

Faith and Freedom

"Lord our Heavenly Father ... look down in mercy, we beseech thee, on these our American States, who have fled to thee from the rod of the oppressor and thrown themselves on Thy gracious protection, desiring to be henceforth dependent on Thee, to Thee have they appealed for the righteousness of their cause..."

– First Prayer in the Continental Congress
September 7, 1774

Stepping into the doors of the Lucille Ryals Thompson Colonial Chapel at The American Village, one can almost hear the echoes of the founders of our country, as they struggled against the mightiest empire in the world for American independence and freedom. America's founders were people whose faith in God was a source of strength in their struggle for freedom.

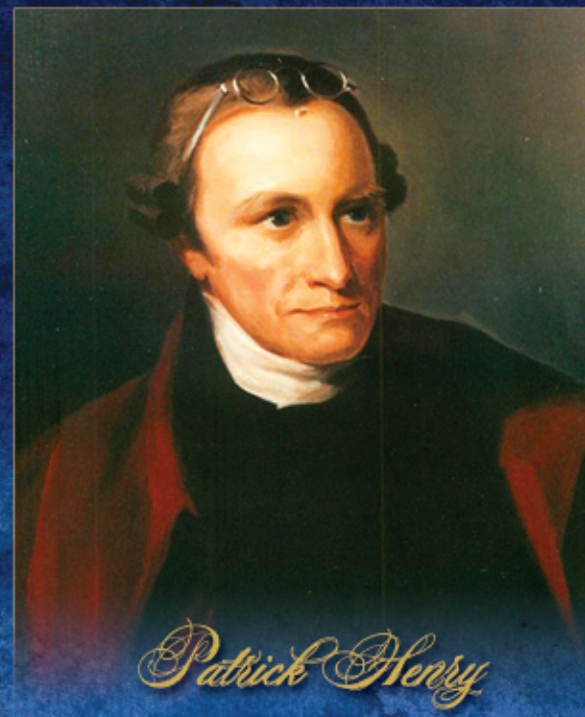


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George Washington

"The time is now near at hand which must probably determine, whether Americans are to be, Freemen, or Slaves; whether they are to have any property they can call their own; whether their Houses, and Farms, are to be pillaged and destroyed, and they consigned to a State of Wretchedness from which no human efforts will probably deliver them. The fate of unborn Millions will now depend, under God, on the Courage and Conduct of this army ..."

General Orders, July 2, 1776



Patrick Henry

"In vain ... may we indulge the fond hope of peace and reconciliation. There is no longer any room for hope. If we wish to be free ... we must fight! I repeat it, sir, we must fight! An appeal to arms and to the God of Hosts is all that is left us!-

"Sir, we are not weak, if we make a proper use of the means which the God of nature hath placed in our power.

"Three millions of people, armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations, and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us.~

"It is in vain, sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry, 'Peace! Peace!' but there is no peace. The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!"

Second Virginia Convention, March 23, 1775



Faith and Freedom

"Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof."

– Biblical inscription on the Liberty Bell (Leviticus 25: 10)

Francis Scott Key

"Blest with victory and peace, may the heav'n rescued land Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation. Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just, And this be our motto: 'In God is our trust.'"

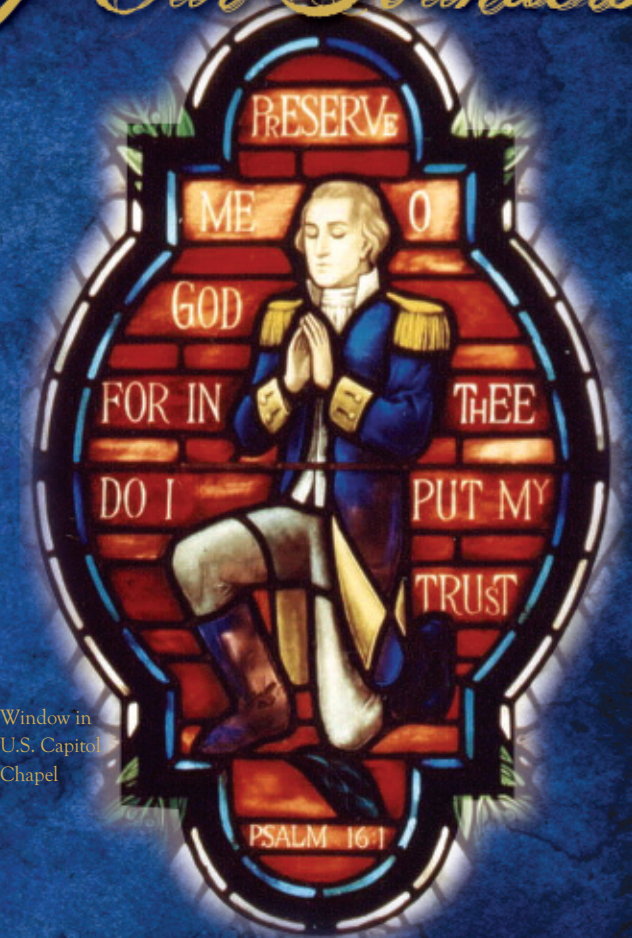
Star-Spangled Banner, Verse IV, 1814

The Lucille Ryals Thompson Colonial Chapel Foundation at the American Village is a privately-funded non-profit foundation. "Faith and Freedom" publications and events are sponsored entirely by private gifts to remember our country's heritage of religious faith as a foundation for our freedom.

