

## Thanksgiving Bible Hour, Firm Foundation Christian Church, 2024

Last year, we looked at the first celebration of Thanksgiving in America, in 1621, by the pilgrim settlers at Plymouth. This year, we shall look at the first official celebration of Thanksgiving under the United States Constitution, given in the first year of President George Washington's presidency (he had been sworn in on 4/30/1789). The text of the proclamation is in black print, and my references, comments, and recommended hymns are in brown print.

### Thanksgiving Proclamation, 3 October 1789

By the President of the United States of America. a Proclamation. **Hymn: Give Thanks**

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 favor—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 public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness.” **Psalm 40:5, Hymn: Count Your Blessings**

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 **Psalm 33:12**—for the signal and manifold mercies, and the favorable interpositions of his Providence which we experienced in the course and conclusion of the late war **Psalm 107:1-3**—for the great degree of tranquillity, union, and plenty, which we have since enjoyed—for the peaceable and rational manner, in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and

particularly the national One now lately instituted—for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed; and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and in general for all the great and various favors which he hath been pleased to confer upon us. 2

**Corinthians 3:17, Hymn: God Bless America**

And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech him to pardon our national and other transgressions **Proverbs 14:34**—to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually—to render our national government a blessing to all the people, by constantly being a Government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed **1 Kings 2:3**—to protect and guide all Sovereigns and Nations (especially such as have shewn kindness unto us) and to bless them with good government, peace, and concord **1 Timothy 2:1-4**—To promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the encrease of science among them and us—and generally to grant unto all Mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as he alone knows to be best. **Romans 2:13**

Given under my hand at the City of New-York the third day of October in the year of our Lord 1789.

George Washington **Hymn:10 Testify to Love**

**Activity: Filling the “cup of blessing” (Luke 22:17a) to overflowing, “My cup runs over” (Psalm 23:5), and sharing a blessing with the person next to you clockwise (Luke 22:17b)**

## Count Your Blessings

(Words: Johnson Oatman Jr, 1897; Music: Blessings, Edwin Othello Excell, 1897)

1 When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed,  
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,  
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,  
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.

Refrain:

Count your blessings, name them one by one;  
Count your blessings, see what God hath done;  
Count your blessings, name them one by one;  
Count your many blessings, see what God hath done.

2 Are you ever burdened with a load of care?  
Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?  
Count your many blessings, ev'ry doubt will fly,  
And you will be singing as the days go by. [Refrain]

3 When you look at others with their lands and gold,  
Think that Christ has promised you His wealth untold;  
Count your many blessings, money cannot buy  
Your reward in heaven, nor your home on high. [Refrain]

4 So, amid the conflict, whether great or small,  
Do not be discouraged, God is over all;  
Count your many blessings, angels will attend,  
Help and comfort give you to your journey's end. [Refrain]