

# A Thanksgiving Present

## Thoughts about Thanksgiving

Want a few Thanksgiving reflections to ponder? Or maybe to share in a social media post or around the Thanksgiving table? Well, you're sure to find inspiring options in this list of quotations about thanksgiving.

“Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name.” (Psalm 100:4)

“No duty is more urgent than that of returning thanks.” (Ambrose of Milan)

“By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.” (Hebrews 13:15)

“The lack of gratitude is the foundation of all sin.” (G.K. Chesterton)

“True thanksgiving means that we need to thank God for what He has done for us, and not to tell Him what we have done for Him.” (George R. Hendrick)

“I will give thanks to the LORD because of His righteousness and will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High.” (Psalm 7:17)

“How wonderful it would be if we could help our children and grandchildren to learn thanksgiving at an early age. Thanksgiving opens the doors. It changes a child's personality. Thankful children want to give; they radiate happiness; they draw people.” (Sir John Templeton)

“Gratitude is born in hearts that take time to count past mercies.” (Charles E. Jefferson)

“Gratitude bestows reverence, allowing us to encounter everyday epiphanies, those transcendent moments of awe that change forever how we experience life and the world.” (John Milton)

“Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.” (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

“Some people complain because God put thorns on roses, while others praise Him for putting roses among thorns.” (Anonymous)

“A thankful heart is not only the greatest virtue, but the parent of all the other virtues.” (Cicero)



“Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever. Let Israel say: ‘His love endures forever.’ Let the house of Aaron say: ‘His love endures forever.’ Let those who fear the Lord say: ‘His love endures forever.’...Open for me the gates of the righteous; I will enter and give thanks to the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord through which the righteous may enter. I will give You thanks, for You answered me; You have become my salvation.” (Psalm 118:1-4, 19-21)

“We would worry less if we praised more. Thanksgiving is the enemy of discontent and dissatisfaction.” (Harry A. Ironside)

“You say, ‘If I had a little more, I should be very satisfied.’ You make a mistake. If you are not content with what you have, you would not be satisfied if it were doubled.” (Charles Spurgeon)

**BLESSED ARE THE PEOPLE  
WHOSE GOD IS THE LORD**  
It is good thing to give  
thanks unto the Lord  
Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;  
Giving his love endures forever  
**THANKS**  
in all things  
Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift  
**FROM THE FULLNESS OF HIS GRACE WE HAVE  
ALL RECEIVED ONE BLESSING AFTER ANOTHER**

“In that day you will say: ‘Give thanks to the LORD, call on His name; make known among the nations what He has done, and proclaim that His name is exalted.’” (Isaiah 12:4)

“In ordinary life we hardly realize that we receive a great deal more than we give, and that it is only with gratitude that life becomes rich.” (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

“Thou hast given so much to me, give one thing more, a grateful heart; not thankful when it pleaseth me, as if Thy blessings had spare days, but such a heart whose pulse may be Thy praise.” (George Herbert)

“I would maintain that thanks are the highest form of thought, and that gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder.” (G.K. Chesterton)

“From David, learn to give thanks for everything. Every furrow in the Book of Psalms is sown with the seeds of thanksgiving.” (Jeremy Taylor)

“Hem your blessings with thankfulness so they don’t unravel.” (Unknown)

“Let us come before Him with thanksgiving and extol Him with music and song. For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all.” (Psalm 95:2-3)

“Giving thanks to God for both His temporal and spiritual blessings in our lives is not just a nice thing to do; it is the moral will of God. Failure to give Him the thanks due Him is sin.” (Jerry Bridges)

“The Pilgrims made seven times more graves than huts. No Americans have been more impoverished than these who, nevertheless, set aside a day of thanksgiving.” (H. U. Westermayer)

“The Christian who walks with the Lord and keeps constant communion with Him will see many reasons for rejoicing and thanksgiving all day long.” (Warren Wiersbe)

Speaking of Jesus Christ, the apostle Paul writes, “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.” (2 Corinthians 9:15)

“How slow we are to thank and swift to grumble.” (Martyn Lloyd-Jones)

“When it comes to life, the critical thing is whether you take things for granted or take them with gratitude.” (G.K. Chesterton)

“The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to Him in song.” (Psalm 28:7)

## **Thanksgiving in a Nutshell (Barbara Lewis)**

The story of the first Thanksgiving begins in 1608, when a group of people called the Separatists, persecuted for forming a church apart from the Church of England, left their homeland to settle in Leyden, Holland. There they found religious freedom but also poverty, grueling work and a secular culture that threatened to undo the values they had carefully instilled in their children. After seeking God's guidance, under the leadership of William Bradford they sold everything and, to finance their journey, indentured themselves to an English company for their first seven years in America. On the *Mayflower*, the Separatists joined others seeking the new land for other reasons; these they called the Strangers. These two groups, a passenger list of 102, together were the Pilgrims.

The journey lasted nine weeks, with the ship finally losing its course. Instead of reaching Virginia, they landed at Cape Cod, Mass. Now outside the territory covered by the King's Charter, the Pilgrims were responsible for their own government. After much prayer, the Pilgrims wrote a set of laws - called The Mayflower Compact. Only after it was signed, on Nov. 11, 1620, did they leave the ship to begin their new life at the place they named Plymouth.

Half the Pilgrims died that first winter. Yet the survivors clung to their faith in God, and when the *Mayflower* returned to England the next spring, not one Pilgrim chose to return. That spring the little colony literally put down roots with the help of Squanto, an Indian who years before had been kidnapped and taken to England, where he had learned English and become a Christian. Squanto taught them how to grow corn, use fertilizer, stalk deer and catch fish. William Bradford, the governor, wrote of Squanto that he was "a special instrument sent of God for their good beyond their expectations."

The first harvest brought plenty. In October, Gov. Bradford set aside a day for everyone to thank God for meeting their needs through that arduous year. Squanto, his chief, Massasoit, and other members of his tribe were their invited guests. The Indians brought deer and turkeys, while the Pilgrim women cooked vegetables and fruit pies.

