

## ABOUT FREEMASONRY

Freemasonry, also known generally as Masonry, is the oldest and largest fraternity in the world. No other organization has a man walk into a room full of strangers, anywhere on earth, and immediately receive welcome and honor as a friend and Brother.

Many have written over 100,000 books and innumerable articles on and about our Fraternity. Although we cannot present all that information here, we have designed Tryfreemasonry.com to provide you with a variety of useful facts.

Freemasonry does not recognize differences in race, color, creed, or station, and our history and traditions date from antiquity. We have two purposes: 1) inspire members to live by the tenets of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth, and 2) endeavor to build a world where justice, equality, and compassion shine for all human kind.

While we founded our philosophy upon religious principles, we do not serve as a religion nor as a substitute for one. We do not solicit membership but rather welcome men who have good morals and profess a belief in a Supreme Being. Any man who sincerely wishes to serve in our fraternity need only ask a member to receive a petition.

When a man seeks a Masonic Lodge, he enters an opportunity for personal development, character building, and the nurturing of leadership potential. Through one's Masonic journey, and his association with our brethren, a Freemason learns the skills and understanding needed to support his community and strengthen his family.

Medieval guilds of stone masons, who constructed the large European cathedrals, serve as the model for Freemasonry. Consequently, our moral symbolism draws from the art and science of those builders. As they labored to build an expression for a community's faith, so Freemasons today labor within their communities to build a finer place to live.

Our earliest Masonic documents date to the close of the Thirteenth Century. Present Masonic practice and structure, however, emerged only some three hundred years ago. Lodges of Freemasons began to accept men of prominence and learning, those who did not work stone. In A.D. 1717, four British lodges met and formed the first Grand Lodge and elected a Grand Master to lead it. Freemasonry came to Indiana in A.D. 1803, and today we have over 400 lodges.

Indiana Freemasons actively promote education, support stronger communities, and practice charity. This proud tradition continues through a range of community betterment programs, most especially our Hoosier C.H.I.P. program.

Perhaps the civic service of Freemasonry becomes no more evident than with the laying of cornerstones for public buildings. In these ceremonies, Freemasonry reminds itself (and all citizens) of our moral convictions and our dedication to others, which remain necessary for any well ordered and compassionate society.