



MISSOURI YORK RITE BEACON



*Seasons Greetings
From the Missouri Grand York Rite*

Grand York Rite of the State of Missouri

Missouri York Rite Beacon is the official publication of the Grand York Rite of the State of Missouri.

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Page 3

Grand High Priest's Message

Page 4

Grand Master's Message

Page 5

Grand Commander's Message

Page 6

Happy Birthday Debbie Hanson

Page 7

The Night Before Christmas, Down at the Lodge

Page 8

Hannukka: Light Overcoming Darkness

Page 10

Picture This....

Page 12

Happy Kwanzaa

Page 13

Capitular Education

Page 15

Capitular Development Course

Page 22

Between the Winter Lights: St. John the Evangelist

Page 25

Writers Corner

Page 30

RARA

Page 31

CMMRF

Page 32

Commandery Charities

Page 33

73rd Triennial Convocation

Page 34

Message from the Editor

Page 34

Message from the Grand Secretary and Recorder

Page 35

Grand York Rite Bulletin Board

Page 37

Springfield Chapter's 175th Anniversary

Submissions: All submissions of photographs should include a 40 to 50 word article telling who, what, when, where and why. Pictures should be high resolution jpg (s) from a camera (at least 300 dpi). Phone pictures should be set to high resolution.

Cover Artwork by: REC Larry Wilson & REC Donald MacCormick



Articles to be considered for publication should be e-mailed to:

<https://moyorkrite.org/missouri-york-rite-beacon-news-submission-form/>



***M.:E.: O.: Kevin M. Ritter
Grand High Priest
of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch
Masons of the State of Missouri***



Greetings, Companions!

Time flies when you are having fun! It does not seem possible that the Capitular year is already half over. I have really enjoyed getting to visit several Chapters over the last few months, with several more visits planned in the coming weeks. I am also looking forward to getting to visit our neighboring Grand Chapters in the next few months.

As we prepare to welcome the holiday season, I am always struck by the blessings I have seen in my life during the previous twelve months. The same is true this year. I am blessed to have wonderful friends and family, a wonderful, supportive partner, a job I enjoy, and the company of my Companions in Springfield Chapter Number 15. I also consider myself particularly blessed to be able to serve the Grand Chapter as Grand High Priest this year. Thank you, Companions, from the bottom of my heart, for the care, support, and friendship you have shown me and the Grand Officers this year.

The holiday season is often filled with gifts. Beyond presents wrapped and exchanged, our lives are filled with the gifts of time, love, and attention, freely given and received by those who we love and with whom spend our precious time and money. Thank you, Companions, for the gifts you give in supporting Royal Arch Research Assistance. I know there are Table Chapters being planned, donations being sent with annual dues payments, and donations provided in the sale of my coins this year. The work we do in supporting RARA is so important, and I continue to be amazed by the many gifts our Companions contribute.

I hope you all have a wonderful holiday season. Regardless of which holiday(s) you celebrate, I hope you have a wonderful holiday season, filled with friends, family, food, fellowship, and the joy and magic of the holiday season. As you consider planning your New Year's Resolutions, I hope you will continue your support of RARA and consider giving a little bit more this year to push our impact just a bit further. I hope that you will continue working to learn our ritual, whether you are a new member, a new officer, or simply want to learn a new part in a degree. I hope you will maintain your relationships with your Companions and continue to deepen those connections in 2026.

On behalf of myself and my partner, Cecily, I'd like to wish each of you a Merry Christmas, Happy Hannukah, Happy Kwanzaa, and a Happy Festivus (If you know what I mean). Take care of yourselves and each other, Companions, and I look forward to seeing you in 2026! Be Excellent to Each Other!

Fraternally,

Kevin Ritter
Grand High Priest





M.I.O. Dennis W. Houck
Grand Master of the Grand Council of
Cryptic Masons of the State of Missouri



Happy Holidays Companions,

As the Christmas season draws near, I begin to reflect on the many blessings I have received so far this year. In these moments, I reflect on all the Councils I have visited and the new friends I have made. This excites me and I am looking forward to the future journeys my position affords me. One thing about being Grand Master is that you may have everything planned out at the beginning of your term, and then something comes up and it changes the momentum of your tenure. As a leader, you cannot anticipate this, but you must be able to adapt to the unexpected and make it part of your journey. These challenges are part of what makes this such a wonderful position in our fraternity. You all have given me such treasured memories that I will cherish forever. Thank you my Companions.