## Congressional Thanksgiving Proclamation, 1782

“It being the indispensable duty of all Nations, not only to offer up their supplications to ALMIGHTY GOD, the Giver of all good, for His gracious assistance in a time of distress, but also in a solemn and public manner to give Him praise for His goodness in general, and especially for great and signal interpositions of His providence in their behalf:



Therefore the United States in Congress assembled, taking into their consideration the many instances of divine goodness to these States, in the course of the important conflict in which they have been so long engaged; the present happy and promising state of public affairs; and the events of the war, in the course of the year now drawing to a close; particularly the harmony of the public Councils, which is so necessary to the success of the public cause; the perfect union and good understanding which has hitherto subsisted between them and their Allies, notwithstanding the artful and unwearied attempts of the common enemy to divide them; the success of the arms of the United States, and those of their Allies, and the acknowledgment of their independence by another European power, whose friendship and commerce must be of great and lasting advantage to these States:

Do hereby recommend to the inhabitants of these States in general, to observe, and request the several States to interpose their authority in appointing and commanding the observation of THURSDAY the twenty-eight day of NOVEMBER next, as a day of solemn THANKSGIVING to GOD for all His mercies: and they do further recommend to all ranks, to testify to their gratitude to GOD for His goodness, by a cheerful obedience of His laws, and by promoting, each in his station, and by his influence, the practice of true and undefiled religion, which is the great foundation of public prosperity and national happiness.”

Done in Congress, at Philadelphia, the eleventh day of October, in the year of our LORD one thousand seven hundred and eighty-two, and of our Sovereignty and Independence, the seventh.



## Thanksgiving Proclamation by America's First President (1789)

By the President of the United States  
of America, a 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 public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many 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 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 signal and manifold mercies, and the favorable interpositions of His Providence which we experienced 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 hath been pleased to confer upon us.

And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech Him to pardon our national and other transgressions -- to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually -- to render our national government a blessing to all the people, by constantly being a Government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed -- to protect and guide all Sovereigns and Nations (especially such as have shown kindness unto us) and to bless them with good government, peace, and concord -- To promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and us -- and generally to grant unto all Mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as He alone knows to be best.”

Given under my hand at the City of New York, the third day of October  
in the year of our Lord 1789.



## **A Thanksgiving Prayer (Mary Fairchild)**

Heavenly Father, on Thanksgiving Day  
We bow our hearts to You and pray.

We give You thanks for all You've done  
Especially for the gift of Jesus, Your Son.

For beauty in nature, Your glory we see  
For joy and health, friends and family,

For daily provision, Your mercy, and care  
These are the blessings You graciously share.

So today we offer this response of praise  
With a promise to follow You all of our days.

### **How did President Theodore Roosevelt celebrate Thanksgiving in 1902?**

True story: On Thanksgiving Day in 1902, construction workers were hustling to finish work on the White House's West Wing annex. Roosevelt interrupted work that afternoon and insisted each worker put down his tools and eat a turkey dinner prepared by the White House kitchen.

### **“Why Is Thankfulness So Important”**

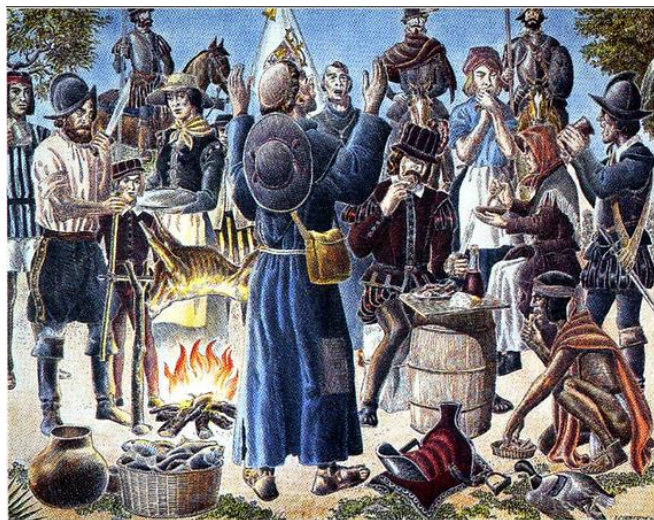
“In everything give thanks, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.” (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

The Bible is not subtle in its calls for thanksgiving. Repeatedly, urgently, and throughout its many books the reader is urged to “give thanks to the Lord, for He is good,” and “in all things give thanks.” In both Old and New Testaments, both Gospels and Epistles, we are urged to consider our blessings, and the character of the One from Whom they flow, and to offer praise and thanks in response. Centuries later, Martin Luther described gratitude as “the basic Christian attitude” and the Puritan theologian Jonathan Edwards asserted that a spirit of thankfulness to God was an indicator of one’s spiritual state.

Why, one might wonder, is thankfulness so important?

The act of thanksgiving requires both memory and humility -- both reflection on the causes and sources of gratitude, and the recognition of the blessing as a grace, rather than an entitlement. As such, a spirit of thanksgiving is incompatible with pride and distracted self-absorption, two of the greatest threats to spiritual life. It is virtually impossible to be thankful when one is distracted or indignant; thankfulness requires a laying aside of slights and irritations to focus on one’s unearned blessings and their source. (From “Thinking About Thanksgiving” by Cherie Harder, President of Trinity Forum.)

## A Quick Thanksgiving History (Besides Plymouth Plantation)



The earliest record of a thanksgiving in America is 1541 by Spanish explorer Coronado at Palo Duro Canyon in what is now Texas. (Scene on left.)

French Protestant colonists at Charlesfort (now Parris Island, South Carolina) held a thanksgiving service in 1564.

In 1607, the Jamestown settlers held thanksgiving at Cape Henry, Virginia, and there are many other records of such hallowed observances.

The first call for an annual Thanksgiving was at Berkeley Plantation, Virginia, in 1619, when Captain John Woodlief and 38 settlers aboard the ship *Margaret*, proclaimed, "Wee ordaine that the day of our ships arrivall at the place assigned for plantacion in the land of Virginia shall be yearly and perpetually kept holy as a day of thanksgiving to Almighty God."

### "Night's Blessings" (Eldred Herbert)

When I go to bed and cannot sleep,  
I don't waste time by counting sheep;  
I count all my blessings, one by one,  
From the early morn till the settling sun;  
The day so new, the sunrise so clear,  
I started my day with thankful prayer;  
Thanked God for husband and children two,  
Freckled-face boy, girl with eyes of blue.

Thanked God for ability to work,  
And from life's battle I did not shirk;  
I thanked Him for guidance through the day,  
He is my Buckler from tempter's sway.  
And when I was tempted to be rude,  
I turned to my Lord in solitude;  
His strength sufficient, my soul restored,  
Just one more blessing from the Lord.

