

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2024 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2024-C032
Title: A Prayer to Remember the Innocents
Proposer: South Dakota
Topic: Indigenous Ministry

Directly Related: (Attached)

None

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

2022-A127 Create Commission to Research Church's Historic Role in Indigenous Boarding Schools

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1973 through 2022, 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](#).

C032 - A Prayer to Remember the Innocents

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: South Dakota

Has Budget Implications: No

Cost:

Amends C&C or Rules of Order: No

Requests New Interim Body: No

Changes Mandate Of Existing lb: Yes

Directs Dfms Staff: No

Directs Dioceses: No

Directs Executive Council: No

HiA: HB

Legislative Committee Currently Assigned: 10 - Prayer Book, Liturgy & Music

Completion Status: Incomplete

Latest House Action: N/A

Supporting Documents: No

Resolution Text

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring,

That the 81st General Convention of The Episcopal Church expresses remorse for the role The Episcopal Church played in the irreparable harm suffered by Indigenous children who attended Indigenous boarding and residential schools in the 1800s and 1900s and acknowledges that the effect of that harm carries on in boarding school survivors and their descendants; and be it further

Resolved, that the 81st General Convention receives the gift of the following prayer to remember the Indigenous children who were forcibly taken to boarding and residential schools in the 1800s and 1900s:

A PRAYER TO REMEMBER THE INNOCENTS

Ohiŋni wičhaunġiksuyapi kte. "We will always remember them."

Dear Lord, Almighty God, we pray for all Indigenous children who were in residential and boarding schools in Canada and the United States. Some died there; we ask that you give assurance to their descendants that their souls are with you and their ancestors. Some survived there; we ask that you give your healing grace to all who

endured hardship while there and are still struggling with those memories. Lastly, we ask you to help us guard our children against harm in this world. All this we ask in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

And be it further

Resolved, That the use of this prayer be encouraged in liturgies throughout The Episcopal Church; and be it further

Resolved, That the 81st General Convention designate September 30 or another appropriate date on the Church Calendar as the annual remembrance of these Indigenous children; and be it further

Resolved, That the 81st General Convention direct the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music to prepare appropriate biblical lessons, collects and other liturgical resources commemorating the lives and suffering of these children; and be it further

Resolved, That the 81st General Convention directs the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music to report back to the 82nd General Convention with its recommendation for the inclusion of this commemoration in the church calendar and Lesser Feasts and Fasts.

Explanation

In the Episcopal Diocese of South Dakota, we are blessed by the living witness of survivors of the Indigenous boarding and residential schools. This witness has helped us understand the irreparable harm suffered by Indigenous children who attended the boarding and residential schools in the 1800s and 1900s and their families who were separated from their children in this way. In 2021, as one response to this harm, the Niobrara Council of South Dakota charged the mission churches to construct monuments or create other types of remembrances for the boarding school Indigenous children.

In 2022, Woniya Wakan (Holy Spirit) Episcopal Church, Santee-Yankton Mission, Wagner, Diocese of South Dakota, created a prayer of remembrance. On June 25, 2022, the 150th Niobrara Convocation adopted this prayer at St. John's Church, Sisseton Mission, Episcopal Diocese of South Dakota.

That fall, at the 138th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of South Dakota, the Convention received this prayer under the title "A Prayer to Remember the Innocents" and on Sept. 25, 2022, unanimously adopted the following resolution.

RESOLVED, that any person or group, any church, at any time, or at any liturgical service, may use this prayer to help people in their prayers, to bring awareness to others of the plight of Indigenous school-age children in the boarding school era, and to help with healing and reconciliation.

RESOLVED, that a resolution submitted by the Niobrara Council at the 2021 Diocesan Convention was passed to have the 4th Sunday of June as a day of remembrance for all Indigenous children; and, if adopted at this 138th Convention, then this prayer could also be used on that day.

RESOLVED, that if adopted by this 138th Convention, that the General Convention Deputies from this Diocese forward this prayer to the next General Convention for its consideration of adoption at the national level; and, to perhaps be included in the next Book of Common Prayer revision in the Prayers and Thanksgivings section.

In the Diocese of South Dakota the Niobrara Convocation customarily meets in the 4th weekend of June. Thus, the initial selection of the 4th Sunday of June coincided with that gathering. Nationally and internationally, September 30 has come to be the common day for this commemoration.