

The Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost November 19, 2023

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

142 Market Street, Williamsport, PA 17701

stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org

Office (570-323-4619) Fax (570-323-2452)

Rev. Brian D. Vasey, Pastor

bvasey@stmarkswilliamsport.org

Welcome to Saint Mark's!

This is Christ's church. There is a place for you here. Join us as we do God's work in Christ's name for the life of the world.

Our Mission: *“To know Christ and to make Christ known.”*



An Order for Holy Communion
Setting Two, LBW
8 and 10:30 am

Please Note:

Hand sanitizer is available for your use; face masks are optional; offerings may be received by way of baskets as you enter or leave.

A guide to hymnal use: LBW, Green Book; WOV, Blue Book

**Please stand as you are able.*

C = Congregation P = Pastor

INTRODUCTION TO TODAY'S WORSHIP

In a world filled with violence and despair, we gather around signs of hope—word, water, bread, and wine—eager to welcome the good news of Christ who has come, and has promised to come again.

PRELUDE *Elevazion* Zipoli

WELCOME/ANNOUNCING THE DAY/ANNOUNCEMENTS

***BRIEF ORDER FOR CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

All may make the sign of cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the pastor begins.

In the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Kneel/Stand. Silence is kept for reflection.

Most merciful God,

We confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not you with our whole heart; we have

not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

In the mercy of Almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake, God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the \dagger Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

***HYMN O God, Our Help in Ages Past**

LBW, "Green", 320

***THE GREETING**

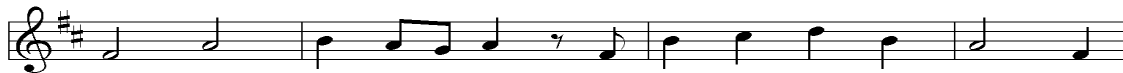
The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

***HYMN OF PRAISE**



A Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and peace to his peo-ple on earth.



B Lord God, heav-en-ly king, al-might-y God and Fa-ther:



We wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo-ry.



Lord Je-sus Christ, on-ly Son of the Fa-ther, Lord God, Lamb of God:



You take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.



You are seat-ed at the right hand of the Fa-ther; re-ceive our prayer.



For you a-lone are the Ho-ly One, you a-lone are the Lord,



you a-lone are the Most High, Je-sus Christ, with the Ho-ly Spir-it,



in the glo-ry of God the Fa-ther. A - men

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray. Righteous God, our merciful master, you own the earth and all its peoples, and you give us all that we have. Inspire us to give thanks to you and serve you with justice and wisdom, and prepare us for the joy of the day of your coming, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

THE FIRST READING.....Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18

⁷Be silent before the Lord GOD!

For the day of the LORD is at hand;
the LORD has prepared a sacrifice,
he has consecrated his guests.

¹²At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps,
and I will punish the people
who rest complacently on their dregs,
those who say in their hearts,
“The LORD will not do good,
nor will he do harm.”

¹³Their wealth shall be plundered,
and their houses laid waste.
Though they build houses,
they shall not inhabit them;
though they plant vineyards,
they shall not drink wine from them.

¹⁴The great day of the LORD is near,
near and hastening fast;
the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter,
the warrior cries aloud there.

¹⁵That day will be a day of wrath,
a day of distress and anguish,
a day of ruin and devastation,
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness,
¹⁶a day of trumpet blast and battle cry
against the fortified cities
and against the lofty battlements.