When day is done and I lay in bed,  
I feel God's blessing upon me spread.  
If you are restless and cannot sleep,  
Just count your blessings instead of sheep;  
You will find the solitude is right,  
You will feel His presence in the night;  
Then rest shall come, repose in sleep,  
When you count blessings instead of sheep.

## Lincoln's Thanksgiving Address (1863)

“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, tranquility and Union. In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the United States to be affixed.”

Done at the City of Washington, this Third day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the Independence of the Unites States the Eighty-eighth.

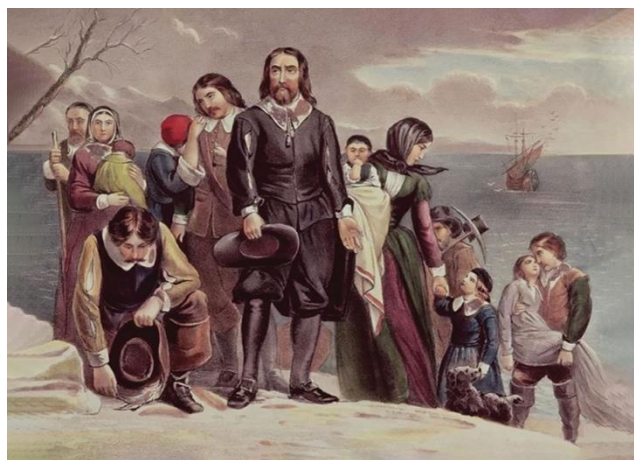
By the President: Abraham Lincoln



## A Time to be Thankful...To God

The Family Research Council's Thanksgiving Message -- November 23, 2005

Thanksgiving is uniquely American. There are of course regional twists to the holiday. Ours consists of fried turkey, cornbread dressing, sweet potato crunch and my favorite -- sweet potato pie. It is a time for families to gather together in prayer around the table. As you join with family and friends, take time and reflect on that first Thanksgiving. William Bradford, Governor of Plymouth, proclaimed the first official day of Thanksgiving in October of 1621. What were they thankful for? One year after arriving, the Pilgrims stood at about half their original number. Not quite one year earlier they had arrived in New England from Holland after a 66-day journey across the North Atlantic.



During that first winter 47 of the 102 Pilgrims were lost to disease and starvation. If it hadn't been for Squanto, the young Patuxent Indian, the second winter might have claimed them all. Squanto had been taken captive by slave traders, but monks in Spain purchased his freedom and taught him the Christian faith. He made his way to England, learned our language, and thence returned to America. He was there to welcome the Pilgrims shortly after their arrival. Squanto taught them how to plant corn in New England's rocky soil. He shared his knowledge of forests and rivers. Bradford said Squanto had been sent by God to be the little band's Joseph.

We trace not only our Christian heritage to this brave band of Pilgrims, but also our country's solid foundation of self-government. The Mayflower Compact was signed even before the Pilgrims landed. It laid out the ideals of government by consent of the governed and made clear their purpose, "undertaken for the Glory of God, and Advancement of the Christian Faith." Plymouth Rock is the place where those Pilgrims first set foot on America's shores. The great French political scientist Alexis de Tocqueville wrote about this scene. In his classic 1835 book, *Democracy in America*:

This rock has become an object of veneration in the United States. Does this not show very clearly that the power and greatness of man is wholly in his soul? Here is the stone that the feet of some miserable persons touched for an instant, and this stone becomes celebrated; it attracts the regard of a great people; they venerate its remnants; they parcel out its dust in the distance. What has become of the thresholds of so many palaces? Who cares about them?

Tocqueville was one of the first Europeans to recognize the change that was taking place "in the course of human events" in America. He wrote that religious freedom was the key to understanding democracy in America. Today, there are those who think that religion and democracy are at odds with one another. Tocqueville knew that a firm foundation of faith was essential to the rise of democracy.

## The Mayflower Compact

In the Name of God, Amen.

“We, whose names are underwritten, 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 the Honour 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 another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil Body Politick, for our better Ordering and Preservation, and Furtherance of the Ends aforesaid:

And by Virtue hereof do enact, constitute, and frame, such just and equal Laws, Ordinances, Acts, Constitutions, and Officers, 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 hereunto subscribed our names at Cape Cod the eleventh of November, in the Reign of our Sovereign Lord King James, of England, France, and Ireland, the eighteenth, and of Scotland the fifty-fourth, Anno Domini; 1620.

## “A Thanksgiving Poem” (Paul Laurence Dunbar)



Thou hast, with ever watchful eye,  
Looked down on us with holy care,  
And from Thy storehouse in the sky  
Hast scattered plenty everywhere.

Then lift we up our songs of praise  
To Thee, O Father, good and kind;  
To Thee we consecrate our days;  
Be Thine the temple of each mind.

With incense sweet our thanks ascend;  
Before Thy works our powers pall;  
Though we should strive years without end,  
We could not thank Thee for them all.

## Tisquantum (“Squanto”)

Tisquantum was a native of Patuxet, living at present-day Plymouth; the Patuxet belonged to the Wampanoag confederation. Nothing is really known about Squanto's early life. His history picks up in 1614, when Captain John Smith and some of other ships under his command arrived to map Cape Cod and vicinity. John Smith is perhaps better known for having been rescued by Pocahontas at the Jamestown Colony several years earlier. After Smith completed his exploration and mapping of the harbors, he departed, leaving behind an associate, Thomas Hunt, to trade with the Indians. John Smith had hopes of founding a plantation in New England, and so wanted to engage the Indians in trade.



Thomas Hunt, however, had other plans. Offering to trade beaver, Hunt lured 24 Nauset and Patuxet Indians onboard his ship and took them captive. John Smith would later write that Master Hunt "most dishonestly, and inhumanely, for their kind usage of me and all our men, carried them with him to Malaga, and there for a little private gain sold those silly salvages for rials of eight." Sir Ferdinando Gorges, head of the Council for New England, remembered it similarly: "one Hunt (a worthless fellow of our nation) set out by certain merchants for love of gain; who (not content with the commodity he had by the fish, and peaceable trade he found among the savages) after he had made his dispatch, and was ready to set sail, (more savage-like than they) seized upon the poor innocent creatures, that in confidence of his honesty had put themselves into his hands."

