

**MAYFLOWER COMPACT 2.0**  
**Thanksgiving Eve –November 24, 2012 –Hebrews 11: 8-16**  
**Faith UP Church**

Question? Who attended the first Thanksgiving Dinner? Answer --90 Wampanoag Indians plus their chief, Massasoit, plus 52 Pilgrims. Question? Did they actually eat turkey at the first Thanksgiving dinner? Answer --There is no evidence that they did. What are the names of the two Thanksgiving Turkeys pardoned by the President yesterday? Answer: No, it is not Steve Smith and Stu Broberg; the names are Liberty and Peace. Question: What does the Broberg family make on Thanksgiving Day? Answer: Reservations! Last question: What was the first legal document in the colonies; the first social contract; the precursor of the US Constitution? Answer: The Mayflower Compact, signed by 46 Pilgrims, on November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1620.

The Pilgrims were off course and so landed beyond the Northern-most bounds of what would have been the colony of Virginia, where they were to have been colonists. Because they landed in a place where there was no lawful authority, many of the Pilgrims announced: "They would use their own liberty, for none had power to command them." So a navigation error was the proximate cause of the first political/ legal document, the first time rights were claimed by a group of people apart from a king in the new world.

The Mayflower Compact read in part: *"in the presence of God and one another (we do) covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil body politic, for our better ordering...and by virtue hereof to enact, constitute, and frame, such just and equal laws...from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the colony, into which we promise all due submission and obedience..."* From the beginning, it required this social compact, an agreement to be together as community, in order to succeed as a colony, or as a body politic, or as a group of people seeking a new land, a new way of being to be lived in the presence of God.

Our scripture from the New Testament book of Hebrews is the story of a people of faith seeking a new land. As it says, *"By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance..." (Hebrews 11: 8)* By faith the Pilgrims set out to find a new world where they could worship and live in freedom. Hebrews goes on to note: *"By faith (Abraham) went out, not knowing where he was to go...(v. 8)* By faith the Pilgrims were led to a place where they were not bound by any other earthly authority and so were able to write the Mayflower Compact. Hebrews says: *"By faith (Abraham) sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land..." (v. 9)* The Pilgrims landed in New England right before winter, surrounded by Indians, the beginning of the United States. *"For he (Abraham) looked forward to a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God..." (v. 10)* The Pilgrims were clear that their colony and indeed their very existence was wholly and completely reliant on the Lord God Almighty. From the beginning, America saw itself as uniquely called by God and uniquely blessed by God, standing in a lineage as the new Israel, the new Promised Land.

You know, today, I think most of the blessings of community, of life together, of the social contract, have broken down. A young man from Washington & Jefferson College is killed. Young people are drawn into drugs and gangs. People become sucked into generational patterns of poverty. All of this is because the sense of community has broken down. Bad things happen in communities when community breaks down. Bad things happen in communities when good people do nothing. When we say in effect, "No, I am not my brother's keeper." "I am not responsible for what happens to someone else". "I do not take responsibility for what happens here in Washington." When we feel completely

disconnected from one another and in a way then that allows in that vacuum, mischief and evil to flourish. When community breaks down evil may flourish. When compact breaks down then it is we begin to lose “the land of promise”, the place the Pilgrims sojourned to find. What the Pilgrims found was not so much Plymouth Rock as it was a community founded upon a compact founded upon God.

Now on this Thanksgiving I want to say I am grateful I live in a community like Washington. I chose to return to the county in which I was raised. I was pleased this past Saturday when the community marched against violence; when it said violence here is unacceptable, we do not tolerate it; we will do whatever it takes to make sure that it does not take hold here. People of differing perspectives all marched together and in the same direction. There were some very secular people there (probably uncomfortable with we religious types). And there were churches represented there (probably uncomfortable with those folks who were purely secular in their interests). But it required people breaking out of our little comfortable boxes, out of their comfort zones, in order to come together to symbolize what a rediscovery of community might begin to look like for us in Washington.

On this Thanksgiving I want to say I am grateful I get to have friendships with other churches like First Presbyterian 1793 and Faith UP Church. I am grateful that we don't have to agree all the time but nevertheless we choose to be together, to live together in a way that points to what community might be like. Us being together tonight is a sign and a foretaste of what community begins to look like.

**I say we need a “Mayflower Compact 2.0”.** I say, as the church we need to declare we are in search of the land of promise that Abraham first searched for, and that the Pilgrims sought to find, and that they covenanted and compacted together in order to forge. We need a new compact. We need the churches to step forward in spiritual leadership to seek with many other people of many other organizations, some with which we would agree and some with which we might disagree, in order to reform what has been lost –community.

1620 –the Pilgrims traversed the Atlantic Ocean in search of the new land; they discovered they needed a Mayflower Compact in order to live together in community. 2012 –we are still searching for that new land, the land of promise, a vision of that which God has placed in all of our hearts. We need a compact. We need a statement of who we want to be and how together we want to seek the new land of restored community together.

Pilgrims are always in search of the land of promise. It is our heritage. It is who we are. It is part of what we celebrate each Thanksgiving –people who are constantly sojourning in the land of promise, *whose builder and maker is God.*

May God bless us this Thanksgiving with blessings of community. And Amen.

*By: The Reverend Dr. Stuart D. Broberg, The Church of the Covenant, Washington, PA  
IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!*