

# **Declaration of Principles**

**Adopted June 12, 1940**

**by**

**The Most Ancient and Honorable Society of Free and Accepted Masons  
of the state of Vermont**

**F**reemasonry is a charitable, benevolent, educational and religious society. Its principles are proclaimed as widely as men will hear. Its only secrets are in its methods of recognition and of symbolic instruction.

**I**t is **charitable** in that it is not organized for profit and none of its income inures to the benefit of any individual, but all is devoted to the promotion of the welfare and happiness of mankind.

**I**t is **benevolent** in that it teaches and exemplifies altruism as a duty.

**I**t is **educational** in that it teaches by prescribed ceremonials a system of morality and brotherhood based upon the Sacred Law.

**I**t is **religious** in that it teaches monotheism, the Volume of the Sacred Law is open upon its altars whenever a Lodge is in session, reverence for God is ever present in its ceremonial, and to its brethren are constantly addressed lessons of morality; yet it is not sectarian or theological.

**I**t is a **social organization** only so far as it furnishes additional inducement that men may forgather in numbers, thereby providing more material for its primary work of education, of worship and of charity.

**T**hrough the improvement and strengthening of the character of the individual men, Freemasonry seeks to improve the community. Thus it impresses upon its members the principles of personal righteousness and personal responsibility, enlightens them as to those things which make for human welfare, and inspires

them with that feeling of charity, or good will, toward all mankind which will move them to translate principle and conviction into action.

**To that end**, it teaches and stands for the worship of God; truth and justice; fraternity and philanthropy; and enlightenment and orderly liberty; civil, religious and intellectual. It charges each of its members to be true and loyal to the government of the country to which he owes allegiance and to be obedient to the law of any state in which he may be.

**It believes** that the attainment of these objectives is best accomplished by laying a broad basis of principle upon which men of every race, country, sect and opinion may unite rather than setting up a restricted platform upon which only those of certain races, creeds and opinions can assemble.

**Believing these things**, this Grand Lodge affirms its continued adherence to that ancient and approved rule of Freemasonry which forbids the discussion in Masonic meetings of creeds, politics or other topics likely to excite personal animosities.

**It further affirms** its conviction it is not only contrary to the fundamental principles of Freemasonry, but dangerous to its unity, strength, usefulness and welfare, for Masonic Bodies to take action or attempt to exercise pressure or influence for or against any legislation, or in any way to attempt to procure the election or appointment of government officials, or to influence them, whether or not members of the Fraternity, in the performance of their official duties. The true Freemason will act in civil life according to his individual judgment and the dictates of his conscience.

**I hereby certify** that the foregoing Declaration of Principles was adopted by the Grand Lodge of the Most Ancient and Honorable Society of Free and Accepted Masons for the State of Vermont on June 12, 1940.

**Attest:** Archie S. Harriman, Grand Secretary