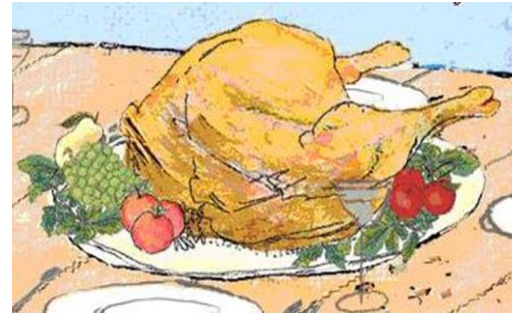


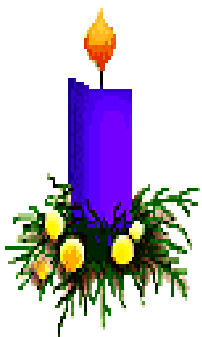


A Holiday Message

Is it coincidence, fate, or part of a grand plan that we would start this time of year with Thanksgiving. We all know the history of the holiday. It is also this time of year when nature “shuts us in”. The trees are bare, the temperatures are getting colder, there have even been early snows this year. What better time to slow down and reflect upon what we have - family, friends, health, food, shelter, and so much more.



It is truly a time to be thankful for so many things that we take for granted in the fast paced world that we now share with billions of others. Just turn on the television or read the paper. Despite our trials, tests, losses and tribulations, we have so many reasons to be thankful.



From Thanksgiving we move into the Christmas season. Depending on your faith or beliefs, the season means different things to different people. However you celebrate the season, it is a time that we should all put aside our differences and our thoughts about ourselves and think more of others and the season.

I once received an article reportedly written by Ben Stein and recited on a CBS Sunday Morning Commentary. Mr. Stein is Jewish as well as are all of his ancestors. In the article he says, "It doesn't bother me a bit when people say 'Merry Christmas' to me. I don't think they are slighting me or getting ready to put me in a ghetto. In fact, I kind of like it. It shows that we are all brothers and sisters celebrating this happy time of year."

Wouldn't it be great if we could all feel that way, and for the whole year.

However you celebrate the season, it is our wish that you celebrate it in peace and love, with family and friends, and safely.

