

400TH ANNIVERSARY
COMMEMORATIVE EDITION

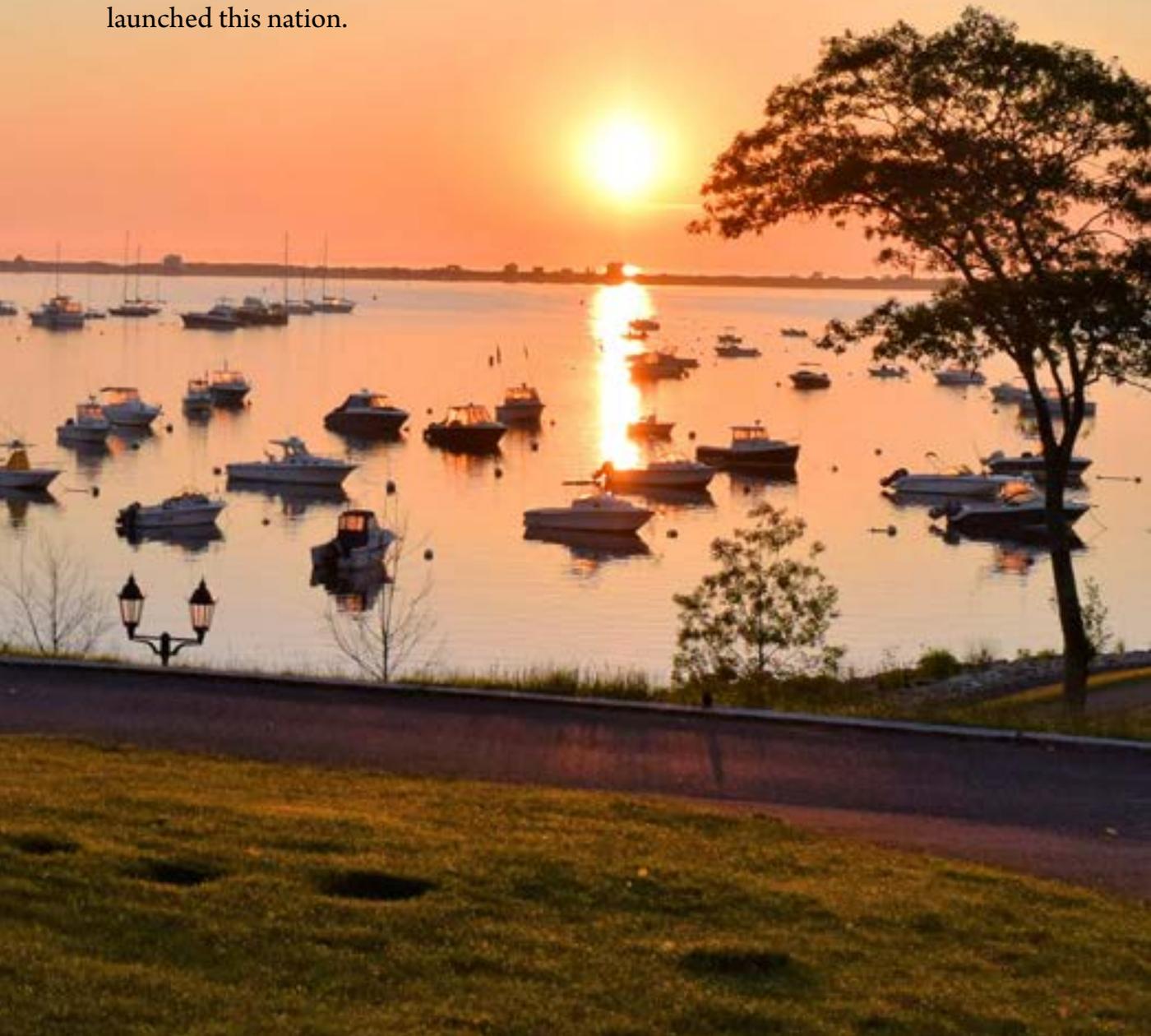
A TIME FOR THANKFULNESS
THANKSGIVING 2020

THE LEYDEN PRESERVATION GROUP



FOUR CENTURIES OF THANKSGIVING

The first recorded Pilgrim Thanksgiving took place during the harvest season of 1621, and established a great tradition of American families stopping to celebrate and give thanks for the mercy and goodness of God. For the quadricentennial of the Mayflower Pilgrim arrival in Plymouth, we dedicate this primer to all who seek to understand and commemorate the spirit of praise and thanksgiving which launched this nation.



THE FIRST THANKSGIVING

There are two and only two primary source accounts of the first Thanksgiving. They are presented below in the original English. They must be read in the context of the larger record given by Winslow and Bradford concerning the Pilgrim story.

Edward Winslow, Mourt's Relation:

“Our harvest being gotten in, our governour sent foure men on fowling, that so we might after a speciall manner rejoyce together, after we had gathered the fruits of our labours; they foure in one day killed as much fowle, as with a little helpe beside, served the Company almost a weeke, at which time amongst other Recreations, we exercised our Armes, many of the Indians coming amongst us, and amongst the rest their greatest king Massasoyt, with some ninetie men, whom forthree dayes we entertained and feasted, and they went out and killed five Deere, which they brought to the Plantation and bestowed on our Governour, and upon the Captaine and others. And although it be not always so plentifull, as it was at this time with us, yet by the goodness of God, we are so farre from want, that we often wish you partakers of our plentie.”





William Bradford, Of Plimoth Plantation:

“They begane now to gather in ye small harvest they had, and to fitte up their houses and dwellings against winter, being all well recovered in health & strength, and had all things in good plenty; For as some were thus imployed in affairs abroad, others were exersised in fishing, aboute codd, & bass, & other fish, of which yey tooke good store, of which every family had their portion. All ye somer ther was no want. And now begane to come in store of foule, as winter approached, of which this place did abound when they came first (but afterward decreased by degrees). And besids water foule, ther was great store of wild Turkie, of which they tooke many, besids venison, &c. Besids, they had about a peck a meale a weeke to a person, or now since harvest, Indean corn to proportion. Which made many afterwards write so largely of their plenty here to their friends in England, which were not fained, but true reports.”

A PROCLAMATION / Oct. 3, 1789

George Washington's National Thanksgiving Proclamation:

WHEREAS it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor; and Whereas both Houses of Congress have, by their joint committee, requested me “to recommend to the people of the United States a DAY OF PUBLIK THANKSGIVING and PRAYER, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness:”

