

The Belltower

November 2018

A Monthly Publication of Dunnellon Presbyterian Church

Declaring and Demonstrating the Promises of Christ



Dear Members and other Friends:

When it comes to historical memory, the old saying that you can't choose your relatives is just plain wrong. Americans have chosen the Pilgrims as honorary ancestors, and we tend to see their story as inseparable from the story of our nation, "land of the Pilgrims' pride." We imagine these honorary founders as model immigrants, pacifists and pioneers in the democratic experiment. Even as we have done this, we may have burdened them with values they wouldn't have recognized and shrouded their story with myth.

Robert Tracy McKenzie is chairman of the history department at Wheaton College. Among the numerous books he has written is "The First Thanksgiving: What the Real Story Tells Us About Loving God and Learning From History." In his book, Dr. McKenzie tries to honor the true history of the pilgrims and the first thanksgiving. Through the captivating story of the birth of this quintessentially American holiday, this veteran historian helps us to better understand the tale of America's origins—and for Christians, to grasp the significance of this story and those like it. McKenzie avoids both idolizing and demonizing the Pilgrims, and calls us to love and learn from our flawed yet fascinating forebears. *His book describes* the interplay of historical thinking and Christian reflection on the meaning of the past for the present. There are five "myths" that Dr. McKenzie "busts," yet through their "busting" he may help each of us to celebrate this great holiday even more fully. Here they are, enjoy!

1. The Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock.

If you visit Plymouth today, you'll find a distinctive rock about the size of your living-room sofa embedded in the sandy beach, sheltered by a classical Greek portico and labeled with a sign erected by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts proclaiming, "Plymouth Rock: Landing Place of the Pilgrims." It's not hard to picture simple English folk huddled on that rock, envisioning through eyes of faith the great nation that would spring from their humble beginning.

Except that's probably not what happened. We "know" the location of the Pilgrims' landing because in 1741 — 121 years after they arrived — a young boy overheard 95-year-old Thomas Faunce relate that his father, who came to Plymouth three years after the Mayflower, told him he'd heard from unnamed persons that the landing occurred there. Curiously, William Bradford never mentioned Plymouth Rock in his history, "Of Plymouth Plantation," and if the expedition landed there, he seems not to have noticed.

2. The Pilgrims came to America in search of religious freedom.

It's fair to say that the Pilgrims left England to find religious freedom, but that wasn't the primary motive that propelled them to North America. Remember that the Pilgrims went first to Holland, settling eventually in the city of Leiden. There they encountered a religious tolerance almost unheard of in that day and age. Bradford and Edward Winslow both wrote glowingly of their experience. In Leiden, God had allowed them, in Bradford's estimation, "to come as near the primitive pattern of the first churches as any other church of these later times." God had blessed them with "much peace and liberty," Winslow echoed.

If a longing for religious freedom had compelled them, they probably never would have left. But while they cherished the freedom of conscience they enjoyed in Leiden, the Pilgrims had two major complaints: They found it a hard place to maintain their English identity and an even harder place to make a living. In America, they hoped to live by themselves, enjoy the same degree of religious liberty and earn a "better and easier" living.

3. The Pilgrims' autumn celebration in 1621 was the first American Thanksgiving.

The Pilgrims were hardly the first people to stop and thank their creator for a bountiful harvest. Native Americans had a long tradition of thanksgiving celebrations. The Algonquian people, for example, participated in regular ceremonies linked to the crop cycle, while the nearby Wampanoag annually celebrated the first harvest of the new season with a “strawberry thanksgiving.”

Europeans who arrived in North America before the Pilgrims also engaged in such observances. There is evidence of a thanksgiving service held in 1564 near present-day Jacksonville, Fla., by French Huguenots. The next year, Spanish documents refer to a thanksgiving Mass celebrated at St. Augustine by conquistadores (who would soon slaughter the Huguenots). Texas historians say Spanish colonists celebrated thanksgiving with the Manso Indians near present-day El Paso in 1598, not early enough to beat out Florida but still a generation before the celebration in Massachusetts. Among English settlers, there is evidence of a thanksgiving celebration in 1607 at a short-lived colony on the coast of Maine, and of two others among Virginia colonists in 1610 and 1619.

More important, the 1621 celebration wasn't a thanksgiving at all from the Pilgrims' perspective. As they understood it, a thanksgiving was a solemn observance, a “holy day” devoted to worship in acknowledgment of a specific, extraordinary blessing from the Lord.

4. The Pilgrims were a humorless lot with a fondness for black.

With more wit than historical accuracy, H.L. Mencken defined Puritanism as “the haunting fear that someone, somewhere, may be happy.” Modern Americans have bought into the stereotype. We picture the Pilgrims as if they were headed to a funeral, their solemn behavior matched by a somber wardrobe.

When we read Winslow's description of the 1621 harvest festival, however, we're transported to a scene of beer and barbecue, shooting and sports. And forget about the ubiquitous black outfits. In fact, the Pilgrims had a taste for a wide range of bright colors. Estate inventories in Plymouth Colony contain abundant references to red, blue, green, yellow and orange garments. Carpenter Will Wright, for example, upon his death left a blue coat and two vests, one white, the other red. Bradford's estate inventory showed that the long-term governor did, in fact, own a black hat and a dark suit, but he also sported a “colored” hat, a red suit and a violet cloak. Pretty gaudy, actually.

5. The Pilgrims' Mayflower Compact was an early and noteworthy example of American democracy.

Americans have loaded this document with far more significance than it's worthy of. We read it selectively, zeroing in on the parts where the signers commit to form a “civil body politic” and agree to formulate “just and equal laws . . . for the general good of the colony.”

