

ARTICLE FOR COUNTRY GAZETTE

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Orting United Methodist Church

It's a free country!

Aren't we glad we live in a free country. We are free today because of the vision, hard work and sacrifice of many people. This freedom is a wonderful gift, providing to all "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." There are many around the world who are not free. I thank God for this gift of freedom.

Some think freedom means we can do whatever we feel like doing. "It's a free country," we say, and it sounds almost like a threat. Then we go about whatever we are doing without a thought about the long term results or how it might be impacting others. In Tanzania, Africa, they have a way of talking about people like this. "He's so free," they say with a certain shake of their head. To them this means that the person didn't think about anybody else but went ahead with what he wanted to do in the way he wanted to do it with no respect for the community.

Being free carries with it responsibilities to our families, to our friends, to our communities, to our world. We can't do whatever we want, whenever we want, especially if it hurts other people and grieves the holy spirit of God. We must be willing to give up the things we don't really need if that will benefit others. True freedom is about loving that which God has created as good, true and beautiful. It brings about an eager response to contribute to that goodness, truth and beauty by the way we live with others, the things we say and do, the choices we make. It may be by getting to know our neighbors, welcoming newcomers to Orting, attending and supporting our church. We are here to make this world a better place by giving of ourselves in service to Christ and others.

True freedom is given to us in Christ. When we trust and follow his ways of self giving love we are truly free. In following Christ we find freedom to receive the good things God wants to give us and we feel a desire to share what we have with others. The abundant life and love Christ brings to us, that we experience in the body of believers in the church, can not be kept to ourselves but must be shared beyond our own walls and boundaries. This is what it means to be free. In the Methodist Church we call it having "Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors."