

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

Resolution No.: 2022-C049
Title: Establishing Annual Commemoration for Father Fred Yerkes, Priest and
Missionary, January 30
Proposer: Florida
Topic: Church Calendar

Directly Related: (Attached)

None

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.

C049 - Establishing Annual Commemoration for Father Fred Yerkes, Priest and Missionary, January 30

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: Florida

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 January 30 (the first open day after his January 25th death date) be set forth as a commemoration for Father Fred Yerkes. Father Fred Yerkes faithfully served innumerable small churches with unflagging zeal for fifty years; his Godly example reminds us of the worth of small churches; and be it further

Resolved, that those churches founded or served by Father Fred Yerkes be strongly encouraged to have an annual commemoration on January 30th or some other convenient date; and be it further

Resolved, that this convention contact the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music of The Episcopal Church to memorialize this Fred Yerkes commemoration for inclusion in "A Great Cloud of Witnesses;" and be it further

Resolved, the following collect and readings are set forth for that commemoration: O God, our strength and our salvation, you called your servant Fred Yerkes to be a faithful shepherd of your people by preaching, teaching, and planting churches in small communities. Multiply among us faithful pastors who will give inspiration to those who are small in number, yet continue to gather in the Risen Christ's name; and bring us all, we pray, into the fellowship of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Jeremiah 1:4-7;
For the Psalm: Christ our Passover, *Pascha nostrum*;
1 Corinthians 15:51-58
Mark 16:5-8 + the shorter ending

Explanation

Note: this resolution was adopted by The Diocese of Florida in convention on January 29, 2022.

Fred Gerker Yerkes

Fred Gerker Yerkes was born in Jacksonville, Florida, in 1910. An Episcopal minister and classical scholar, who styled himself “a country mission priest,” he devoted his life to serving small, isolated congregations in North Florida, where he was for years Archdeacon for the Diocese of Florida’s Gainesville convocation. He carried a portable altar, organ, hymnals and prayer books in the trunk of his car, often conducting five services each Sunday and driving over 1,000 miles every week, serving over 25 parishes in his career. Unmarried, the small church was his family. Fred died in 1989.

A “river rat,” who as a teenager piloted his father’s hardware store delivery boat, Fred ferried Father Thomas Brayshaw, who supplied 18 Episcopal missions on the St. John’s River, and was moved to follow in his footsteps.

His mother, fluent in languages, inspired him to study Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. He graduated from St. John’s College in Annapolis in 1932 and received a divinity degree at the University of the South, Sewanee, in 1935. He was ordained deacon in 1935, priest in 1936.

During the Depression years of the 1930s, many Episcopal congregations in North Florida were without pastors. Bowing to Fred’s request to be a country parson and missionary, Bishop Frank Juhan assigned him a string of missions from Ft. George to Cedar Key. Fred, unmindful of material goods, visited lumber camps, turpentine mills, and anyplace else that needed the Lord’s word, to conduct what he called “Oak Tree Services,” outdoors. He was rector and taught classics at a girls’ school in Gainesville, where students from the local synagogue joined his Hebrew classes. He was engaged in prison ministry, and, during World War II, opened a service center for soldiers at Camp Blanding and a retreat house for service wives. Year after year, in small towns, he organized scout troops and boys’ choirs. When chapels and Sunday School buildings were in poor condition, he paid for the repairs. He learned the history and lore of each community he served and cherished their children, declaring, “This is what we are building for.”

