



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BEING THANKFUL IN 2021

Many cultures have a tradition of thanking God for good things. In Jamestown, Virginia they proclaimed a day of Thanksgiving for their safe arrival many years before the Pilgrims landed in Massachusetts.

The Pilgrims were not unique to offering gratitude and celebrating with family and friends in 1621 at Plymouth Rock, Massachusetts. They also were not the first to celebrate an abundance of harvest, Native American people celebrated days of thanksgiving, long before the English colonists arrived. However, it is a tradition that has continued to this day.

It was a member of the Patuxet tribe, [Squanto](#) (Tisquantum) who taught the Pilgrims how to plant corn, which became an important crop, as well as how to use natural resources, and where to fish and hunt beaver. His leadership and instruction helped the Pilgrims survive their first year in Massachusetts. While there is more myth than legend and little scant evidence on the man in the story of Squanto, it was clear without him the Pilgrims likely would have had a more difficult chance of survival, if at all.

Presidents and Congresses from the beginning of our republic have designated days of thanksgiving and fasting. The Thanksgiving we celebrate annually in November was established by Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War and made into law by Congress in 1941. Do we need an official holiday to be thankful? Probably not.

There are only a few people left who remember the horrors of polio and measles before a vaccination was created to stop the spread. As humans who have lived through the worst pandemic in our lifetime, it can appear that there is little to be thankful for. Most have lost close friends and/or family members.

Educators are scrambling to find solutions to the massive learning loss that has occurred. Businesses that didn't shut down are trying to figure out ways to carry on. Artists who were struggling before the pandemic are wondering if creating art/music for pleasure is even worth the pursuit.

But as tragic as the past few years have been for so many, we must remember that we will eventually get through this. At some point, we all will succumb to death and all that will remain is the memory we have left with friends and loved ones. For that reason alone, we must seek out gratitude, regardless of our circumstances.

Thanksgiving is just one day set aside that allows us to take a moment to reflect on the things for which we are the most grateful. This Thanksgiving we should be thankful for the small and large blessings in our lives. When people think of us, we want them to remember our graciousness, not our grumbling.

SUMMARY

Despite the current climate, having an attitude of gratitude will give all of us a more fulfilling and more peaceful life.

The apostle Paul tells us in 1st Thessalonians, “In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God...” The words can seem daunting given our times. But as the old saying goes, we should have an “attitude of gratitude.” Our circumstances may be dire, but if we change how we think about them, we will lead happier, more fulfilled lives.

Not only that, those of us who are parents, grandparents, and educators have younger ones watching and looking up to us. What example do we want to set for them?

Thanksgiving is just one holiday a year, but now, let us make a concerted effort to practice Thanksgiving every day. It will not only benefit the greater good, but it will also benefit ourselves as well.

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Bethany Bowman is the Director of Professional Learning for the Professional Educators of Tennessee, a non-partisan teacher association headquartered in Nashville, Tennessee. Permission to reprint in whole or in part is hereby granted, provided that the author and the association are properly cited. For more information on this subject or any education issue please contact Professional Educators of Tennessee. To schedule an interview please contact communications@proedtn.org or 1-800-471-4867.