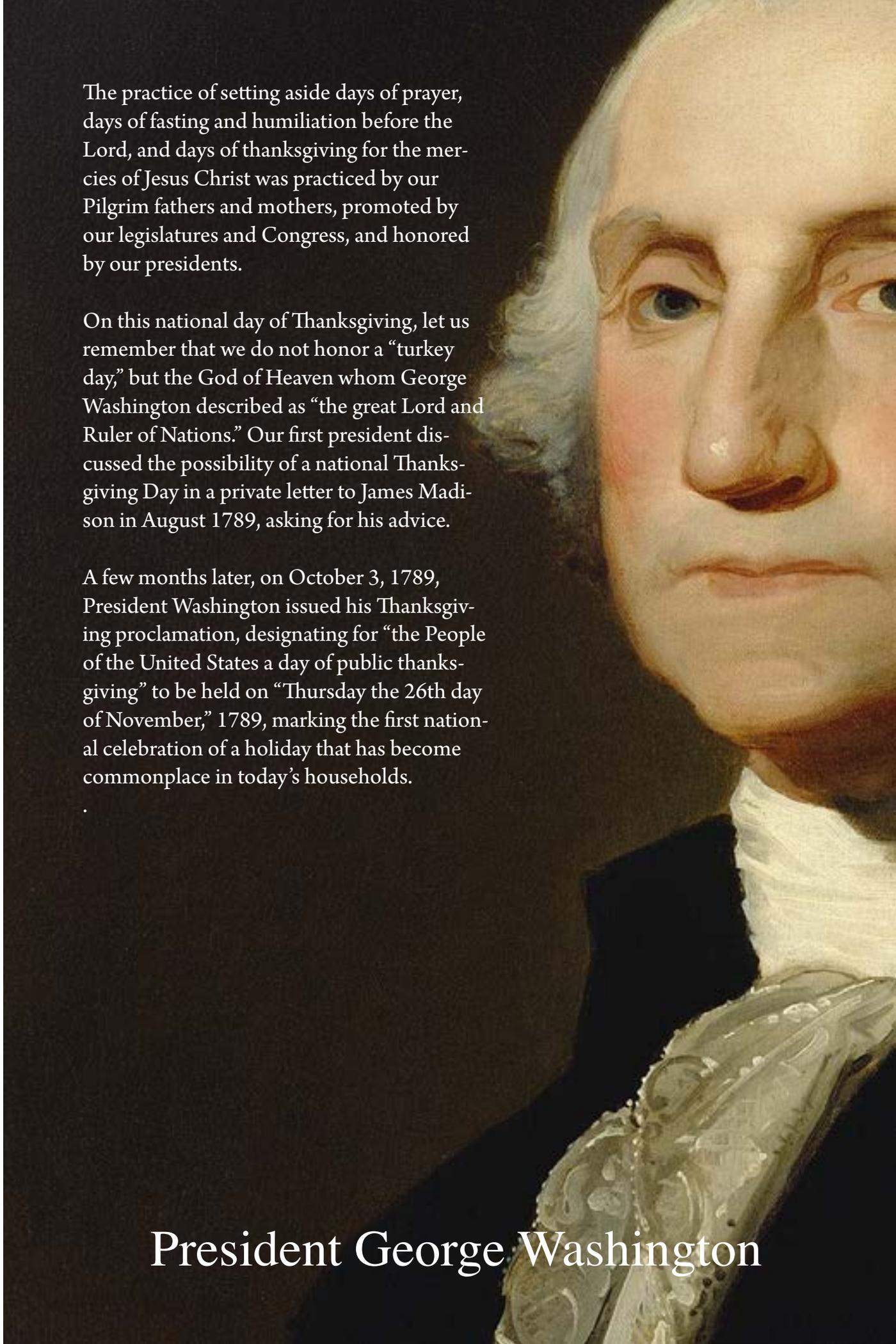
NOW THEREFORE, I do recommend and assign THURSDAY, the TWENTY-SIXTH DAY of NOVEMBER next, to be devoted by the people of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be; that we may then all unite in rendering 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 signal and manifold mercies and the favorable interpositions of His providence in the course and conclusion of the late war; for the great degree of tranquility, union, and plenty which we have since enjoyed;—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.

A large, elegant handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "G. Washington". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned at the bottom of the page, below the main text of the proclamation.

The practice of setting aside days of prayer, days of fasting and humiliation before the Lord, and days of thanksgiving for the mercies of Jesus Christ was practiced by our Pilgrim fathers and mothers, promoted by our legislatures and Congress, and honored by our presidents.

On this national day of Thanksgiving, let us remember that we do not honor a “turkey day,” but the God of Heaven whom George Washington described as “the great Lord and Ruler of Nations.” Our first president discussed the possibility of a national Thanksgiving Day in a private letter to James Madison in August 1789, asking for his advice.

A few months later, on October 3, 1789, President Washington issued his Thanksgiving proclamation, designating for “the People of the United States a day of public thanksgiving” to be held on “Thursday the 26th day of November,” 1789, marking the first national celebration of a holiday that has become commonplace in today’s households.

A close-up portrait of President George Washington, showing his face from the nose up. He has white powdered hair, blue eyes, and a serious expression. He is wearing a dark coat and a white cravat with a decorative pattern.

President George Washington

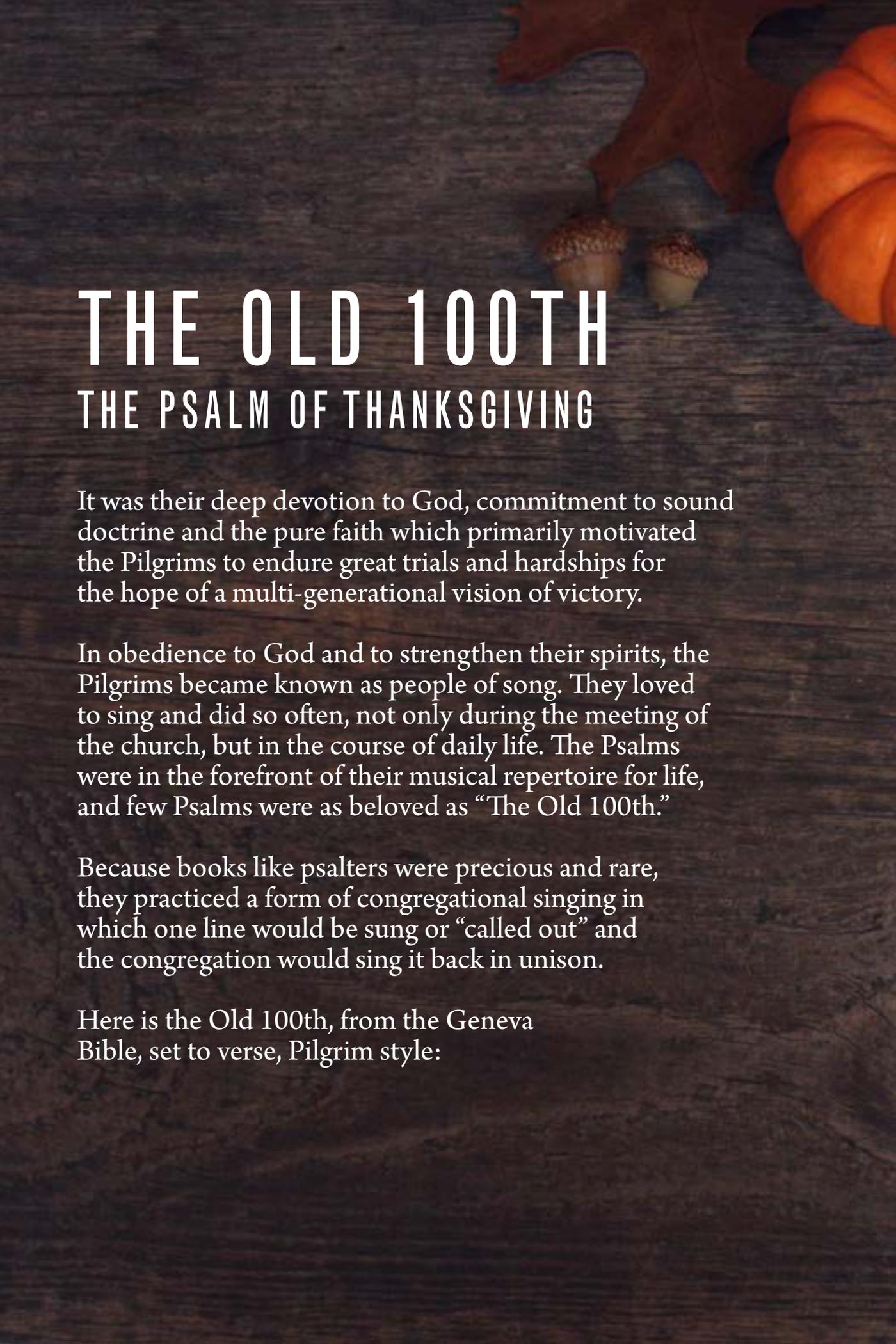
IN THIS TEMPLE
AS IN THE HEARTS OF THE PEOPLE
FOR WHOM HE SAVED THE UNION
THE MEMORY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN
IS ENSHRINED FOREVER



A PROCLAMATION

The year that is drawing towards its close has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature, that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God. In the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity, which has sometimes seemed to foreign States to invite and to provoke their aggression, peace has been preserved with all nations, order has been maintained, the laws have been respected and obeyed, and harmony has prevailed everywhere except in the theatre of military conflict; while that theatre has been greatly contracted by the advancing armies and navies of the Union. Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the fields of peaceful industry to the national defence have not arrested the plough, the shuttle or the ship; the axe has enlarged the borders of our settlements, and the mines, as well of iron and coal as of the precious metals, have yielded even more abundantly than heretofore. Population has steadily increased, notwithstanding the waste that has been made in the camp, the siege and the battle-field; and the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect continuance of years with large increase of freedom. 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, tranquillity and Union.

By the President, Abraham Lincoln, 1863



THE OLD 100TH

THE PSALM OF THANKSGIVING

It was their deep devotion to God, commitment to sound doctrine and the pure faith which primarily motivated the Pilgrims to endure great trials and hardships for the hope of a multi-generational vision of victory.