But it is no accident that the compact begins with a description of the signatories as “the loyal subjects of our dread sovereign lord, King James.” Having been blown off course en route to America, the Pilgrims were about to settle some 200 miles north of the northernmost jurisdiction of the Virginia Company, which was authorized by King James I to coordinate colonial ventures along the Atlantic seaboard. It was quite possible that they were committing an illegal act in the eyes of the crown. So, they made a point of assuring James of their unquestioned loyalty.

They also identify him as their king not by virtue of their consent, but “by the grace of God.” This puts the Mayflower Compact closer to an affirmation of the divine right of kings than the right of self-rule.

So, with this new information, enjoy that which is my favorite holiday of the year- with Thanksgiving!

With thanksgiving for all who will read this, I am,

Pastor Jeff



PRESBYTERIAN MEN'S CLUB

November Men's Breakfast

Thursday, November 29, 2018 at 8:00 am
~~~ 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday ~~~

### Note: Special Date due to Thanksgiving

The Men's Club will meet at 8:00am at the Purple Sage Café, East Pennsylvania Ave, Dunnellon, for breakfast, fellowship, prayer, and to discuss concerns of the Church.

Please notify Don K. by Monday, November 26<sup>th</sup> if you plan to attend.

Call 352-489-2682

### *Thank You*

"Thank you to the "Jr. Engineering Gang" of Ron S., Don R., Dick ., Wayne C., Norman T., Don K. for their 20 man-hours used on the railroad ties project."

Thanks,  
Don

# PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

## PW Circles

Wednesday, November 7<sup>th</sup>  
1:00 pm Pat McDowell Circle  
7:00 pm Lydia Circle

## PW Coordinating Team

Thursday, November 28<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am  
*Note the date change due to Thanksgiving.*

## PW Quilt Circle

Tuesdays, November 13<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>  
at 10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Come join us.  
Anyone is welcome to visit us  
to see what we do.  
Any questions, call Jean K.

# A Note from the PW Moderator

I would like to thank all that attended the P.W Gathering. I also want to thank the P.W Coordinating Team for the delicious food that they prepared for the brunch.

Tickets for the December 1<sup>st</sup> "Card & Game Party" will be available in the Narthex before and after Sunday's Services. Thanks to everyone for their support in volunteering to make baskets. We only have one more month before the "Card & Game Party" so let's make it a big success.

The envelopes for the donations for the Thanksgiving and Christmas food gift cards are in the Narthex.

Thanks to our generous congregation for your support of the P.W.'s mission projects.

Carolle C, P.W. Moderator

## Thanksgiving & Christmas

### Love Gifts

The Christian Community Action Committee of Dunnellon Presbyterian Church will again provide Thanksgiving and Christmas food gift cards to 18 families of children at Romeo Elementary School.

Envelopes for your financial support of this outreach are available in the Narthex.

## Angel Tree Gift Giving

Sign up for the Angel Tree Gift requests will be available, in the Narthex, starting November 4<sup>th</sup>.

Gifts need to be returned to DPC no later than Friday, December 7<sup>th</sup>.

You may bring your gifts to the Narthex or to the Office.

Please make sure to attach the Angel Card and the gift receipts to your gifts so we will know which child should receive the gifts.

*Thank you!*



# DPC Community Activities

## NOVEMBER MOVIE WITH MEANING

Saturday, November 3, 2018  
at 1:00 pm

The November “**Movie With Meaning**” will be **Mr. Church** (2016, rated PG-13)...

No, not DPC’s Mr. *Hugh* Church, but a character played by a non-comedic Eddie Murphy.

Hired to lend a hand to a single mother diagnosed with cancer, Henry Joseph Church wins the hearts of mom Marie Brody and daughter Charlie through his cooking, establishing a bond that lasts long beyond Marie's death and Charlie's childhood. Cast includes Eddie Murphy and Britt Robertson.

One Netflix reviewer wrote:

*“What a different role for Eddie Murphy. He was terrific in this beautiful story of love, family, devotion. I didn't know what to expect when I ordered it but was entertained and moved by this film. I recommend it to all.”*

Most other reviewers agreed, so perhaps you will, too.

Join us at **1 p.m., Saturday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>** for a movie and discussion.

Free!  
With drinks and popcorn!

Terry B.

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## MEMORIAL GARDEN

Volunteers have come to improve the looks of the garden now that the temperatures are lower.

Thank you.

Fall flowers have been planted. Come for a stroll, sit on one of the benches. Relax.

Jean K.



## NOVEMBER FELLOWSHIP DINNER

### The Annual Thanksgiving Dinner

Wednesday, November 14, 2018  
at 6:30 pm

Hosted by the Lydia Circle

The Lydia Circle will provide the turkey, potatoes, gravy and stuffing/dressing.

Please bring  
your favorite side-dish or dessert.

Come enjoy the food, fellowship  
and have fun!



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## DPC CONCERT SERIES

Sunday, November 11<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m.

*6<sup>th</sup> Annual “Salute to Veterans”*

Mark your calendars for the Veteran's Day Tribute concert performed by the Dunnellon Community Chorale at Dunnellon Presbyterian Church at 3:00 p.m., Sunday, November 11<sup>th</sup>. American Legion Post #58 Color Guard will begin the program of patriotic music on this day that America salutes her veterans and honors our country's patriots, past and present. This will be the 6th tribute concert the chorale has prepared. Jeanne Wolfanger is the director and Connie Hart, accompanist.

The concert is free, gifts are appreciated.

DUNNELLON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
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STAMP

REV. JEFFREY W. WELCH, PASTOR

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

“Everyone  
who belongs  
to  
**the truth**  
listens to  
**MY VOICE.**”

John 18:37, NRSV