I began this month by visiting Centralia Council Number 34. After a fantastic dinner, I was given the honor of presenting Companion Charles A. Goose with his 50-year pin and MIC Kevin B. Sample with his 40-year pin. As I traveled on in my travels, I arrived in Sikeston, Missouri, where I was lucky enough to be present as MWBro Bryson award Companion Ron Galemore with his 50-year Blue Lodge pin. Wow, these journeys and seeing MWBro Bryson brings to mind how amazing our Grand Lodge officers truly are. As they are constantly on the move throughout this great state and beyond.

Yet, as my travels continue to pick up this year comes quicker and quicker to a close. As we close out 2025, let us continue to look forward into the new year. On March the 7th, we will host the Grand Master's Chapter Day in Jefferson City. Following that, on March the 28th, we will honor the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge with his own Cryptic Day Class in Columbia, Missouri. Companions, we need to keep focused as we move forward into the future and keep in mind the continued growth of our great fraternity. It is because of you all that makes Freemasonry, Cryptic Masonry in my mind, the greatest fraternity in this world.

Everyone, Debbie and I want to wish you all a very Merry Christmas. Remembering that while you celebrate this wonderful time of year, let us not forget the true reason for this season.

Luke 2 VS 14

Fraternally Yours,

MIC Dennis W. Houck





*SK Ronald L. Skiles
Right Eminent Grand Commander
of the Grand Commandery of Knights
Templar of the State of Missouri*



Greetings Sir Knights,

On behalf of all of the Grand Officers and myself, we wish for all Sir Knights in the Grand Commandery of Missouri a safe, warm, and very Merry Christmas this year.

**The True Meaning of Christmas
A Celebration of Faith**

As twinkling lights glow in windows and the sound of carols drift through the crisp winter air, the season wraps around us like a warm blanket. But beyond the beauty and the bustle lies a quiet invitation - to remember why we celebrate Christmas at all. At its heart, Christmas is a story of faith. It is the story of a young mother, Mary, who trusted in God's plan. It is the story of Joseph who chose courage over fear. It is the story of shepherds who followed the call of the Angels. And, most importantly, it is the story of a baby born in a humble stable who would become the Savior of the world.

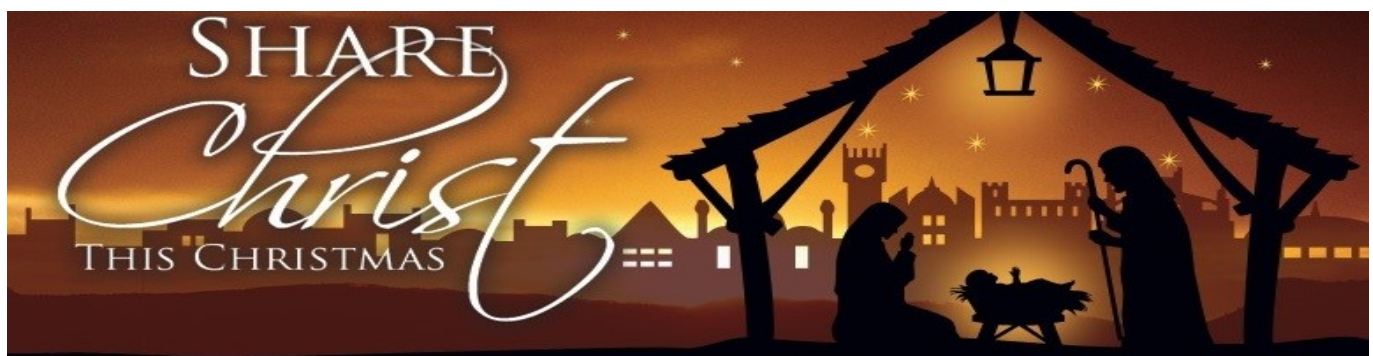
The birth of Jesus Christ is more than a moment in history - it is a reminder of hope fulfilled, promises kept, and love given freely. In the stillness of that Holy Night in Bethlehem, Heaven touched Earth. And, through that tiny child, the world received its greatest gift. For many, Christmas faith is woven through family traditions: lighting Advent candles, reading the Nativity story by a glowing fire, or singing hymns that echo through candlelit Chapels. These moments bring warmth not just to our homes, but to our hearts. Even in times of hardship or loneliness, Christmas shines with the comforting truth that we are never alone. God is with us - Emmanuel. That simple truth can carry us through the darkest nights with light that never fades.