17 I will bring such distress upon people
that they shall walk like the blind;
because they have sinned against the LORD,
their blood shall be poured out like dust,
and their flesh like dung.
18 Neither their silver nor their gold
will be able to save them
on the day of the LORD's wrath;
in the fire of his passion
the whole earth shall be consumed;
for a full, a terrible end
he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.
The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM 90:1-8, 12

1 Lord, you have | been our refuge
from one generation | to another.
2 **Before the mountains were brought forth, or the land and the | earth were
born, from age to age | you are God.**
3 You turn us back to the | dust and say,
"Turn back, O child- | ren of earth."
4 **For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when | it is past
and like a watch | in the night;**
5 you sweep them away | like a dream,
they fade away suddenly | like the grass:
6 **in the morning it is | green and flourishes;
in the evening it is dried | up and withered.**
7 For we are consumed | by your anger;
we are afraid because | of your wrath.
8 **Our iniquities you have | set before you,
and our secret sins in the light | of your countenance.**
12 So teach us to num- | ber our days
that we may apply our | hearts to wisdom.

THE SECOND READING.....1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

1Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. 2For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3When they say, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! 4But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; 5for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. 6So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; 7for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. 8But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. 9For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. 11Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**




Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?



You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

***THE HOLY GOSPEL.....Matthew 25:14-30**

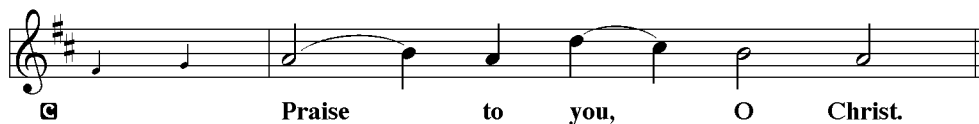
The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew the 25th chapter



Glo - ry to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] 14“For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; 15to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. 16The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. 17In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. 18But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. 19After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. 20Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.’ 21His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ 22And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.’ 23His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ 24Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; 25so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ 26But his master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? 27Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. 28So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. 29For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. 30As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ”

The Gospel of the Lord.



THE SERMON

*HYMN

If God Himself Be For Me

LBW, “Green”, 454

***THE APOSTLES' CREED**

Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

He descended into hell.

On the third day he rose again.

**He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen**

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

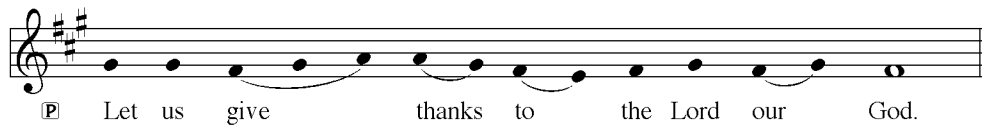
After each petition, "Hear us, O God/Your Mercy is Great"

***THE PEACE**

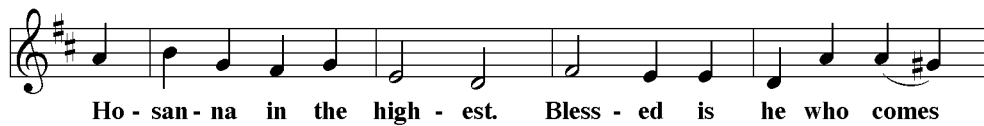
The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you. *The ministers and congregation greet each other.*

*GREAT THANKSGIVING



It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by whose glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Blessed are you Lord of heaven and earth.
In mercy for our fallen world you gave your only Son,
that all those who believe in him should not perish,
but have eternal life.
We give you thanks

for the salvation you have prepared
for us through Jesus Christ.
Send now your Holy Spirit
into our hearts,
and upon these gifts,
that we may receive our Lord
with a living faith
as he comes to us in his holy supper.

Amen. Come Lord Jesus.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

***OUR LORD'S PRAYER**

Lord as you have taught us, so now we pray,

Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name,

thy kingdom come,

thy will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those

who trespass against us;

and lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

**For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

***LAMB OF GOD**



☪ Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world;



grant us peace, grant us peace.

***INVITATION TO COMMUNION** *All Are Welcome to Receive.*

Persons may come forward to the chancel to receive Holy Communion. This format will be more “continuous” noting the following procedure:

- *Communicants as directed by ushers are asked to come forward by way of the center aisle, take a cup from the tray provided and receive the bread.*
- *Once receiving the bread, communicants will proceed to one of two stations (left or right) to receive wine from the pouring chalice.*
- *After receiving wine, communicants will place the empty cup in the designated tray and return to their pew by way of the side aisles.*

Come and feast at the Table of Jesus.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

THE COMMUNION

***AFTER COMMUNION**

The body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen.

