



Anniversary of Modern Spiritualism March 31, 2019

Rev. Ken Nowaczewski, Speaker &
Rev. Keith Norton, Chair

Rev. Keith Norton

Good morning!

171 years ago, today, March 31st, 1848 Andrew Jackson Davis recorded, “About daylight this morning, a warm breath passed over my face and I heard a voice, tender and strong saying ‘Brother, the good work has begun – behold a living demonstration is born.’ I was left wondering what could be meant by such a message.”

The events which took place the evening of March 31st, 1848 with the Fox family in Hydesville, New York, are generally considered to have initiated the Modern Spiritualist Movement.

Hydesville was a small hamlet about 20 miles from Rochester, New York. On December 11, 1847, John Fox, along with his wife Margaret and their two daughters, Kate and Margaretta, moved into the house in question. The house had a reputation of being "haunted"; there were several instances recorded of raps, taps, and other noises. In fact, the prior tenant, Michael Weakman, moved out of the house because of the inexplicable disturbances.

Beginning around the middle of March in 1848, the Fox family began to be disturbed by the strange sounds and activities. The children were so alarmed at what was happening that they refused to sleep apart and were taken into the

bedroom of their parents. The sounds were so loud that the beds themselves often shook. Every possible opportunity was made to ascertain the source of the sounds, but to no avail.

Finally, on March 31st, Kate Fox made history. She challenged the mysterious unseen power. 'Mr. Splitfoot, do as I do,' Kate said, clapping her hands together. The sound instantly followed her with the same number of raps. When she stopped, the sound ceased for a short time. Then Margaretta said, in sport, 'Now, do just as I do. Count one, two, three, four,' striking one hand against the other at the same time; and the raps came as before. She was afraid to repeat them.

Then Katie said in her childish simplicity, 'Oh, mother, I know what it is. Tomorrow is April-fool day, and it's somebody trying to fool us.'" Mrs Fox then asked: 'Is this a human being that answers my questions so correctly?' There was no rap. I asked: 'Is it a spirit? If it is, make two raps.' Two sounds were given as soon as the request was made. I then said: 'If it was an injured spirit, make two raps,' which were instantly made, causing the house to tremble. I asked: 'Were you injured in this house?' The answer was given as before. 'Is the person living that injured you?' Answered by raps in the same manner.

I ascertained by the same method that it was a man, aged thirty-one years, that he had been murdered in this house, and his remains were buried in the cellar; that his family consisted of a wife and five children, two sons and three daughters, all living at the time of his death, but that his wife had since died. Upon further inquiry, it was ascertained that the spirit's name was Charles B. Rosna and that he had been a peddler who stayed at the house five years prior to these incidents.

The following statement appeared in the Boston Journal (a non-Spiritualist paper) on November 23, 1904: "Rochester, N.Y., Nov. 22nd, 1904: The skeleton of the man supposed to have caused the rapping's first heard by the Fox sisters in 1848 has been found in the walls of the house occupied by the sisters, and clears them from the only shadow of doubt held concerning their sincerity in the discovery of spirit communication."

"The Fox sisters declared they learned to communicate with the spirit of a man, and that he told them he had been murdered and buried in the cellar. Repeated excavations failed to locate the body and thus give proof positive of their story."

"The discovery was made by school-children playing in the cellar of the building in Hydesville known as the "Spook House," where the Fox sisters heard the wonderful rapping's. William H. Hyde, a reputable citizen of Clyde, who owns the house, made an investigation and found an almost entire human skeleton between the earth and crumbling cellar walls, undoubtedly that of the wandering peddler who, it was claimed, was murdered in the east room of the house, and whose body was hidden in the cellar."

"Mr. Hyde has notified relatives of the Fox sisters, and the notice of the discovery will be sent to the National Order of 4 Spiritualists, many of whom remember having made pilgrimage to the "Spook House," as it is commonly called. The finding of the bones practically corroborates the sworn statement made by Margaret Fox, April 11, 1848."

The Hydesville Cottage was destroyed by fire, September 21, 1955. A brick from the original building is at Camp Chesterfield, Indiana, and the Peddler's pack may be seen at Lily Dale Camp, New York.

