

It is a great pleasure to welcome you once again to this very special day here in Rebild Bakker.

For more than a century, people have gathered here to celebrate a remarkable friendship.

A friendship that began long before most of us were born, and one that has endured through changing times and changing generations.

In Rebild Municipality we are proud to be part of this tradition.

This year's Rebild Festival takes place at a time when the relationship between Denmark and the United States is being discussed intensely.

Questions regarding security, trade and Greenland are at the center of the public debate.

Naturally, they are part of today's conversations as well.

It would be strange to pretend otherwise.

But that is exactly why I believe it is worth asking:

What is it really that we are celebrating today?

Are we celebrating a government?

No.

Are we celebrating a president?

No.

We are celebrating something far greater, far more important and far more enduring.

We are celebrating the people who, more than a hundred years ago, forged an everlasting bond between Denmark and the United States.

Thousands of Danes crossed the Atlantic in search of a better life.

They brought their hopes and dreams with them.

They built families, businesses and communities. Yet they never forgot where they came from.

That shared history is what brings us together today, just as it has brought generations together before us.

There is an old saying that it is easy to be a friend when the sun is shining.

True friendship reveals its strength when the storms arrive.

Friendships between nations are no different.

If we only engage in dialogue when we agree on everything, then dialogue has little value.

It is when the world becomes more uncertain that we discover how strong our friendships really are.

That's why the message of the Rebuild Festival is just as important today as it was when the first guests gathered here in these hills.

Some people have asked me whether the Rebuild Festival should still take place this year.

My answer is yes.

In fact, it is a very clear and strong YES!

Not because the world looks the way we wish it did.

But precisely because it does not.

The Rebuild Festival has never been about agreeing on everything.

It is about keeping the dialogue alive.

It is about believing that the relationships between people are worth preserving.

That is also why this year's Rebuild Festival has taken on a slightly different format.

We wanted the focus to be where it has always belonged.

Not on today's political debates - but on the historical, cultural and human ties between Denmark and the United States.

In my view, the Rebuild Festival cannot and should not become a political statement.

If it does, it loses both its purpose and its history.

As mayor, I meet people with different opinions every single day.

That is a strength.

Democracy depends on the fact that we do not always agree.

But I have also found that the best solutions start with people coming together, listening to one another, and talking to one another.

That is true locally.

It is true nationally.

And it is true internationally.

That is why I believe in dialogue.

Dialogue does not mean that we will always agree.

It means that the relationship matters enough for us to keep talking.

Respectful dialogue helps us understand one another better.

The Rebuild Festival has always been about respect.

Respect for our history, for our relationships, and above all, for meaningful dialogue.

In just a little while, we will gather in the hills for this year's celebration.

We will enjoy music.

We will listen to inspiring speakers.

Together, we will celebrate a tradition that generation after generation has helped keep alive.

I very much look forward to it.

My sincere thanks to the Rebuild Society for once again putting together an outstanding program.

And an equally heartfelt thank you to the many volunteers whose dedication and hard work have made today's celebration possible.

Without you, there would be no Rebuild Festival.

Today, Americans celebrate Independence Day.

It commemorates the nation's journey to freedom and self-determination.

But when we gather here in Rebuild Bakker, we celebrate something more.

We celebrate the simple truth that even the most independent nations do not stand alone.

That people need one another.

That friendships across borders and cultures matter.

That dialogue is always stronger than silence.

And that the relationships we build across generations are worth protecting—even when the world around us feels uncertain.

I hope that everyone who leaves Rebuild today takes one thought home with them.

Friendship between people is one of the most valuable things we have.

They do not become less important when the world is troubled.

Quite the opposite.

Friendships are not only built in fair weather.

It is in difficult times that we discover how strong they truly are.

I wish you all a wonderful Rebuild Festival.

Thank you.