So, as we gather, give, and celebrate, may we also pause. Let our hearts be still and open to the miracle of faith. May we welcome the Christ child anew and carry His love into the world around us. Wishing you peace, joy, and love this Christmas season. May your days be filled with warmth, laughter, and the company of family and friends. As we celebrate this special time of year, let us also remember the true spirit of Christmas - love, giving, and gratitude.

Festively and Fraternally Yours,

SK Ronald L. Skiles

Right Eminent Grand Commander





*Birthdays are the time for
Remembering special people
like you...*

*For the sweet person you are;
And the kind things you do
May life's special blessings;
Be yours all year through*

Happy Birthday

Debbie Hanson

*The membership of the Grand York
Rite of Missouri*



'Twas the Night before Christmas, and down at the Lodge.

Not a gavel was stirring, and in the hodge-podge

Of aprons and jewels and chairs East and West
you could savor the silence, most gladly divest

All metal and mineral, it mattered not,
since Christmas was nigh and the coals were still hot

In the hearth of your homestead, all Masons abed,
as visions of trestle boards danced in their head;

When up on the roof there arose such a clatter,
Our Tiler jumped up to see what was the matter!

He picked up his sword and ran fast to the door,
three knocks shook the panels - he wondered 'What for?'

He answered the knocking with, raps of his own,
and once the door opened he saw, with a moan

Of delight it was Santa, all jolly and red
Except for one notable feature Instead!

Upon his large finger lie wore what we knew
was compass and square on a background of blue!

'Why Santa!' he shouted and lowered his blade
'I see you're a Mason!' the Tiler relayed.

He looked toward the Master's most dignified chair
and said, voice near trembling, 'Most Worshipful there

Is a Gentleman properly clothed at the gate!'
The Master replied, 'Let's allow him - but wait!

You tell me a Gentleman, but I don't see
His Apron beneath that red suit, can it be

Our visitor hasn't been properly raised?
Must we offer a test that is suitably phrased?

'I do beg your pardon,' old' Santa said quick
As he pulled up his coat and displayed not a stick

But a cane with, engraving, two balls did appear
and oh, what an apron, he wore and held dear!

Adorned like the Master' complete with a sign

Of "Lodge Number One, the North Pole" on one line!

"Now let man enter," the Master declared, and once
in the Lodge room the Brethren all stared,

For Santa was wearing a jewel not seen
for many a century - there in between

The fur of his coat and the splendid red collar
gleamed two golden reindeer that shone like a dollar!

"It's Donner and Blitzen, who, I must confess
Are actually images brought from the West

By my Warden, a craftsman like none in the world!"
And with a great laugh from his bag he unfurled

An ear of fine corn and some oil from the east,
"My friend I have plenty, tonight we will feast

On all that is good! We are Masons, kind sir!"
A murmur went throughout the Lodge, quite a stir,

As presents and promises flew from his sack
This Santa, a Mason, showed he had a knack

For making this Christmas the best you could glean,
And soon even Deacons were laughing, they'd seen

On this very night only happiness reigned!
This jolly Saint Nicholas quickly explained

That only a Mason could be so inclined
to make all kids happy, make all people find

A Christmas so special, yes, Santa was right!



Who else still believes in Santa?....

Hannukka: Light Overcoming Darkness

<https://masonicmentor.com/hannukkah-light-overcoming-darkness/>



Hanukkah is a joyous Jewish festival also known as the Festival of Lights. It commemorates the 164 BCE dedication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem at the time of the Maccabean Revolt against the Seleucid Empire.