Rev. Ken Nowaczewski

What is Spiritualism?

Is it a Religion? Is it a Science? Is it a Philosophy?

Does it deal with the living or the dead?

Does it have its roots buried deeply within ancient mysteries?

Does Spiritualism deal with "things that go bump in the night" or is there a more meaningful side to it?

How does Spiritualism relate to other religious beliefs? Is it in opposition to those beliefs? Are there any references to Spiritualistic Concepts and Phenomena in the Bible? What is a Spiritualist church, such as the Center of Enlightenment?

These are all questions which any serious investigation of Spiritualism must address. The study of Spiritualism and its implications to the matters of the spirit, is truly, a lifelong pursuit.

Knowledge is wonderful, something which the serious should always strive to attain. But knowledge alone is not enough. Once the objective facts of spiritualism are mastered, the fascinating process of transformation must begin.

That transformation is a process whereby knowledge (the acquisition of facts) becomes digested, assimilated, and synthesized into wisdom. (The use of that knowledge in order to further the unfoldment of soul qualities for the benefit of self and others.)

The **National Spiritualist Association of Churches** defines Spiritualism as *“The Science, Philosophy, and Religion of continuous life based upon the demonstrated fact of communication, by means of Mediumship, with those who live in the Spirit World”*.

Spiritualism is a way of looking at and living life which accepts the reality that we were created, first and foremost, in God’s image as Spirit, underlying all which appears to be material, there is a spiritual foundation.

Therefore, any religious or philosophical movement which accepts the reality of the spirit can be said to be Spiritualist in nature. You would be very hard pressed to find any religious movement that does not accept some type of spiritual force and consciousness underlying and vitalizing the human person. Therefore, Spiritualism can be said to be the foundation upon which most faiths and denominations are built.

Spiritualism, itself, as a concept of communication between those in the body and those in spirit, has been a part of the human story for centuries.

The Old and New Testaments are, in effect, a grand recording of ancient Spiritualism.

They talked about spirit intervention and communication from approximately 1800 BC to around 200 AD.

The beginning of Christianity involved several spirit visitations, and it is recorded that Jesus appeared 11 times after his death upon the cross. Jesus died in the flesh and was resurrected in the spirit, demonstrating the reality of ancient Spiritualism.

Beliefs in Spiritualistic Concepts were not confined to Biblical personalities alone. Bascowen, the famous Anthropologist, states: *“in dreams and visions the primitive Akkadians no doubt saw, as they declared, the shadowy forms of departed human beings. Inscriptions as early as 3800 BC on tablets, show their beliefs in ghosts and spirits”*.

The birth of the Modern Spiritualist Movement is most widely accepted as having taken place on March 31, 1848 with the events surrounding the Fox family, in Hydesville, New York. In reality though, Spiritualism is as old as humanity.

Spiritualism is the basic essence from which all religious thought appeared and continues to appear on this great Earth. As such, Spiritualism really belongs to no group, nor to any religious movement or denomination. It is a gift from God, given to all people, of all faiths and denominations.

Spiritualism focuses on three major concepts:

1. There is personal and conscious survival of bodily death (please note the words personal and conscious).
2. Death itself, is the transition from one realm of awareness and life to another.
3. Communication of some form between this world and the world of spirit is possible, provide that certain conditions prevail.

So then, what is a Spiritualist?

A Spiritualist is a person who believes these three basic concepts. We as Spiritualists have no creed. We have a Declaration of Principles, which sets forth the truths we accept. We believe in Infinite Intelligence (God) as a Religious Movement, our Ministers stand in the same position as any other denomination. We are accorded the same privileges, our marriage ceremonies are legal, our standing is just as high as that of any denomination in the land.

A prominent minister once said *“Spiritualists are men and women who are deluded. The whole movement is delusion, it is a snare, they are denying the divinity of Christ”*. To this we answer: we do not deny the divinity of Jesus, but we do deny his Godship. We do not deny the divinity of any man or woman.

Jesus was a manifestation of the consciousness of God in the form of man, who lived upon the Earth, and whenever he touched the people, they could feel his divinity. He could reach out and touch the center of Universal Power. We recognize Him for just what he was, a man born into the world as everyone else is born into the world, just as divine as anyone else, a divine spark of God, conscious of His relationship with all around him.

