

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2022 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2022-A140
Title: Urge The Episcopal Church and Constituents to Designate Indigenous Peoples' Day
Proposer: Executive Council
Topic: Native Americans and Ministry

Directly Related: (Attached)

2012-A131 Express Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples
1991-D179 Celebrate the Survival of Native Americans on the Columbus Quincentennial

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

2015-A024 Direct Dioceses to Examine the Impact of the Doctrine of Discovery
2012-A128 Examine Impact of Doctrine of Discovery
2009-D035 Repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery

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.

A140 - Urge The Episcopal Church and Constituents to Designate Indigenous Peoples' Day

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: Executive Council

Requests New Interim Body: No

Amends C&C or Rules of Order: No

Has Budget Implications: No

Cost:

HiA: HD

Legislative Committee Currently Assigned: 09 - Racial Justice & Reconciliation

Completion Status: Incomplete

Latest House Action: N/A

Supporting Documents: No

Resolution Text

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring,

That on the homelands of the Piscataway, Nentego (Nanticoke), and Susquehannock peoples, the 80th General Convention of the Episcopal Church urges all Episcopal entities, dioceses, parishes and missions to designate a day honoring our Indigenous ancestors. Further, domestic and United States territorial dioceses across the church as well as all Episcopal entities to refer to the U.S. federal holiday of Columbus Day as Indigenous Peoples' Day; and be it further

Resolved, that nations across the globe have adopted Indigenous' Peoples Day as a holiday and/or observance, including, but not limited to Colombia and Taiwan, and, further the United Nations recognized August 9 as the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

Resolved, That observance of Indigenous Peoples' Day would serve as a celebration and a remembrance of the Indigenous peoples who have for thousands of generations safeguarded the land, and who, in the face of cultural genocide, preserved their languages, traditions, stories, and ceremonies for future generations; and be it further

Resolved, That all diocesan offices, parishes, and Episcopal Church-related organizations are encouraged to examine their observance, remembrance, and honoring of our Indigenous and Native siblings.;

Explanation

Columbus Day, the second Monday in October, has been designated by the United States Federal government since 1937. There has been a movement to designate this holiday to honor the people who tended and took care of the land when Columbus “discovered” it in 1492. In recent years, states have opted to drop observing the holiday altogether or redesignate it as Indigenous’ Peoples Day.

The State of New York, where DFMS is legally located, still designates the second Monday in October as Columbus Day. South Dakota, New Mexico, Maine, among others, have changed the language to be Indigenous Peoples’, Native Americans’, or American Indian Heritage Day.

President Joe Biden was the first United States head of state to acknowledge this cultural change, proclaiming October 11, 2021 as Indigenous Peoples’ Day. Biden’s address says, “For generations, Federal policies systematically sought to assimilate and displace Native people and eradicate Native cultures. Today, we recognize Indigenous peoples’ resilience and strength as well as the immeasurable positive impact that they have made on every aspect of American society.”

The Episcopal Church has been a long-term advocate for Indigenous and Native rights and ministries. Since 1973, the General Convention of The Episcopal Church has recognized the importance of advocating for and developing Native-focused Episcopal ministries.

Works Consulted:

A Proclamation on Indigenous Peoples’ Day, 2021. (2021, October 8). The White House. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/10/08/a-proclamation-indigenous-peoples-day-2021/>

Desilver, D. (2021, October 11). Working on Columbus Day? It depends on where your job is. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/10/11/working-on-columbus-day-it-depends-on-where-your-job-is/>

State of New York 2022 Legal Holidays. (n.d.). Retrieved February 20, 2022, from https://www.cs.ny.gov/attendance_leave/2022_legal_holidays.cfm



Resolution Number: 2012-A131
Title: Express Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 77th General Convention expresses its solidarity with the Indigenous Peoples of the world and supports the rights of Indigenous Peoples to live in and retain their traditional lands and territories, to maintain their languages and enrich their cultures, and to ensure that their traditions are strengthened and passed on for generations to come; and be it further

Resolved, That the 77th General Convention ask the Presiding Bishop and other representatives of The Episcopal Church to make protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples a priority in joint work with other Provinces of the Anglican Communion, in ecumenical work with other Christian denominations, and in interfaith work with other faith communities; and be it further

Resolved, That the 77th General Convention reaffirm the 76th General Convention's repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery, a misguided, unfair, and harmful legal doctrine which the Church helped promote in earlier centuries, a legal doctrine which has been used in English, Continental, and American law to justify the unfair treatment and exploitation of Indigenous Peoples; and be it further

Resolved, That the 77th General Convention urges the United States government and governments in other countries in which the Episcopal Church has dioceses to review their laws and policies, in consultation with Indigenous Peoples, and to identify and correct those which treat Indigenous Peoples unfairly or which, although neutral in content, result in invidious discrimination against Indigenous Peoples; and be it further

Resolved, That the 77th General Convention direct the Office of Government Relations, in consultation with Indigenous Peoples, to make protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples a high priority in its advocacy about United States foreign policy, including advocacy about trade agreements, human rights advocacy, and international environmental protection; and be it further

Resolved, That the 77th General Convention calls on congregations, institutions, dioceses, and corporate offices of The Episcopal Church, with the aid of resources such as "Exposing the Doctrine of Discovery," to reflect upon their history and to encourage them to support Indigenous Peoples in their ongoing efforts to exercise their inherent sovereignty and fundamental human rights, to continue to raise awareness about the issues facing Indigenous Peoples, and to develop advocacy campaigns to support the rights, aspirations, and needs of Indigenous Peoples; and be it further

Resolved, That in consultation with Indigenous Peoples within their dioceses or Provinces that congregations and dioceses be urged to take tangible steps to help Indigenous Peoples, including:

- *Action to preserve Indigenous Peoples' language, history and culture, such as by supporting appropriate linguistic, historic, Bible (and authorized liturgical resources) translation work for language groups into which the Bible and authorized liturgical resources have not yet been fully translated,*

- Action to obtain fairer and better treatment of Indigenous Peoples, such as seeking the repeal of unfair laws and policies,
- Formation of partnerships with congregations whose members consist primarily of Indigenous Peoples; and be it further

Resolved, That the 77th General Convention calls on congregations, institutions, dioceses, and corporate offices of The Episcopal Church to support continued use and development of theological reflections by Indigenous Peoples, with guidance from the Office of Indigenous Ministries, Indigenous Theological Training Institute, local Schools for Ministry and seminaries, which promote Indigenous visions of full, good, and abundant life and which strengthen their own spiritual and theological reflections.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 2012* (New York: General Convention, 2012), pp. 149-150.



Resolution Number: 1991-D179
Title: Celebrate the Survival of Native Americans on the Columbus
Quincentennial
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 70th General Convention of the Episcopal Church:

- a) ardently affirm the Executive Council resolution of February 1989 which calls upon the Church to observe the 500th Anniversary of the voyage of Christopher Columbus in a manner which respects the dignity of Native Americans;
- b) respectfully commend the Episcopal Council of Indian Ministries for its design for observance of the quincentenary as a celebration of their survival as a culturally distinct people despite 500 years of oppression and displacement;
- c) designate ECUSA's official celebration of the 500th Anniversary to be the ECIM Eucharistic Celebration at 11:00 a.m. on October 12, 1992, at the Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul - the National Cathedral - in Washington, D.C.; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of General Convention be instructed to communicate the plans for this official celebration through ECUSA media services to all dioceses of the Church.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Phoenix, 1991* (New York: General Convention, 1992), p. 838.