Hunt stored the Indians below the hatches, and sailed them to the Straits of Gibraltar, and on to the city of Malaga, Spain, where he sold as many of them as he could. But when some local Friars in Malaga discovered that they had been brought from America, they took custody of the remaining Indians, and instructed them in the Christian faith. As Sir Ferdinando Gorges states, the Friars "so disappointed this unworthy fellow of the hopes of gain he conceived to make by this new and devilish project."

The Nauset and Patuxet tribes were outraged by the kidnappings, and became extremely hostile. English and French ships visiting Plymouth and Cape Cod were no longer welcomed with profitable beaver trade, as an unwitting French captain and crew would discover in 1617, when their ship was burned and almost everyone killed (a few were enslaved) by the Nauset.

But outrage and vengeance against Europeans would soon become a low priority amongst the Nauset and Patuxet. In 1618 and 1619, a devastating plague, described variously in historical sources as either tuberculosis or smallpox (and perhaps a combination of both), wiped out the entire village at Patuxet, and many surrounding areas were heavily hit.

One Patuxet did survive, however: Tisquantum. He had somehow found himself passage from Malaga, Spain into England, where he began living with John Slaney in Cornhill, London, and began picking up the English language. John Slaney was the treasurer of the Newfoundland Company which had managed to place a colony at Cupper's Cove (Cupids), Newfoundland in 1610; he employed Tisquantum, presumably as an interpreter and as an expert on North American natural resources. He was sent to Newfoundland, and worked there with Captain John Mason, governor of the Newfoundland Colony.

While in Newfoundland, Tisquantum encountered a ship's captain by the name of Thomas Dermer, who had worked with Captain John Smith, perhaps even on the 1614 mapping expedition in which Squanto had been originally taken. Dermer was employed by the New England Company, headed by Sir Ferdinando Gorges; they still had hopes to profit from beaver trade with the Indians of Massachusetts: but this would not be possible as long as hostilities remained. Thomas Dermer recognized that Tisquantum, who had now been living with Englishmen for a number of years, could act as an interpreter and peacemaker between the English and the still-enraged Indians of Patuxet and Nauset. He sent a letter off to Sir Ferdinando Gorges expressing the good use Tisquantum could be put to, and Gorges had them come back to England to discuss their plans.

In 1619, Captain Dermer and Tisquantum set off for New England, to attempt to make peace and re-establish trade with the Indians, and to map out the natural resources that could be exploited by the Company. But upon arriving, they discovered Tisquantum's town, all the Patuxet, were dead from the plague. He did make contact with Massasoit, and his brother Quadequina, the heads of the Wampanoag Confederation, and in the absence of his own people he took up residence with them. Their plan to make peace foiled by the fact that Tisquantum's tribe had been completely wiped out, Dermer continued on to see if he could make peace with the Nauset. He was attacked and taken captive. Tisquantum, hearing about the incident, came to Dermer's rescue and negotiated his release. Dermer would continue on south without Tisquantum, where he was attacked again at Martha's Vineyards. He would die of the wounds after reaching Jamestown, Virginia.

Tisquantum's return home in 1619 was just in time for the Mayflower Pilgrims, who pulled into Provincetown Harbor in November 1620. The Pilgrims sent out their own exploration parties, and during their third expedition they were attacked in camp early one morning by the Nauset. Shots were fired and arrows flew heavily, but in the end nobody was injured and the Nauset fled back into the woods. The Pilgrims continued their expedition around Cape Cod, eventually ending up in the abandoned Patuxet territory, where they decided to settle (the area had been named Plymouth by John Smith on his 1614 mapping expedition).

The Pilgrims lived out of the Mayflower, and ferried back and forth to land to build their storehouses and living houses: they labored all through the winter months of December, January, February, and didn't start moving entirely to shore until March. And during that entire time, they saw almost no signs of any Indians, aside from a few fires burning in the far distance. On March 16, they got a surprise: an Indian named Samoset walked right into the Colony and welcomed them in broken English. Samoset was from an Indian group in Maine, and had picked up a few English words from the fisherman that came into the harbors there. He informed them there was

an Indian, Tisquantum, who had been to England and could speak better English than he could. Tisquantum made his first appearance on March 22, at which time he brought Massasoit and Quadequina. The Pilgrims used the opportunity to negotiate a peace treaty and to establish trading relations.

Tisquantum would soon become an integral member of the Plymouth Colony, translating and negotiating between Plymouth's governors (John Carver, and later William Bradford) and tribal leaders including Massasoit. Peace was made with the Nauset, with whom they had their initial conflict on Cape Cod; and peace was negotiated with a number of other Indian leaders within the Wampanoag Confederation. Tisquantum was a guide, taking the Pilgrim ambassadors to various locations, and helping them establish trading relations. He also taught the Pilgrims how to better utilize the natural resources: how to catch eels, and how to plant corn using fish caught from the town brook as fertilizer.

But Squanto's new-found power soon began to corrupt him. He realized that the Indians had a significant fear of the English, especially their guns and technology. He leveraged this fear for his own private benefit, exacting tributes to put in a good word for someone, or by threatening to have the English release the plague against them. Squanto even went so far as trying to trick the Pilgrims into a show of military action, by claiming certain Indian groups were in conspiracy together to fight the English: but he went too far, and his treachery was discovered by both the Pilgrims and the Indians.

When Massasoit learned that Squanto was abusing his power and deceiving for personal gain, he ordered the Pilgrims to turn him over for punishment (death). The Pilgrims were obligated to do so, by the peace treaty they had signed: but at the same time they realized that the survival of their Colony depended on communication with the Indians. But Massasoit had called their hand, and William Bradford was minutes away from turning Squanto over for execution, when a ship came onto the horizon. Not knowing whether it was friend or foe, and even suspecting that perhaps the Indians were in conspiracy with the French, Bradford refused to turn over Squanto until the identity of the ship was discovered. The ship turned out to be the *Fortune*, and for Squanto it was very good fortune it arrived. The new settlers, the shortage of food, and the oncoming winter distracted from other events. Then as spring came, new settlers showed up to found another colony, at Wessagussett: and they had all kinds of problems with the Indians that required Squanto's interpreting skills. Massasoit, though clearly disappointed and frustrated, did not bother asking for Squanto's life again.

