

Proclamation for Day of Public Thanksgiving John Hancock, Governor of Massachusetts (1791)

Historical Background of Document:

John Hancock, signer of the Declaration of Independence and as the first elected Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, issued a proclamation on October 5, 1791, to give thanks to God for their many blessings. The proclamation declared November 17, 1791 as a day of public thanksgiving.

Text of Proclamation:

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

**By His EXCELLENCY
John Hancock, Esq.
GOVERNOR of the COMMONWEALTH
of Massachusetts.
A PROCLAMATION,
For a Day of Public Thanksgiving.**

In consideration of the many undeserved Blessings conferred upon us by GOD, the Father of all Mercies; it becomes us no only in our private and usual devotion, to express our obligations to Him, as well as our dependence upon Him; but also specially to set a part a Day to be employed for this great and important Purpose:

I HAVE therefore thought fit to appoint, and by the advice and consent of the Council, do hereby accordingly appoint, THURSDAY, the seventeenth of *November* next, to be observed as a Day of Public THANKSGIVING and PRAISE, throughout this Commonwealth:—Hereby calling upon Ministers and People of every denomination, to assemble on the said Day—and in the name of the Great Mediator, devoutly and sincerely offer to Almighty God, the gratitude of our Hearts, for all his goodness towards us; more especially in that HE has been pleased to continue to us so a great a measure of Health—to cause the Earth plentifully to yield her increase, so that we are supplied with the Necessaries, and the Comforts of Life—to prosper our Merchandise and Fishery—And above all, not only to continue to us the enjoyment of our civil Rights and Liberties; but the great and most important Blessing, the Gospel of Jesus Christ: And together with our cordial acknowledgments, I do earnestly recommend, that we may join the penitent confession of our Sins, and implore the further continuance of the Divine Protection, and Blessings of Heaven upon this People; especially that He would be graciously pleased to direct, and prosper the Administration of the Federal Government, and of this, and the other States in the Union—to afford Him further Smiles on our Agriculture and Fisheries, Commerce and Manufactures—To prosper our

University and all Seminaries of Learning—To bless the virtuously struggling for the Rights of Men—so that universal Happiness may be Allies of the United States, and to afford his Almighty Aid to all People, who are established in the World; that all may bow to the Scepter of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and the whole Earth be filled with his Glory.

And I do also earnestly recommend to the good People of this Commonwealth, to abstain from all servile Labor and Recreation, inconsistent with the solemnity of the said day.

Given at the Council-Chamber, in Boston, the fifth Day of October, in the Year of our Lord, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Ninety-One, and in the sixteenth Year of the Independence of the United States of America.

JOHN HANCOCK.

By his Excellency's Command,

JOHN AVERY, jun. Sec'y

GOD save the Commonwealth of MASSACHUSETTS!!