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Lord Jesus,
in this simple meal you have set a banquet.
Sustain us on the journey,
strengthen us to care for the least of your beloved children,
and give us glad and generous hearts
as we meet you on the way.
Amen.

***THE BLESSING**

Almighty God, Father, Son † and Holy Spirit,
bless you now and forever.
Amen.

***HYMN I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light** **WOV, “Blue”, 649**

***DISMISSAL**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE *Offertorio* Zipoli

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Prayer List: Victims of COVID-19 and their families, Liz Ruesskamp, Grace Arner, Diane Damaska, Vanessa Morgan, Gary Clark, Charles Miller, Jerry Miller, Patricia Alexander, Richard Ritter, Ashton Ott, Lucille Sider, April Clark, Lenny Sherlinski, Ruth Sherlinski, Gary Cable, Elsie Sechler, Virginia Pulaskie, Susan

Kalabacas, Bunny Ditchfield, Judy Fortin, Ezra Buckman, Sheila Brassard, Kevin Rosini, Kathy Eshelman, Micah, Deb Buckman, Linda Rosini, Mike Ford, Ruth Ann Bigelow, Kristin Rehm, Walt Haussmann.

WORSHIP LEADERS November 19, 2023

Lector	8:00AM	Becky Pryor
	10:30AM	Shelby Weber
Communion Assistants	8:00AM	Drew Haussmann
	10:30AM	Matt and Wanda Fortin
Organist		Sam Robinson
Ushers	8:00AM	Herb Poff and Richard Miller
	10:30AM	Matt Fortin, captain Glenn Yaple and Bud Doebler
Altar Guild	November	Deb Buckman and Leah Haussmann



READ ANY GOOD BOOKS LATELY? Faith Formation has temporarily “moved some books” from our church library to the Front Lounge in order to make them more accessible. Stop by the Front Lounge and take a look!



ALTAR FLOWERS today are given to the glory of God:
+ In Celebration of our St. Mark’s family.
+In Honor of my Mother, Dorothy Baur by Joseph and Christine Baur and her grandchildren.



OUR STEWARDSHIP November 12, 2023

Regular Offering	\$2,855.00
Plate Offerings	20.00
Thanksgiving	22.00
Sunday School Offering	7.00
Parish Life	70.00
Evangelism and Fellowship	25.00
GRAND TOTAL	\$2,999.00

The Annual Stewardship Campaign continues here at Saint Mark’s. Upcoming projects for the new calendar year include: Roof repair, a new sound/video system, updating the air conditioning system in the second floor of the Parish House, organ repair/maintenance, ongoing cleaning expenses, and salaries of our paid staff. If you cannot return your pledge card today, please do so in the near future. In 2024, Christ calls all of us to support the work of his church through our prayers, presence, gifts and service. May the faithfulness of all God's saints inspire us to faithfully serve our Lord through St. Mark's in 2024 and beyond.



FAMILY SUPPORT

When you or a family member are ill, have a crisis of faith, or have a personal concern of which you wish to make the pastor aware, please contact him directly by church office telephone (570-323-4619) or email (bvasey@stmarkswilliamsport.org). Do not assume the pastor will know of your need any other way.



When you or a loved one has a change of address, telephone number or email, please contact the church office at 570-323-4619 or stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org. Please direct your intentions whether or not to share this information with our church family



PRESIDING BISHOP TAKES LEAVE OF ABSENCE

CHICAGO (Nov. 15, 2023) — The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) appointed the Rev. Michael Burk as presiding bishop pro tempore after its

Executive Committee approved Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton’s request for a four- to six-month leave of absence, to begin Nov. 17. Prayers for both Bishop Eaton and Bishop Burk.

