

FAST DAY PROCLAMATION OF THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS

from *The U.S. Constitution: A Reader*, p. 119

The petition of this Fast Day Proclamation was echoed repeatedly by Congresses in early American history.

DECEMBER 11, 1776

Whereas, the war in which the United States are engaged with Great Britain, has not only been prolonged, but is likely to be carried to the greatest extremity; and whereas, it becomes all public bodies, as well as private persons, to reverence the Providence of God, and look up to him as the supreme disposer of all events, and the arbiter of the fate of nations; therefore,

Resolved, That it be recommended to all the United States, as soon as possible, to appoint a day of solemn fasting and humiliation; to implore of Almighty God the forgiveness of the many sins prevailing among all ranks, and to beg the countenance and assistance of his Providence in the prosecution of the present just and necessary war.

The Congress do also, in the most earnest manner, recommend to all the members of the United States, and particularly the officers civil and military under them, the exercise of repentance and reformation; and further, require of them the strict observation of the articles of war, and particularly, that part of the said articles, which forbids profane swearing, and all immorality, of which all such officers are desired to take notice.

It is left to each state to issue out proclamations fixing the days that appear most proper within their several bounds. . . .

“Fast Day Proclamation of the Continental Congress,” December 11, 1776, in Worthington C. Ford, Gaillard Hunt et al., eds., *The Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774–1789*, Vol. 6 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904–37), 1022.