

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2022 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2022-C032
Title: Designating the Third or Fourth Sunday in Advent as a Day to Offer God Thanks for the Abolition of Slavery and to Ask God's Help in Assuring Always that Black Lives Matter
Proposer: New York
Topic: Racism, Reconciliation

Directly Related: (Attached)

2006-A123 Study Economic Benefits Derived from Slavery

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

2009-A143 Extend 2006 Resolution to Examine and Repent for Complicity in Slavery

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.

C032 - Designating the Third or Fourth Sunday in Advent as a Day to Offer God Thanks for the Abolition of Slavery and to Ask God's Help in Assuring Always that Black Lives Matter

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: New York

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 80th General Convention acknowledge that although the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States took effect on December 18, 1865 abolishing American chattel slavery -- the ability of white people to purchase and own black people and decide in all respects their fate, and the fate of their children -- nonetheless white supremacist and anti-Black thoughts, words and deeds persisted causing years of the subjugation and segregation of black people and still persist today as systemic racism causing grave ongoing disadvantage, dehumanization and violence to black people, up to and including the loss of their dignity, liberty and lives; and be it further

Resolved, that the 80th General Convention acknowledge the Episcopal Church contributed to this state of affairs, in violation of its core tenets, not only because it tolerated the misuse of scripture to support slavery but also because at the General Convention held in October, 1865, the House of Deputies twice decisively defeated resolutions to give God thanks for the abolition of slavery so as not to embarrass the reunion of Church with the Bishops of the Confederacy, who during the war had been meeting separately and who would not be willing to say that their minds about slavery had been changed by the war; and be it further

Resolved, that designating a Sunday each year around the December 18 anniversary of the Thirteenth Amendment for offering a prayer of thanksgiving for the abolishment of slavery and seeking God's aid in conforming our lives to his way of love and equality where black lives assuredly matter is a fitting step, building on the October 4, 2008 service of repentance directed by the 2006 General Convention, for the making amends for our errors which have caused a delay in the rectification of slavery, the consequences of which delay persist today; and be it further

Resolved, that the 80th General Convention of the Episcopal Church directs that at parish option the Third or Fourth Sunday in Advent be designated as a day to offer God thanks for the abolition of American chattel slavery and to ask God's help in always assuring that black lives matter; and be it further

Resolved, that the President of the House of Deputies and the Presiding Bishop of the House of Bishops are respectfully called on to appoint a drafting group to prepare a prayer of thanksgiving and supplication to be used throughout the Episcopal Church on the Third or Fourth Sunday in Advent.

Explanation

Racial injustice is not just a political question; it is a vital concern in our religious practice and belief and a necessary corollary of the commandment to love our neighbor and our baptismal covenant to respect the dignity of every human being. It is not possible fully to respect the dignity of each person while making the magnitude of that respect conditional on race or other personal characteristic. White supremacist and anti-Black thoughts, words or deeds are sinful and need to be rejected whenever encountered in ourselves or others. Designating at parish option the Third or Fourth Sunday in Advent as a day to give thanks for the abolishment of slavery and to ask God's help in always assuring that black lives matter will help us to do God's will on earth as in heaven, where all are free and beloved. Parish flexibility to choose the Third or Fourth Sunday in Advent will accommodate different Advent practices will still having a Sunday close to December 18, the anniversary of the Thirteenth Amendment.



Resolution Number: 2006-A123
Title: Study Economic Benefits Derived from Slavery
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention of The Episcopal Church declare unequivocally that the institution of slavery in the United States and anywhere else in the world, based as it is on “ownership” of some persons by other persons, was and is a sin and a fundamental betrayal of the humanity of all persons who were involved, a sin that continues to plague our common life in the Church and our culture; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church acknowledge its history of participation in this sin and the deep and lasting injury which the institution of slavery and its aftermath have inflicted on society and on the Church; and be it further

Resolved, That we express our most profound regret that (a) The Episcopal Church lent the institution of slavery its support and justification based on Scripture, and (b) after slavery was formally abolished, The Episcopal Church continued for at least a century to support de jure and de facto segregation and discrimination; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church apologize for its complicity in and the injury done by the institution of slavery and its aftermath; we repent of this sin and ask God’s grace and forgiveness; and be it further

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention of The Episcopal Church through the Executive Council urgently initiate a comprehensive program and urge every Diocese to collect and document during the next triennium detailed information in its community on (a) the complicity of The Episcopal Church in the institution of slavery and in the subsequent history of segregation and discrimination and (b) the economic benefits The Episcopal Church derived from the institution of slavery; and direct the Committee on Anti-Racism to monitor this program and report to Executive Council each year by March 31 on the progress in each Diocese; and be it further

Resolved, That to enable us as people of God to make a full, faithful and informed accounting of our history, the 75th General Convention of The Episcopal Church direct the Committee on Anti-Racism to study and report to Executive Council by March 31, 2008, which in turn will report to the 76th General Convention, on how the Church can be “the repairer of the breach” (Isaiah 58:12), both materially and relationally, and achieve the spiritual healing and reconciliation that will lead us to a new life in Christ; and be it further

Resolved, That to mark the commencement of this program the Presiding Bishop is requested to name a Day of Repentance and on that day to hold a Service of Repentance at the National Cathedral, and each Diocese is requested to hold a similar service.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Columbus, 2006* (New York: General Convention, 2007), pp. 664-665.