

# Give Thanks, with a Grateful Heart

by Blythe Thimsen

On October 3, 1863, in Washington, D.C., President Abraham Lincoln issued Proclamation 106, proclaiming the last Thursday in November, as a day of Thanksgiving. Fast-forward 152 years, and Thanksgiving is an established part of our country's history, but nowadays, the focus of the holiday is more often than not on the birds that are cooking in the ovens, the football games playing on the big screens and the 5 a.m. door-buster shopping deals available the following morning.

While we still call it Thanksgiving, it seems too easy to leave the "thanks" out of it. So this year, before the table is set, the bird is stuffed and the chairs are pushed back from the table (with us stuffed), we wanted to pause and reflect on the real reason for the holiday, and take stock of the many reasons we have for which to give thanks. Following are the thanksgivings of many of our friends, family and neighbors from our community.



"The year that is drawing toward its close has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added which are of so extraordinary a nature that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever-watchful providence of Almighty God.

In the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity, which has sometimes seemed to foreign states to invite and to provoke their aggression, peace has been preserved with all nations, order has been maintained, the laws have been respected and obeyed, and harmony has prevailed everywhere, except in the

## Proclamation 106 | Thanksgiving Day

theater of military conflict, while that theater has been greatly contracted by the advancing armies and navies of the Union.

Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the fields of peaceful industry to the national defense have not arrested the plow, the shuttle, or the ship; the ax has enlarged the borders of our settlements, and the mines, as well of iron and coal as of the precious metals, have yielded even more abundantly than heretofore. Population has steadily increased notwithstanding the waste that has been made in the camp, the siege, and the battlefield, and the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is

permitted to expect continuance of years with large increase of freedom.

No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy.

It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged, as with one heart and one voice, by the whole American people. I do therefore invite my fellow-citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe

the last Thursday of November next as a day of thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens. And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners, or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it, as soon as may be consistent with the divine purposes, to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility, and union." ~ President Abraham Lincoln

"I am thankful for crucibles. Our society tends to highlight success, yet life's deepest and most powerful lessons come in times of pain and trial. Although never fun in the moment, the crucibles shape our character and shape the lens through which we see the world. I would probably be wiser if I embraced the painful trials. The painful moments develop character and character determines how we live the ordinary moments in life. The ordinary moments in life determine how we handle the large moments.

Three people outside my family are facing painful crucibles, and they are changing the way I look at the world, and I am thankful for them.

Cat Davis was diagnosed with scleroderma in the prime of her life, in her mid-20s, yet is literally one of the most optimistic people I know. She reminds me to be kind, patient and generous with everyone, because there may be more going on with someone than is readily apparent.

Ken Hopkins was involved in a bike accident on July 13<sup>th</sup>, which has left him paralyzed from the waist down, yet his life is progressively moving forward as he is already

back on air making people laugh and smile again. A woman who works at Old European told me how she began to recover from the loss of her grandchild because of Dave, Ken & Molly, explaining the only laughter she had in that painful tragedy was from them. Helping someone laugh, and brightening their day, may be life changing to that person.

Jonathan Vankeulen was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer that is taking his life. He is 30 years old and has a beautiful family. I have been honored to spend time with him, as he

uses his days trying to pass legislation that will help others who are or will be battling cancer.

Jonathan is teaching me to live life, be grateful and find enjoyment no matter your circumstances. He also teaches me that we all have something to give and the gifts we have are meant to be shared. For that, I am thankful"

~ Kevin Parker, State Representative, 6th District, and owner of Dutch Bros.

"As I sit on my couch, snuggled into my quilt, handmade by a friend, thinking about what I am thankful for, it's this: the generosity of my friends and the love of my family."  
~ Shelley Howard, claims specialist

**"ALL OF US AT CATHOLIC CHARITIES SPOKANE ARE MOST THANKFUL FOR THE GENEROUS SPIRIT OF OUR COMMUNITY IN THEIR NEVER-ENDING WILLINGNESS TO GIVE THEIR TIME, TALENT AND TREASURE TO ANSWER POPE FRANCIS' CALL TO SERVE THE POOREST OF THE POOR. THANKS TO OUR TIRELESS VOLUNTEERS, OUR SUPPORTERS, OUR STAFF AND OUR ADVOCATES, WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO REVEAL GOD'S LOVE TO OVER 77,000 DIFFERENT POOR AND VULNERABLE PERSONS THIS YEAR."** ~ Dr. Robert J. McCann, executive director, Catholic Charities Spokane