But Squanto's life was not to last long anyway. On one trip to trade for some corn seed for the subsequent growing season, he went with Governor Bradford south on the ocean-side of Cape Cod, and they pulled into Manamoyick Bay because of dangerous weather conditions. There, in November 1622, Squanto's nose began to bleed. He told Governor Bradford it was a sign among the Indians of death. He asked Bradford to pray for him so that he could go to the Englishman's God in Heaven when he died, and asked Bradford to give various things as gifts to his English friends back at Plymouth. Within a few days, he was dead.

**(Caleb Johnson's MayflowerHistory.com)**



**The New-England Boy's Song about Thanksgiving Day  
(Lydia Maria Child, 1844)**

Over the river, and through the wood,  
To grandfather's house we go;  
The horse knows the way,  
To carry the sleigh,  
Through the white and drifted snow.

Over the river, and through the wood,  
To grandfather's house away!  
We would not stop  
For doll or top,  
For 't is Thanksgiving day.

Over the river, and through the wood,  
Oh, how the wind does blow!  
It stings the toes,  
And bites the nose,  
As over the ground we go.

Over the river, and through the wood,  
With a clear blue winter sky,  
The dogs do bark,  
And children hark,  
As we go jingling by.

Over the river, and through the wood,  
To have a first-rate play —  
Hear the bells ring  
Ting a ling ding,  
Hurra for Thanksgiving day!

Over the river, and through the wood —  
No matter for winds that blow;  
Or if we get  
The sleigh upset,  
Into a bank of snow.

Over the river, and through the wood,  
To see little John and Ann;  
We will kiss them all,  
And play snow-ball,  
And stay as long as we can.

Over the river, and through the wood,  
Trot fast, my dapple grey!  
Spring over the ground,  
Like a hunting hound,  
For 't is Thanksgiving day!

Over the river, and through the wood,  
And straight through the barn-yard gate;  
We seem to go  
Extremely slow,  
It is so hard to wait.

Over the river, and through the wood,  
Old Jowler hears our bells;  
He shakes his pow,  
With a loud bow wow,  
And thus the news he tells.

Over the river, and through the wood —  
When grandmother sees us come,  
She will say, Oh dear,  
The children are here,  
Bring a pie for every one.

Over the river, and through the wood —  
Now grandmother's cap I spy!  
Hurra for the fun!  
Is the pudding done?  
Hurra for the pumpkin pie!

## **Excerpts from Thanksgiving Day Proclamations by President Ronald Reagan**

### **Thanksgiving Proclamation by President Ronald Reagan (1981)**

The unequalled freedom enjoyed by our citizens has provided a harvest of plenty to this nation throughout its history. In keeping with America's heritage, one day each year is set aside for giving thanks to God for all of His blessings... In this spirit, Thanksgiving has become a day when Americans extend a helping hand to the less fortunate. Long before there was a



government welfare program, this spirit of voluntary giving was ingrained in the American character. Americans have always understand that, truly, one must give in order to receive. This should be a day of giving as well as a day of thanks... Searching our hearts, we should ask what we can do as individuals to demonstrate our gratitude to God for all He has done. Such reflection can only add to the significance of this precious day of remembrance. Let us recommit ourselves to that devotion to God and family that has played such an important role in making this a great Nation, and which will be needed as a source of strength if we are to remain a great people.

### **Thanksgiving Proclamation by President Ronald Reagan (1982)**

...I have always believed that this anointed land was set apart in an uncommon way, that a divine plan placed this great continent here between the oceans to be found by people from every corner of the Earth who had a special love of faith and freedom. Our pioneers asked that He would work His will in our daily lives so America would be a land of morality, fairness, and freedom... We should be grateful not only for our blessings, but for the courage and strength of our ancestors which enable us to enjoy the lives we do today. Let us reaffirm through prayers and actions our thankfulness for America's bounty and heritage...

## Thanksgiving Proclamation by President Ronald Reagan (1985)

Although the time and date of the first American thanksgiving observance may be uncertain, there is no question but that this treasured custom derives from our Judeo-Christian heritage. "Unto Three, O God, do we give thanks," the Psalmist sang, praising God not only for the "wondrous works" of His creation, but for loving guidance and deliverance from dangers. A band of settlers arriving in Maine in 1607 held a service of thanks for their safe journey, and twelve years later settlers in Virginia set aside a day of thanksgiving for their survival. In 1621 Governor William Bradford created the most famous of all such observances at Plymouth Colony when a bounteous harvest prompted him to proclaim a special day "to render thanksgiving to the Almighty God for all His blessings." The Spaniards in California and the Dutch in New Amsterdam also held services to give public thanks to God.

In 1777, during our War of Independence, the Continental Congress set aside a day for thanksgiving and praise for our victory at the battle of Saratoga. It was the first time all the colonies took part in such an event on the same day. The following year, upon news that France was coming to our aid, George Washington at Valley Forge prescribed a special day of thanksgiving. Later, as our first President, he responded to a Congressional petition by declaring Thursday, November 26, 1789, the first Thanksgiving Day of the United States of America... Let us thank God for our families, friends, and neighbors, and for the joy of this very festival we celebrate in His name. Let every house of worship in the land and every home and every heart be filled with the spirit of gratitude and praise and love on this Thanksgiving Day...

## Thanksgiving Proclamation by President Ronald Reagan (1986)

Perhaps no custom reveals our character as a Nation so clearly as our celebration of Thanksgiving Day. Rooted deeply in our Judeo-Christian heritage, the practice of offering thanksgiving underscores our unshakable belief in God as the foundation of our Nation and our firm reliance upon Him from Whom all blessings flow. Both as individuals and as a people, we join with the Psalmist in song and praise: "Give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good..."

Today let us take heart from the noble example of our first President. Let us pause from our many activities to give thanks to almighty God for our bountiful harvests and abundant freedoms. Let us call upon Him for continued guidance and assistance in all our endeavors. And let us ever be mindful of the faith and spiritual values that have made our Nation great and that alone can keep us great. With joy and gratitude in our hearts, let us sing those stirring stanzas:  
 O beautiful for spacious skies,  
 For amber waves of grain,  
 For purple mountain majesties  
 Above the fruited plain!  
 America! America!  
 God shed His grace on thee...

## Thanksgiving Proclamation by President Ronald Reagan (1987)

...When the delegates to the First Continental Congress met in Philadelphia in 1774, they overcame discord by uniting in prayer for our country. Despite the differences among them as they began their work, they found common voice in the 35th Psalm, which concludes with a verse of joyous gratitude, "And my tongue shall speak of Thy righteousness and of Thy praise all the day long..."

