

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

412 Cedar Street, P.O. Box 307

Paw Paw, MI 49079

269-657-3762

NOVEMBER
2014

Sunday services at 9:30 am
All are welcome to attend



ANOTHER SIDE TO THE STORY

Ever hear the old saying "There are two sides to every story"? The older I get the more I can relate to the truth of that statement.

I thought it'd be appropriate to write something about Thanksgiving since that holiday is looming on the horizon. Hardly an original topic, to be sure, so I thought I'd do a little research and see if I could come up with something new and interesting about this holiday.

Like most of us, I learned about Thanksgiving back in my earliest school days. As the story is told, the Pilgrims came to Plymouth to escape the religious persecution they were subjected to in England. During the first winter, more than half the settlers were unable to survive on the meager food supply they brought with them.

The Native Americans befriended the Pilgrims and taught them how to survive in this new land. As a result of this teaching, the Pilgrims' first harvest was overwhelmingly successful, and in celebration of their abundant harvest, the Native Americans and the colonists feasted and celebrated together on a day we now call "The First Thanksgiving."



I didn't have to do much research on the Internet before I realized that what I had learned about Thanksgiving was a mixture of both history, myth and distortions. It seems that many of the so-called Puritans who came to the new world weren't what we'd call puritan today.

They were victims of bigotry in England, but some of them were themselves religious bigots. Many were outcasts and fugitives who, in some way or other, did not fit into the mainstream of their society back in England.

Continued on page 3





Despite their Halloween disguises, you'll probably recognize Eva, Jeanie and Doris in pictures 1 and 2. I thought they'd look better in context so I added a little computer generated background. Special thanks to them for their extra effort to make the event fun for all the little urchins who visited us that day.

Pictures 3 and 4 are shots of the cookie sale during the wine festival. Eva, Phyllis, Joan and Barb are shown manning the booth.

Sorry Barb and Gerry. I had a computer failure that resulted in a loss of many of my pictures and the ones of the craft sale were among them.



Next page, photo 5 is of the ECW meeting held this summer and hosted by the Copeland's.

Number 6 is of our rummage sale at church.

Photos 7 and 8 show Phyllis, Barb and Eva decorating coffee cans for the upcoming annual cookie walk.



Continued from Page 1.

The small number of original colonists saw the Native Americans as a powerful force. A force they must subject themselves to until the next ships arrived bringing more colonists and thus shift the balance of power in the colonists' favor. In reality, they considered the Native Americans heathens, calling them instruments of the devil. They only invited the Native Americans to the feast so that a treaty could be negotiated giving the colonists all rights to the lands of Plymouth.

In recent years, on Thanksgiving Day, many Native Americans and their supporters gather at the top of Coles Hill, overlooking Plymouth Rock, for a National Day of Mourning. They believe that the theft of their lands and the destruction of their traditional way of life started there with the arrival of the colonists.

But of course the meaning of Thanksgiving today goes well beyond whatever may or may not have started back in Plymouth in 1621. Thanksgiving Day in America is a time to offer thanks, of family gatherings and holiday meals. A time of turkeys, stuffing and pumpkin pie.

Nearly half a century ago, President Dwight Eisenhower proclaimed Thanksgiving as a time when Americans should celebrate "the plentiful yield of our soil . . . the beauty of our land . . . the preservation of those ideals of liberty and justice that forms the basis of our national life, and the hope of international peace." Each of us might put it a little differently, but I think the vast majority of us could embrace that meaning.

One final thought...if you're one of those people who is able to trace his or her lineage back to someone who came over on the Mayflower, you just might want to think twice before you let others know about it. They may have ancestors who have lived the other side of the story.