"I am grateful to get paid to do something I love! I never have a day where I don't look forward to going to work. How many people can say that? I am grateful for my painful experiences. They were necessary learning points and the catalyst that lead to the genuine happiness I now experience on a daily basis. I'm no longer afraid of these experiences because they taught me that 1.) the pain is only temporary, and 2.) there is always something better waiting in the light at the end of the proverbial tunnel. I am grateful for friends and family who love me unconditionally." ~ Jessica Griffiths, training and development consultant, Washington Trust Bank

"I am blessed in so many ways, it's hard to know where to begin! I'm thankful for my family and circle of friends that have loved me for years, and for the extraordinary new friends that came into my life this year. I'm thankful for my home where I am always greeted by my dog with a happy tail, and can relish summer mornings sipping tea in my garden watching the dozens of songbirds, butterflies and bees that that visit."  
~ Jane Cudy, marketing and PR assistant, Spokane Symphony

"I am thankful. I have gratitude for the moments of adversity in not having enough; enough faith, enough hope, enough love, enough money, enough food, enough time etc. Perhaps, being grateful in small amounts when there is not enough, gives promise to recognize greater bless-

ings. I'm learning there is a responsibility that comes with privilege. That I am blessed to bless. Gifted to give. Everyday I'm thankful for grace and clarity when I find faith, hope, love, money, food, time etc. I understand this: being grateful is a choice. Choose wisely."  
~ Celeste Shaw, owner of Chaps

"I am thankful that God helped me discover Him, and that He fashioned a way to serve Him by providing a job I love that fits me like a custom yoke. I love my family, and am thankful for my comfortable home, our three dogs, a couple of cool cars, my Washburn B16 banjo and spectacular Formula One action in nineteen countries around the globe every year."  
~ Russell Mackenzie, director of food services, Union Gospel Mission



# GRATEFUL

"Too many of us take our health for granted. As I passed through sixty, I noticed that many friends are having health issues, or are fighting for their lives, or had lost the battle. Thus, each and every day, I am thankful for my health. However, one's health is not something that can simply be left to chance. Hence, each day I try to do something to "help-health." In my experience, there are three primary areas: exercise, what we put into our mouths, and proper rest. In each instance, it's a personal thing and whatever each of us can do is healthy-helpful." ~ Greg Johnson, attorney

"I have been blessed with the spunkiest, cutest, full-of-life and independence two year old boy. If nothing else were to happen, I would say life feels pretty complete."  
~ Kristi Somday, Graphic Designer



"As cliché as it is, I am thankful for my family. Growing up makes you realize how much you appreciate the people who support you. I am not more thankful for anything other than my family! It truly tops the list." ~ Ellen Arguinchona, culinary student

# THANK



"I'm thankful for so many things: the fall season, a wonderful family, the blessing of living in a great community and for those who choose to volunteer their time for works of service." ~ Fr. Jerry Cimijotti, Christ the King Anglican Church

"I am grateful to friends and family who support me through difficult times. I am grateful for good health. I am grateful to live in this corner of the world, where the sky is blue, the air is crisp, and the autumn leaves are beautiful and inspiring. I am grateful to have enough to eat and to have a roof over my head and gas in the furnace; everyday blessings that I so often take for granted."

~ Vince Bozzi, publisher, Bozzi Media

"In all the countless things I could be thankful about this year, I would like to focus on God's gift of our body's ability to heal itself. After having dental surgery in early July, I was prepared for a long weekend of recuperating but was surprised to find myself recovering in less than a day and was astonished to find that my sedentary, 50 pounds-on-the-plus-side of obesity frame, still was able to heal. That day I stopped a 40-year habit of drinking two to three cans of Coke per day, I started walking a minimum of two miles a day and started consuming quality nutrient dense food. The benefit, 100 days later, is a 40 pound weight loss and a renewed sense of wellbeing. Thank you God, for we are fearfully and wonderfully made as it says in Psalm 139."

~ David Eyre, paratransit dispatcher

**"I am so very thankful to live in a town that I love and get to enjoy the life I have chosen. I am also very thankful for the outpouring of support for my friend and radio partner, Ken, as he deals with his life-changing accident. I am blessed beyond belief with family, a circle of friends, and wonderful radio listeners."** ~ Dave Sposito, 92.9 KZZU FM

time with my family, especially my wife of 35 years, my two wonderful daughters, their husbands and my four grandchildren. I'm grateful we are all healthy and thankful to my higher power for all that he has blessed us with." ~ Dave Vahala, 944 Automotive

**"I'M TRULY GRATEFUL FOR MY HEALTH, HEALTHY FRIENDS AND FAMILY AND A ROOF OVER MY HEAD. MANY WILL SAY THOSE WORDS, BUT TRULY, BASIC GOOD HEALTH IS TAKEN FOR GRANTED. I'M TRYING TO FOCUS ON WHAT REALLY MAKES A GREAT LIFE."** ~ Dana Haynes, owner of Dandles Candles

**"I am so thankful for my family and friends who love me, and now a fiancé who I will call my husband next summer! I am thankful for all of the relationships in my life that God has given me to support me through the hard times and celebrate with me through the good!"**

~ Molly Lorenz, 3rd grade teacher

"This year has been more challenging than most, with several career changes and ultimately, underemployment. I'm thankful for not fearing financial uncertainty and being able to spend quality

"I am truly thankful for my happy family, including three daughters who make me smile each day. I'm also thankful to live in a great town and work at a university that is such a key part of this community."

