

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

**Resolution No.:** 2022-C010  
**Title:** Amending Biographical Information for the Feast of Peter Williams Cassey and Annie Besant Cassey  
**Proposer:** El Camino Real  
**Topic:** Church Calendar

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### Directly Related: (Attached)

2018-A065 Authorize Continued Use of *Lesser Feasts and Fasts* 2006  
2015-A057 Consider Adding Commemorations to "A Great Cloud of Witnesses"  
2015-C008 Refer a Resolution to Include Peter and Annie Cassey in the Church Calendar (Referred)  
2015-C011 Refer a Resolution to Include Peter and Anna Cassey in the Church Calendar (Referred)  
2015-C044 Refer a Resolution to Include Peter and Annie Cassey and Henrietta Lockwood (Referred)

**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.*

# C010 - Amending Biographical Information for the Feast of Peter Williams Cassey and Annie Besant Cassey

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**Final Status:** Not Yet Finalized

**Proposed by:** El Camino Real

**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 of The Episcopal Church amend the biographical descriptions for the feast day of Peter Williams Cassey and Annie Besant Cassey in Lesser Feasts and Fasts, 2018, in the following manner:

[Text in Lesser Feasts and Fast 2018, pp. 234-236, corrections either strikeout or in italics]

APRIL 16: Peter Williams Cassey, ~~Priest~~, *Deacon*, 1917 and Annie Besant Cassey 1875

Peter Williams Cassey was ordained as a deacon in 1866, the first person of color ordained in the Episcopal Church west of the Mississippi River. He was a fourth generation freed African American. His great grandfather bought his freedom and founded the first black church in New York, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. His grandfather was the first African American Episcopal priest in New York and founder of St. Philip's, Manhattan. His parents, Joseph and Amy Cassey were prominent abolitionists in Philadelphia.

Peter received the best classical education available at the time, ~~speaking and~~ fluently reading Greek, Hebrew and Latin. He arrived in San Francisco in 1853 and worked as a barber, *where he formed an abolitionist group to help free slaves*. He helped organize a community association to protect African Americans and other persons of color. In the late 1850's he moved to San José, California ~~where he formed an abolitionist group to help free slaves~~.

Peter married Annie Besant, who came from another prominent African American family. They were among the founding members of Trinity Parish, San Jose, California in 1862 ~~1861~~. At the same time, they rented the former Bascom School for Girls and established St. Philips Mission for Colored People and opened St. Philip's Academy. The school was not only for African American, but also *for Native Americans*, Mexican and Chinese students because no children of color could attend public schools.

Bishop William Ingraham Kip, first Bishop of California, recognized St. Philip's as a mission congregation out of Trinity Church and in 1866 ordained Peter as a deacon. *In 1872, the* The bishop directed him to establish Christ Church for Colored People in San Francisco while Annie kept St. Philip's going. Later this church would split into the African American Church of St. Cyprian and Christ Nippon Sei Ko Kai (Japanese American Episcopal Church). In 1881 Peter was called to St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church in New Bern, North Carolina as the first African American rector in that state. In 1884 he was accepted a call to Florida where he served in succession three parishes until he died at the age of 86 on April 16th, 1917. *He was never ordained a priest because of the racism of the clergy and Standing Committees of the three dioceses in which he served, even though the bishops favored his ordination.*

Bishop Edwin Gardner Weed said at Peter's funeral "that no other clergyman in the diocese came close to the theological maturity and scholarship that Peter Williams Cassey exhibited in his ministry and teachings. We should be proud of these great souls that helped lay the foundations of this diocese."

## **Explanation**

The Dean and Vestry of Trinity Cathedral, San Jose submitted to the 30th and 34th Conventions of the Diocese of El Camino Real resolutions to be submitted to the 78th and 79th General Conventions of the Episcopal Church regarding the inclusion of the Rev. Peter Williams Cassey and Annie Besant Cassey in the liturgical calendar of the church. Both resolutions were passed by the diocesan conventions and both General Conventions received but were not acted upon because the two liturgical calendars, Lesser Feasts and Fasts and Holy Men and Holy Women (now Great Cloud of Witnesses) were in the process of revision. The revised Lesser Feasts and Fasts 2018 was approved for trial use at the 79th General Convention (2018) and included the Cassey's feast day for April 16. However, the committee editing of the Diocese of El Camino Real's resolution had significant errors. They include not listing Peter as a deacon and failing to include the fact that he was not ordained a priest because of the racism of the clergy and Standing Committees in the three dioceses that he served, even though the bishops of those dioceses were in favor of ordaining him a priest. This resolution urges the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music

and the 80th General Convention to amend these errors before Lesser Feasts and Fasts is fully authorized.



