

November 23, 2022
erasmuse@indiana.edu

This file contains a **program for a Thanksgiving dinner**. More materials are in the directory listing <http://rasmusen.org/special/thanksgiving/>

1. The Head of the Household should read the **current Presidential Thanksgiving Proclamation** if it's any good. To find it for 2022, Google "Presidential thanksgiving proclamation 2022" on Thanksgiving Day itself. [Trump 2017](#) is good, [Trump 2020](#) not as good. [Biden 2021](#) is too clunky and political. Biden 2022 is not out yet. A list of the [old ones](#) up to Obama is available; someone should make a webpage with all of them. (An interesting UCSB analysis of content is [here](#).)

2. Everyone sings, "[We're Gathered Together to Ask the Lord's Blessing](#)." Make multiple copies of this beforehand. Do not make one for each person; make one for each two people so they'll be sociable and share.

2.5. The Head of Household should say a prayer.

(2.8. Item 1 could go here if you have a lot of people and they're serving themselves buffet-style in a line past the food. The reading would be while people are serving themselves.)

3. Start **eating**. (Probably you have been cooking too long and everybody is famished.)

The Head of Household should appoint Heads of Tables, one for each table. For the next items, "the **head**" means the **Head of Table**, and each table is autonomous, going at its own rate. The Head of Table should tell people in advance if he wants them to read an item, so they will be ready mentally.

4. After a while, the Head of Table should read the **1621 Winslow story of the first Thanksgiving** or appoint someone else to do it.

5. At intervals that seem appropriate to the Head of Table, appoint divers other people to read the **other readings**: the 1676 First Proclamation, Psalm 100, the 1789 Washington Proclamation, the 1777 Proclamation. Or, have them pass around the words, each person reading one paragraph.

After each, try to **get some conversation going** about it. Ask people what the hard words mean. Tell about the history—King Philip's War, the Revolutionary War, the Constitution, peace in Israel and the meaning of the word "shalom".

Thanksgiving Day, 2017

A Proclamation

On Thanksgiving Day, as we have for nearly four centuries, Americans give thanks to Almighty God for our abundant blessings. We gather with the people we love to show gratitude for our freedom, for our friends and families, and for the prosperous Nation we call home.

In July 1620, more than 100 Pilgrims boarded the Mayflower, fleeing religious persecution and seeking freedom and opportunity in a new and unfamiliar place. These dauntless souls arrived in Plymouth, Massachusetts, in the freezing cold of December 1620. They were greeted by sickness and severe weather, and quickly lost 46 of their fellow travelers. Those who endured the incredible hardship of their first year in America, however, had many reasons for gratitude. They had survived. They were free. And, with the help of the Wampanoag tribe, and a bountiful harvest, they were regaining their health and strength. In thanks to God for these blessings, the new governor of the Plymouth Colony, William Bradford, proclaimed a day of thanksgiving and gathered with the Wampanoag tribe for three days of celebration.

For the next two centuries, many individual colonies and states, primarily in the Northeast, carried on the tradition of fall Thanksgiving festivities. But each state celebrated it on a different day, and sometime on an occasional basis. It was not until 1863 that the holiday was celebrated on one day, nationwide. In the aftermath of the Battle of Gettysburg, of one of the bloodiest battles of our Nation's Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed that the country would set aside one day to remember its many blessings. "In the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity," President Lincoln proclaimed, we recall the "bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come." As President Lincoln recognized: "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."

Today, we continue to celebrate Thanksgiving with a grateful and charitable spirit. When we open our hearts and extend our hands to those in

need, we show humility for the bountiful gifts we have received. In the aftermath of a succession of tragedies that have stunned and shocked our Nation—Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria; the wildfires that ravaged the West; and, the horrific acts of violence and terror in Las Vegas, New York City, and Sutherland Springs—we have witnessed the generous nature of the American people. In the midst of heartache and turmoil, we are grateful for the swift action of the first responders, law enforcement personnel, military and medical professionals, volunteers, and everyday heroes who embodied our infinite capacity to extend compassion and humanity to our fellow man. As we mourn these painful events, we are ever confident that the perseverance and optimism of the American people will prevail.

We can see, in the courageous Pilgrims who stood on Plymouth Rock in new land, the intrepidity that lies at the core of our American spirit. Just as the Pilgrims did, today Americans stand strong, willing to fight for their families and their futures, to uphold our values, and to confront any challenge.

This Thanksgiving, in addition to rejoicing in precious time spent with loved ones, let us find ways to serve and encourage each other in both word and deed. We also offer a special word of thanks for the brave men and women of our Armed Forces, many of whom must celebrate this holiday separated from the ones for whom they are most thankful.

As one people, we seek God's protection, guidance, and wisdom, as we stand humbled by the abundance of our great Nation and the blessings of freedom, family, and faith.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, DONALD J. TRUMP, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim Thursday, November 23, 2017, as a National Day of Thanksgiving. I encourage all Americans to gather, in homes and places of worship, to offer a prayer of thanks to God for our many blessings.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this seventeenth day of November, in the year of our Lord two thousand seventeen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and forty-second.

(1789, Washington)

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 favour;

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 PUBLICK THANSIVING 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 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...

We Gather Together

We gather together to ask the Lord's blessing;
He chastens and hastens his will to make known;
The wicked oppressing now cease from distressing,
Sing praises to his name: He forgets not his own.