On Thanksgiving Day, 1987, let us, in this unbroken chain of observance, dedicate ourselves to honor anew the Author of Liberty and to publicly acknowledge our debt to all those who have sacrificed so much in our behalf. May our gratitude always be coupled with petitions for divine guidance and protection for our Nation and with ready help for our neighbors in time of need...



## Thanksgiving Proclamation by President Ronald Reagan (1988)

..Almost 200 years ago, the first President of these United States, George Washington, issued the first national Thanksgiving Day Proclamation under the Constitution and recommended to the American people that they "be devoted 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." He called upon them to raise "prayers and supplications to the Great Lord and Ruler of Nations," not merely for continued blessings on our own land but on all rulers and nations that they might know "good government, peace, and concord."

A century ago, President Grover Cleveland called for "prayers and song of praise" that would render to God the appreciation of the American people for His mercy and for the abundant harvests and rich rewards He had bestowed upon our Nation through the labor of its farmers, shopkeepers, and tradesmen. Both of these Proclamations included something else as well: a recognition of our shortcomings and transgressions and our dependence, in total and in every particular, on the forgiveness and forbearance of the Almighty. Today, cognizant of our American heritage of freedom and opportunity, we are again called to gratitude, thanksgiving, and contrition...



### **“Today and Everyday” (Jack Zavada)**

Lord, too often our prayers  
Are filled with impatience over what we want  
Instead of gratitude for what we already have.

Remind us today and in the coming year  
What is truly important.

Remind us to give thanks for family and friends.  
Remind us to be grateful for the work you have given us.  
Remind us to appreciate our many material blessings.

Most of all, remind us today and every day  
To give thanks for Your precious Son Jesus,  
And the sacrifice He made for us  
To give us eternal life with You in heaven.

### **A Thanksgiving Prayer (Ralph Waldo Emerson)**

For each new morning with its light,  
For rest and shelter of the night,  
For health and food,  
For love and friends,  
For everything Thy goodness sends.



## Thanksgiving (Edgar A. Guest)

Gettin' together to smile an' rejoice,  
 An' eatin' an' laughin' with folks of your choice;  
 An' kissin' the girls an' declarin' that they  
 Are growin more beautiful day after day;  
 Chattin' an' braggin' a bit with the men,  
 Buildin' the old family circle again;  
 Livin' the wholesome an' old-fashioned cheer,  
 Just for awhile at the end of the year.

Greetings fly fast as we crowd through the door  
 And under the old roof we gather once more  
 Just as we did when the youngsters were small;  
 Mother's a little bit grayer, that's all.  
 Father's a little bit older, but still  
 Ready to romp an' to laugh with a will.  
 Here we are back at the table again  
 Tellin' our stories as women an men.

Bowed are our heads for a moment in prayer;  
 Oh, but we're grateful an' glad to be there.  
 Home from the east land an' home from the west,  
 Home with the folks that are dearest an' best.  
 Out of the sham of the cities afar  
 We've come for a time to be just what we are.  
 Here we can talk of ourselves an' be frank,  
 Forgettin' position an' station an' rank.

Give me the end of the year an' its fun  
 When most of the plannin' an' toilin' is done;  
 Bring all the wanderers home to the nest,  
 Let me sit down with the ones I love best,  
 Hear the old voices still ringin' with song,  
 See the old faces unblemished by wrong,  
 See the old table with all of its chairs  
 An I'll put soul in my Thanksgivin' prayers.



## A Few Thanksgiving Items of Interest

Question: What state raises the most turkeys?

Answer: Minnesota.

Question: Which city's Thanksgiving Day Parade ends with Santa Claus getting a key to the city?

Answer: Detroit (The Detroit Thanksgiving Day Parade has been an annual tradition since 1924, the same year the Macy's Day Parade began in New York City. According to the Detroit Historical Society, the two-mile parade, which was started by Hudson's department store, takes place on Woodward Avenue and ends with Santa Claus stepping off the final float in front of Hudson's to accept the key "to both the city and the hearts of good children everywhere.")

Question: According to the Guinness Book of World Records, how much does the heaviest turkey on record weigh?

Answer: 86 pounds (A typical Thanksgiving turkey usually weighs around 15 pounds.)

Question: What town canceled Thanksgiving because they couldn't make pumpkin pies?

Answer: Colchester, Connecticut (A frigid bout of cold weather in the middle of October led to the Connecticut River freezing, so settlers couldn't get molasses, or liquid sugar, shipped on time from across the pond. Thus, the townspeople decided to postpone the holiday for a week in 1705 because they couldn't make pumpkin pie, which was such a well-established dessert and signified the New World bounty.)

Question: What professional football team has played almost every Thanksgiving since 1934?

Answer: The Detroit Lions (George Richards purchased the Portsmouth Ohio Spartans in 1934 and moved them to Detroit. Rebranded as the Detroit Lions, George decided to host a Thanksgiving Day game against the world champion Chicago Bears in hopes of attracting fans. The team has always played on Thanksgiving except between 1939-1944 due to World War II. The Dallas Cowboys also joined in on the Turkey Day tradition in 1966 and have played every Thanksgiving except in 1975 and 1977. Both teams always play on their home field.)

Question: What city is home to the oldest Thanksgiving parade?

Answer: Philadelphia (The Philadelphia Gimbel Brothers Department Store parade in 1920 had only 50 people, 15 cars and a fireman dressed as Santa Claus. The parade ended with Santa on his sleigh, signifying the arrival of the holiday season. Today, it's much bigger and called the 6ABC Dunkin' Donuts Thanksgiving Day Parade instead. It was the inspiration behind the Macy's Day Thanksgiving Day Parade which started in 1924.)

Question: What's the only area in Australia to celebrate Thanksgiving?

Answer: Norfolk Island (The tradition started when American whaling ships would make frequent stops on the island during the late 1800s. The tiny territory, home to fewer than 2,000 inhabitants, typically celebrates the American holiday with a meal that combines classic Thanksgiving foods like pumpkin pie and cornbread blended with Norfolk Island cuisine. Many also celebrate by attending church services.)

Question: How long was the first Thanksgiving?

Answer: Three days (In November 1621, the settlers' first corn harvest proved so successful that Governor William Bradford reportedly invited the Plymouth colonists' Native American allies to enjoy the fruits of their labor. Members of the Wampanoag tribe came bearing food to share. They had so much bounty that the revelers decided to extend the affair.)