~ David Meany, director of media relations, EWU

**"Of course I am thankful for family and health, but I am thankful for my new doggie, Millie, who had quite a journey, coming from a high-kill shelter. She is sweet, beautiful and so loving. We really are blessed considering she came sight unseen."**

~ Heidi Swartz, operations service coordinator



"This year, I'm thankful to have written and published my first book. Everyday, I'm thankful that God cares, hears and answers prayers."

~ Blythe Thimsen, writer and editor

**I am thankful for my family and a group of friends who've become family, for having a job that is fulfilling, and the adventures life has given me this year!**

~ Pia Longinotti, English and Journalism teacher, Freeman High School

"I am grateful for my entire family, especially my boys (B & T) my friends (the Angels), opportunity and do-overs. Most importantly I'm thankful for God's grace and His willingness to meet me where I am."

~ Laurie L. Ross, author of Sip of Spokane

**"I AM SO THANKFUL FOR THE HONOR OF BECOMING A NEW MOMMY. THIS YEAR OUR LITTLE ONE'S FIRST BIRTHDAY FALLS ON THE DAY BEFORE THANKSGIVING. HAPPY BIRTHDAY, FIONA!!"**

~ Liberty Brewster, wife and mom, actress, Isagenix consultant

"I'm thankful for an intact family and a wonderful community in which to raise them! As a father of five, grandfather of eleven and father-in-law of four, all living less than an hour away, I couldn't be happier. I've lived in several different communities over the years but none of them hold a candle to the Spokane and Coeur d'Alene community! I'm very thankful and very blessed indeed."

~ Bryan Varney, family man

"My life is far from perfect. I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis after the birth of my first child. I was very sick throughout my pregnancy and was thankful it was "only" RA and not the "c" word (cancer).

I said that to one of the medical personnel and they responded by saying "you are gonna wish it was." I didn't understand that statement at the time but I have learned to understand over time. I am still thankful.... I am thankful

to wake up everyday, as there have been many times that I should not have. I am thankful for my wonderful, caring and so very patient husband who can walk out the door at any given moment but chooses to be with me. I am thankful for my two beautiful, smart, talented and compassionate daughters. They have endured so much in their short life and they continue to be positive. I am thankful for all of the pain and sickness that I have been through, as it makes me appreciate the "good" days even more. I am thankful for my family. I truly have the best parents and brothers and sister. I know I can count on them for just about anything. And finally, I am thankful for my sense of humor... without it I would be crying instead of laughing!" ~ Diane Davey, overcomer

**"I am thankful for my friends who are like family, and my family... definitely thankful they are my friends."** ~ Kristin Monasmith, director of public Relations, Shriners Hospitals for Children - Spokane

"I am thankful for Aloha Island Grill."

~ Theresa Berglund, food fan

"It's great to be part of for an organization where 100% of the funding comes from individuals and businesses in our community. People in our area truly care for the needs of others and give generously to help the poor. That's inspiring and we're grateful to God for blessing us with such wonderful support. Not long ago, we were short on hamburger for an evening meal so our cook gathered some Mission men for a quick prayer. Just as they concluded, a donor came in the back kitchen door with 50 lbs. of ground beef. Amazing! I'm so thankful that God knows our needs before we ask or speak them."

~ Dave Wall, director of Community Engagement, Union Gospel Mission

"I am thankful for my brother and sister and that the three of us can be together for holidays."

~ Laura Richardson, sister

**"I am most thankful for family - amazing parents, in-laws, Cindy, and my children Kelsey and Jamie; the opportunity to get an education, and friends who have supported me in the journey."**

~ Tony Higley, executive director, Community Colleges of Spokane Foundation

"Having worked with people struggling with poverty, for over 25 years, I am constantly reminded of how fortunate I am, and to be grateful for all the things I have: a place to call home, a car to get me to where I need to go, food to replenish my body, love of family to replenish my soul."

~ Mollie Delpae, executive director, Mid-City Concerns Senior Center and Meals on Wheels Spokane



"I am thankful for the love of my family, friends, and my wonderful fiancé I will be marrying in August. I am also thankful for the love of God that pours over me everyday."

~ Brett Ward, middle school student teacher in WSU teaching program