Beside us to guide us, our God with us joining,
Ordaining, maintaining his kingdom divine;
So from the beginning the fight we were winning;
Thou, Lord, wast at our side, All glory be thine!

We all do extol thee, thou leader triumphant,
And pray that thou still our defender wilt be.
Let thy congregation escape tribulation;
Thy name be ever praised! O Lord, make us free!

(Edward Winslow, December 11, 1621)

Our corn did prove well, and God be praised, we had a good increase of Indian corn, and our barley indifferent good,

but our peas not worth the gathering, for we feared they were too late sown, they came up very well, and blossomed, but the sun parched them in the blossom;

our harvest being gotten in, our governor sent four men on fowling, that so we might after a more special manner rejoice together after we had gathered the fruit of our labors.

They four in one day killed as much fowl as, with a little help beside, served the company almost a week.

At which time, amongst other recreations, we exercised our arms,

many of the Indians coming amongst us, and amongst the rest their greatest King Massasoit, with some ninety men,

whom for three days we entertained and feasted, and they went out and killed five deer, which they brought to the plantation and bestowed on our governor, and upon the captain and others.

And although it be not always so plentiful as it was at this time with us, yet by the goodness of God, we are so far from want that we often wish you partakers of our plenty.

THE FIRST THANKSGIVING PROCLAMATION - JUNE 20, 1676: Connecticut

"The Holy God having by a long and Continual Series of his Afflictive dispensations in and by the present Warr with the Heathen Natives of this land, written and brought to pass bitter things against his own Covenant people in this wilderness, yet so that we evidently discern that in the midst of his judgements he hath remembered mercy,

having remembered his Footstool in the day of his sore displeasure against us for our sins, with many singular Intimations of his Fatherly Compassion, and regard; reserving many of our Towns from Desolation Threatened, and attempted by the Enemy, and giving us especially of late with many of our Confederates many signal Advantages against them, without such Disadvantage to ourselves as formerly we have been sensible of, if it be the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed,

It certainly bespeaks our positive Thankfulness, when our Enemies are in any measure disappointed or destroyed; and fearing the Lord should take notice under so many Intimations of his returning mercy, we should be found an Insensible people, as not standing before Him with Thanksgiving, as well as lading him with our Complaints in the time of pressing Afflictions:

The Council has thought meet to appoint and set apart the 29th day of this instant June, as a day of Solemn Thanksgiving and praise to God for such his Goodness and Favour,

many Particulars of which mercy might be Instanced, but we doubt not those who are sensible of God's Afflictions, have been as diligent to espy him returning to us; and that the Lord may behold us as a People offering Praise and thereby glorifying Him;

the Council doth commend it to the Respective Ministers, Elders and people of this Jurisdiction; Solemnly and seriously to keep the same Beseeching that being perswaded by the mercies of God we may all, even this whole people offer up our bodies and soulds as a living and acceptable Service unto God by Jesus Christ."

PSALM 100

"Make a joyful noise unto Jehovah, all ye lands.

Serve Jehovah with gladness: come before his presence with singing.

Know ye that Jehovah he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

For Jehovah is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations."

(Continental Congress, 1777)

Forasmuch as it is the indispensable duty of all men to adore the superintending providence of Almighty God;

to acknowledge with gratitude their obligation to him for benefits received, and to implore such farther blessings as they stand in need of;

and it having pleased him in his abundant mercy not only to continue to us the innumerable bounties of his common providence, but also smile upon us in the prosecution of a just and necessary war, for the defense and establishment of our unalienable rights and liberties;

particularly in that he hath been pleased in so great a measure to prosper the means used for the support of our troops and to crown our arms with most signal success:

It is therefore recommended to the legislative or executive powers of these United States, to set apart Thursday, the 18th day of December next, for solemn thanksgiving and praise;

that with one heart and one voice the good people may express the grateful feelings of their hearts, and consecrate themselves to the service of their divine benefactor; and that together with their sincere acknowledgments and offerings, they may join the penitent confession of their manifold sins,

whereby they had forfeited every favor, and their humble and earnest supplication that it may please God, through the merits of Jesus Christ, mercifully to forgive and blot them out of remembrance;

that it may please him graciously to afford his blessings on the governments of these states respectively, and prosper the public council of the whole;

to inspire our commanders both by land and sea, and all under them, with that wisdom and fortitude which may render them fit instruments, under the providence of Almighty God, to secure for these United States the greatest of all blessings, independence and peace;

that it may please him to prosper the trade and manufactures of the people and the labor of the husbandman, that our land may yield its increase;

to take schools and seminaries of education, so necessary for cultivating the principles of true liberty, virtue and piety, under his nurturing hand, and to prosper the means of religion for the promotion and enlargement of that kingdom which consisteth in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

And it is further recommended, that servile labor, and such recreation as, though at other times innocent, may be unbecoming the purpose of this appointment, be omitted on so solemn an occasion.

Psalm 107:

21 Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! 22 And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.

23 They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; 24 These see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. 25 For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. 26 They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. 27 They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end. 28 Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. 29 He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. 30 Then are they glad because they be quiet; **so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.**

31 Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

32 Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.

You might want to continue with the rest of the Psalm:

33 He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the watersprings into dry ground; 34 A fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein. 35 He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into watersprings. 36 And there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation; 37 And sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase. 38 He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly; and suffereth not their cattle to decrease.

39 Again, they are minished and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow. 40 He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, where there is no way. 41 Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock. 42 The righteous shall see it, and rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth.

43 Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord.