

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

**Resolution No.:** 2022-D065  
**Title:** Adding Matthew Shepard to the Sanctoral Calendar  
**Proposer:** Dr. Adam Hamilton-Ferguson  
**Topic:** Church Calendar

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**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.*

# D065 - Adding Matthew Shepard to the Sanctoral Calendar

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**Final Status:** Not Yet Finalized

**Proposed by:** Dr. Adam Hamilton-Ferguson

**Endorsed by:** Deputy Nathan Brown, The Rev. RJ Powell

**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 Episcopal Church add Matthew Shepard to the Sanctoral Calendar, using his death date (12 October).

## Explanation

Matthew Wayne Shepard (1 December 1976 – 12 October 1998) was born in Casper (Diocese of Wyoming), and baptized at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, where he also served as an acolyte and altar server. While a political science major at the University of Wyoming (Laramie), he was affiliated with St. Matthew's Cathedral. On 6 October, 1998, Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson met up with him at the Fireside Inn bar, where they abducted him, drove him to the countryside near Laramie, tied him to a split-rail fence, pistol-whipped him until he was unconscious, and drove away, leaving him comatose and exposed to the elements for eighteen hours. A cyclist discovered him the next day, at first mistaking him for a scarecrow. He was airlifted to Colorado, where he died on 12 October without ever regaining consciousness. His funeral at St. Mark's in Casper attracted 700 mourners, but was picketed by the Westboro Baptist Church of Topeka, Kansas (now an SPLC-listed hate group). Henderson and McKinney were later convicted of kidnapping and murder, even though their attorneys attempted the "gay panic" defense--that men, if improperly propositioned by another man, would be justified in lashing out with any means necessary, similar to the "Twinkie Defense" used by the attorney for Dan White in his trial for murdering San Francisco Supervisor Harvey Milk and San Francisco Mayor George

Moscone. Matthew Shepard's murder was one of the first anti-gay hate crimes to receive truly international attention, and his name was given to the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Act, signed into law by President Obama in 2018, twenty years after his murder. On 26 October, 2018, his ashes were interred in the columbarium at the National Cathedral of Ss. Peter and Paul (Diocese of Washington, D.C.). We feel that it is just and fitting that our Episcopalian brother in Christ, Matthew Shepard, be added to our Sanctoral Calendar as we wrestle with the past and ongoing spiritual trauma inflicted on members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

