



Local

Thanksgiving Day Service

November 24th. 11:00 a.m. Pieterskerk ~ Leiden

“I felt a respect and veneration upon entering the church at Leiden”

Abigail Adams

Good News! Now that Covid is under control, we are able to “gather together” once more. Please join us on Thanksgiving morning at the historic Pieterskerk for the traditional, non-denominational Thanksgiving Day Service. There will be a Catholic priest, Protestant ministers, a rabbi and a cantor. Our Dutch friends and friends from all nations and of all faiths are welcome.

This is a service for everyone!

Thanksgiving at the Pieterskerk in Leiden is unique. The Pilgrims lived in its surroundings from 1609 to 1620. Their minister, John Robinson was interred there. Some of the descendants of Moses Fletcher, a Leiden Pilgrim and subsequently a signer of the Mayflower Compact, still live in Leiden. Ria Koet, his direct descendant and a Dutch citizen, will tell the story of her family. The Koets are the only non-American members of the Mayflower Society.

On July 17th 1989, during the first visit of a sitting American President to The Netherlands, the Pieterskerk was the chosen site for President George H.W. Bush to speak. Standing in the resplendent Pieterskerk,

he said, "And it was from this place the Pilgrims set their course for a New World. In their search for liberty, they took with them lessons learned here of freedom and tolerance."

The Bush family trace their ancestry to Francis Cooke, a signer of the Mayflower Compact and a Leiden pilgrim. President Obama too has roots in Leiden – the Blossom family. In fact, thru the Blossom Family, Presidents Bush and Obama are distant cousins. A total of nine American Presidents are descendants of the Leiden Pilgrims including John and John Quincy Adams, Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

In Leiden, one feels how inextricably the values of the American nation are linked with The Netherlands. The story of a group of English dissenters who were welcomed and able to live and worship freely and even publish at a time when freedom of religion and the press were certainly not the norm, is a Dutch story, an American story and the story of all nations that aspire to be free.

The Honorable Shefali Razdan Duggal, the recently arrived American Ambassador to the Netherlands will speak and read excerpts from the annual *Thanksgiving Day Proclamation* of the President. Unlike other holidays, Thanksgiving is "proclaimed" each year on the fourth Thursday of November. Alderman Ashley North will represent Leiden.

The congregation will sing familiar hymns. One of them, "*We Gather Together*," is Dutch and known to Dutch people as "*Wilt Heden Nu Treden*." The American School of the Hague vocal group, JAKK and the concert Band will sing and play as well as artists, Adrienne West and Liat Alkan. The Scouts of all ages and "The Little Pilgrims" will present the colors and a Middle School student will read a Wampanoag Indian Prayer. Children and young people are always an integral part of the Service.

You won't forget Thanksgiving in Leiden! We hope you will join us.

Roberta Enschede, Coordinator

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Information: oarinl@yahoo.com tel: 0654253650

Anneke Beeuwkes, Michele Beier, Tove McGrew

CAR POOL, if possible.

Please bring some COOKIES for coffee time after the service!

Bron: The Local Expat, 17 november 2022