GRAND COMMANDERY OF KNIGHTS TEMPLAR FOR THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

NOVEMBER 2026 MESSAGE
SK GEORGE R. SAUNDERS REGC

November Message

The air is crisp, the leaves have peaked and have now mostly fallen, the commercials are in full pre-Christmas shopping mode, Daylight Savings Time ended – it must be November. The major holidays in November are Veterans Day, November 11, and Thanksgiving, on November 26, this year. Other popular days include National Sandwich Day, November 3, National Fast-Food Day, November 16, National Pickle Day, November 14, and National Scrapple Day, November 9.

Originally known as Armistice Day, Veterans Day honors the service of all military veterans. It was adopted by a Congressional resolution on June 4, 1926, that called for an observance on November 11, which was the day hostilities ceased to end World War I. A Congressional Act made November 11 a national holiday on May 13, 1938. Veteran's Day should not be confused with Memorial Day, which honors those who have died while in military service, or Armed Forces Day, which honors those who are currently serving in the US military.

The traditional origin of Thanksgiving in the United States includes native Americans, Puritans, Pilgrims and a multiple day feast in Plymouth Colony, Massachusetts, in 1621. The first documented thanksgiving celebration was in 1619 at Charles City County, Virginia, by the passengers of the ship Margaret when it landed on the James River. The ships charter stated "that the day of our ships arrival at the place assigned for plantation in the land of Virginia shall be yearly and perpetually kept holy as a day of thanksgiving to Almighty God". Florida, Texas, Virginia and New England have made claims to having the first Thanksgiving celebrations. George Washington proclaimed November 26, 1789, as the first nationwide celebration in America as "a day of public thanksgiving and prayer". Abraham Lincoln' proclamation set Thanksgiving to be held on the last Thursday in November.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a joint resolution of congress on December 26, 1942, making the fourth Thursday in November the official National Thanksgiving Day.

Giving thanks is not just a once a year endeavor the day before Christmas shopping season begins. Thanksgiving is an act of worship, not just a feeling that must be endured. But the act of prayer must be practiced frequently. We give thanks through prayer. Philippians 4:6 tells us, “In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be known to God”. Thanksgiving is the foundation of every supplication to God, not just a secondary formality. Paul wrote, in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, “pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you”. Giving thanks in prayer is the core of the life God calls us to live.

It is easy to give thanks when things are going well but, it may seem impossible when things are not going well. Thanksgiving while you are suffering a hardship is never just between the supplicant and God, it is witness to the hope in God that rises above the circumstances. Thanksgiving should not only be a solitary act but, in a group of God’s people, with and for one another. We should be a community, or family, of gratitude. We must not forget, at the Last Supper, Jesus gave thanks, symbolizing his body with bread and his blood with wine, with his disciples.

This Thanksgiving, give thanks for what you have, not only material things but, the people around you and their love, and the love of God as he gave you the strength to endure the hardships that you encountered.

Yours in Christ,

SK George R. Saunders, KCT

Grand Commander

George R. Saunders