Congregational Meeting

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING



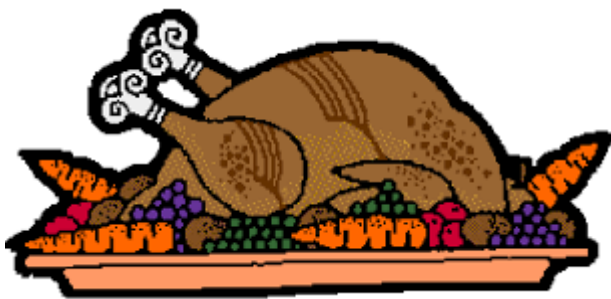
The **ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING** is scheduled for **Sunday, December 10, 2023,**

immediately following the 9:30 a.m. single service of worship. In case of an emergency cancelation of the worship service that day (due to weather or other cause), the Annual Congregational Meeting will be moved to the following Sunday, December 17.

Among the items to be presented, discussed, and/or voted upon are

- Annual Report of Committees to the Congregation
- Election of four Council members
- Adoption of the 2024 budget to support the ministry of St. Mark's
- Any other business that needs to be addressed

Please mark your calendars and plan to participate in this Annual Congregational Meeting. If you need additional information or have items that you would like to discuss, please contact one of the Council officers: Ralph Zeigler, president; Melvin Wentzel, vice-president; Vicki Hausmann, secretary; or Debra Buckman, treasurer. Thank you!



Turkey and all the Fixings.

Following after the Congregational meeting there will be a luncheon served to celebrate the start of our new year and the successful conclusion of this past year. A chance to celebrate those elected to

council and bid a great thank you to those leaving the council (for now).

See the insert to make a reservation.



ANNUAL WREATH MAKING

Please join us on Sunday, December 3, for our annual Advent Wreath-making event. We will gather in Fellowship Hall during the Sunday School hour (9:15 ish) and create an Advent Wreath for your family to use at home during the Advent season. We will be making our wreaths in a variety of vessels and containers, using wet floral foam to keep the greens fresh throughout the Advent season. All materials will be provided! Please sign up in the Narthex or RSVP by contacting Vicki Hausmann at (570) 447-3263. We look forward to seeing you there!



You may have noticed that Christmas came a little early this year ~ at least to the Narthex! Please know that we are not rushing the season or forgetting about the importance of Thanksgiving. Rather, St. Mark's was host to the Billtown Brass concert yesterday as part of Williamsport's Victorian Christmas celebration. This decorating was to help welcome both our musicians and the guests who came through our doors to enjoy their concert. We hope you enjoy these decorations in the spirit of Victorian Christmas as well!



What Do I Owe the Lord? (Romans 4:7-8)



Unlike most of our great great grandparents, we live a life of financial indebtedness. According to an article on the Ramsey Solutions website, 77% of American households have at least some type of debt at an average of \$58,609 per adult. This debt includes credit cards, student loans, auto loans, and mortgages.

The definition of debt in its simplest terms means owing someone payment for any reason. Without the present financial system, most of us could not afford a house, car, or many of the other possessions we have. When it comes to the spiritual, we serve God with an unpayable indebtedness. The price that was paid for our sin by Jesus when He was crucified, can never be repaid by human merit (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:4-5). Even though it cannot be repaid, we owe the Lord a life of worship and service because He forgave us and saved us from everlasting destruction (2 Thes. 1:8-9). Unfortunately, we sometimes place our loyalties to the people in our lives more than we do to God and when we do, we're no longer worthy of Jesus (Matt. 10:37). We must constantly remind ourselves that:

- We owe Him more than we owe our parents
- We owe Him more than we owe our children
- We owe Him more than we owe our friends
- We owe Him more than we owe our employer
- We owe Him more than we owe ourselves We sing the old song, "He paid a debt He did not owe, Christ Jesus paid the debt that I can never pay." And for that, we owe Him everything!