Question: What foods did the colonists and Native Americans not have at the first Thanksgiving?

Answer: Turkey...and desserts. (The original guests indulged with lobster, seal and swan, as well as mussels, clams and oysters. The Wampanoag also reportedly brought five deer to the celebration. They also most likely enjoyed lots of local vegetables like onions, beans, squash, lettuce, spinach, cabbage, carrots and peas.)

Question: What president refused to declare Thanksgiving a holiday?

Answer: Thomas Jefferson

Question: Has Thanksgiving always been celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November?

Answer: No. In 1939, Thanksgiving was celebrated on the third Thursday in November. (Franklin D. Roosevelt bumped it up a week to add seven more shopping days to the holiday season to boost the economy. Americans didn't like the change, so it was officially switched back in 1942.)

Question: A Thanksgiving turkey mix-up inspired what popular meal trend?

Answer: Frozen TV dinners (In 1953, a Swanson employee accidentally ordered a colossal shipment of Thanksgiving turkeys -- 260 tons, to be exact. To deal with the excess, salesman Gerry Thomas took inspiration from the prepared foods served on airplanes. He came up with the idea of filling 5,000 aluminum trays with the turkey -- along with cornbread dressing, gravy, peas and sweet potatoes to complete the offering. The 98-cent meals were a hit, especially with kids and increasingly busy households. Within a single year, over 10 million were sold and a whole industry was born.)

Question: Do turkeys actually gobble?

Answer: Only male turkeys gobble. Female turkeys cackle instead.

## The Pumpkin (John Greenleaf Whittier)



Ah! on Thanksgiving day, when from East and from West,  
 From North and from South comes the pilgrim and guest;  
 When the gray-haired New Englander sees round his board  
     The old broken links of affection restored,  
 When the care-wearied man seeks his mother once more,  
 And the worn matron smiles where the girl smiled before,  
     What moistens the lip and what brightens the eye?  
     What calls back the past, like the rich Pumpkin pie?

## “Thankful Heart” (Henry Coyle)

Father, we lift our thankful hearts to Thee  
 With gratitude, for all Thy bounty free,  
 For love, and friends, for home, for faith's pure light,  
 For health, for harvest store, for rest at night -

For every blessing showered from above -  
 Bestowed on us unstinted, by Thy Love  
 And thoughtful care; O hear us, as we pray,  
 Father in heaven, this Thanksgiving day.

Watch over us, be Thou our Stay and Guide,  
 Thro' day and night; guard us from sinful pride,  
 For we are human, weak and prone to wrong,  
 And by Thy grace alone are we made strong.

Give us our daily bread, our wants supply,  
 And touch our hearts that we may not deny  
 The widow and the orphan of their share  
 Of what we have - relieve their want and care.

O grant that we may keep Thy law, and live  
 A Christian life; our enemies forgive;  
 That we may love our neighbor, work for peace.  
 That so Thy glory may on earth increase.

## A Psalm of Thanksgiving: Psalm 100

Shout with joy to the Lord, all the earth!  
 Worship the Lord with gladness.  
 Come before Him, singing with joy.

Acknowledge that the Lord is God!  
 He made us, and we are his  
 We are His people, the sheep of His pasture.

Enter His gates with thanksgiving;  
 go into His courts with praise.  
 Give thanks to Him and praise His name.

For the Lord is good.  
 His unfailing love continues forever,  
 and His faithfulness continues to each generation.

## Thanksgiving Proclamation, President Donald Trump (2020)

On Thanksgiving Day, we thank God for the abundant blessings in our lives. As we gather with family and friends to celebrate this season of generosity, hope, and gratitude, we commemorate America's founding traditions of faith, family, and friendship, and give thanks for the principles of freedom, liberty, and democracy that make our country exceptional in the history of the world.

This November marks 400 years since the *Mayflower* and its passengers faced the unknown and set sail across the Atlantic Ocean. Propelled by hope for a brighter future, these intrepid men and women endured two long months at sea, tired and hungry, to arrive in a new world full of potential. In the winter weather that greeted their arrival, they lost nearly half of their fellow travelers to exposure, disease, and starvation. Despite unimaginable hardships, these first Americans nevertheless remained firm in their faith and unwavering in their commitment to their dreams. They forged friendships with the Wampanoag Tribe, fostered a spirit of common purpose among themselves, and trusted in God to provide for them. The following year, they celebrated a successful harvest alongside their Native American neighbors — the first Thanksgiving. This seminal event in the history of our Nation is a continual reminder of the power of faith, love, perseverance, prayer, and fellowship.

The *Mayflower's* arrival to the New World in 1620 also marks the arrival of the first seeds of democracy to our land. Absent the rule of a monarch in an uncharted wilderness, these early settlers resolved to create their own government through what is known as the Mayflower Compact. Defined by majority rule through elected leaders responsible for creating “just and equal laws,” the Mayflower Compact represents the first chapter in the long tradition of self-determination and rule of law in America. One hundred and fifty-six years later, our Nation's Founding Fathers resolved to break free from England, building upon the Mayflower Compact to establish an enduring government whose authority came solely “from the consent of the governed...”

During this season of gratitude, we also acknowledge those who cannot be with their families. This includes the brave American patriots of our Armed Forces who selflessly defend our sacred liberty at home and abroad. And we pause to remember the sacrifices of our law enforcement personnel and first responders. We are deeply grateful for all those who remain on watch over the holidays and keep us safe as we celebrate and give thanks for the blessings in our lives.

This Thanksgiving, we reaffirm our everlasting gratitude for all that we enjoy, and we commemorate the legacy of generosity bestowed upon us by our forbearers. Although challenges remain, we will never yield in our quest to live up to the promise of our heritage. As we gather with our loved ones, we resolve with abiding faith and patriotism to celebrate the joys of freedom and cherish the hope and peace of a brighter future ahead...