For more information about the Lucille Ryals Thompson Colonial Chapel Foundation, please write to the Foundation at:

P. O. Box 6, Montevallo, AL 35115
or email: colonialchapel@americanvillage.org

Faith of Our Founders



Window in U.S. Capitol Chapel

George Washington

"...it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor..."

First Presidential Proclamation for a Day of National Thanksgiving, 1789

The July 4, 1776 American Declaration of Independence proclaimed for the world:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

It closed with this pledge:

"And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually affirm our oath and pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor."



"Resistance to tyranny becomes the Christian and social duty of each individual. ... Continue steadfast and, with a proper sense of your dependence on God, nobly defend those rights which heaven gave, and no man ought to take from us."

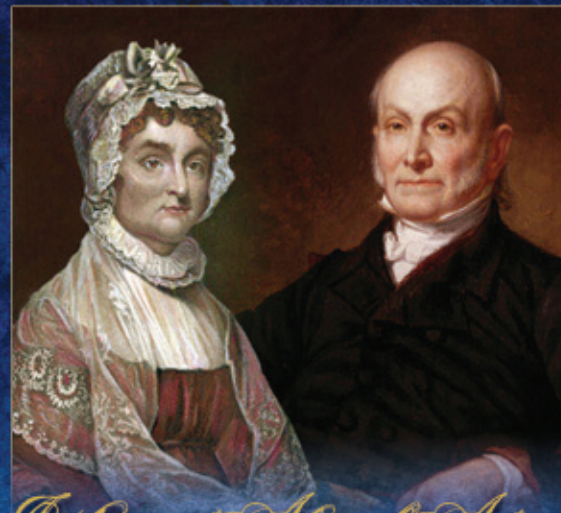
First Signer of the Declaration of Independence



Thomas Jefferson

"God who gave us life gave us liberty. And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people, that these liberties are a gift of God?"

Author of the Declaration of Independence and Third President, 1781



John and Abigail Adams

"...[it] ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty."

*Speaking of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence
Letter to Abigail Adams, July, 1776*



"The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, but the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Trust in him at all times, ye people pour out your hearts before him. God is a refuge for us."

Letter to John Adams, June 18, 1775

"The general principles on which the fathers achieved independence were ... the general principles of Christianity... and the general principles of English and American liberty... Now I will avow, that I then believed and now believe that those general principles of Christianity are as eternal and immutable as the existence and attributes of God; and that those principles of liberty are as unalterable as human nature and our terrestrial ...system."

John Adams, Letter to Thomas Jefferson, June 28, 1813



Benjamin Franklin

"In the beginning of the contest with Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayers in this room for Divine protection. Our prayers, Sir, were heard, and they were graciously answered...do we imagine we no longer need His assistance?"

At the Constitutional Convention, June 28, 1787

"The longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth: 'that God governs in the affairs of men.' And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid? We have been assured in the Sacred Writings that except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. I firmly believe this."

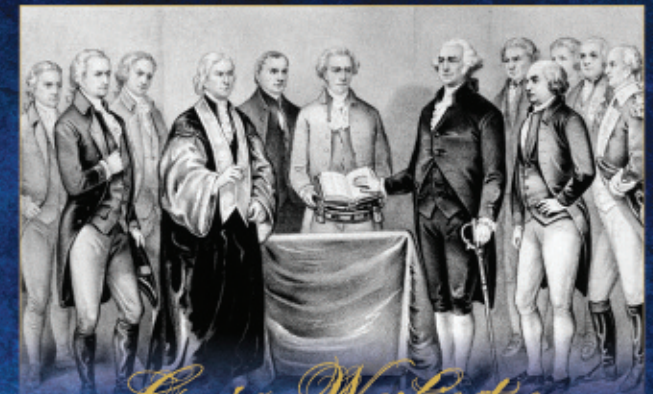
Constitutional Convention, 1787



James Madison

"It is for blessings such as these, and more especially for the restoration of the blessing of peace, that I now recommend... [a day of thanksgiving be] set apart as a day on which the people of every religious denomination may in their solemn assemblies unite their hearts and their voices in a freewill offering to their Heavenly Benefactor of their homage of thanksgiving and of their songs of praise."

"Faith of the Constitution", Fourth President, March 4, 1815



George Washington

While we are zealously performing the duties of good citizens and soldiers, we certainly ought not to be inattentive to the higher duties of religion. To the distinguished character of Patriot, it should be our highest glory to add the more distinguished character of Christian.

*General Orders (May 2, 1778)
Published in Writings of George Washington (1932),
Vol.XI, pp. 342-343*

"I now make it my earnest prayer, that God would have you...in his holy protection...that he would most graciously be pleased to dispose us all, to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of mind, which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion..."

Prayer for Our Country, 1783

"I can not omit the occasion to congratulate you and my country on the success of the experiment [in self-government, and] ... to repeat my fervent supplications to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe and Sovereign Arbiter of Nations that His providential care may still be extended to the United States, that the virtue and happiness of the people may be preserved, and that the Government which they have instituted for the protection of their liberties may be perpetual."

Final Address to Congress, December, 1796