Thanksgiving Day is the most purely religious holiday in the life of our nation. While the spiritual meaning of Christmas and Easter are often overshadowed by secular influences, Thanksgiving remains directly and solely focused upon God and His gifts. The Westminster Confession of Faith speaks of "thanksgivings upon special occasions" as valid and important religious observances (XXI.5).

Our national observance of Thanksgiving is unique. It is both distinctly Christian and exclusively American, a holiday for celebrating faith, family, and freedom.

Thanksgiving Day

TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

NOVEMBER 26, 2020

A THANKSGIVING DAY VIRTUAL SERVICE

THE SILENT MEDITATION

After enduring religious persecution in their native England and for twelve years in Holland, the pilgrims sailed for America. They were modest men and women with a great hope and inward zeal. They rested in the providence of God that He was leading them to a land of religious freedom to advance the gospel of the kingdom of Christ. The voyage of the Mayflower took twice as long as Christopher Columbus' voyage, enduring several wintry storms. After arriving in their new land, they faced disease, famine, bitter cold, and many dangers. However, when the Mayflower made its return voyage, none of the pilgrims returned with it. Their first harvest occurred in the autumn of 1621. Their own seed had barely grown, but the Indians had shown them how to plant corn which yielded a huge harvest. On the first Thanksgiving, they celebrated God's goodness to them with a party of ninety Indians. Their Thanksgiving feast lasted three days and included a festival of sports.

We pray the Lord's grace and bountiful blessings on us this Thanksgiving as we celebrate His goodness to us.

"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving ... be thankful unto Him and bless His name."
Psalm 100:4

Silent Prayer

O Most Merciful Father, Who has blessed the labors of the husbandman in the returns of the fruits of the earth; we give You humble and hearty thanks for this Your bounty; beseeching You to continue Your loving kindness to us, that our land may still yield her increase, to Your glory and our comfort; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Hymn — *Now Thank We All Our God* — NUN DANKET
(words printed in video)

The Call to Worship — Psalm 106:1-2; 105:1-3

Minister: Praise the Lord! Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good:
ALL: His loving kindness is everlasting.
Minister: Who can speak of the mighty deeds of the Lord?
ALL: Who can show forth His praise?
Minister: Oh, give thanks to the Lord, call upon His name; Make known His deeds among the peoples.
ALL: Sing to Him, sing praises to Him; Speak of all His wonders.
Minister: Let the heart of those who seek the Lord be glad.

The Invocation (in unison)

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we, Your unworthy servants, give You humble thanks for all Your goodness and loving kindness to us and to all whom You have made. We bless You for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for Your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. Give us such an awareness of Your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth Your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to Your service, and by walking before You in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with You and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.

The Responsive Reading — Psalm 117

Minister: Praise the Lord, all you nations;
ALL: Extol Him, all you peoples.
Minister: For great is His love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever.
ALL: Praise the Lord.

The Hymn — *My Heart Is Filled with Thankfulness* — Keith & Kristyn Getty
(words printed in video)

The Reading of God's Word — Psalm 40:16; Psalm 34:3; Psalm 48:1; Psalm 69:30-32
Mr. Robert McGowin

The Homily — **MAGNIFY THE LORD WTH THANKSGIVING** — Mr. McRoberts

The Silent Prayers of Thanksgiving — Psalm 77:11-13
Mr. McGowin

The Hymn — *Thy Mercy, My God* — Sandra McCracken

Thy mercy, my God, is the theme of my song, The joy of my heart. and the boast of my tongue;
Thy free grace alone, from the first to the last, Hath won my affections, and bound my soul fast.

Without Thy sweet mercy I could not live here; Sin would reduce me to utter despair;
But, through Thy free goodness, my spirits revive, And He that first made me still keeps me alive.

Thy mercy is more than a match for my heart, Which wonders to feel its own hardness depart;
Dissolved by Thy goodness, I fall to the ground, And weep to the praise of the mercy I've found.

Great Father of mercies, Thy goodness I own, And the covenant love of Thy crucified Son;
All praise to the Spirit, Whose whisper divine, Seals mercy, and pardon, and righteousness mine.
All praise to the Spirit, Whose whisper divine, Seals mercy, and pardon, and righteousness mine.

The Concluding Prayer of Thanksgiving and Benediction

Minister: Now to Him Who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever.

People: **AMEN.**

The Closing Hymn — *All Creatures of Our God and King* — LASST UNS ERFREUEN
(words printed in video)

Continental Congress Thanksgiving Proclamation 1782:
by the United States in Congress assembled.

P R O C L A M A T I O N

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-eighth 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 eighty-two, and of our Sovereignty and Independence, the seventh.