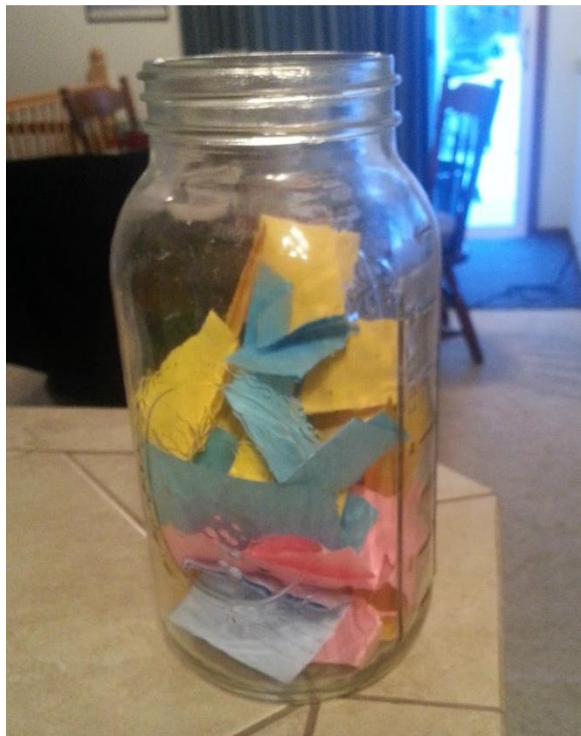


## **The Thanksgiving Jar Revisited (Denny Hartford)**

It was back in 2015 that Claire and I began to significantly increase our “gratitude attitude” by starting a Thanksgiving Jar project as one of our New Year’s resolutions. It was a simple enough plan -- just set a large glass jar on the kitchen counter into which we would drop little notes of things for which we were grateful to God. Those notes quickly began to accumulate, answers to prayer, encouragements, deliverances, tests passed, special moments of beauty and adventure. You get the idea.

Well, this practice turned out to be a remarkably effective way to sharpen our sense of Thanksgiving, to reduce complacency and complaining, and to deepen our appreciation of the constancy of God’s mercies to us. We not only noticed more of God’s activity in our lives; we also began to look for Him to “show up” in every area of our daily routines. And so, with profound appreciation for the effects stimulated by this spiritual discipline, we have continued it ever since.

But here is another nifty element of our Thanksgiving Jar project. When the jar becomes full, we empty it into a large sack or box and start all over again. By the time Christmas season rolls around, we have emptied the jar several times over. We then take the whole year’s worth of notes (we start afresh every December 1st), mix ‘em all up, and pour them into a big wicker basket. Then, as the final stage of our evening prayers together, we each pull out a few of those notes and read them aloud. As you can imagine, it’s fun to look back on the year, but it also gives us a brand new opportunity to thank God for the blessings documented in those notes.



For the first couple of years, this practice added a special spice to our Christmas season. And it still does. However, even as the Thanksgiving Jar helped us to expand our “gratitude attitude,” there was also an expansion in the number of notes we were making. So it is that the pattern now is that we’re opening Thanksgiving Jar notes at the conclusion of our nightly prayers deep into spring! Thank you, heavenly Father, for inspiring and directing us in this very joyful, very practical spiritual discipline.

And what about you? Perhaps you might consider starting a Thanksgiving Jar project for you and your family. It will certainly help make Thanksgiving a whole-year practice and, in so doing, you’ll find a wonderful bunch of associated blessings as well.

## The Two Original Reports of the 1621 Feast

### 1) William Bradford, Of Plymouth Plantation (William Bradford) (In modern spelling)

“They began now to gather in the small harvest they had, and to fit up their houses and dwellings against winter, being all well recovered in health and strength and had all things in good plenty. For as some were thus employed in affairs abroad, others were exercised in fishing, about cod and bass and other fish, of which they took good store, of which every family had their portion.

All the summer there was no want; and now began to come in store of fowl, as winter approached, of which this place did abound when they came first (but afterward decreased by degrees). And besides waterfowl there was great store of wild turkeys, of which they took many, besides venison, etc. Besides, they had about a peck of meal a week to a person, or now since harvest, Indian corn to that proportion. Which made many afterwards write so largely of their plenty here to their friends in England, which were not feigned but true reports.”

### 2) Edward Winslow (writing in “Mourt’s Relation”) (In original spelling)

“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 for three 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.”

### “Thanksgiving” (Ella Wheeler Wilcox)

We ought to make the moments notes  
Of happy, glad Thanksgiving;  
The hours and days a silent phrase  
Of music we are living.  
And so the theme should swell and grow  
As weeks and months pass o’er us,  
And rise sublime at this good time,  
A grand Thanksgiving chorus.

## Thanksgiving (James Whitcomb Riley, 1849 –1916)

Let us be thankful -- not only because  
Since last our universal thanks were told  
We have grown greater in the world's applause,  
And fortune's newer smiles surpass the old,

But thankful for all things that come as alms  
From out the open hand of Providence:  
The winter clouds and storms -- the summer calms --  
The sleepless dread -- the drowse of indolence.

Let us be thankful -- thankful for the prayers  
Whose gracious answers were long, long delayed,  
That they might fall upon us unawares,  
And bless us, as in greater need we prayed.

Let us be thankful for the loyal hand  
That love held out in welcome to our own,  
When love and only love could understand  
The need of touches we had never known.

Let us be thankful for the longing eyes  
That gave their secret to us as they wept,  
Yet in return found, with a sweet surprise,  
Love's touch upon their lids, and, smiling, slept.

And let us, too, be thankful that the tears  
Of sorrow have not all been drained away,  
That through them still, for all the coming years,  
We may look on the dead face of To-day.



## **Governor Bradford of Massachusetts made this first Thanksgiving Proclamation three years after the Pilgrims settled at Plymouth:**

“Inasmuch as the great Father has given us this year an abundant harvest of Indian corn, wheat, peas, beans, squashes, and garden vegetables, and has made the forests to abound with game and the sea with fish and clams, and inasmuch as He has protected us from the ravages of the savages, has spared us from pestilence and disease, has granted us freedom to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience.

Now I, your magistrate, do proclaim that all ye Pilgrims, with your wives and ye little ones, do gather at ye meeting house, on ye hill, between the hours of 9 and 12 in the daytime, on Thursday, November 29th, of the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred and twenty three and the third year since ye Pilgrims landed on ye Pilgrim Rock, there to listen to ye pastor and render thanksgiving to ye Almighty God for all His blessings.”



## **Thanksgiving Observance (Author Unknown)**

Count your blessings instead of your crosses;  
 Count your gains instead of your losses.  
 Count your joys instead of your woes;  
 Count your friends instead of your foes.  
 Count your smiles instead of your tears;  
 Count your courage instead of your fears.  
 Count your full years instead of your lean;  
 Count your kind deeds instead of your mean.  
 Count your health instead of your wealth;  
 Count on God instead of yourself.