Central to the celebration of Hanukkah is the lighting of the Hanukkah Menorah (Hanukiah). According to Jewish tradition, when the Maccabees reclaimed the Temple in Jerusalem they found only enough intact oil to light the holy seven-branched Menorah for one day. However, the oil miraculously lasted for eight days (the amount of time need to produce more). For many these candles have come to represent the triumph of good over evil, light overcoming darkness.

Masonic Connections

First, “light” is very important in Freemasonry. Three times during our ceremonies a Freemason is asked what he most desires and he answers “light”, “more light” and again “more light”. Secondly, the temple that is retaken by the Maccabees is the Second Temple. It is the rebuilding of this Temple that forms the basis of two of the degrees of the Scottish Rite. It occurred about 597 BCE after the



Babylonians were overthrown by the Persians. Finally, the Hellenistic Period during which this revolt took place was a time that gave us Euclid and the great Greek philosophers. It lasted from about 323 BCE to 31 BCE at which point the Roman Empire dominated.

The Hellenistic Period

What is known as the Hellenistic Period began with the death of Alexander the Great and lasted until the last remnants of Greek rule fell to the Romans. When Alexander the Great died, there was a period of warfare between his generals over what was the Great Macedonian Empire. General Seleucus eventually gained control of the eastern portion of the empire, including what is now Israel.

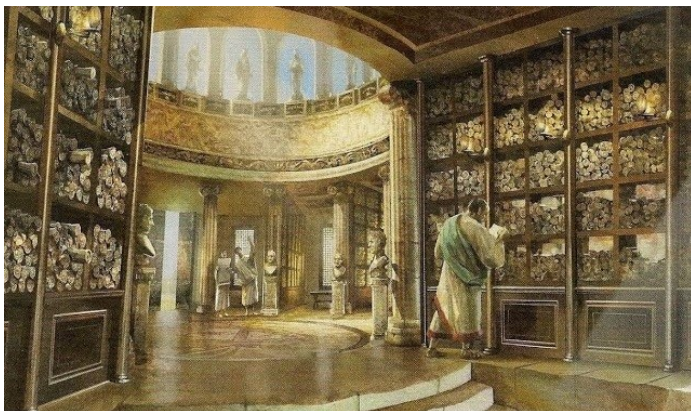


By Avantiputra7 - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?>

The initial period

For the first 150 years of this period, the Jewish people thrived. The Greeks were more interested in cultural assimilation than military domination. The great library at Alexandria was formed as a center of learning. The Greek language became the language of trade and intellectual pursuits. We see this in the translation of the Hebrew scriptures into the

Septuagint during the second and third centuries BCE.



Representation of Library of Alexandria

Antiochus IV

Antiochus IV became the ruler in 175 BCE and began to very aggressively destroy the Jewish culture and religion. He turned the Temple in Jerusalem into one for the worship of Zeus in 167 BCE. This triggered the Maccabean revolt. In 164 BCE the Temple was captured by the Maccabees and rededicated to the worship of God. Hanukkah means “dedication” and it is that re-dedication that is celebrated. Antiochus IV died in that same year.



The strains created by the Hellenistic influences continued, but the Jewish religion remained intact with worship centered on the Temple. Roman rule eventually replaced the last traces of the Hellenistic period in 31 BCE.



THE MASTERS CRAFT

The Masters Craft creates unique Masonic items for the Fraternity at large, when quality, artistry and longevity are desired. The Masters Craft is owned and operated by W. Bro. John Bridegroom, Past Most Illustrious Grand Master of Indiana. Being deeply impressed by the artistry of items in the Masonic Fraternity's history, we desire to continue that tradition in the Masters Craft.

<https://themasterscraft.net/>

Picture This.....



Region 6 Commandery Christmas Celebration with approx. 55 guests greeting Excelsior Chapter of DeMolay, Jackson Bethel Jobs Daughters, and F&AM PHA. A great meal and a great time was had by all.