In obedience to God and to strengthen their spirits, the Pilgrims became known as people of song. They loved to sing and did so often, not only during the meeting of the church, but in the course of daily life. The Psalms were in the forefront of their musical repertoire for life, and few Psalms were as beloved as “The Old 100th.”

Because books like psalters were precious and rare, they practiced a form of congregational singing in which one line would be sung or “called out” and the congregation would sing it back in unison.

Here is the Old 100th, from the Geneva Bible, set to verse, Pilgrim style:

A photograph of several pumpkins and autumn leaves on a dark wooden surface. The pumpkins vary in color, including bright orange, yellow-orange, and white. The leaves are scattered around the pumpkins, some showing signs of decay. The background is a dark, textured wooden surface.

Shout to Jehova all the earth,
Serve ye Jehova with gladness,
Enter his gates with singing mirth,
Know that Jehova, he God is.

It's He that made us and not we,
His folk and sheep of His feeding
Oh with confession enter ye
His gates, his courtyards with praising.

Confess to him, bless ye his name,
Because Jehova he Good is.
His mercy ever is the same,
And his faith unto all ages. Amen.



Recommended Reading At The Dinner Table

The Most Important Documents To Read This Thanksgiving

Last and not least, they cherished a great hope and inward zeal of laying good foundations, or at least making some ways toward it, for the propagation and advance of the gospel of the kingdom of Christ in the remote parts of the world, even though they should be but stepping stones to others in the performance of so great a work.

— William Bradford

If you only read from one book other than the Bible this Thanksgiving, make it *Of Plymouth Plantation* by William Bradford. And if you only have time for one chapter, make sure it is the fourth (transcription on next page). It is in this chapter that we learn about the true reasons why these

homeschooling Pilgrims debated over whether or not they should risk their lives to go to America, the ultimate reasons for their departure (including concern over bad peer influences with their children), and their tremendous confidence in God. Most importantly, it is here that you read of Bradford's multi-generational vision of victory. Remember, from the approximately fifty survivors of that first winter, more than 30 million progeny have descended. 

Of Plymouth Plantation

Chapter 4 - Reasons which led-the Congregation at Leyden to decide upon Settlement in America.

By William Bradford

After they had lived here for some eleven or twelve years, the period of the famous truce between the Low Countries and Spain, several of them having died, and many others being now old, the grave mistress, Experience, having taught them much, their prudent governors began to apprehend present dangers and to scan the future and think of timely remedy. After much thought and discourse on the subject, they began at length to incline to the idea of removal to some other place; not out of any new-fangledness or other such giddy humour, which often influences people to their detriment and danger, but for many important reasons, the chief of which I will here briefly touch upon.

First, they saw by experience that the hardships of the country were such that comparatively few others would join them, and fewer still would bide it out and remain with them. Many who came and many more who desired to come, could not endure the continual labour and hard fare and other inconveniences which they themselves were satisfied with. But though these weaker brethren loved the members of the congregation, personally approved their cause, and honoured their sufferings, they left them, weeping, as it were; as Orpah did her mother-in-law, Naomi; or as those Romans did Cato at Utica, who desired to be excused and borne with, though they could not all be Cates. For, though many desired to enjoy the ordinances of God in their purity, and the liberty of the gospel, yet, alas, they preferred to submit to bondage, with danger to their conscience, rather than endure these privations. Some even preferred prisons in England to this liberty in Holland, with such hardships. But it was thought that if there could be found a better

and easier place of living, it would attract many and remove this discouragement. Their pastor would often say, that if many of those who both wrote and preached against them were living where they might have liberty and comfortable conditions, they would then practice the same religion as they themselves did.

Secondly, they saw that though the people generally bore these difficulties very cheerfully, and with resolute courage, being in the best strength of their years; yet old age began to steal on many of them, and their great and continual labours, with other crosses and sorrows, hastened it before their time; so that it was not only probable, but certain, that in a few more years they would be in danger of scattering by the necessities pressing upon them. Therefore, according to the divine proverb (Prov. xxii, 3), that a wise man seeth the plague when it cometh, and hideth himself; they, like skillful and hardened soldiers, were wary of being surrounded by their enemies, so that they could neither fight nor flee, and thought it wiser to dislodge betimes to some place of better advantage and less danger, if any such could be found.

Thirdly, as necessity was a task-master over them, so they themselves were forced to be, not only over their servants, but in a sort over their dearest children; which not a little wounded the hearts of many a loving father and mother, and produced many sad and sorrowful effects. Many of their children, who were of the best disposition and who had learned to bear the yoke in their youth and were willing to bear part of their parents' burden, were often so oppressed

with their labours, that though their minds were free and willing, their bodies bowed under the weight and became decrepit in early youth, the vigour of nature being consumed in the very bud, as it were. But still more lamentable, and of all sorrows most heavy to be borne, was that many of the children, influenced by these conditions, and the great licentiousness of the young people of the country, and the many temptations of the city, were led by evil example into dangerous courses, getting the reins off their necks and leaving their parents. Some became soldiers, others embarked upon voyages by sea and others upon worse courses tending to dissoluteness and the danger of their souls, to the great grief of the parents and the dishonour of God. So they saw their posterity would be in danger to degenerate and become corrupt.

Last and not least, they cherished a great hope and inward zeal of laying good foundations, or at least of making some way towards it, for the propagation and advance of the gospel of the kingdom of Christ in the remote parts of the world, even though they should be but stepping stones to others in the performance of so great a work.

These, and some other similar reasons, moved them to resolve upon their removal, which they afterwards prosecuted in the face of great difficulties, as will appear.

The place they fixed their thoughts upon was somewhere in those vast and unpeopled countries of America, which were fruitful and fit for habitation, though devoid of all civilized inhabitants and given over to savages, who range up and down, differing little from the wild beasts themselves. This proposition when made public, found many different opinions, and raised many fears and doubts. The hopeful ones tried to encourage the rest to undertake it; others more timid, objected to it, alleging much that was

neither unreasonable nor improbable. They argued that it was so big an undertaking that it was open to inconceivable perils and dangers. Besides the casualties of the seas, they asserted that the length of the voyage was such that the women, and other weak persons worn out with age and travail, could never survive it. Even if they should, they contended that the miseries which they would be exposed to in such a country, would be too hard to endure. They would be liable to famine, nakedness, and want. The change of air, diet, and water would infect them with sickness and disease. Again, all those who surmounted these difficulties, would remain in continual danger from the savages, who are cruel, barbarous, and treacherous, furious in their rage, and merciless when they get the upper hand, not content to kill, they delight in tormenting people in the most bloody manner possible; flaying some alive with the shells of fishes, cutting off the members and joints of others piecemeal, broiling them on the coals, and eating collops of their flesh in their sight whilst they live, with other cruelties too horrible to be related.

And the very hearing of these things could not but move the very bowels of men to grate within them and make the weak to quake and tremble. It was further objected that it would require greater stuns of money to prepare for such a voyage, and to fit them with necessaries, than their diminished estates would amount to. Many precedents of ill success and lamentable miseries befallen others in similar undertakings were alleged, besides their own experience in their removal to Holland, and how hard it was for them to live there, though it was a neighboring country and a civilized and rich commonwealth. It was replied that all great and honourable actions are accompanied with great difficulties, and must be both met and overcome with answerable courage. It was granted the dangers were great, but not desperate the difficulties were many, but not invincible. For, many of the

