

RESOLUTION (#2) – Commemoration of Harriet Ross Tubman

Presented to the Synod of Province III on May 3, 2021

If adopted, to be forwarded to the Secretary of General Convention

Resolved, That the Synod of Province III, meeting electronically on May 3, 2021, endorses the following resolution, and hereby instructs the Secretary of Province III to forward it to the Secretary of General Convention by no later than June 25, 2021 for consideration by the 2022 General Convention.

Proposed Resolution

Title: Designate March 10 as the Date to Commemorate Harriet Ross Tubman

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That this 80th General Convention urges the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music to designate March 10 as the date on the calendar of commemorations of the Episcopal Church for honoring Harriet Ross Tubman; and be it further

Resolved, That all dioceses and parishes, in cooperation with other judicatories and local communities of faith, be encouraged to honor Harriet Ross Tubman on the 110th anniversary of her death (March 10, 2023) in a worship service on or close to that date.

Explanation

Currently on our calendar of commemorations Harriet Ross Tubman, along with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Amelia Bloomer, and Sojourner Truth, are assigned the date of July 20. Yet in recent years, within the Black community and elsewhere, the significance of Tubman's life and ministry has grown significantly.

Soon her portrait will appear on the \$20 bill replacing the seventh President of the United States, Andrew Jackson, an owner of slaves.

It has been suggested that the James Webb Space Telescope, often dubbed "the next Hubble" and slated to launch in the latter part of 2021, be renamed the "Harriet Tubman Space Telescope" because she liberated people and used the North Star as her guide. (*Scientific American*, March 1, 2021)

Furthermore, Senators Ben Cardin and Chris Van Hollen (both D-Md) are sponsoring S. 3423, which would bring a statue of Harriet Tubman to the Washington, DC, Capitol Building in recognition of her extraordinary life and service to the nation. They note that through art in the Capitol, Congress can make a powerful statement about our nation's history and values. From the Statuary Hall collection to the ceilings of the Brumidi corridors, "we tell the story of our nation.

From time to time, Congress authorizes new additions to its collection, and in recent years has honored Rosa Parks and Sojourner Truth.”

Messrs. Carden and Van Hollen further state: “Congress has an opportunity to recognize another of our nation’s heroes, Harriet Tubman. Through the course of her life, Tubman showed extraordinary courage – escaping slavery, leading others to freedom on the Underground Railroad, operating an espionage network to fight the Confederacy, tending to the wounded as an army nurse, and devoting her later years to women’s suffrage, the care of orphans, and the establishment of freedmen’s schools. A statue of Harriet Tubman in our Capitol Building would be a powerful reminder to all visitors, from schoolchildren to foreign leaders, of the values she represents – strength, tenacity, equality, and compassion.

“Because Harriet Tubman is a favorite daughter of Maryland, our state has passed legislation to facilitate the acquisition of a statue. They established the Harriet Tubman Statue Commission to work with the Joint Committee on the Library and Architect of the Capitol to raise private funds and procure a statue that is consistent with the art and architecture of the Capitol Building. Through this process, Congress would be gifted the statue at no cost to taxpayers.”

The General Convention was ahead of the curve when it added Harriet Ross Tubman to our calendar of commemorations (first reading in 1994, second reading in 1997). Now, the time has come to assign her a unique date. As this 80th General Convention gathers just 64 miles (as the crow flies) from the birthplace of Harriet Ross Tubman and the nearby National Park dedicated to her life and times – both located in Cambridge, MD, let us henceforth commemorate her on the anniversary of her death: March 10.

Furthermore, the 110th anniversary of her death, March 10, 2023, will be an appropriate opportunity to join with other communities of faith in celebrating the extraordinary life and ministry of Harriet Ross Tubman. Let us encourage all Episcopal dioceses and congregations to intentionally join with others in our own local areas on this date to honor her.