

**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**

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**Title of Resolution:** Designating the 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

**Text of Resolution:**

Resolved: 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 further

Resolved: that we acknowledge that 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 further

Resolved: that designating a Sunday each year around the December 18 anniversary of the Thirteenth Amendment for a prayer of thanksgiving for the abolishment of slavery and seeking God's aid in conforming our lives to his way of love where black lives assuredly matter is a fitting step to show our repentance for errors which even at the distance of over 150 years have caused a delay in the rectification of slavery, the consequences of which persist today; and further

Resolved: that the 244th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of New York and its member congregations, respectfully request that at parish option the Third or~~the~~ 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 further

Resolved: that the Bishop of New York is respectfully asked to organize inclusive and collaborative work to prepare a prayer of thanksgiving and seeking God's help to be used in all the parishes of the Episcopal Diocese of New York on the Third or Fourth Sunday in Advent; and further

Resolved: that the Episcopal Diocese of New York offer a resolution at the 2021 General Convention of the Episcopal Church to achieve the effect of this resolution on a churchwide basis.

**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.