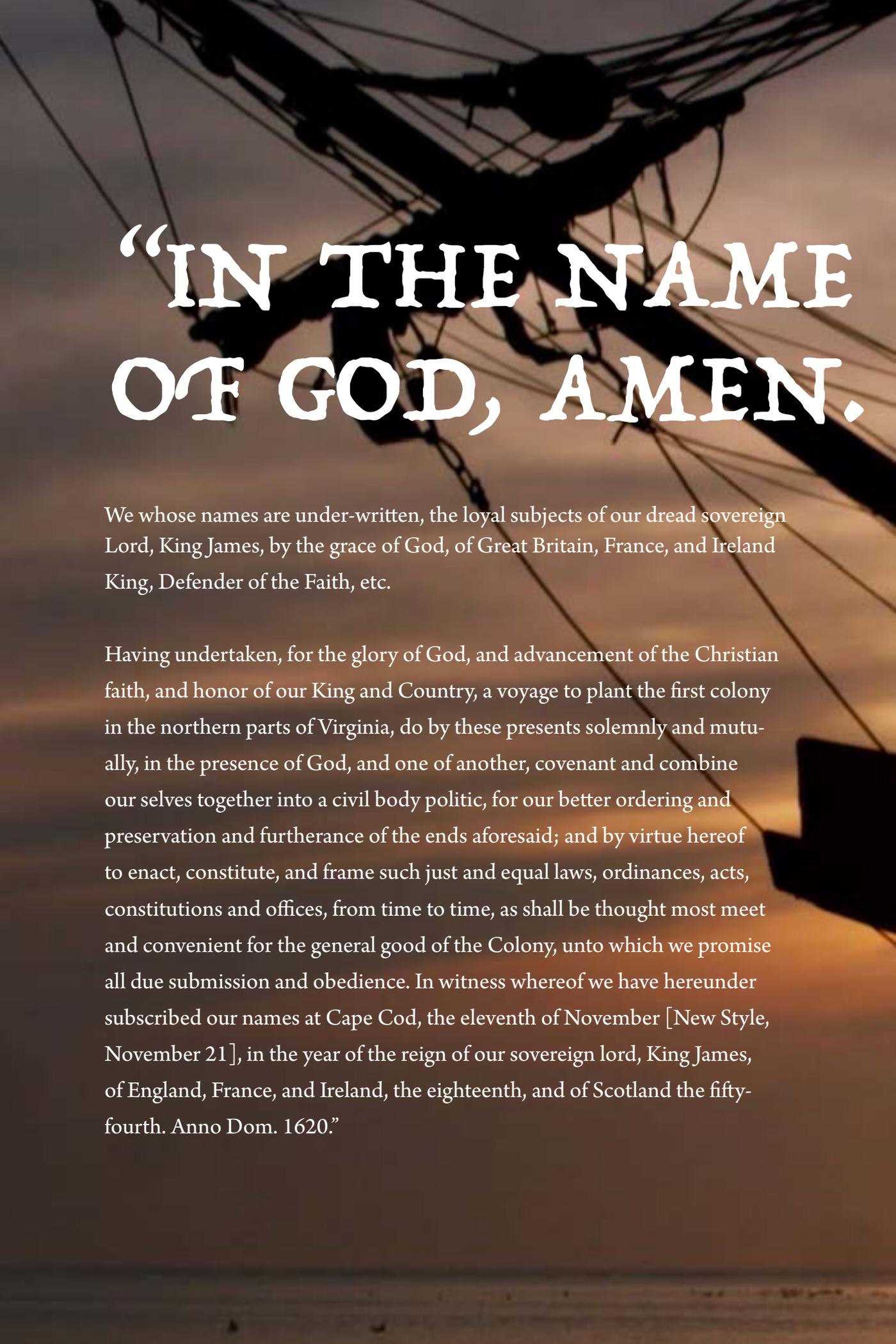
things feared might never befall; others by provident care and the use of good means might in a great measure be prevented and all of them, through the help of God, by fortitude and patience, might either be borne or overcome. True it was that such attempts were not to be undertaken without good ground and reason, rashly or lightly; or, as many had done, for curiosity or hope of gain. But their condition was not ordinary; their ends were good and honourable; their calling, lawful and urgent; therefore they might expect the blessing of God on their proceedings. Yea, though they should lose their lives in this action, yet might they have the comfort of knowing that their endeavour was worthy.

They were now living as exiles in poor circumstances; and as great miseries might befall

them here as there, for the twelve years' truce was now over, and there was nothing but beating of drums and preparation for war. The Spaniard might prove as cruel as the savage of America, and the famine and pestilence as sore in Holland as across the seas. After many other things had been alleged on both sides, it was fully decided by the majority to undertake the enterprises, and to prosecute it by the best means they could. ❀



Artwork from Of Plymouth Plantation



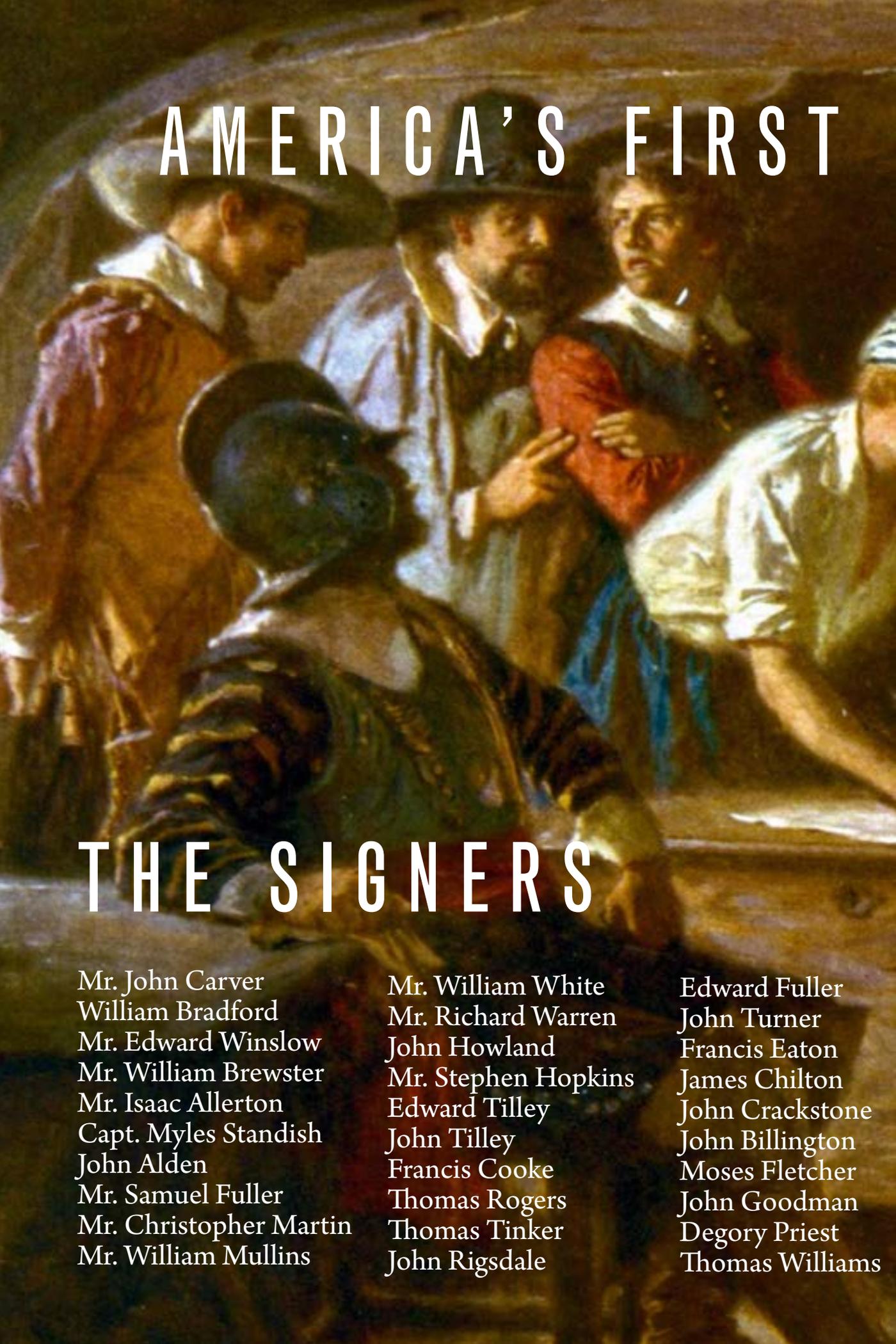
“IN THE NAME OF GOD, AMEN.”

We whose names are under-written, the loyal subjects of our dread sovereign Lord, King James, by the grace of God, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland King, Defender of the Faith, etc.

Having undertaken, for the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian faith, and honor of our King and Country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia, do by these presents solemnly and mutually, in the presence of God, and one of another, covenant and combine our selves together into a civil body politic, for our better ordering and preservation and furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by virtue hereof to enact, constitute, and frame such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions and offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the Colony, unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In witness whereof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cape Cod, the eleventh of November [New Style, November 21], in the year of the reign of our sovereign lord, King James, of England, France, and Ireland, the eighteenth, and of Scotland the fifty-fourth. Anno Dom. 1620.”



