

Welcome

We heartily congratulate you on being accepted into the Masonic Fraternity. The Lodge to which you submitted your Petition For Degrees of Freemasonry has elected you to receive the degrees. Your Petition was read to the members of the Lodge at a regular Stated Communication of the Lodge. After you met three additional members of the Lodge your Petition was read again at another Stated Communication and then the members voted on your petition.

In Freemasonry, Light is taken to mean "Truth or Wisdom." Your decision to proceed further in our Ancient and Honorable fraternity in your search for Masonic Light is heartily applauded by your Brethren. Even among the most ancient societies, Light in the East was always considered to have a pristine clearness and brilliancy they equated with knowledge, wisdom, and goodness. It is the Divine Light that all Freemasons seek in their lifelong pilgrimage toward the Celestial Lodge, that "house not made with hands eternal in the heavens."

It is our sincere hope that you will have a better understanding of our Ancient Fraternity as we practice: The Brotherhood of Man under The Fatherhood of God.

This book has been designed to provide you with an overview of the three degrees of Freemasonry. Space prevents the inclusion of other important information that may answer your many questions. One of the best sources for answers are the many knowledgeable Brethren on your own Lodge.

What is Freemasonry?

What is Freemasonry, has been an important question for every Mason to ponder and answer. One common definition is: "Freemasonry is a system of morality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbols." The system of morality to which we refer as Freemasonry are exemplified in the degrees of the Lodge.

While it is difficult to say what Freemasonry is it can be said with assurance what it is not. It is not a cult, a religion, a secret society, or a political group. While Masonry is not a religion it is religious in nature. Belief in a Supreme Being is a fundamental requirement for becoming a Mason. Masonry is a charitable organization, an organization dedicated to strengthening a man's character, improving his moral and spiritual outlook, and broadening his mental horizons. Masonry seeks to make good men better; not better than others, but better than they themselves were the day before.

What do Masons do?

By example, the Mason extends the sphere of influence of moral values to his own community and nation; Masonry emphasizes personal responsibility for one's own conduct. Masons become better men by the positive reinforcement of association with men of like mind, and values, such as; honesty, integrity, brotherly love, and the pursuit

of truth. Masonry inspires men to stand firm against oppression, tyranny, fanaticism, usurpation of power, intolerance, and similar evils – from whatever source – that threaten our freedoms. One way the Masons fight against these evils is by supporting public education and offering scholarships for continuing education. Equal opportunity of education for all is a basic freedom Masons strenuously support. Throughout history Masons have done a great deal in the advancement of humanity, and society at large.

One of the most important things we do as Masons is to provide a working plan for good men to become even better men. Masonry provides excellent opportunities to develop both dramatic and public speaking abilities. It helps to develop leadership skills. Masonry moves quietly to increase the stature of human kind as children of God. Creeds have their rightful function in every land. Yet it is not creed but action that Masonry emphasizes. Masonry reinforces the good works of all religions in community service. Men of all faiths wear the Square and Compass of Freemasonry.

#### Masonic Contribution to Society.

Oftentimes, members of the Masonic Fraternity are either the present leaders or future leaders in their communities. Perhaps this is due to their Masonic involvement. In fact, it has been said that every time someone new joins the Masons, their community benefits. Many of America's leaders, past and present, public and private, have been members of our fraternity. Fourteen United States Presidents have been Freemasons. Freemasons have served with honor in the several branches of the United States Government and Military, several have been Supreme Court justices, and numerous have been members of Congress. Many signers of the Declaration of Independence were Masons. The principles of Freemasonry were prominent in the framing of the constitution of the United States. Masonry is a strong supporter of public education, constitutional government, and equality. We as Masons believe strongly in the freedom of religion and expression. Masonry is not a service institution but Masons are responsible, charitable members of their communities. Where there is a need Masons traditionally attempt to fill the void. Masons are active supporters of the several faiths of which they are members and many hold positions of leadership and service in their churches.

#### Finally

Only through diligent study can you begin to fully realize and comprehend the magnificence, as well as the significance, of our ancient ceremonies and their lessons. You are, therefore, earnestly encouraged to continue to investigate all of the various aspects of our Beloved Ancient Craft. We are confident you will discover, like the millions of good and true men that have preceded you in our Society of Friends and Brothers, that Freemasonry can and will make a significant positive impact in your daily life if you observe and practice its simple lessons of truth.