



Pinewood Lutheran Church

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The DeLorean is gassed up and the “flux capacitor” is working, so get ready. We’re going to time travel back to 1621 and the first Thanksgiving in Plymouth, Ma. When we arrive it’s not in late November, but a few weeks earlier. The colonists are coming off a year of starvation, but this harvest has been successful. It’s time to thank God for His bountiful providence! Since they’re English, what better way than to have a feast—which dates back to the time of Henry the 8th in the “old country.”! After all, over-eating after months of being hungry comes naturally.

At first glance, you’re shocked. It’s all so politically incorrect. First, the men have hunted wild turkeys and venison, dressed them out, and they are recently spitted, roasting over an open fire. Where are the anti-hunting folks? Where are the vegans? Next, you notice that the women are doing much of the work, although everyone seems to be pulling their weight in some capacity. Is this sexism? Contrary to popular opinion (dating back about 125 years) the local Indians are not present. Why? Well, recently many of them were killed off by the colonists as both sides raided each other. So much for “diversity.” The food is plain. Corn is a staple—think cornbread. They got that from the Indians. Perhaps you’ll find some baked pumpkin, too. Although the addition of exotic spices is nowhere to be found. Bland, bland, bland, except for a lot of salt. Salt fish, salted vegetables—these are the staples of the feast. But the pilgrims are happy because they actually have something to eat for a change.

The next thing you notice is how boring it all is. There is no television with back-to-back football games being played. There is no Macy’s Thanksgiving Parade. There are no cars, so no traffic jams or long commutes to the relatives. The kids are really bored because their cell phones don’t work, their video games are not even invented, and all they are left with is playing with the local dogs and cats or just gazing at the woods. And horrors of horrors, they are even expected to work at getting the food ready while being quiet!

In past decades in England this day had taken on deep religious overtones. Everyone was expected/required to attend church that day.—And it lasted a couple of hours—bare minimum! The topics leading up to a lengthy table prayer were all about how God gave them this harvest and how much they didn’t deserve it, so gratitude was the over-arching theme. Everyone gave thanks. But not to themselves, but to God Almighty.

The one thing that really stands out for you is that despite our modern trappings of the holiday everyone present is very, very content. They don’t seem to need grocery store food, fancy table decorations, elaborate menus, or even the lazy sleeping in and then drinking too much later on which hallmarks many modern Thanksgivings. And even more

importantly, there are no stores open and no Black Fridays to get ready for on the morrow. Instead, God talk and God focus predominates.

Now our time-traveling DeLorean has returned you to the present age. What have you learned from your interlude? I suppose one of the first things you did was thank God for modern plumbing! Close behind would be a thank-you for central heat, running water, electricity, and grocery stores. (After all, you've just learned the hard way that eating what you grow is a very difficult and restrictive life.)

Next, you begin to think about modern conveniences: your car and travel, the ease of cell phone communication, and not having to chop wood to feed the fire in that crude oven of yore. (And you have the blisters on your hands to remind you, too!) You're grateful to arise from a soft bed on Thanksgiving morn instead of one filled with straw that had a few fleas thrown in for good measure. And what can you say of that glorious morning shower except: Thank You dear Lord!

And yet, those early Christian settlers seemed very happy, very content, and their stress level barely registered compared to our own on that day. Why? Could it be because they focused on God above all else? Could it be that technology has distanced us from God's care for His creation, unlike them? Could it be that we have so much we just take it all for granted and seldom say a real "Thank You Lord" from the core of our being? None of those early colonists had much compared to you. And yet, they were happy, grateful, and content. Maybe we can learn from them by putting God first this Thanksgiving and recapture a bit of our Thanksgiving heritage? With that in mind, service time is: 7:30 on Thanksgiving Eve. See you there...