Jay Launiu

Please find in today's bulletin two inserts

1 – Christmas Flower Order Form

2 – Reservations for the Turkey Dinner after the Congregation Meeting

Extras in the Nave or Office



Monday, November 20, -
 Sunday, November 26, 2023

Monday, November 20	WCC Board Meeting	6PM	FH
Thursday, November 23	Thanksgiving Day (Church Office Closed)		
Friday, November 24	Church Office Closed		
Sunday, November 12	Holy Communion	8:00 AM and 10:30AM	

BIRTHDAYS

Ray Reams	November 21	Sally Bjornstad	November 23
James Newcomer, Jr.	November 23	Nancy Bieber	November 25
Stephen Dewar	November 25	Ashley Miller	November 26

ANNIVERSARIES

Mary and Robert Clouser	November 20
Judith and Charles Fortin	November 26

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Please remember to let the administrative assistant know when committee meetings are scheduled, or changed, so it can be included in the bulletin.

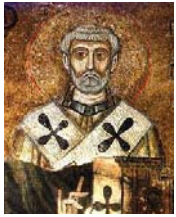
If there is anything you would like to include in the “This Week at Our Church” please let the administrative assistant, Joe Baur, know at jbaur@stmarkswilliamsport.org



**THE CHURCH OFFICE WILL BE
 CLOSED THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 23
 AND FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 24 IN
 CELEBRATION OF THANKSGIVING
 DAY.**

COMMEMORATIONS

Clement, Bishop of Rome, died around 100



Thursday, November 23, 2023

Clement was the third bishop of Rome. He is best remembered for a letter he wrote to the congregation in Corinth, still struggling with the same problems that led to Paul's letters to them. As did Paul, he focused on the need for love among Christians.

Miguel Agustín Pro, martyr, died 1927



Thursday, November 23, 2023

Pro grew up in a time when the Mexican revolutionaries accused the church of siding with the wealthy. He became a pastor, and worked on behalf of the poor and homeless. Falsely accused of throwing a bomb at a government official, he was executed, but not before crying out "Long live Christ the King!"

Justus Falckner, died 1723; Jehu Jones, died 1852; William Passavant, died 1894; pastors in North America *Friday, November 24, 2023*



Falcker

Jones

Passavant

Not only was Falckner the first Lutheran ordained in North America, but he published a catechism which was the first Lutheran book published on the continent. Jones was the Lutheran church's first African American pastor and carried out missionary work in Philadelphia which led to the formation there of the first African American Lutheran congregation (St. Paul's). William Passavant helped to establish hospitals and orphanages in a number of cities and was the first to introduce deaconesses to the work of hospitals in the United States.

Isaac Watts, hymnwriter, died 1748

Saturday, November 25, 2023



A great hymnwriter in the English language, Watts as a youth was critical of the quality of the metrical psalter of the time. He wrote about 600 hymns—many based on the psalms.

A National Day of Thanksgiving (USA)



Thursday, November 23, 2023

Celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November, our National Day of Thanksgiving (Thanksgiving Day) encourages all people to “give thanks” for all blessings and gifts they possess.

A Brief History of “Thanksgiving Day”

Thanksgiving Day has been an annual holiday in the United States since 1863.

There are claims that the first Thanksgiving Day was held in the city of El Paso, Texas, in 1598. Another early event was held in 1619 in the Virginia Colony. Many people trace the origins of the modern Thanksgiving Day to the harvest celebration the Pilgrims held in Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1621. However, their first true thanksgiving was in 1623, when they gave thanks for rain that ended a drought.

In the second half of the 1600s, thanksgivings after the harvest became more common and started to become annual events. However, they were celebrated on different days in different communities and in some places there were more than one thanksgiving each year. George Washington, the first president of the United States, proclaimed the first national Thanksgiving Day in 1789.