

Keeping Their Vision

We have entered the week of Thanksgiving. The beginnings of the holiday are tied to the Pilgrims, a name commonly applied to the early settlers of the Plymouth Colony in present-day Plymouth, Mass., where Life Care operates a nursing center. Who were these brave pioneers whose daring, ingenuity and faith had much to do with shaping the course of what became America?

Their leadership came from a religious congregation who had fled a volatile political environment in the East Midlands of England for the relative calm of the Netherlands to preserve their religion. Concerned with losing their cultural identity, the group arranged with English investors to establish a new colony in North America. Dramatic and significant is the story of the Pilgrims. On December 21, 1620, the voyaging *Mayflower* dropped anchor in Plymouth Bay. It had been a grueling voyage, taking the 120-ton-capacity ship 66 days to make the perilous crossing. There had been disease, anxiety and childbirth among the 102 courageous passengers.

They arrived on the bleak New England shore during a hard winter that ultimately claimed half of their number. When spring came, however, and the captain of the *Mayflower* offered free passage to anyone desiring to return, not a single person accepted. The fidelity of the 41 men – who while still aboard the *Mayflower* had signed the famous Compact beginning with the words, “In ye name of God Amen” – was taking on visible meaning. These chivalrous souls had dedicated themselves to the total causes of freedom.

They had come to a wilderness to carve out a better way of life. Faith prompted the voyage; faith sustained the Pilgrims; and their religious convictions constrained them to raise their voices in praise. Their hardships, sacrifice, devotion, concept of government and vigorous commitment to their spiritual values helped shape the United States.

This week, as we begin our Thanksgiving observance, praising God for the blessings He has provided to the peoples of this land – now as then – the question arises: Can we emulate the price they were willing to pay and keep their vision for America?

--Beecher Hunter