local level. The impact of an individual Christian is felt, recorded, and retold by those who knew them best; and from these recollections, a liturgical commemoration might begin to take shape. The SCLM reaffirms that the local process is both vitally important and under-supported by the Church. Therefore, in this triennium, the Calendar Committee has collected materials to help congregations celebrate their saints.

The SCLM recommends this process as local worshipping communities begin to identify local exemplars of Christian discipleship and offers its assistance to those crafting liturgies of commemoration.



**Resolution Number:** 2009-A098  
**Title:** Approve Guidelines and Procedures for Alteration of the Church Calendar  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved*, That the “Guidelines and Procedures for Continuing Alteration of the Calendar of The Episcopal Church,” as set forth in *Holy Women, Holy Men: Celebrating the Saints*; found on pages 558-562 of the *Blue Book*, be approved by the 76th General Convention and published in *Holy Women, Holy Men: Celebrating the Saints* with the following revision: On page 558, revise “Principles of Revision” to replace existing paragraph 3 with the following:

**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.

And be it further

*Resolved*, That the Standing Committee on Liturgy and Music report to the 77th General Convention those candidates for inclusion who are being liturgically commemorated.

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Anaheim, 2009* (New York: General Convention, 2009), pp. 616-617.



**Resolution Number:** 1994-A074  
**Title:** Adopt Procedures for Alteration of the Church Calendar  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred As Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the following Guidelines and Procedures for Continuing Alteration of the Calendar in the Episcopal Church be adopted and be printed in future editions of Lesser Feasts and Fasts.*

## **I. Introduction**

**A.** The Church is "the communion of Saints," that is, a people made holy through their mutual participation in the mystery of Christ. This communion exists through history, exists now, and endures beyond "the grave and gate of death" into heaven. For "God is not a God of the dead but of the living," and those still on their earthly pilgrimage continue to have fellowship "with those whose work is done." The pilgrim Church and the Church at rest join in watching and praying for that great day when Christ shall come again to change and make perfect our common humanity in the image of Christ's risen glory.

**B.** The pilgrim Church rejoices to recognize and commemorate those faithful departed who were extraordinary or even heroic servants of God and of God's people for the sake, and after the example, of their Savior Jesus Christ. By this recognition and commemoration, their service endures in the Spirit, as their examples and fellowship continue to nurture the pilgrim Church on its way to God.

## **II. Guidelines**

**A.** The Church commemorates persons, not abstract qualities. Nevertheless, it does look for certain traits in those whom it chooses specially to commemorate. Among these traits are:

**1. Heroic Faith.** This means bearing witness to God in Christ "against the odds." Historically, the greatest exemplars of such faith have been martyrs, who have suffered death for the cause of Christ, and confessors, who have endured imprisonment, torture, or exile for the sake of Christ. Following this precedent, the Episcopal Church in the United States of America has been very specific and has restricted the designation of martyrdom to persons who have chosen to die rather than give up the Christian faith, and has not applied it to persons whose death may have resulted from their heroic faith but who did not consciously choose martyrdom. There are other situations where choosing and persisting in a Christian manner of life involves confessing Christ "against the odds," even to the point of risking one's life. For this reason the Anglican Communion traditionally has honored monks and nuns like Antony, Benedict, Hilda, Constance and her companions, missionaries like George Augustus Selwyn, and people as diverse as Monnica, Richard of Chichester, and Nicholas Ferrar. More recently the Church has learned to honor social reformers like William Wilberforce and Jonathan Daniels for the same reason. Heroic faith is, therefore, a quality manifested in many different situations.

**2. Love.** "If I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all that I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain

nothing...So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor. 13:2b-3, 13).

3. **Goodness of life.** People worthy of commemoration will have worked for the good of others. It is important to recognize that the Church looks not only for goodness but also for growth in goodness. A scandalous life prior to conversion does not disqualify one from consideration for the Calendar; rather, the witness of perseverance to the end will confirm holiness of life and the transforming power of Christ.

4. **Joyousness.** As faith is incomplete without love, so does love involve "rejoicing in the Spirit"--whether in the midst of extraordinary trials, or in the midst of the ordinary rounds of daily life. A Christian may not fail in the works of love, but still lack the joy of it--thereby falling short of true Christian sanctity. Such joy, however, is as much a discipline of life as an emotion. It need not lie on the surface of a person's life, but may run deeply and be discerned by others only gradually.