The Mayflower left Delfthaven in Holland on September 6th, 1620. After a boisterous passage of sixty-three days, it anchored within Cape Cod. In her cabin the first Republican government in America was solemnly inaugurated. That vessel thus became truly the 'Cradle of Liberty' rocked on the free waves of the ocean.



AMERICA'S FIRST

THE SIGNERS

Mr. John Carver
William Bradford
Mr. Edward Winslow
Mr. William Brewster
Mr. Isaac Allerton
Capt. Myles Standish
John Alden
Mr. Samuel Fuller
Mr. Christopher Martin
Mr. William Mullins

Mr. William White
Mr. Richard Warren
John Howland
Mr. Stephen Hopkins
Edward Tilley
John Tilley
Francis Cooke
Thomas Rogers
Thomas Tinker
John Rigsdale

Edward Fuller
John Turner
Francis Eaton
James Chilton
John Crackstone
John Billington
Moses Fletcher
John Goodman
Degory Priest
Thomas Williams

FOUNDING FATHERS



Gilbert Winslow
Edmund Margeson
Peter Browne
Richard Britteridge
George Soule
Richard Clarke
Richard Gardiner
John Allerton
Thomas English
Edward Doty
Edward Leister

You don't have to come from Virginia to appreciate its unique brand of Thanksgiving Day traditions. Every true-blue Virginian with a love for the great providence of God in the history of the Old Dominion knows that the most delectable delicacy of country cooking antiquity is none other than peanut soup. Forget your chowders and forsake your cheese, chilled, and cream soups. Away with your bisques, borscht, bouillabaisse, bouillon, and broths. Those patriotic palates who relish genuine gustatory glory know that only the peanut can produce a soup of such historic and culinary excellence that could rightly deserve the title—"America's Soup."

Ingredients:

- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1/4 c. butter
- 3 tbsp. all purpose flour
- 2 qt. chicken stock or canned broth
- 1 c. smooth peanut butter
- 1 3/4 c. heavy cream
- 1 1/2 c. peanuts, chopped

Directions:

Saute in butter until soft, but not brown. Add cream and bring to a soft boil. Stir in flour until well blended. Add stock / broth and salt, stirring constantly, and bring to a boil. Remove from heat and rub through a sieve. Add peanut butter, stirring to blend thoroughly, almost boil. Return to low heat. Serve hot or cold, garnished with chopped peanuts.



PEANUT SOUP



NEW ENGLAND TRADITIONS

In 1796, Amelia Simmons published the first cookbook written from an American using distinctively American ingredients. She helped to popularize the American tradition of holiday pies. Her recipes included directions for apple pie, mince pie, cranberry tart and pumpkin pie.

AMELIA SIMMONS'S APPLE PIE

2 Pillsbury refrigerated pie crusts, brought to room temperature; 3 Granny Smith apples; 3 tbs. butter, divided; Granulated sugar; Cinnamon; Nutmeg; Lemon juice-
Cooking spray

1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees and spray a pie dish with cooking spray
2. Unroll your first pie crust and line the pie dish
3. Peel, core, and chop the apples
4. Sprinkle sugar, cinnamon, and nutmeg on the bottom of the pie crust
5. Add apples and spread them to fill the dish
6. Cover with more sugar, cinnamon, and nutmeg
7. Melt 1 ½ tbsp. butter and drizzle it over the apples
8. Add a drizzle of lemon juice (I didn't use much)
9. Unroll your second pie crust & cover the apples
10. Seal sides of the crusts together with a fork and poke holes in the center
11. Melt remaining butter and brush the crust so it becomes golden brown when baking
12. Bake for approximately 30 minutes or until the pie is browning
13. Allow to cool fully.





A “Goodbye” for Which to Be Thankful

Pastor John Robinson’s Parting Words to the Pilgrims Stand as a Model of Love for Christians of All Time

John Robinson, the pastor of the Pilgrim church in Lieden, did not join his beloved congregation on the Mayflower and was to never see his flock again. Yet he left with them a letter of tender counsel that shows his heart as a loving shepherd. William Bradford places the scene of their parting in context:

But the tide (which stays for no man) calling them away, yet were [they] loathe to depart, their Reverend pastor [Robinson] falling down on his knees, (and they all with him,) with watery cheeks commended them with

most fervent prayers to the Lord and his blessing. And then with mutual embraces and many tears, they took their leaves one of another. . . .

Excerpt of Robinson’s Farewell Letter to the Pilgrims

Loving Christian friends, I do heartily and in the Lord salute you all, as being they with whom I am present in my best affection, and most earnest longings after you, though I be constrained for a while to be bodily absent from

you. I say constrained, God knowing how willingly, and much rather than otherwise, I would have borne my part with you in this first brunt, were I not by strong necessity held back for the present. Make account of me in the meanwhile, as of a man divided in myself with great pain, and as (natural bonds set a side) having my better part with you. And though I doubt not but in your godly wisdoms, you both foresee and resolve upon yet which concerneth your present state the condition, both severally and jointly, that have I thought it but my duty to add some further spur of provocation unto them, who run already, if not because you need it, that because I owe it in love and duty.

And first, as we are daily to renew our repentance with our God, especially for our sins known, and generally for our unknown trespasses, so doth the Lord call us in a singular manner upon occasions of such difficulty and danger as lieth upon you, to a both more narrow search and careful reformation of your ways in his sight; least he, calling to remembrance our sins forgotten by us or unrepented of, take advantage against us, the in judgment leave us for the same to be swallowed up in one danger or other. . . .

Now next after this heavenly peace with God and our own consciences, we are carefully to provide for peace with all men what in us lieth, especially with our associates, and for yet watchfulness must be had, that we neither at all in our selves do give, no nor easily take offence being given by others. Woe be unto the world for offences, for though it be necessary (considering the malice of Satan the man's corruption) that offences come, that woe unto the man or woman either by whom the offence

cometh, saith Christ, Mat. 18:7. And if offences in the unseasonable use of things in themselves indifferent, be more to be feared than death itself, as the Apostle teacheth, 1 Cor. 9:15. how much more in things simply evil, in which neither honor of God nor love of man is thought worthy to be regarded. . . .

And if taking of offence causelessly or easily at men's doings be so carefully to be avoided, how much more heed is to be taken yet we take not offence at God himself, which that we certainly do so often as we do murmur at his providence in our crosses, or bear impatiently such afflictions as wherewith he pleaseth to visit us. Store up therefore patience against the evil day, without which we take offence at the Lord himself in his holy and just works. . . .

*“Fare you well in him in whom you trust,
and in whom I rest.”*

These few things therefore, and the same in few words, I do earnestly commend unto your care and conscience, joining therewith my daily incessant prayers unto the Lord, yet he who hath made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all rivers of waters, and whose providence is over all his works, especially over all his dear children for good, would so guide and guard you in your ways, as inwardly by his Spirit, so outwardly by the hand of his power, as yet both you and we also, for and with you, may have after matter of praising his name all the days of your and our lives. Fare you well in him in whom you trust, and in whom I rest. 



Food For Thought on Thanksgiving

Potent Quotes from the Pilgrims

Finally, we have a few quotes that are acceptable for our consideration and worth sharing with your family.

1. Pilgrim's Journey from Holland

The Pilgrim Journey -- "So being ready to depart, they had a day of solemn humiliation.... pouring out prayers the Lord with great fervency, mixed with abundance of tears. And the time being come that they must depart, they were accompanied with most of their brethren

out of the city, into a town sundry miles off called Deltshaven, where the ship lay ready to receive them. So they left that goodly and pleasant city which had been their resting place near twelve years, but they knew they were strangers and pilgrims, and looked not much on those things, but lifted their eyes to the heavens, their dearest country, and quieted their spirits." *Bradford's description of the Embarkation from Holland.*

2. The Great Declaration of Praise and Thanksgiving Offered by William Bradford for the Providential Deliverance of the Pilgrims

May not and ought not the children of these fathers rightly say: “Our fathers were Englishmen which came over this great ocean, and were ready to perish in this wilderness; but they cried unto the Lord, and he heard their voice, and looked on their adversity, etc.” Let them therefore praise the Lord, because he is good, and his mercies endure forever. Yea, let them which have been redeemed of the Lord, show how he hath delivered them from the hand of the oppressor. When they wandered in the desert wilderness out of the way, and found no city to dwell in, both hungry, and thirsty, their soul was overwhelmed in them. Let them confess before the Lord his loving kindness, and his wonderful works before the sons of men.

