

Church of the Spirit - July 4, 2018 Newsletter

*"Freedom is not worth having
if it does not include the freedom to make mistakes."
Mahatma Gandhi*



This month Americans celebrate our independence. For 242 years we have maintained that freedom and it is what the United States of America stands for across the globe. On July 4, 1776 the Second Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence to announce that the thirteen colonies, then at war with the Kingdom of Britain, would regard themselves as thirteen independent sovereign states no longer under British rule. In part they stated; "When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

In 1886 the Statue of Liberty, a gift from the French people to the American people, was placed in New York Harbor, on an island renamed Liberty Island. There Lady Liberty greets all as they enter. A symbol of our American beliefs. On the plaque at her feet it reads in part; "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Freedom! Liberty! Equality! Freedom is the most important gift to humanity. We honor those who have gone before us, who fought and died adopting and defending the liberties that we still enjoy today. We have taken for granted all the freedoms we have which have become our way of life. But we must stay vigilant as there are those who would search to destroy our freedoms. We will carry on the fight for freedom, equality, peace and justice.

Our freedom story began as people fought oppressive English rule partly in search of religious freedom. Religious persecution is what has led many here. That is one of the liberties that we hold most dear. As Spiritualists we know that the freedom to practice our beliefs was not always an easy place to be. But we have those freedoms now as is evidenced by our ability to hold our worship services and include our messaging work, offer classes, workshops, exercises, suggested books, or information on seeking out a Medium for a full reading. We don't have to hide it or do it in secret. We have the freedom to explore any religion that interests us or seems like a better fit for ourselves and our families. Even within that freedom are more freedoms. We have the freedom to delve further into Spiritualism, searching for knowledge. Practicing our meditation and learning as much as we can from any resource we feel is appropriate. We have that liberty!

At Church of the Spirit and within the guidelines of the National Spiritualist Association of Churches we hold our regular Sunday services that include raising our vibrations through hymns, prayers, healing, meditation, a sermon and messages for all in attendance that day. No one is excluded. These messages are greetings from Spirit, Spirit Guides or a family member or friend in spirit that are meant to be just that, a greeting. A one to two minute message of greeting to let you know that someone in your Spirit family is there for you, sending you love and support or a word of encouragement in a particular area of concern to you, or an answer to a question that you have been meditating on. These

messages are uplifting and positive in nature. We read aloud our Declaration of Principles which are affirmations of what we hold to be true and already proven. On The first Wednesday evening of each month we have an all message service. This service is an abridged version of the Sunday service wherein all in attendance receive a three to four minute message and once you receive your message you may leave. We have the freedom to offer these services to church members, visitors and the community.

People go to church for many reasons. Some attend as an obligation or as part of a family tradition. Some attend different churches in their lifetime trying to find, in one place, the right combination of all they seek. Perhaps the most fulfilling experience is finding a sense of community, of family. At Church of the Spirit we have that sense of community, of family. You can feel it when you enter. A sense of coming home. People yearn for that feeling of belonging, of being involved in something that is uplifting, of being around other like-minded individuals. Whatever your religious affiliation finding your Spiritual home is a quest to find the right fit, to contributing to a common goal and growing as the Spirit you are, following your individual path on this earth plane. As tensions grow during the week having a respite for a few hours is something to look forward to. A place to let go of the injustices, the constant bombardment of our psyche on a myriad of subjects. A place to refuel, to re-energize, to expand our light of love and peace and to pass that light along to everyone we encounter. Spirit is all-knowing, all-loving and is always here for us.

Church is an entire experience not just one part of it. We could have just church and no Mediums with messages for all or just Mediums and no church at all. But that would not be the entire experience of attending a Spiritualist church. The goal within every church activity is to broaden your horizon of knowledge, of widening your experience in teaching and support. A church involves so much more than just giving messages or readings. It is a place, albeit just a building, (and we are blessed to have a building) but a place where you can turn to as you need, and to seek resolution of whatever it is that is troubling you. You have a community behind you that has your welfare at heart. You could seek out Mediums and get full readings for a fee, as often as you desire, whether they are Mediums from our church community or outside that community, but that would not give you the whole experience that happens in a loving, caring, open congregation with a Pastor that knows you or doesn't, but who you can turn to and who will give you the time you require to heal or grow or learn and offer advice if that is what you need. That is the uplifting part that we all need especially in these turbulent times. At Church of the Spirit our congregation is small but has doubled in the last ten years as people turn from their Christian upbringing or their childhood beliefs and are expanding their options. We have the Liberty to do that as we need, individually and as a group.

But Liberty, once again is under attack. We should celebrate our freedoms everyday and not just on Independence Day. What we have taken for granted is threatened by those who do not want Liberty For All. But, let's remember that we have some experience in this area! We, the People, are here to say and remind all that the United States of America is still and always will be that shining beacon on a hill. We must stand up and speak out when injustices are occurring. Together we can turn the tide of hate into a river of love flowing through and around us connecting us all. How do we do this? As Spiritualists we already know; we Pray, Meditate, Listen and follow the Natural Laws. Hope to see you in church!

Many Blessings,

Rev. Marrice