Jesus was called the Messiah, which means teacher, he was called the Christ, which means anointed one. He gave knowledge to the world, knowledge that he had gained by his experiences. We do not accept the sacrifice of his life as saving us from our mistakes or so-called Sins. We recognize that if we transgress, we and we alone must pay the price.

We claim that we make our own Heaven or Hell as we obey or disobey God’s Laws. We do deny Hell as a place of fire and brimstone. We do deny the location of Heaven. We place Heaven and Hell within the mind of man. We can live in either state of consciousness just as long as we want to. Heaven and Hell are not locations, but states of mind.

We do not believe in the downfall of man, because man is not a creature of spontaneous creation, but has been evolving throughout the ages. We believe that Jesus did heal the sick and raise the dead, because we believe that when man, the son of God is quickened with divine intelligence these things are possible because they are natural phenomena of life.

We believe that if Jesus had not visited his disciples in the upper chamber, if he had not proven to them that he had indeed risen from the dead, the church would have no foundation and ministers could not have preached the faith of the continuity of life.

We know that God has always spoken to mankind, and he is still speaking. We know through our communication, there is no death, that death is but another manifestation of life.

Spiritualism has added nothing to the truth of the continuity of life, all religions have taught the existence of life after death, but Spiritualism has added one thing to that knowledge and that one thing is: that the individuality continues, the personality continues after the change called death.

Other religions believe in the continuity of life but do not prove it. Spiritualists know that we are spirit encased in a body of flesh, which is mine, but not I.

In the philosophy of Spiritualism, we find that God does not condemn us or cast us out of his divine plan of continuity, and that we cannot be separated from him.

Spiritualism takes into its arms and into its heart all philosophies. It accepts the truths as given to us by the Christian leader, Jesus.

We find accepting them that none conflicts with other philosophies, but each brings with it the same truths and the same psychic demonstrations. We believe no one philosophy can possibly contain all of the truth. The philosophy of Spiritualism points the way to that which they know is within them. The divinity of God, and that we can never be separated from Him.

Truthfully, a Spiritualist can be of any faith or denomination. Spiritualism does not belong solely to Modern Spiritualists, any more than Christ belongs solely to Christians. Jesus came to show us all the way back to God, and shows us all the truth concerning spirit, soul, and body.

What Spiritualism does is:

- It teaches personal responsibility.
- It removes all fear of death, which is really the portal of the spirit world.
- It teaches that death is not the cessation of life, but a mere change of condition.
- It teaches not that man has a soul, but that man is a soul and has a body.
- It teaches that communion between the living and the so-called dead is scientifically proven.

- It brings comfort to the bereaved and alleviates sorrow.
- It brings to the surface man's spiritual gifts, such as inspiration, clairvoyance, clairaudience, and healing.
- It teaches that the spark of divinity dwells in all.

So why then, if Spiritualism has been around forever and does such wonderful things, why has the Spiritualist Movement not been widely accepted as some other religions?

The blame must fall in part on Spiritualist themselves. Something happened to detract the Modern Spiritualist Movement from its intended course.

The Medium became the message... The message of Spiritualism became lost amidst all the phenomena and hoopla surrounding the Medium.

The Medium, and what he or she could do or demonstrate became, for all practical purposes, the focal point around the movement and its religion. The Mediums became the High Priests and Priestesses of the Modern Spiritualist Movement.

So, what is a Spiritualist Church then?

A church which professes, as its faith and driving force, the religion of Spiritualism, as manifested through the Modern Spiritualist Movement. Such churches can be independent, such as the **Center of Enlightenment**, or they can be affiliated with the Spiritualist Church bodies such as this country's **National Spiritualist Association of Churches** or England's **Spiritualists National Union**.

The focal point of their worship service is the demonstration of mediumship, claiming that mediumship represents the proof of their religion. There is absolutely no conflict between our Christian faith and our open embrace of Spiritualism. We believe Spiritualism represents the missing link in Christ's resurrection.

At our church, the Center of Enlightenment, we teach all of these beliefs and more.

