



A Thanksgiving Grace

God of abundance
For the gift of life itself;
For the shining of the sun and the nourishment of the rain;
For the beauty of creation,
We praise you.
For family and friends;
For memories of joy and love that tell us who we are;
For the food on this table and that gives us life;
We thank you.
For the compassion to remember those who are alone today;
For the courage to remember that some will not eat today;
For the conviction that we are blessed to become blessings;
We beseech you.
In your Holy Name, Amen.

(Rev. Rebecca Littlejohn, Senior Minister of Vista La Mesa Christian Church, in California; a member of the Academy of Parish Clergy, As quoted from the Autumn 2011 Issue of Sharing The Practice)

A Prayer For Our Association

Kind and loving God,
who by Your Spirit inhabits the whole company of the faithful;
graciously guard and protect the work of our
National Association of Congregational Christian Churches.
Shed Your heavenly wisdom and grace upon its leaders;
enlighten them with the knowledge of Your will;
inspire them with pure passion for the good work they do with us,
or the benefit and building up of our congregations.
May good work continue to prevail and grow among those who serve in our
Association's office and on our national leadership team.
As the apostles met in Jerusalem to take counsel for peace and unity among the early churches,
so may all the meetings of our Association be for the purpose of unity of spirit.
Let Your peace rule in the hearts of all,
and the law of love govern all that we do as an Association.
And let the true mediator of our work together be Your Son, and our savior Jesus Christ.
Amen

(Note: This prayer was written in 2008 for the Congregational Society of Classical Retreat Guides for use by our NACCC member churches. We hope that you will find it useful in your church's worship services whenever appropriate. They are being made available to all NACCC member churches through a generous donation from a Society member. For more information about the Society, please [email: kewauneccc@yahoo.com](mailto:kewauneccc@yahoo.com) Rev Randall Kohls, President CSCRG).

Suggested Hymn for Heritage Sunday

(Words by Allen E Cross, 1920. Echoing the 300th anniversary of the Pilgrims' voyage to America in the *Mayflower*, this hymn was first sung at the International Council of Congregational Churches in the Old South Church, Boston, Massachusetts, 1920. The words come from Pastor Robinson's farewell to the Pilgrims:

(Tune: Either Truro or Duke Street)

More light shall break from out Thy Word
For pilgrim followers of the gleam,
Till, led by Thy free Spirit, Lord,
We see and share the pilgrim dream.

What mighty hopes are in our care,
What holy dreams of brotherhood;
God of our Fathers, help us dare
Their passion for the common good.

Wild roars the blast, the storm is high;
Above the storm are shining still
The lights by which we live and die;
Our peace is ever in Thy will.

The ancient stars, the ancient faith,
Defend us till our voyage is done;
Across the floods of fear and death
The Mayflower still is sailing on.

A Liturgy for Heritage Sunday

Leader: Let us thank God for those who have shaped and preserved our expression of the Christian life in Congregational Ways.

Congregation: We thank you, O God, for the lives of those who exemplified a pilgrim spirit.

Leader: For Robert Browne, John Robinson, and William Brewster, William Bradford, John Eliot, Henry Ward and Lyman Beecher, Julia Ward Howe, Louise Baker, Alice Freeman Palmer, Mary Lyon, Thomas Gallaudet, Thomas Hooker, John Wise, Antoinette, Brown, Harriett Beecher Stowe, Samuel Morse, Jane Addams, Jonathan Edwards, Thomas Hooker, John Cotton, and hundreds of other theologians, ministers, writers, inventors – who contributed in countless ways to the beginnings of our Way.

Congregation: We thank you, O God, for the lives of those who have exemplified a Pilgrim spirit.

Leader: Henry David Gray, Harry Butman, Vaughan Abercrombie, Arvel M. Steece, Raymond Waser, Carrie Mead, Charlotte Abercrombie, Lydamar Reese, Lois Heilmann and those of more recent times, whose passion and generosity helped define and refine our heritage in new and vibrant ways.

Congregation: We thank you O God that these and others have continued to lift up the best of who we are as Christians in covenant with each other.

Leader: For Lowell Mason, Leonard Bacon, Washington Gladden, Isaac Watts, Katherine Lee Bates, Allen Eastman Cross, Henry Hallum Tweedy, Jack Brown and other Congregational hymn-writers who continue to inspire our worship.

Congregation: We thank you, O God, for the music which weekly lifts our spirits and binds us together.

Leader: For Christ, who remains the head of every Congregational Christian Church who is the Gospel upon which we live and in whose Spirit we witness to this world.

Congregation: We thank you O God, for continuing to unite our tradition under Christ.

Leader: For the vibrancy of our church, the faithful service of our members, and the covenant which binds us together.

Congregation: We thank you, O God, for the freedom of conscience, under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

Leader: For the strength of our diversity, and from it the unending opportunities to learn from each other and grow in faith to the benefit of the kingdom of God.

Congregation: May we continue to be a Way which finds unity in essentials, charity in non-essentials, and Jesus Christ in all things.

DID YOU KNOW . . .

- The Pilgrims and Puritans, our Congregational forebears, believed that the Bible, not the Pope or the Church, was the primary source of truth. They did not use the King James version of the bible (it was King James I who had harried them out of England) Rather, they used the Geneva bible (1560) making it the major book of the new land.
- Among the earliest buildings erected by the Pilgrims at Plymouth was the “meetinghouse,” which served the people both as their place of worship and meeting place for the community for the business of the plantation.
- Perhaps more than any other Protestant group in America’s beginnings, Congregationalists have stressed the value of education. They have been the founders of more than fifty colleges, universities, and seminaries, including Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, Oberlin, Olivet, Piedmont, Pomona, Elon, Grinnell, Andover, Gordon, Bangor, Pacific School of Religion, and dozens of others.
- Congregationalists formed the first seminary in New England – Andover Seminary, in 1807.
- The first women’s college in America, Mount Holyoake, was founded by Mary Lyons, a Congregationalist. Congregationalists also founded Wellesley (1870) and Smith (1871).
- Antoinette Brown, a Congregationalist, was the first woman to be ordained in the Christian ministry (1853). Although First Congregational Church, Nantucket claims that Louise Baker, a school teacher-turned minister of that Church was the “first orthodox ordained clergy woman” that is still being researched. However, Louise, too, was a Congregationalist.
- Of the forty-nine patriots who signed the Declaration of Independence (1776) thirteen were Congregationalists.
- Most of the abolitionists who rallied to the defense of the West Africans, who in 1839, mutinied on the slave ship *Amistad*, were devout Congregationalists, who later were among those who founded the American Missionary Association.
- John Milton (1608-1674) author of “*Paradise Lost*”, first wrote pamphlets for Congregationalism.
- Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) was one of the great New England poets of the 1800’s and a Congregationalist.
- Lloyd Douglas author of “*The Robe*”, was senior minister of the First Congregational Church of Los Angeles.
- The tune “*Antioch*” for the hymn “*Joy to the World*” was arranged by Lowell Mason, a Congregationalist.
- The hymn “*Our God Our Help in Ages Past*,” was written by a Congregationalist, Isaac Watts, as were many other hymns in the Pilgrim Hymnal.
- Leonard Bacon, a Congregational minister in New Haven, CT wrote “*O God, Beneath Thy Guiding Hand*.”
- Washington Gladden, one of the pioneers of the Social gospel, wrote the hymn, “*O Master Let Me Walk with Thee*.”