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Thanksgiving is a very special time of year for many of us. Our fondest memories tend to be of dinners with loved ones, some no longer with us. The aromas and tastes of the feast coupled with laughter and story-telling shared around the dinner table cement those memories for us, making them last a lifetime.

Growing up, you probably heard the story of the first Thanksgiving repeated over and over again in grade school. Some of us even had the opportunity to re-enact the first Thanksgiving. But even though you've heard it before, it is still worth repeating because it truly does remind us of how grateful we should be.

The story began in November of 1620, when the Pilgrims journeyed to Plymouth Rock, Massachusetts on the Mayflower. The 65-day voyage over "fast and furious oceans" was dangerous and miserable. Many of the Pilgrims suffered from seasickness, and two people died. One passenger actually washed overboard, only managing to save himself by clinging to a rope trailing behind in the water!

About halfway through the voyage, one of the ship's main beams cracked, making it very uncertain whether the ship could complete the voyage. Temporary repairs were made and the Mayflower sailed on, sometimes meeting with violent storms that forced them to drop sail and drift helplessly in the ocean. Although their destination was Virginia, they ended up landing in Massachusetts in November.

When they finally landed in this "New World," the winter was fierce. Most people stayed aboard the ship, trying to survive on whatever rations were left. Within two or three months, at least half of the Pilgrims had died, sometimes two or three a day, usually by starvation, scurvy, or other illnesses.

In March, members of the Wampanoag tribe finally made contact with the settlers. A man named Samoset, who spoke broken English, came first. He told them of Squanto, another native who had actually been to England and spoke English well. Squanto stayed with the Pilgrims at Plymouth for the rest of his life, acting as their teacher and guide. He taught them how to plant corn and where to fish. Without the assistance of these Native Americans, the Plymouth Colony most likely would have perished.

In the autumn of 1621, the Pilgrims and Indians celebrated their first successful harvest with a three-day feast. This was the very first Thanksgiving.

We are likely to face hardship at some point in our lives. Thankfully, we have stories like that of the Pilgrims from which to draw strength. In the end, I think Thanksgiving is all about realizing that when life throws storms our way, we can and will get through them ... and sometimes a bounteous feast awaits us when we do!

So this Thanksgiving, think about the Pilgrims and what they endured to make this wonderful day possible. Take time to think of all of the wonderful blessings that you receive each and every day. Give thanks for all that you hold dear.

In keeping with that sentiment, we here at Petra Financial Solutions want to thank YOU for your business and friendship. We hope you and yours have a very happy and joyous Thanksgiving Day!

**Mother Nature** – The United States has suffered 218 weather and climate disasters since 1980 in which the cost of damages exceeded \$1 billion (inflation adjusted value in 2017 dollars), an average of nearly 6 separate "billion-dollar or more" disasters per year (source: National Centers for Environmental Information).

**Less Oil Dependent** – Imports of crude oil into the USA for the week ending Friday 9/8/17 were 6.48 million barrels a day. In the last 20 years, there has been only 1 week in which the USA imported less than 6.48 million barrels a day of crude oil (source: Department of Energy).

**World Series Bound** – The Los Angeles Dodgers are the first team in the 148-year history of Major League Baseball to win 15 of 16 games and lost 15 of 16 games in the same season (source: Elias Sports Bureau).



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