



The Washington Flyer
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“O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever!”
Psalm 107:1

Special Thanksgiving Message

Thanksgiving is a uniquely American holiday, with its beginning pointing to the providence and blessings of God upon our nation. History shows that many settlers arriving in the New World offered thanks to the Lord for His protection and provision. The Pilgrims’ Thanksgiving feast in 1621 is recognized as the first Thanksgiving celebration because of the significance of their settlement to the founding of our country. The Mayflower Compact they established contained the ideas that each person should have religious freedom and the freedom to work his own land and enjoy the benefits of it; these principles are the basis for the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution that secure our freedom today. In 1621, after a year of devastating losses, the Pilgrims gathered with their new friends, the Indians, who had helped them learn to plant crops and planned a three-day feast to thank God for His mercy and to acknowledge His sovereignty, provision, and blessings during great hardships. The day they set aside for Thanksgiving became a model for gratitude that has been followed throughout our history and has been an example of acknowledging God’s sovereignty, mercy, protection, and blessings.

Many [leaders](#) throughout our nation’s history have used Thanksgiving to recognize God’s goodness:

1783, Proclamation by the U.S. Congress:

“[S]et apart . . . a day of public thanksgiving, that all the people may then assemble to celebrate with grateful hearts and united voices, the praises of their Supreme and all bountiful Benefactor, for his numberless favors and mercies. That he hath been pleased to conduct us in safety through all the perils and vicissitudes of the war; that he hath given us unanimity and resolution to adhere to our just rights; that he hath raised up a powerful ally to assist us in supporting them, and hath so far crowned our united efforts with success, that in the course of the present year, hostilities have ceased, and we are left in the undisputed possession of our liberties and independence.”

1789, George Washington:

“I do recommend and assign Thursday, the 26th day of November next, to be devoted by the people of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be; that we may then all unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country previous to their becoming a nation; . . . for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national one now lately instituted; for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and, in general, for all the great and various favors which He has been pleased to confer upon us.”

1798, John Adams:

“I recommend that on the said day the duties of humiliation and prayer be accompanied by fervent thanksgiving to the Bestower of Every Good Gift, not only for His having hitherto protected and preserved the people of these United States in the independent enjoyment of their religious and civil freedom, but also for having prospered them in a wonderful progress of population, and for conferring on them many and great favors conducive to the happiness and prosperity of a nation.”

1815, James Madison:

“No people ought to feel greater obligations to celebrate the goodness of the Great Disposer of Events and of the Destiny of Nations than the people of the United States. His kind providence originally conducted them to one of the best portions of the dwelling place allotted for the great family of the human race. He protected and cherished them under all the difficulties and trials to which they were exposed in their early days. Under His fostering care their habits, their sentiments, and their pursuits prepared them for a transition in due time to a state of independence and self-government.”

1863, President Abraham Lincoln: In a year of momentous national strife, and after a period of 48 years without a national presidential Thanksgiving proclamation, President Lincoln issued this proclamation reflecting on God’s great mercy and abundance in provision even in the midst of his righteous judgment on our nation:

“No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy. It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged, as with one heart and one voice, by the whole American people. 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.”

In Case You Missed It:

[Weekly Market Update](#) provided by Jeff Beach of the [AACCS Investment Team at Merrill Lynch](#)

[Practical Legal Help for Christian Schools: ADF Ministry Alliance](#)

[Promise to America’s Children](#)