3. William Bradford’s Multi-Generational Vision

“Just over fifty Pilgrims survived the first winter. But from them came more than thirty million descendants and a nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights. More importantly, their vision was one of holy, Christ-centered, multi-generational faithfulness.

Last and not least, they cherished a great hope and inward zeal of laying good foundations, or at least making some ways toward it, for the propagation and advance of the gospel of the

kingdom of Christ in the remote parts of the world, even though they should be but stepping stones to others in the performance of so great a work.

And also:

Thus out of small beginnings greater things have been produced by His hand that made all things of nothing, and gives being to all things that are; and, as one small candle may light a thousand, so the light here kindled hath shone unto many, yea in some sort to our whole nation; let the glorious name of Jehovah have all the praise.”

4. The Greatest Quote Concerning the Resolve of the Pilgrims

The simple sentence below by William Bradford is one of the most powerful in all of Christian literature, for it is a commentary on the meaning of holy risk-taking and the pursuit of righteousness and the kingdom of God:

“So they committed themselves to the will of God, and resolved to proceed.”

Thanksgiving

An Acknowledgement of God's favor

By Thomas Manton (1602 - 1677)

*At Midnight I will rise to give
thanks unto thee, because of
thy righteous judgments.*

—*Psalm 119:62*

Thanksgiving is a sensible acknowledgment of favors received or an expression of our sense of them, by word and work, to the praise of the bestower. The object of it is the works of God as beneficial unto us, or to those who are related to us, or in whose good or ill we are concerned, as public persons [or] magistrates: "I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplication, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority" (1Tim. 2:1-2); pastors of the church: "You also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons, thanks may be given by many on our behalf" (2 Cor. 1:11); or our kindred according to the flesh or some bond of Christian duty: "Rejoice with them that do rejoice" (Rom. 12:15).

The necessity of being much and often in thanksgiving will appear by these two considerations:

[1.] Because God is continually beneficial to us, blessing and delivering His people every day and by new mercies giveth us new matter of praise and thanksgiving: "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the

God of our salvation. Selah" (Psa. 68:19). He hath continually favored us and preserved us and poured His benefits upon us. The mercies of every day make way for songs which may sweeten our rest in the night; and His giving us rest by night and preserving us in our sleep, when we could not help ourselves, giveth us songs in the morning. And all the day long we find new matter of praise: our whole work is divided between receiving and acknowledging.

[2.] Some mercies are so general and beneficial that they should never be forgotten but remembered before God every day, such as redemption by Christ: "He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered" (Psa. 111:4). We must daily be blessing God for Jesus Christ: "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 9:15), [which] I understand [to be] of His grace by Christ. We should ever be thus blessing and praising Him; for the keeping of His great works in memory is the foundation of all love and service to God.

The greatest bond of duty upon the fallen creature is gratitude. Now grateful we cannot be without a sensible and explicit acknowledgment of His goodness to us. The more frequent and serious in that, the more doth our love constrain us to devote ourselves to God: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present yourselves a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1).

And therefore praise and thanksgiving [are] greater helps to the spiritual life than we are usually aware of; for working in us a sense of...

God's love and an actual remembrance of His benefits (as it will do if rightly performed), it doth make us shy of sin [and] more careful and solicitous to do His will.

Shall we offend so good a God? There is a [complaining] and sour spirit which is natural to us, always repining and murmuring at God's dealing and wasting and vexing our spirits in heartless complaints. Now this fretting, quarrelling, impatient humor, which often showeth itself against God even in our prayers and supplications, is quelled by nothing so much as by being frequent in praises and thanksgivings: "The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21). When the temptation is laid to make us murmur and swell at God's dealings, we should on the contrary bless and give thanks. So Job 2:10: "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" As we receive good things cheerfully and contentedly, so must we receive evil things submissively and patiently.

Means or directions: Heighten all the mercies you have by all the circumstances necessary to be considered. Consider the person giving: God—so high and glorious! A small remembrance from a great prince—no way obliged, no way needing me, to whom I can be no way profitable—a small kindness melts us: a gift of a few pounds, a little parcel of land. Do I court him and observe him? There is less reason why God should abase Himself to look upon us or concern Himself in us: "Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!" (Psalm 113:6). We have all things from Him.

Consider the person receiving: so unworthy: "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which thou hast showed unto thy servant" (Gen. 32:10). "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?" (2 Sam. 7:18).

Consider the season: our greatest extremity is God's opportunity. "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen" (Gen. 22:14), when [Abraham's] knife was at the throat of his son. "We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God, which raiseth the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust, that he will yet deliver us" (2 Cor. 1:9–10).

Consider the end and fruit of His mercy: it is to manifest His special love to us and engage our hearts to Himself: "Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption" (Isa. 38:17), or "Thou hast loved me from the grave."

Consider the means by which He brought them about, when unlikely, weak, insufficient, unexpected in themselves. The greatest matters of providence hang many times upon small wires: a lie brought Joseph into prison, and a dream fetched him out; he was advanced, and Jacob's family fed.

Consider the number of His mercies: "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them!" (Psa. 139:17)—the many failings pardoned, comforts received, dangers prevented, deliverances vouchsafed. How He began with us before all time, conducted us in time, and hath been preparing for us a happiness which we shall enjoy when time shall be no more. ❀

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Thomas Manton



Falsehood the World Portrays About Thanksgiving

Refuting the Seven Revisionist Myths About Thanksgiving

For more than a quarter of a century, the story of the Mayflower Pilgrims has been under political attack and subject to unprecedented historical revisionism. Plymouth and the story of the Pilgrims which is honored through our national Thanksgiving Day celebration is one of the most precious stories of faith, fortitude, and the providential care of God for his Church in the history of Western Civilization. For centuries Americans looked to Plymouth as our national origin story, and treated the events that transpired there as sacred to our traditions of freedom under God.

Not surprisingly, the story of the Mayflower Pilgrims presents a historical record which is perceived as a threat to that growing body of pundits, commentators, and new historians intent on presenting the formation of our nation as one of shame, disgrace, genocide and cultural imperialism. It is not uncommon for hecklers to appear in

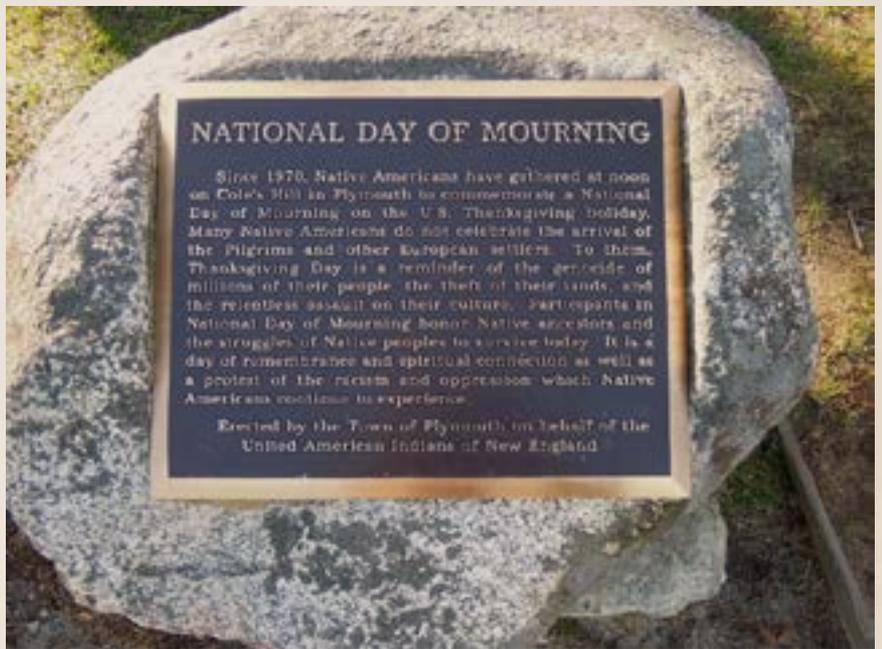
Plymouth disrupting celebration parades, for historic monuments to be defaced, and for pressure to be placed on the community of Plymouth itself to forsake its rich heritage. In the last two years alone, articles appearing in national publications, and leading up to the quadricentennial, have been dominated by anti-Pilgrim sentiment.

