

1 **OVERTURE 89** from the Fellowship Presbytery (to OC)

2 “Issue a Declaration of Thanksgiving for the United States of America (USA) on the  
3 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Nation’s Founding”

4  
5 **Whereas**, God’s Word calls His church, “O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good, for  
6 his mercy endureth for ever” (Psalm 136:1) in whatsoever comes to pass according to  
7 Jesus Christ’s sovereign rule and reign over all men and nations; and,

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9 **Whereas**, we confess that “the providence of God doth, in general, reach to all creatures; so,  
10 after a most special manner, it taketh care of his church, and disposeth all things to the  
11 good thereof” (*WCF* 5.7); and,

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13 **Whereas**, a pastoral letter published and circulated to Presbyterian congregations by the  
14 Synod of New York and Philadelphia in 1775 counseled colonial American  
15 Presbyterians in solemn terms, “In particular, as the Continental Congress, now sitting  
16 at Philadelphia, consists of delegates chosen in the most free and unbiassed manner,  
17 by the body of the people, let them not only be treated with respect, and encouraged  
18 in their difficult service; not only let your prayers be offered up to God for his direction  
19 in their proceedings, but adhere firmly to their resolutions; and let it be seen that they  
20 are able to bring out the whole strength of this vast country to carry them into  
21 execution,” which prayers the Lord abundantly and affirmatively answered; and,

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23 **Whereas**, the Synod’s pastoral letter of 1775 further urged American Presbyterians, “We  
24 would also advise for the same purpose, that a spirit of candour, charity, and mutual  
25 esteem, be preserved and promoted towards those of different religious denominations.  
26 Persons of probity and principle of every profession, should be united together as  
27 servants of the same Master; and the experience of our happy concord hitherto in a  
28 state of liberty, should engage all to unite in support of the common interest; for there  
29 is no example in history in which civil liberty was destroyed, and the rights of  
30 conscience preserved entire,” which state of liberty the Lord was gracious, merciful,  
31 and kind to preserve; and,

32  
33 **Whereas**, colonial American Presbyterian preachers and pastors defended the sacred cause of  
34 liberty from pulpits across our land, including Dr. John Witherspoon, the only minister  
35 of the Gospel to serve as a delegate to the Continental Congress meeting in  
36 Philadelphia, who delivered on May 17, 1776 a sermon entitled “The Dominion of  
37 Providence Over the Passions of Men” on Psalm 76:10, in which he preached, “The  
38 knowledge of God and his truths have from the beginning of the world been chiefly,  
39 if not entirely, confined to those parts of the earth, where some degree of liberty and  
40 political justice were to be seen”; and,

41  
42 **Whereas**, God’s Word reads, “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers,  
43 intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are  
44 in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty”  
45 (1 Timothy 2:1-2); and,

1  
2 **Whereas**, the success of America’s War of Independence has resulted in the enshrinement of  
3 certain civil liberties and individual rights in the Constitution of the United States of  
4 America, including that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of  
5 religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech,  
6 or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assembly, and to petition the  
7 Government for a redress of grievances” (*First Amendment to the Constitution of the*  
8 *United States*), all which ensure the freedom of Christians to worship God as He has  
9 ordained in His Word, for “God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free  
10 from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are, in anything contrary to his  
11 Word; or beside it, if matters of faith, or worship” (*WCF 20.2*); and,  
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13 **Whereas**, the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) since its founding on December 4, 1973  
14 has ever and always endeavoured to be a national Presbyterian Church ministering in  
15 (and beyond) the territory of the United States of America as a Church faithful to the  
16 Scriptures, true to the Reformed Faith, and obedient to the Great Commission of the  
17 Lord Jesus Christ; and,  
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19 **Whereas**, the Declaration of Independence, drafted by Thomas Jefferson, working in  
20 collaboration with a Committee of Five, in a rented room in Philadelphia merchant  
21 Jacob Graff Jr.’s home (now known as the Declaration House) on the corner of Seventh  
22 and Market Streets in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was adopted by the Continental  
23 Congress on July 4, 1776; and,  
24

25 **Whereas**, God granted success to the Patriot cause in large part through the efforts of South  
26 Carolina Reformed and Presbyterian worthies such as French Huguenot Francis  
27 “Swamp Fox” Marion (c. 1732-1795) and Scots-Irish Presbyterians, including  
28 “Fighting Elder” Andrew Pickens (1739-1817) and the daring militiamen who served  
29 under General Daniel Morgan (1736-1802), who himself later joined the Presbyterian  
30 Church; and,  
31

32 **Whereas**, the General Assembly shall have the power: “In general, to recommend measures  
33 for the promotion of charity, truth and holiness through all the churches under its care”  
34 (*BCO 14-6.k*);  
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36 **Therefore, be it resolved** that the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly issue a formal “Declaration of  
37 Thanksgiving for the United States of America (USA) on the Occasion of the 250<sup>th</sup>  
38 Anniversary of the Nation’s Founding” on July 4, 2026 by publishing the foregoing  
39 statements together with this resolution, to be spread upon the minutes and published  
40 electronically by the Administrative Committee through byFaith.  
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43 *Adopted by the Fellowship Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 25, 2026*  
44 *Attested by /s/ TE Chip McArthur, Stated Clerk*