5. **Service to others for Christ's sake.** "There are varieties of gifts...and there are varieties of service" (1 Cor. 12:4-5). There is no true holiness without service to others in their needfulness. The Church recognizes that just as human needs are diverse, so also are forms of Christian service--both within the Church and in the world.

6. **Devotion.** People who are worthy of commemoration have shown evidence of seeking God through the means of grace which the Church recognizes, having "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42). We look both for regularity and for growth in the discipline of prayer and meditation upon God's Word; and we look for this devotion to be manifested not only in a person's private life but also in visible company and communion with his or her fellow Christians.

7. **Recognition by the faithful.** Initiating the commemoration of particular saints is the privilege of those who knew, loved, and discerned the special grace of Christ in a member of their community, and who desire to continue in the communion of prayer with that member now departed. Such instinctive recognition by the faithful begins naturally at the local and regional levels. Evidence of both (a) such commemoration growing locally and (b) such recognition of sanctity spreading beyond the immediate community is essential before the national Church has an obligation to take heed. It may, in fact, decide that the commemoration in question is best left to local observance.

8. **Historical perspective.** In a resolution on the Calendar, the 1958 Lambeth Conference of Bishops stated, "The addition of a new name should normally result from a widespread desire expressed in the region concerned over a reasonable period of time." Generally this has been two generations or fifty years after death.

**B.** The qualities or traits just outlined do not exhaust the character of Christian sanctity, nor should they be applied as if each and all of them were legal conditions which a proposed Commemoration must meet before recommendation for observance is granted. These are guidelines to help both the faithful and the official organs of the Church test their own thoughts when proposing, or recommending, a Commemoration. These Guidelines and Procedures are intended to implement Resolution A097a of the 1988 General Convention.

### **III. Local Calendars and Memorials**

Local and regional commemoration normally occurs for many years prior to national recognition.

The Book of Common Prayer (pp. 13, 18, 195 and 246) permits memorials not listed in the Calendar, provides collects and readings for them (the Common of Saints), and recognizes the bishop's authority to set forth devotions for occasions for which no prayer or service has

been provided by the Prayer Book. Although the Prayer Book does not require the bishop's permission to use the Common of Saints for memorials not included in the Calendar, it would seem appropriate that the bishop's consent be requested. While these Guidelines cannot provide procedures for initiating local, diocesan or regional memorials that would govern all such commemorations, this process is suggested:

- A. A parish or diocese establishes a memorial for a specific day, using the above Guidelines to justify the memorial.
- B. A collect is appointed from the Common of Saints or composed, perhaps in consultation with the Standing Liturgical Commission, diocesan or parish liturgical commission. Readings and a proper preface may also be appointed if desired. A brief description of the person or group is written, in accord with these Guidelines and Procedures.
- C. The parish, diocese, province or organization proceeds to keep the memorial.
- D. Those interested in promoting a wider commemoration begin to share these materials with others, suggesting that they also adopt the memorial. If at some time it is desired to propose a local commemoration for national recognition, documented evidence of the spread and duration of local commemoration is essential to include in the proposal to the Standing Liturgical Commission.

Some commemorations, perhaps many, will remain local, diocesan or regional in character. This in no way reduces their importance to those who revere and seek to keep alive the memory of beloved and faithful witnesses to Christ.

#### **IV. Procedures For National Recognition**

Procedures to amend the Calendar flow naturally from II and III above, as well as earlier documents like *Prayer Book Studies IX and XVI* (1957 and 1963, respectively). As stated in Resolution A119s of the 1991 General Convention, "all requests for consideration of individuals or groups, to be included in the calendar of the Church year, shall be submitted to the Standing Liturgical Commission for evaluation and subsequent recommendation to the next General Convention for acceptance or rejection."

A. A proposal to commemorate a person (or group of persons) may be submitted to the Calendar Committee of the Standing Liturgical Commission of the General Convention by three or more Church Bodies of recognized organizations within the Episcopal Church--e.g., Diocesan Conventions, Provincial Synods, parishes, seminary faculties, religious communities, ethnic or women's groups. Each proposal must include:

- a). a detailed rationale for commemoration based on the Guidelines (above) and demonstrating how this person manifests Christ and would enhance the devotional life of the Church;
- b). an inspirational 350-word biographical sketch of the person to be commemorated, preferably including some of the person's own words;
- c). information concerning the spread and duration of local or international commemoration of this individual or group;
- d). suggested collects and readings.