After the national riots of 2020, with their share of monument toppling and defacements of public historic buildings, there is rising concern that Plymouth may be targeted further with the goal for monument destruction, and censoring the great Pilgrim legacy to life and liberty under God. Behind this assault on the great Pilgrim legacy are a series of myths rooted in a historical revisionism which is not only at war with Christianity, but with a fair and reasonable account of the facts which inform our interpretation of the origins of the American nation in Plymouth.

Thanksgiving Day should stand out in our hearts as one of the most sacred and significant days of celebration of the year. The importance of Thanksgiving Day does not merely stem from its patriotic value as the oldest national celebration in American history. The day should not be observed simply to maintain a historical tradition that was cherished long before it was officially declared a national holiday. Thanksgiving Day is momentous because it not only calls our remembrance to the awe-inspiring work of God's providence among our forbearers, but also allows us to connect with them in a real way by demanding a perpetual reflection on the providence of God in our own lives. Whether joyfully or with more than a little misgiving, on Thanksgiving Day the nation acknowledges that we are the heirs of our Pilgrim Fathers. Thanksgiving provides a national identification that should connect with every American on a deep and intimate level. It is a day that points to the firm conviction that every good and perfect gift comes from above, and that we are the residual beneficiaries of God's favor bestowed upon, and celebrated by our ancestors, during that first Thanksgiving feast. As we gather around our family tables in celebration of God's providence and provision we are the fulfillment of the hope of those godly men and women; we are the enduring testimony to the fruition of their multi-generational vision of faithfulness.

At the same time, it is perhaps for this very reason that the hallowed importance of Thanksgiving Day is diminished in our modern culture. The necessary reflection on God's providence invoked on this day is something that the unregenerate heart simply cannot grasp, much less celebrate. The essential theme of man's

utter dependence on God is something to which men shaped by the egotistical philosophy of the enlightenment cannot relate. The exclusive adoration and deep fidelity to Jesus Christ practiced among the Pilgrim Fathers is something that this secular generation finds intolerable. For this reason, each year the observance of Thanksgiving Day has gradually diminished into a day celebrated by an excess of parades, food, and football. Thanksgiving Day has been even further eroded by the radical left who, out of their hatred for God, has revised history to distort and pervert America's Christian heritage. While the Christmas holiday has inherited its fictitious flying reindeer and Easter has inherited a fictitious egg laying rabbit, it seems that Thanksgiving has inherited a fictitious historical narrative, equal to those other absurdities, and accompanied by a barrage



of unwarranted ridicule and speculative doubt.

For this reason, there are many who view Thanksgiving Day as a national day of mourning. While Thanksgiving Day is a happy time, many cannot celebrate the occasion without a small feeling of shame for the oppressors and remorse for the oppressed. Of course, such an understanding of history is based on a fictitious

and speculative view of Pilgrim/ Indian relations. It is incumbent on Christian families of this generation to debunk the myths invented by those who seek to divorce history from truth because they have rejected God, the sovereign author of history. By debunking these myths we hope to reflect on the true meaning of this day of thanksgiving and restore a culture that gives proper glory, honor, and thanksgiving to God. We confront these unhappy skeptics to defend the honor and preserve the legacies of the Englishmen and Native Americans that gathered in friendship during that first thanksgiving harvest. The myth-making ability of modern skeptics seems to be limitless, but here let us contend with those myths that have been the most widely propagated and generally believed concerning our Pilgrim Fathers and their Native American friends.

MYTH #1: The first thanksgiving was a pretext for “bloodshed, enslavement, and displacement that would follow in later decades.”

A diligent appeal to the actual historical source documents reveal a very different account of what took place between the Pilgrims and Indians. From the beginning, William Bradford relates that the Pilgrims and Indians made a binding peace accord which contained six principle terms: (1) That neither group would harm one another; (2) that any who does harm will be held accountable; (3) that they will not steal from one another and anything stolen will be restored, (4) that they would become military allies, protecting one another in instances of attack; (5) That neighboring confederates would also be welcomed to the peace accord, and (6) that when they met they would come unarmed. Both parties honored this treaty, which remained unbroken for over half a century following the first thanksgiving. The Pilgrims treated each Native American tribe individually and never attacked any tribe unless

they had been attacked first. Conflicts and wars that occurred prior to 1675, were always carried out by the Pilgrims in conjunction with their Native American allies, and always according to the terms of the treaty. If a Plymouth citizen treated an Indian improperly, they were tried in a court of law and punished. In 1638, the Colony of Plymouth hanged three colonists for the murder of a single Indian. In that same year a colonial court of law denied a town the right to retaliate against wrongs committed by an Indian tribe, because it was found that the town had committed an earlier violation of Indian rite. In 1675, the peace accord was broken, but not by the Pilgrims. The treaty was broken by King Phillip of the Wampanoag tribe, who rejected Christianity and declared war on the Colonists. King Phillip’s first acts of aggression were carried out on Native Americans who remained friends with the Colonies. In addition, the colonists were by no means swift in declaring war against King Phillip. The hard decision came only after eight towns were attack in a period of three months; children were burned alive in their homes, and their parents subjected to cannibalistic ritual torture. King Phillip’s war was, per capita, the most devastating war ever to be fought on American soil. This bloody war marked a turning in the relations between the Indians and settlers.

MYTH #2: The first thanksgiving was not Christian and was not a thanksgiving.

Two original source documents provide first hand accounts of that first thanksgiving among the Pilgrims and their Indian friends. William Bradford writes of that time “they found the Lord to be with them in all their ways, and to bless their outgoings and incomings, for which let His Holy name have praise forever, to all posterity.”¹ Edward Winslow relates that on that first thanksgiving “for three days we entertained and feasted... . yet by the goodness of God, we are so far from want, that we often wish you partakers of our plenty.”² The Pilgrims together

with a large company of Indians celebrated three days of thanksgiving unto God for His providence in providing for them a land and a bountiful harvest. While it is not clear that the Indians present during the celebration believed in Jesus Christ, it is known that through the missionary efforts of the Pilgrims a great number of Native Americans, including their king, did believe. Not only was this gathering a time of giving thanks for an abundant harvest, their thanks was directed toward the God of Christianity for the harvest He had provided for them.

MYTH #3: The Pilgrim Fathers were racists who treated the Indians as an inferior race.

Racism as we understand it today is a modern invention predicated on an evolutionary view of man which understands various races as following similar, but differing paths of evolution. According to the evolutionary worldview, some races of men have more quickly evolved or have evolved better than others have. However, this way of thinking would have been foreign to the Pilgrims who landed at Plymouth. The Pilgrims who landed at Plymouth understood men and cultures in light of a biblical worldview. This means that they did not consider men as members of any particular race, but as men divided by tribes, tongues, and nations. Almost from the beginning, the Pilgrims and Indians enjoyed a relationship of common ground and mutual respect for one another.

Moreover, the Pilgrims invited Indians to partake in a desegregated society. Many Indians like Squanto, lived among the Pilgrims and were highly esteemed by the Pilgrims. There are records of Indians who were permitted to sit on the juries of the Pilgrims. By the middle of the seventeenth century, Harvard College accepted Native Americans as students, having as part of its original charter the education of the English

and Indian youth of this country. The common schools and grammar schools established by the Pilgrims had accepted Indian children as students almost from the beginning of their existence.

MYTH #4: The primary reasons for the Mayflower voyage was to further the financial ambitions of the Pilgrims.

If an historian wanted to understand the reasons why the pilgrims risked everything to come to America, it would be expected that he might consider the reasons the Pilgrims themselves gave for coming to America. William Bradford's Plymouth Plantation provided the following reasons: (1) there were threats of war in Holland and the Pilgrims did not want to become entangled in a foreign war; (2) there were not enough opportunities to support the multigenerational vision they shared for their families; (3) they desired to find a place where they would be able to preserve the faith among their children; and (4) they desired to come to America for the advancement and propagation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Pilgrims had a bold vision for a biblical family and a biblical community. They left Holland to be a "city on a hill", an example of what God can do through a small group of faithful families. It is tragic that we find that many of the bad influences related to materialism, youth culture, entertainment, excess, and complacency that the Pilgrims sought to leave behind them in Holland, are the types of things many look forward to on Thanksgiving Day.

MYTH #5: The Pilgrims stole land from the Indians.