**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.



**Resolution Number:** 2015-A057  
**Title:** Consider Adding Commemorations to "A Great Cloud of Witnesses"  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Substituted  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the 78th General Convention instruct the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music to review the following persons in light of the criteria adopted by this General Convention:*

- 1/3 Gladys Aylward
- 1/4 Thomas Atkinson
- 1/5 Amma Syncletica of Alexandria
- 1/12 Caesaria of Arles
- 1/30 Charles Stuart, King and Martyr, 1649
- 1/31 Marcella
- 2/10 Scholastica, Religious, 543
- 4/3 Katherine Drexel
- 4/3 Mary of Egypt
- 4/17 Kateri Tekakwitha
- 4/22 Maria Gabriella Sagheddu
- 4/30 Marie de l'Incarnation, Educator and Spiritual Teacher in New France, 1672
- 5/21 Helena, Protector of the Holy Places, 330
- 7/11 Olga of Kiev
- 7/23 Bridget of Sweden, Founder of Bridgettine Order, 1373
- 8/12 Jane Frances de Chantal, Religious
- 9/28 Paula and Eustochium
- 10/3 Mother Theodore (Anne-Therese) Guerin, Religious, Educator, Prophetic Witness, 1856
- 10/12 Elizabeth Fry, Prison Reformer, 1845
- 11/5 Catherine of Alexandria
- 11/8 Elizabeth of the Trinity
- 11/16 Gertrude the Great and Mechtilde of Hackeborn
- 11/29 Dorothy Day
- 12/13 Ella Baker  
Emily Ayckbown, Founder of the Sisters of the Community of the Church, 1870  
Kate Harwood Waller Barrett  
Etheldred Berry  
Mary McLeod Bethune  
Louise De Koven Bowen, Hull House  
Josephine Butler  
Denzil A. Carty  
Anna Bessant Cassey, Peter Cassey, and Henrietta Lockwood  
Rosa Judith Cisneros  
Atilano Coco  
Florence Converse

**Ella Cara Deloria, Native American Poet and Writer**  
**Helen Fuller**  
**Ann Gream**  
**Angelina and Sarah Grimke**  
**Sister Margaret Hawk, Church Army, Native American Activist**  
**Addie D. Waites Hunton**  
**Satoko Kitahara**  
**Susan Trevor Knapp, NY Training School for Deaconesses**  
**Queen Lili'uokalani**  
**Eva Lee Matthews and Beatrice Henderson**  
**Victoria Earle Matthews, Author and Settlement House Worker, 1907**  
**Eleanor Laura McMain**  
**Harriet O'Brien Monsell**  
**Maria Montessori**  
**Anna Newell, St. Margaret's House, Berkeley**  
**Phoebe Palmer**  
**Katherine Parr**  
**Ellen Albertina Polyblank [Sister Albertina] & Elizabeth Ann Rogers [Sister Beatrice]**  
**Richeldis of Faverches**  
**Eleanor Roosevelt**  
**Dorothy Sayers**  
**Mary Kingsbury Simkovitch, Greenwich House, NYC**  
**Therese of Lisieux**  
**Adeline Blanchard Tyler**  
**Ruth Elaine Younger (Mother Ruth, CHS); and be it further**

*Resolved,* That the General Convention instruct the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music to create collects and biographies for those persons on this list who conform to the criteria and present these materials to the 79th General Convention for addition to "A Great Cloud of Witnesses," with full explanation for those revisions; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance to consider a budget allocation of \$15,700 for the implementation of this resolution.

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), pp. 729-731.



**Resolution Number:** 2015-C008  
**Title:** Refer a Resolution to Include Peter and Annie Cassey in the Church Calendar  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Referred  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the 78th General Convention authorize the inclusion of The Reverend Peter Williams Cassey and Ms. Annie Besset Cassey in the church calendar; and be it further Resolved, That April 16 be set aside as a feast day commemorating the life and witness of the Reverend Peter Williams Cassey, deacon, abolitionist, social reformer, educator, church planter and pastor and Ms. Annie Besset Cassey, community organizer, educator and foster mother of many children, commending all congregations to celebrate their lives through the appointed prayers and readings; and be it further*

*Resolved, That they are placed on the calendar as deacon and companion who represent pioneers in justice, compassion and cultural diversity in their own time.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), p. 920.





**Resolution Number:** 2015-C011  
**Title:** Refer a Resolution to Include Peter and Anna Cassey in the Church Calendar  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Referred  
**Final Text:**

***Resolved, That the 78th General Convention of The Episcopal Church direct the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music to consider the addition of the Reverend Peter Williams Cassey and Anna Besant Cassey - on the feast day of April 16 - to the commemorations in "Holy Women, Holy Men".***

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), p. 921.



**Resolution Number:** 2015-C044  
**Title:** Refer a Resolution to Include Peter and Annie Cassey and  
Henrietta Lockwood  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Referred  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the 78th General Convention to set aside a feast day commemorating the lives and witnesses of the Rev. Peter Williams Cassey, Deacon, abolitionist, social reformer, educator, church planter and pastor, Annie Besant Cassey, mother, educator, community organizer, educator and foster mother of many children, and Henrietta Lockwood, mother, nurse, and educator.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), p. 934.