The Center of Enlightenment is committed to lives of unconditional love, excellence, integrity, and healing. People of all faiths can find a common spiritual philosophy of life under the banner of Spiritualism.

We offer a vast array of classes where one can receive Mediumship Certification and Healing Certification. We offer a three-year program of ordination into the ministry.

We offer a full-service ministry of weddings, funerals, baptisms, and counseling.

We offer a Healing Service each Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m. and Worship Service at 10:30 a.m.

We have an array of Mediums working each church service and most of all we will welcome you with open arms.

Rev. Keith

Pioneers of Spiritualism

Bang Sisters:

Widely known for their remarkable clairvoyance, slate writing, water color and oil paintings produced by spirit. All of their demonstrations were carried out in the most casual fashion and in common daylight. Examples of their paintings and personal items can be seen at Camp Chesterfield.

Andrew Jackson Davis:

Known as “The Poughkeepsie Seer” and “Spiritualism’s John the Baptist”. He had the gift of clairvoyance and heard voices at an early age. In 1845, he began to dictate his great work: “The Principles of Nature, Her Divine Revelations, and a Voice to Mankind” The dictation lasted for 15 months. He foretold the coming of Modern Spiritualism and established the first Lyceum (Sunday School).

On March 31st, 1848 he recorded, “About daylight this morning, a warm breathing passed over my face and I heard a voice, tender and strong saying ‘Brother, the good work has begun – behold a living demonstration is born.’ I was left wondering what could be meant by such a message.”

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle:

The creator of one of the most famous fictional detectives in the world – “Sherlock Holmes”. He was introduced to psychic phenomena while still a practicing physician. In the years between 1885 – 1888 he was invited to take part in seances at the house of a patient, a teacher at the Greenwich Naval College, a keen mathematician and a man of scholarly education. The phenomena (including apports being produced) experienced at the seances was too amazing for him and he secretly underrated both the honesty of the medium and the intelligence of the sitter. But his interest was aroused.

Following the death of his wife Louisa in 1906, the death of his son Kingsley just before the end of the First World War, and the deaths of his brother Innes, his two brothers-in-law, and his two nephews shortly after the war, Sir Arthur sank into depression. He found solace in supporting Spiritualism and its attempts to find proof of existence beyond the grave. His book “The History of Spiritualism, Volumes I & II” is a collection of his extensive research on Spiritualism’s history. He is known as the “St. Paul of Spiritualism.”

Judge John Worth Edmonds:

He was a U.S. Senator, President of the Senate, a Commissioner to the Indian Tribes, Inspector of the Prison at Sing-Sing, Circuit Judge, Judge of the Court of Appeals, and Judge of the Supreme Court of New York. He resigned the latter position on account of the outcry raised against his spiritualistic beliefs. He was one of the first to witness the phenomena of the Fox girls.

Fox Sisters:

Catherine and Margaretta Fox, children of John & Margaret Fox are credited with the investigations of the rappings which appeared in their home located in Hydesville, New York in 1848. The events that occurred at the Hydesville Cottage are generally considered to have initiated the Modern Spiritualist Movement.

Horace Greeley:

(1811 – 1872) famous American political writer, editor of the New York Tribune (which he founded in 1834) and an important figure in early American Spiritualism. When the Fox sisters arrived in New York in June 1850, he was their

first caller. The papers of the day were very negative in their reports of the Fox sisters and the phenomena. It was in these hard times that Greeley supported them by giving them publicity in his paper. In fact, he opened the columns of his paper to all who wished to express themselves regarding spirit communication. Because of this, he was named the “Abraham Lincoln of Modern Spiritualism.”

Daniel Dunglas Home (D.D. Home):

Born in Leith, near Edinburgh, Scotland. He came to America to live with his aunt in Connecticut but later returned to Great Britain. His work was done in England and France. Among the notables that he demonstrated his Mediumship to were Napoleon and the Czar of Russia. He was a wonderful clairvoyant and was known for the fact that he would not commercialize his mediumship. He is most known for his gift of levitation, which he would often demonstrate to small private parties. At one of these parties, it is said that he was levitated out the window of the parlor room located on the 3rd floor and re-entered through the window of one of the other bedrooms down the hallway, located on the same floor.