KILWINNING COUNCIL NO. 19 **ALLIED MASONIC DEGREES** **INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS**

We are pleased to introduce the 2026 officers of Kilwinning Council Number 19. This years officer line is as follows:

Sovereign Master – Martin Mauldin
Senior Warden – Doug McDonald
Senior Deacon – Brad Fowler
Junior Warden – Steven Bright
Junior Deacon – Will Jennens
Treasurer – Stanton T. Brown II
Chaplain – Mark Schroer
Secretary – Lloyd G. Lyon
Tyler – Joe Wasson

Our Installing Officers:

Installing Master – Ven. Bro. Lloyd G Lyon
Installing Marshal – Ven. Bro. Donald E. Gilkerson
Installing Chaplain – Ven. Bro. David B. Brown
Installing Senior Warden – Ven. Bro. Frank Abshier



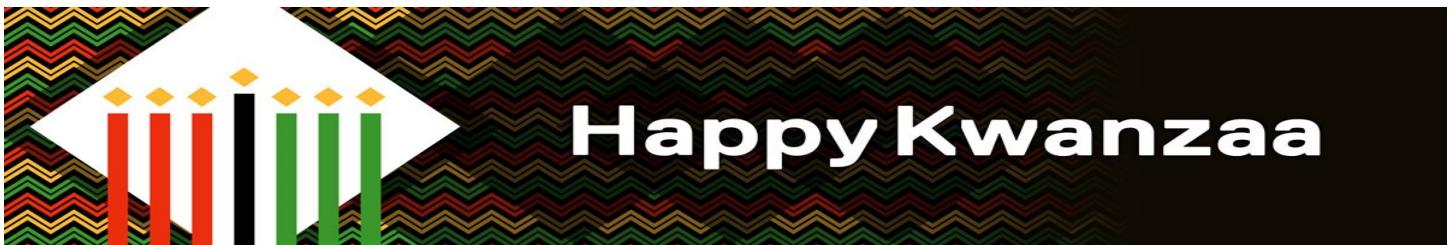
L to r: Installing Marshal – Ven. Bro. Donald E. Gilkerson, Installing Sovereign Master – Ven. Bro. Lloyd G Lyon, 2026 Sovereign Master Martin Mauldin, Installing Chaplain – Ven. Bro. David B. Brown, Installing Senior Warden – Ven. Bro. Frank Abshier

Congratulations to all the Kilwinning Council Number 19 officers and members on a wonderful installation. May you all have a wonderful year.

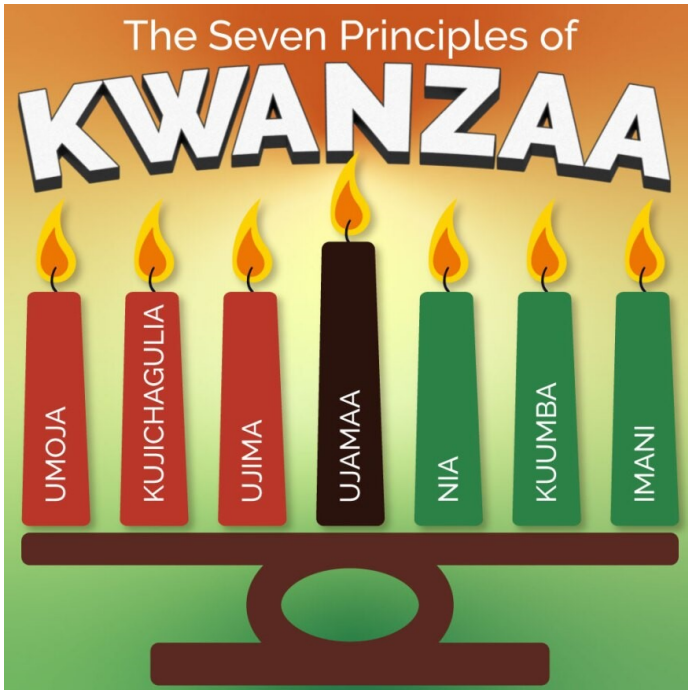


l. to r. Donald E. Gilkerson-Installing Marshal, Brad Fowler-Senor Deacon, Doug McDonald, Lloyd G Lyon-Secretary (Installing Master), Martin Mauldin-2026 Sovereign Master, Frank Abshier-Immediate Past Sovereign Master, Steven Bright-Junior Warden, Will Jennens-Junior Deacon.





Kwanzaa is an annual African American and pan-African cultural celebration held from December 26 to January 1. It is not a religious holiday, but a cultural one that celebrates African heritage, community, and unity.



Key Aspects of Kwanzaa

Meaning: The name Kwanzaa is derived from the Swahili phrase *matunda ya kwanza*, which means "first fruits".

Origin: It was created in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga in the aftermath of the Watts riots as a way to provide African Americans an opportunity to celebrate their own history and culture.

Principles (Nguzo Saba): The celebration focuses on Seven Principles, with one discussed each day. These principles are values that reinforce community among African-Americans:

1. Umoja (Unity)
2. Kujichagulia (Self-Determination)
3. Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility)
4. Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics)
5. Nia (Purpose)
6. Kuumba (Creativity)

7. Imani (Faith)

Symbols and Rituals: Families often decorate with the Pan-African colors of black, red, and green, and use several key symbols, including a Kinara (candle holder), Mkeka (mat), and Muhindi (corn to represent children). A candle is lit on the Kinara each night to represent the daily principle.

Celebration: Celebrations can include songs, dances, storytelling, poetry reading, and a large traditional feast called Karamu held on December 31.



Fri, Dec 26, 2025 – Thu, Jan 1, 2026

United States





Capitular Education 2025-2026

Greg Walker, Chairman

Committee:

REC Donald MacCormick, VEC Lloyd Lyon, VEC Nick Young,

VEC Doug Rose, VEC James Bell

Companions all,

Winter officially starts December 21 or 22 depending on where you are located - The Winter Solstice. But it seems the winter weather has arrived in Missouri far sooner than the date. We are already seeing cancellations of Masonic events due to inclement weather. While we do not like the extra work of rescheduling a degree or meeting, sometimes it is in the best interest of all involved to err on the side of safety and caution. We hope that you can get your Chapter degree work completed as scheduled and you continue to teach the new members all about Capitular Masonry.

This month's reading begins a study of the Most Excellent Master degree. For anyone who has attended a Grand Master's Royal Arch Class, you have witnessed some of the best ritual from across the state, but particularly one of the best renditions of King Solomon at the dedication of the temple by VEC Miles Lansing. It's always a pleasure to watch ritual being performed with passion as well as precision.

Grand Chapter Capitular Education Series - December 2025

Most Excellent Master

The Most Excellent Master degree is, in reality, the culmination of the degrees of EA, FC, Mark Master, Select Master, Royal Master, and Master Mason.

If you follow this timeline, the MEM Degree is the 7th degree in York Rite Masonry. And, fittingly, it is the completion of the Temple degree which is then followed by rest, or the Sabbath, the 7th Day. I would be interested in having a discussion with our Ritual Committee regarding the last section of the reading for this month! It seems like a logical ceremony to include in our degree. There is also a nice shout-out to our Companions in Kansas City in the "Brief History" section of this reading. For this month you will read and discuss the following sections:

- **Brief History**
- **Purpose of the Degree**
- **The Six Circumambulations**
- **The Obligation, Penalty, Grip and Word**
- **The Completion of the Temple**
- **Removal of the Aprons**

Our education series will follow this schedule:

1. **December 2025:** Most Excellent Master Degree
2. **January 2026:** Most Excellent Master Degree, completion including quiz and open-ended question
3. **February 2026:** Royal Arch Degree
4. **March 2026:** Royal Arch Degree, continues
5. **April 2026:** Royal Arch Degree, continues
6. **May 2026:** Royal Arch Degree, completion including quiz and open-ended question
7. **June 2026:** Wrap up of education for the year and a short expose on a passage of scripture from the Royal Arch Degree ritual from the role of Jeshua, the High Priest.

This schedule may not fit all Chapters perfectly, but it is suggested that your members come prepared with a copy of The Beacon in hand, print or digital, to your meetings so that they may take part in the group readings and discussion that follows.