Proposals must be received by the Standing Liturgical Commission Chair no less than 18 months prior to the next General Convention.

B. The chair of the Calendar Committee will communicate with

- 1. organizations submitting proposed commemorations;



2. the Secretary of the General Convention regarding names and addresses of any groups applying for exhibit space in order to present to Convention delegates a potential addition to the Calendar;
3. the chairs of the Cognate Committees on Prayer Book and Liturgy, in order to facilitate the review of submissions.

C. The Calendar Committee of the Standing Liturgical Commission will arrange for

1. submission of appropriate resolutions to General Convention;
2. publication of same in *The Blue Book, 1994*;
3. distribution of pertinent materials to members of the Cognate Committees on Prayer Book and Liturgy, as may be needed;
4. preparation of materials for *Lesser Feasts and Fasts* .

#### V. Procedures to Remove Commemorations from the Calendar

A commemoration may be removed from the Calendar by the same procedure by which one is added, namely, the procedure set forth in Article X of the Constitution of the General Convention concerning Alternations and Additions, which requires concurrence by two consecutive Conventions.

Proposed deletions of commemorations must be forwarded to the Chair of the Standing Liturgical Commission no less than 18 months prior to the next General Convention.

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 1994* (New York: General Convention, 1995), p. 679-83.



**Resolution Number:** 1991-A119  
**Title:** Authorize Standards and Processes for Considering Amendments to the Calendar  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the 70th General Convention reaffirm the criteria approved at the 69th General Convention (1988) for consideration of individuals or groups to be included in the calendar of the Church year; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the General Convention direct the Standing Liturgical Commission to expand the present criteria to set forth guidelines for the determination of exceptions. Specifically, the concept of martyrdom shall be defined in terms applicable to qualifications for inclusion in the calendar. The guidelines should set forth those standards, conditions, and qualities of martyrdom which may be exceptional in terms of including candidates in the calendar before fifty years has passed since the date of their death; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the General Convention direct the Standing Liturgical Commission to promulgate the criteria, for consideration of individuals or groups to be included in the calendar of the Church year, to the Church at large, and specifically, to communicate the criteria to those who propose candidates to the Standing Liturgical Commission; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the General Convention direct the Standing Liturgical Commission to review the processes and procedures by which the calendar may be amended, including local commemorations and removal of names, and to report its findings and recommendations to the 71st General Convention; and be it further*

*Resolved, That all requests for consideration of individuals or groups, to be included in the calendar of the Church year, shall be submitted to the Standing Liturgical Commission for evaluation and subsequent recommendation to the next General Convention for acceptance or rejection. The Standing Liturgical Commission, is to be solely responsible for historical enquiry and for providing all materials for consideration of the candidate or candidates.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Phoenix, 1991* (New York: General Convention, 1992), p. 824.



**Resolution Number:** 1988-A097  
**Title:** Endorse Criteria for Adding Commemorations to the Church Calendar  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred As Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved,* That the General Convention approve and endorse the following criteria for the inclusion of additional commemorations within the Calendar of the Church Year:

*1. Historicity.*

Saints days are not celebrations of ideas that have been given mythical expression. Christianity is a radically historical religion and sees history as the locus of God's action. We should not, therefore, celebrate the lives of saints who are, in fact, only mythical figures. This does not, of course, preclude the liturgical celebration of spiritual or theological realities which are not presented as human lives within history.

*2. Christianity.*

While the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament are a vital part of Christian history and have been celebrated in various traditions, those persons included in a liturgical calendar should be identified with Christian history. For those who have lived within the Christian era, this will normally mean they were baptized, or that they suffered martyrdom while catechumens.

*3. Significance.*

While no soul is insignificant, first attention should be given to those persons who seem particularly important for the contemporary life of the whole Episcopal Church, taking care that this contemporary life is understood as but one moment in the total history of the Christian Church and the whole history of salvation.

*4. Historical Perspective.*

Saving the possibility of more immediate local commemorations using the Common of Saints, no persons should be listed in the Calendar before the elapse of two generations (normally fifty years) from that person's death.

*5. Memorability.*

In addition to its concern to keep well-known witnesses of the faith within the living memory of our liturgical prayer, the Church should also remember other witnesses to its life and mission for whom such attention has been lacking.

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Detroit, 1988* (New York: General Convention, 1989), p. 639.