

## PRESS RELEASE

7<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Immediate Use

### Thanksgiving/Illuminate Event: 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021

#### Thanksgiving/Illuminate 2021

On Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021, we will be working with Bassetlaw Foodbank to deliver an opportunity for people to provide gifts of food to help those less fortunate. This will be a way for people to give thanks for their own lives whilst helping others to survive in modern hardship. We think this would be a good way to commemorate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first Thanksgiving Meal held between the Mashpee Wampanoag native American people and the Mayflower Pilgrims in North America.

Donors will also have the opportunity to leave messages of hope on postcards which will be forwarded via Bassetlaw Foodbank to people receiving their parcels. To receive a positive message like this from other people, especially in the run up to Christmas, can make all the difference.

From 12noon on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> November at St Swithun's Church Retford, there will be a programme of performances and talks where everyone is invited to call in with their donations for Bassetlaw Foodbank (normal rules – cans, sealed packs etc). Donors are welcome to stay throughout or pop in for a few minutes – whatever works for them. Let's make this a great event for Bassetlaw Foodbank and the people it serves – no-one should go hungry in Bassetlaw!

We will be giving donors battery tealight candles to display in their windows on 25<sup>th</sup> November (Thanksgiving Day in 2021) and will be inviting them to take photographs of these to reflect the theme of Illuminate and share them on social media with the hashtag #OneSmallCandle, or send by email to [info@pilgrimroots.org](mailto:info@pilgrimroots.org). We will also support schools in creating their own Illuminate features and will invite them to send photographs for our online display.

The Illuminate activity is inspired by a quote from William Bradford, one of the Mayflower Pilgrim leaders who became the second and longest-serving Governor of Plymouth Colony:

*'As one small candle may light a thousand, so the light here kindled hath shone unto many.'*

#### Background

On 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021, the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first Thanksgiving meal will be commemorated. This was shared between the newly arrived settlers to North America – the Mayflower Pilgrims - and the local population who had formed an alliance with them – the Mashpee Wampanoag.

In the first year, half of the passengers from the Mayflower had died, having arrived at the start of winter, ill-prepared for what was to come. Members of the native population showed them which crops to grow, and how to go about it. A year on from their arrival a celebration meal took place with the settlers and the leader of the local Wampanoag people and one hundred of his warriors.

However the anniversary is not celebrated by the Wampanoag people today. The successful establishment of the Separatists was followed by large scale incursion by Europeans across the continent. Thanksgiving has been marked, since 1970, among many Native Americans as a National Day of Mourning.



Millions of Americans today mark Thanksgiving as a celebration of family and an opportunity to give thanks for what they have. People travel across the country to enjoy a meal together, usually featuring turkey. The original meal would probably have consisted of shellfish and cereals.

Heritage Engagement Officer, Isabelle Richards, said: 'I am delighted that we are working together to ensure the momentum of previous Illuminate events is not lost in this 400<sup>th</sup> Thanksgiving anniversary year. The Thanksgiving/Illuminate project is a great opportunity for people to share hope and solidarity safely, and personally give thanks for whatever reason.'

## Notes for Editors

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[www.pilgrimroots.co.uk](http://www.pilgrimroots.co.uk)

[www.bassetlawchristianheritage.com](http://www.bassetlawchristianheritage.com)

The Thanksgiving/Illuminate activity in Bassetlaw, North Nottinghamshire has been organised by Bassetlaw District Council Pilgrims Gallery at Bassetlaw Museum, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and BCH (Bassetlaw Christian Heritage).

Pilgrim Roots is a regional partnership including Bassetlaw District Council, West Lindsey District Council, Bassetlaw Christian Heritage and other organisations in the Lincolnshire, Bassetlaw, North Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire area.

Photograph – attached is a photograph of an Illuminate lantern jar by Stephanie Baines