When the Pilgrims arrived in America, the Native Americans had no concept of private land ownership. Nevertheless, the Pilgrims bought plots of land from the Indians anyway. In addition, the Pilgrims respected the borders of Indian Territories and even protected the land occupied by the Native Americans from other invading Native American tribes according to the peace accord. To this day, many of these original land contracts exist and can be seen in Plymouth, Massachusetts. Early historians like Bradford, Winslow, and Elliot also provide first hand accounts of these land transactions.

While there were possible instances of abuses among certain individuals, the general rule of law among the Pilgrims required the purchase of land at a fair price, the respect for land markers, and the observance of private property. Historian Alden Vaughan, although not always favorable to the Pilgrims, wrote, "There is no evidence that any New England land for which the native claimant existed was taken under the guise of vacuum domicilium.... Plymouth Colony set a patterns of Puritan land acquisition that was later observed by Massachusetts Bay and its off shoots."³

MYTH #6: The Pilgrims were somber, rigid, and joyless group of people.

If the Pilgrims had been somber, cold, ridged, and joyless people, they would have had legitimate reasons for it. In England, they had been persecuted and forced to flee to Holland where they were strangers in a strange land. When they embarked for America, they spent almost two months on the Mayflower below deck, and were not permitted to venture above the deck of the ship. Once they landed in

America the winter came upon them so fast that half of them died the first winter. During this time they buried their dead at night under the cover of darkness to hide their numbers from the Indians who they feared might raid them.

Yet, in spite of all of this, the Puritans were always joyful, kind, and longsuffering. They wore colorful and fashionable clothing and enjoyed entertaining and feasting in the company of both friends and strangers. They were diligent to care for the poor and the sick even among those who had persecuted and ridiculed them with the vilest language. They were hard working and industrious, but always looking for opportunities to enjoy the company of others. The first thanksgiving itself provides a window into the kind of happy people the Pilgrims were. On this occasion they aside three days to celebrate by sporting, entertaining, showing hospitality, giving gifts, and enjoying the plentiful harvest.

MYTH #7: The Pilgrims came to America for religious liberty, but denied it to others.

Contrary to what is now commonly taught and widely accepted, the Pilgrims did not come to America to gain religious liberty. To be sure, this was a primary reason for leaving England, but the Pilgrims had enjoyed religious liberty in Holland for over 12 years. Yet they came to America with the express goal of "the advancement and propagation of the gospel of Jesus Christ." Religious liberty with pluralism today was never an idea that would have been tolerated among the Pilgrim and Puritan congregations. God had commanded, "You shall have no other Gods in my presence." Since God is omnipresent, this meant that the public worship of idols could not be tolerated.

However, this does not mean that the Pilgrims were indifferent to those who did not believe in

Jesus Christ. From the beginning there were non-Christians, and differing denominations that lived among the Pilgrims at Plymouth. They were never ostracized or denied equal rights under the law. William Bradford relates one story in which a group of non-puritans complained that it offended their conscience to work on Christmas day, as the Pilgrims did not celebrate Christmas. As it was a matter of conscience, they were allowed to take the day off for the observance until they were taught otherwise. While they did not adhere to modern notions of religious pluralism, they did not persecute those who did not share their convictions.

Conclusion

Ultimately, these myths do not originate from a desire to cast the Pilgrim Fathers into doubt, as much as it is an attempt to cast doubt upon the God of the Pilgrim Fathers. The skeptic in America is like a man who is dying of thirst while floating on an ocean of water, because he is a member of a civilization that was miraculously established by the providence of God, but he finds no place for himself in it. His only alternative is to invent a false view of history that exalts the idea of a “noble savage” who loves and worshiped the creature rather than the Creator.

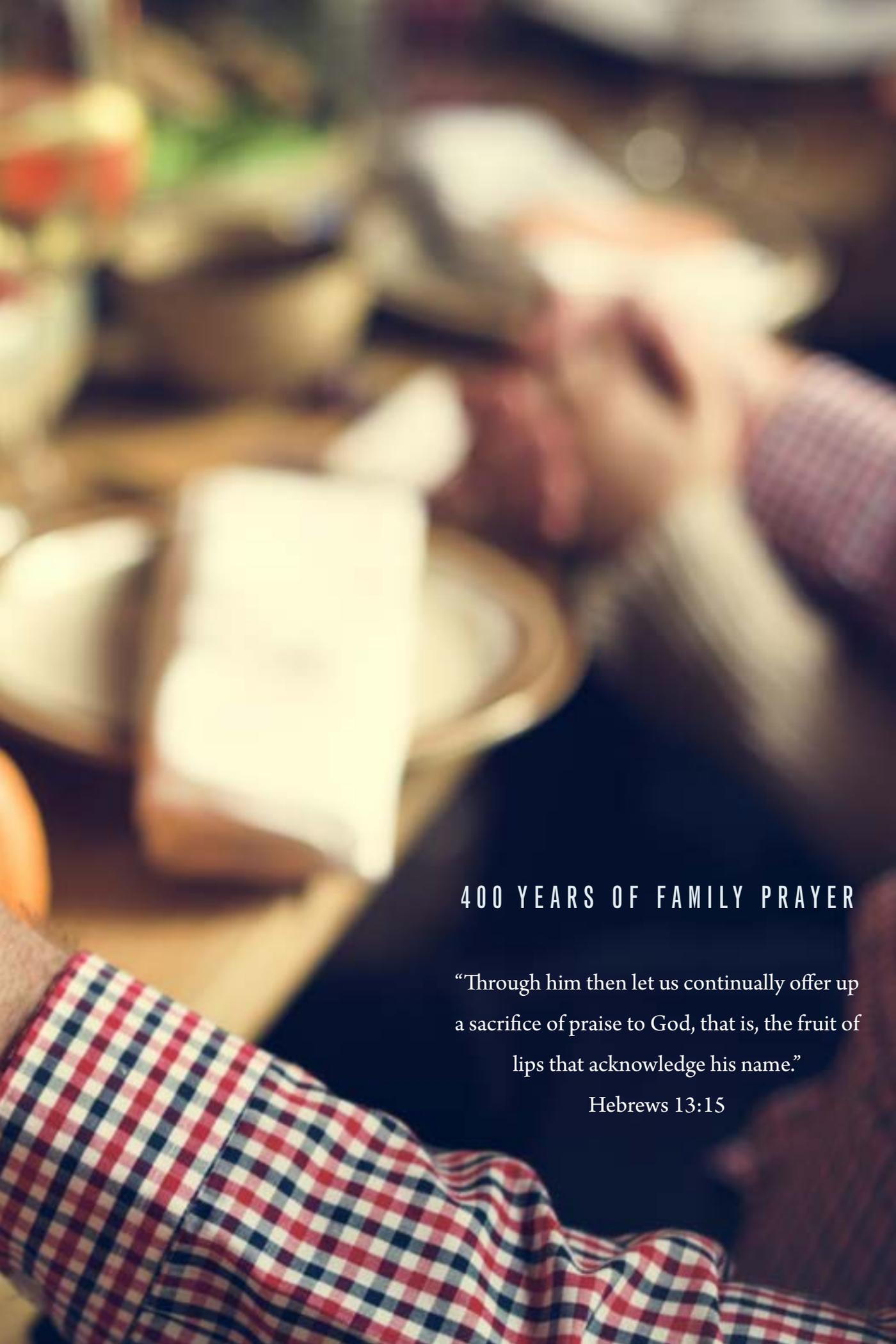
As we gather around the family table for Thanksgiving Day we should consider the fact that we are the fruition of God’s blessing poured out on our Pilgrim Fathers. The liberty that we enjoy is a product of the first chartered documents of the Pilgrims who, beginning with the Mayflower Compact, examined the Scriptures and drafted these charters on principles of self-government and freedom under God. As we lift up our hearts in song and thanksgiving to God we affirm the success of

their multi-generational vision; gathering in confirmation that their toil and hardship was not in vain. On Thanksgiving Day we gather as living testimonies of what God can do through a small number of faithful families who forsake all else to advance the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. 

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400 YEARS OF FAMILY PRAYER

“Through him then let us continually offer up
a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of
lips that acknowledge his name.”

Hebrews 13:15



“Thus out of small beginnings greater things have been produced by His hand that made all things of nothing, and gives being to all things that are; and, as one small candle may light a thousand, so the light here kindled hath shone unto many, yea in some sort to our whole nation; let the glorious name of Jehovah have all the praise!”

—William Bradford,
Of Plymouth Plantation

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