Nettie Coburn Maynard:

As a young woman, she developed trance mediumship. She was most noted for the seances she gave for the President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln. While conducting these seances, she gave the President many messages concerning the welfare of the nation, especially in regard to the Civil War.

It is recorded that her psychic ability and mediumship brought forth the message that influenced President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation. The seances that were held at the White House were always interesting and sometimes demonstrated the unexpected.

Usually a physical phenomenon medium was always present. During one séance, the piano in the room suddenly levitated. Several people, including President Lincoln, tried to hold down to no avail. The piano continued to levitate for some distance off the floor. The accounts of Nettie’s seances with President Lincoln can be found in her book, published in 1891, entitled “***Was Lincoln a Spiritualist?***”

Emmanuel Swedenborg:

(1688 – 1772) known as the “Swedish Seer.” He showed signs of psychic abilities as a child. He was in a sense the first Spiritualist. Those who went before him did not communicate with the spirits of the departed. Spirits were considered a different order of beings.

Spiritualism owes much to Swedenborg. He was the first to explain that death means no immediate change, that the spirit world is a counterpart of this world, that it is ruled by laws which ensure definite progress and that our conditions in the Beyond are determined by the life we live here. At the age of 55, he had a remarkable experience in psychic phenomena – a special revelation. He found that his spirit could be released from his physical body and travel into many areas of the spirit world, including other planets. He was told from then on, his work would be guided by spirit. During his lifetime, he mastered seven different languages, produced fourteen important inventions, including a flying machine, a submarine, an air pump and a fire engine. It would be another 300 years before these machines would actually be invented.

Honorable Nathaniel Potter Tallmadge:

(Feb. 8, 1795 – Nov. 2, 1864) Admitted to the New York bar at the age of 23 and in 1828 was elected to the Legislature Assembly. Elected U.S. Senator for a six-year term, and in 1844, he was offered the office of Governor of Wisconsin, then a territory. In May of 1852, his attention was drawn to Spiritualism, and in the spring of 1854, his name headed a list of 13,000 Spiritualists on a Memorial to Congress asking that body to appoint a select committee to investigate this claim of possibly communicating with the so-called dead. The document was 200 feet long, backed with canvas, bonded and mounted in a cylinder for preservation in the U.S. Government Archives. No official conclusion was reached in respect to the memorial and it was laid on the table, but it is preserved in the Official Archives, and there it shall remain as part of the record of our nation and its religions.

Famous people who were associated with Spiritualism

Thomas Edison:

(1847 – 1931) His family were Spiritualists, and he and his brother sat in seances even as young children. In “The Banner of Light”, May 2nd 1896, John Eggleston wrote: “Thomas Edison’s parents were Spiritualists. I have many times sat in seances in their home when this great inventor was a mere child.” And another stated: “I have known Thomas Edison from a boy, and all his father’s people. William Pitt Edison, brother of Thomas, was a pronounced believer in phenomena, as is Thomas”

Thomas Edison is known for his many inventions, but not all of them worked out. Of the hundreds of patents, one little-known idea from the 1920s sticks out as peculiar. Edison had planned to invent a spirit phone to talk to the dead.

President James Garfield:

(1831 – 1881) President Garfield was a friend of Leah Fox Underhill, the eldest of the famous Fox sisters, and he often joined her seances.

Harry Houdini:

(1874 – 1926) Famous Stage Magician known for his sensational escape acts. In the 1920s, Houdini turned his energies toward debunking psychics and mediums, a pursuit that inspired and was followed by latter-day stage magicians.

Houdini's training in magic allowed him to expose frauds who had successfully fooled many scientists and academics. He was a member of a Scientific American committee that offered a cash prize to any medium who could successfully demonstrate supernatural abilities.

None was able to do so, and the prize was never collected. The first to be tested was medium George Valiantine of Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania. As his fame as a "ghostbuster" grew, Houdini took to attending séances in disguise, accompanied by a reporter and police officer. Possibly the most famous medium whom he debunked was Mina Crandon, also known as "Margery".

