

Day of Thanksgiving and Praise

The proclamation that set the precedent for America's national day of Thanksgiving was issued by President Abraham Lincoln, an embattled Commander-in-Chief in the middle of the Civil War, on Oct. 3, 1863. The idea for such a holiday was recommended to Lincoln by Sarah Josepha Hale, a prominent magazine editor. Her letters to the President urged him to have the "day of our annual Thanksgiving made a national and fixed Union Festival."



During this Thanksgiving weekend, it is important to reflect on the origin of this special day, particularly at this moment in our nation's history. It is also interesting to note – in a time when there is such a struggle to keep references to God and His guidance out of our public life, particularly in governmental activities – the dependence upon our Creator and His leadership of our country as outlined by Lincoln. Here is the 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 strength from the fields of peaceful industry to the national defense, have not arrested the plough, the shuttle, or the ship; the axe had 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 battlefield; and the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect continuance of years, with large increase of freedom.

(more)

“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.”

Is there any doubt about who Lincoln believed to be the source of America’s blessings?

It is our prayer that all the residents and their families, and all the associates and our families, of Life Care have a wonderful day of Thanksgiving and Praise to Almighty God.

– Beecher Hunter