

The Washington Flyer
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"O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good: for his mercy endureth for ever."
Psalms 136:1

Special Thanksgiving Message
Thanksgiving offers a welcome opportunity to pause and reflect on our many blessings. As a uniquely American holiday, it also invites us to look back on our nation's history and recognize God's faithfulness through both triumphs and trials. Some of the most poignant presidential Thanksgiving proclamations were issued during times of great national distress. Though spanning different eras, they share common themes: pride in our nation, gratitude for our blessings, and most importantly, recognition of God as the source.

In 1864, in the midst of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln issued a Thanksgiving proclamation which included these words:

"*It has pleased Almighty God to prolong our national life another year, defending us with His guardian care against unfriendly designs from abroad and vouchsafing to us in His mercy many and signal victories over the enemy, who is of our own household. . . . He has been pleased to animate and inspire our minds and hearts with fortitude, courage, and resolution sufficient for the great trial of civil war into which we have been brought by our adherence as a nation to the cause of freedom and humanity, and to afford to us reasonable hopes of an ultimate and happy deliverance from all our dangers and afflictions:*

He then declared the last day of November "as *a day of thanksgiving and praise to Almighty God, the beneficent Creator and Ruler of the Universe,"* and he encouraged all Americans to *"reverently humble themselves in the dust and from thence offer up penitent and fervent prayers and supplications to the Great Disposer of Events for a return of the inestimable blessings of peace, union, and harmony throughout the land."*

In 1901, two months after President William McKinley's assassination, President Theodore Roosevelt recognized the nation's grief in his Thanksgiving Proclamation, and called it an opportunity to awaken "*a resolute purpose not to be driven by any calamity from the path of a strong, orderly, popular liberty which as a nation we have thus far safely trod."*

One year later, in 1902, Roosevelt reminded Americans that *"Each [generation] has had to bear its peculiar burdens, each to face its special crises, and each has known years of grim trial, when the country was menaced by malice domestic or foreign levy, when the hand of the Lord was heavy upon it in drouth or flood or pestilence, when in bodily distress and anguish of soul it paid the penalty of folly and a froward heart."*

Yet, he offered this encouragement: "*Nevertheless, decade by decade, we have struggled onward and upward; . . . We render heartfelt and solemn thanks to the Giver of Good; and we seek to praise Him not by words only but by deeds, by the way in which we do our duty to ourselves and to our fellow men."*

In 1969, President Richard Nixon pointed to Lincoln's example, reminding Americans that *"the act of thanksgiving should not be limited to time of peace and serenity. He [Lincoln] knew that it is precisely at those times of hardship when men most need to recognize that the Source of all good constantly bestows His blessings on mankind."*

Acknowledging that *"Americans face complex problems unknown before in our nation's history,"* Nixon encouraged the nation to "*confidently face the challenges confronting our own nation and the world because we know we can rely on a strength greater than ourselves."* He also urged Americans "*to rekindle in our respective hearts and minds the spirit of our first settlers who valued freedom above all else, and who found much for which to be thankful when material comforts were meager."*

In 2001, two months after the tragedy of September 11, President George W. Bush reminded Americans that the founding of our country included thanksgiving to God in the midst of insurmountable odds:

In 1621 in New England, the Pilgrims gave thanks to God, in whom they placed their hope, even though a bitter winter had taken many of their brethren. In the winter of 1777, General George Washington and his army, having just suffered great misfortune, stopped near Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, to give thanks to God. And there, in the throes of great difficulty, they found the hope they needed to persevere. That hope in freedom eventually inspired them to victory. In 1789, President Washington, recollecting the countless blessings for which our new Nation should give thanks, declared the first National Day of Thanksgiving.

We share these excerpts as a reminder of the many challenges the Lord has brought our nation through, some with truly miraculous outcomes. The news of today can often tempt us to despair, but as we reflect on our nation's history through the lens of thanksgiving for God's faithfulness, we find reason for hope.

We wish all our readers a **blessed and Happy Thanksgiving**! May your week be filled with joy as you reflect on the goodness of our great God and loving Savior who grants us "every good and perfect gift."

In Case You Missed It:

Weekly Market Update provided by Jeff Beach of the AACS Investment Team at Merrill Lynch

Practical Legal Help for Christian Schools: ADF Ministry Alliance

Next Week: Giving Tuesday! On **Tuesday, December 1,** we will be hosting a **Giving Tuesday** opportunity to support our AACS Youth Legislative Development Conference through our social media accounts (Facebook @AACSeducates and Instagram (@yldc_aacs). As you participate in Giving Tuesday this year, we appreciate your consideration of supporting this great program. A gift now is an investment in the leaders of our future!

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