

Proclamation 4693 of September 28, 1979

Thanksgiving Day, 1979

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Thanksgiving Day was first celebrated in this land not in a moment of unbridled triumph, but in times of great adversity. The colonies of Massachusetts and Virginia had few material possessions to help them face the dangers of the wilderness. They had no certainty that the harvests for which they gave thanks would be sufficient to carry them through a long winter. Yet they gave thanks to God for what they had and for the hope of this new land.

In the darkest hour of the American Revolution, when the young Republic faced defeat by the strongest military power on Earth, our forefathers also saw fit to give thanks for their blessings. In the midst of a devastating Civil War, President Lincoln proclaimed a day to express gratitude for our "singular deliverances and blessings."

The ensuing years have multiplied our nation's blessings. We have been delivered from repeated perils, and we have been blessed with abundance beyond the imaginings of those who offered thanks in the chill of approaching winter more than three-and-one-half centuries ago.

Succeeding generations have broadened the freedom they cherished and the opportunity they sought, and built a mighty nation on the strong foundations they laid. In this two hundred and fourth year of our independence, we have good reasons for gratitude: for liberty in a world where repression is common, for peace in a world of threats and terror and war, for a bounteous harvest in a world where hunger and despair still stalk much of mankind.

Like those who came before us, we come to give thanks for our singular deliverances and blessings, in a time of both danger and great promise. May we be thankful in proportion to that which we have received, trusting not in our wealth and comforts, but in the strength of our purpose, that all nations might be similarly blessed with liberty and abundance and live in peace.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JIMMY CARTER, President of the United States of America, do proclaim Thursday, the 22nd of November, 1979 as Thanksgiving Day. I ask all Americans to give thanks on that day for the blessings Almighty God has bestowed upon us, and seek to be good stewards of what we have received.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred seventy-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fourth.

JIMMY CARTER