These activities cost Houdini the friendship of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Doyle, a firm believer in spiritualism during his later years, refused to believe any of Houdini's exposés. Doyle came to believe that Houdini was a powerful spiritualist

medium and had performed many of his stunts by means of paranormal abilities and was using these abilities to block those of other mediums that he was "debunking". This disagreement led to the two men becoming public antagonists, and Sir Arthur came to view Houdini as a dangerous enemy.

Before Houdini died, he and his wife agreed that if Houdini found it possible to communicate after death, he would communicate the message "Rosabelle believe", a secret code which they agreed to use.

Rosabelle was their favorite song. Bess held yearly séances on Halloween for ten years after Houdini's death.

Abraham Lincoln:

(1809 – 1865) Believed in spirit communication and was guided and counseled by statesmen from the spirit world during his troubled times. It was widely known that the Lincolns held seances at the White House, the medium often being the extraordinary little Nettie Coburn.

During the Civil War, President Lincoln would invite Nettie Coburn to the White House to review his plans for battle. She would go into trance and draw out the plans for battle as she received them from spirit. When they would review the plans from spirit, they were almost an exact match to those that President Lincoln had put together.

After he was installed into office, the newspapers linked him with Spiritualism, remarking that he had been seen going to certain meetings. When a reporter from the Cleveland Plain Dealer asked him if this was slander, he replied: "The only falsehood is that half has not been told of the wonderful things I have witnessed." In the book "*Willie Speaks Out – The Psychic World of Abraham Lincoln*" we read that he received many evidential messages from his son Willie in the spirit world.

For both Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln, communication with the dead seemed natural. President Lincoln once asked a Union army officer: "Do you ever find yourself talking with the dead? Since Willie's death, I catch myself every day involuntarily talking with him as if he were with me."

Mary Todd Lincoln:

(1818 – 1882) Following the death of Willie Lincoln in February 1862, Elizabeth Keckley (Mrs. Lincoln's Seamstress) encouraged Mrs. Lincoln to consult a series of mediums. Mrs. Lincoln often visited the home of Mr. & Mrs. Laurie who were well-known Georgetown mediums. It was during these séances that Mrs. Lincoln was introduced to Nettie Coburn Maynard. Shortly after being introduced to Nettie, Mrs. Lincoln invited her to start conducting séances in the Red Room of the White House.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (American Poet):

(1807 – 1882) Met with regular sitters in seances given by Alice Goodrich, who was trance medium and was the daughter of U.S. Consul, Sam Goodrich.

Longfellow wrote: "The spirit world lies all about us, and its avenues are open to unseen feet that come and go. We perceive them not save be their influences, or when at times providence permits them to manifest to mortal eyes."

Robert Louis Stevenson:

Famous author. Was one of the first secretaries of the Scottish Spiritualist Association. He said that the plot for "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" came to him in a dream.

Harriet Beecher Stowe:

Was psychic even as a child, declared that she herself did not really write the classic "Uncle Tom's Cabin" from her own mind, but that it came to her in a series of visions. She said that she simply wrote the story as it unfolded in front of her.

Julia Ward Howe:

In November of 1861, Julia Ward Howe, the daughter of a well-to-do New York City banker, was touring Union army camps near Washington, D.C. with Reverend James Freeman Clarke and with her husband, Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, who was a member of President Lincoln's Military Sanitary Commission and a fervent abolitionist.

During the course of their camp visit, the group began to sing some of the currently popular war songs, among them "John Brown's Body." In one of those rare flashes of inspiration that leave their mark on the history of a nation,

Reverend Clarke was moved to suggest that Mrs. Howe pen new lyrics to the familiar tune. She replied that she had often thought of doing just exactly that.

The following morning, as Mrs. Howe later described it, she "awoke...in the gray of the early dawn, and to my astonishment found that the wished-for lines were arranging themselves in my brain. I lay quite still until the last verse had completed itself in my thoughts, then hastily arose, saying to myself, 'I shall lose this if I don't write it down immediately.'"

Mrs. Howe's lyrics first appeared on the front page of the Atlantic Monthly in February of 1862. Editor James T. Fields, who paid her \$5 for the piece, is credited with having given the song the name by which it is known today: Battle Hymn of the Republic.