

Thanksgiving – Nov. 23, 2022

Pumpkin pie - staple on New England Thanksgiving tables.

Legend - Conn town (Colchester) postponed Thanksgiving 1 week in 1705 due to a molasses shortage. Could be no Thanksgiving w/o pumpkin pie.

Truly - can be no Thanksgiving without thanks.

It's not always easy. We want to give thanks for good things.

Sometimes ... it's just about getting thru the struggle. Surviving.

1 Thes. 5:18 – “give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

Give thanks in everything. B/c good things are coming. Faith.

Rom. 8:28 – “God works all things together for the good of those who love Him” . . . “All things” . . .

Knowing God, David could say: “I remain confident of this: *I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.*” **Ps. 27:13**

Most of what we know about the **first Thanksgiving** comes from a single eyewitness report: a letter written in December 1621 by Edward Winslow, one of the pilgrims who sailed from England on the Mayflower in 1620.

Didn't happen on 4th Thurs in Nov, and it wasn't called “Thanksgiving.”

- took place over 3 days in late September and mid-November in 1621
- Considered a **harvest celebration**... & surviving 1st year. It was **Local**.

Oh that 1st year - **Mayflower & the Speedwell**. 2 leaks. Left 6 weeks late: Sept. 6, 1620. Mayflower: **102** passengers Bad weather. **66** days. Land – Nov. 11, 1620. Lived onboard the Mayflower the 1st winter.

- Only **53** passengers & half the crew survived.
- Women hard hit; only **5** of **19** survived cold N.E. winter.
- Mayflower sailed back to England in April 1621, and once the group moved to land, they faced even more challenges.

W/o help of Native Americans, likely none would have survived.

- They were taught how to hunt local animals, gather shellfish, and grow corn, beans and squash.

It was after the fall harvest they had **3-day festival of thanksgiving**.

- **50+ colonists** attended the 1st Thanksgiving; 22 men, 4 married women, and approx. 25 children & teenagers.
- These were the lucky ones... survived 66 days at sea; a harsh winter,
- epidemic of disease Lost nearly half the original group.
- Native Americans outnumbered the Colonists 2-1.

For NA, giving thanks: part of daily life. Hunt, fishing, picking plant...

America **first** called for a **Nat'l day of Thanksgiving** to celebrate victory over the British in the Battle of Saratoga, 1777.

1789 - George Washington called for **Nat'l day of Thanks** on the **last Thurs of November** to commemorate end of the Revolutionary War.

- During the Civil War, both the Confederacy & the Union issued Thanksgiving Day proclamations following major victories.
- After the Civil War is when we gained Thanksgiving.

Sec'y of State William Seward wrote the Thanksgiving Proclamation; Abraham Lincoln issued it - fixing the national observation of Thanksgiving on the final Thursday in November. The two men hoped it would help "heal the wounds of the nation."

War isn't easy. Some people are going thru their own wars... battles.
2 Chronicles 20 –King Jehoshaphat. Facing attack, called to pray/fast.

"For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you." **20:12**

Answer: "Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's." **20:15**

God always wins. Love never fails.

No matter what has passed this year, 3 remain: faith, hope and love.

"But the greatest of these is love." – **1 Cor. 13:13**

Psalm 34:1 – "I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise will always be on my lips." By giving thanks to God, we can go from surviving to thriving.

We are too blessed to be stressed. God is fighting your battle.

Thanksgiving Proclamation – Oct. 3, 1863

I do, therefore, invite my fellow-citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next as a Day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens. And I recommend to them that, while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings, they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners, or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty hand to heal the wounds of the nation, and to restore it, as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes, to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility, and union.

Let's give God praise.

Let's pray for God's comfort to those who grieve.

Let's pray for God's peace to heal us.

Let's pray for God's love to fill our world.

Song – new Thanksgiving Song by Matthew West.