Merry Christmas from Missouri Shriners

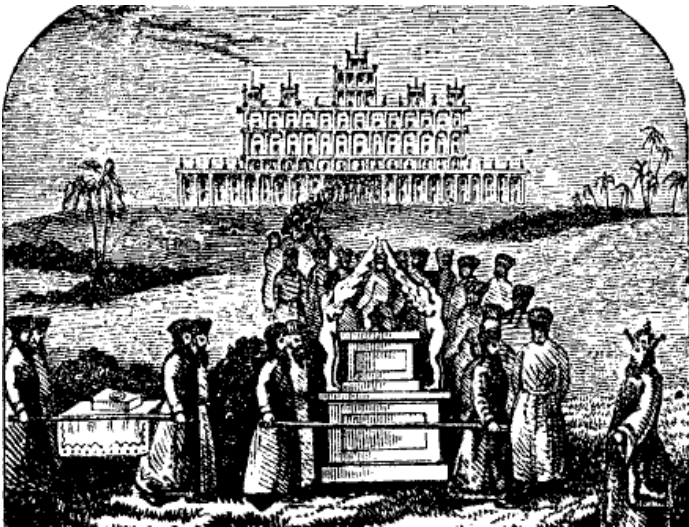


Merry

Missouri
IORG
LEADERSHIP SERVICE SISTERHOOD

Christmas

Capitular Development Course



MOST EXCELLENT MASTER DEGREE

Brief History

The Symbolic Degrees are set in the nearly completed Temple of King Solomon, as is the Mark Degree. The more elaborate Actual Past Master's Degree, as practiced in England at least from the mid-1800s, and in the longer explanation in the Ritual practiced in some States, is set in the Temple at a time following its completion and dedication and describes the visit of the Queen of Sheba to see the Temple with her own eyes. In the Royal Arch Degree we will move forward several hundred years in history to a time when Solomon's Temple lies in



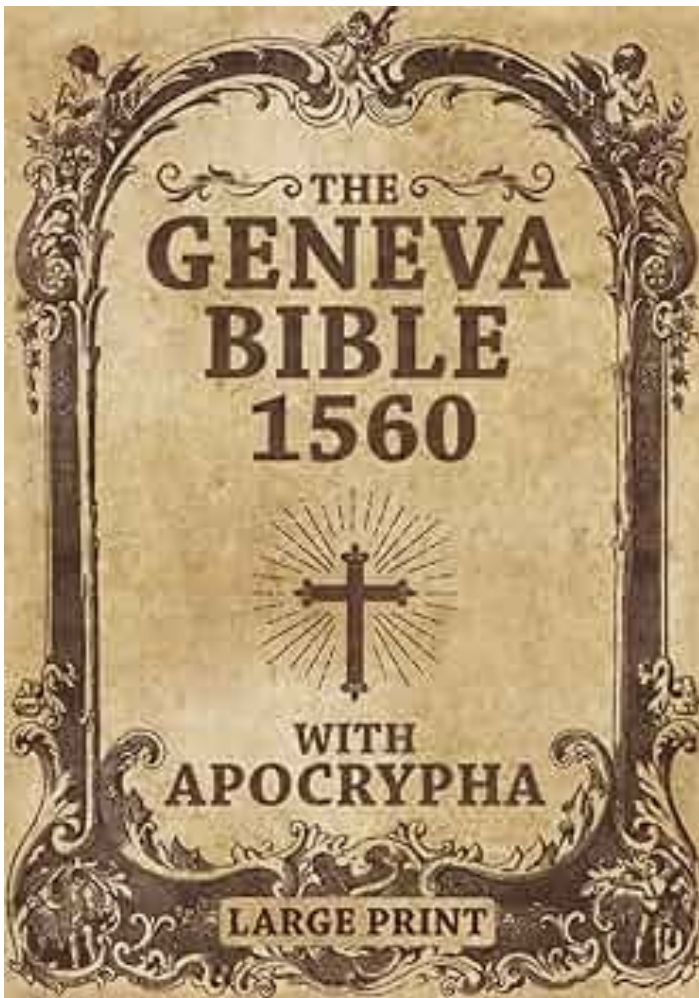
Solomon and Queen of Sheba by Giovanni Demin

ruins. Masonry abhors a vacuum, and it was perhaps inevitable that at some point a ritual would be written which covered perhaps the most important moment in the story of King Solomon's Temple: its completion and dedication.

There is a symbolic and esoteric reason why this story needed to be told, too. How are we to move from the story of an incomplete Temple which is meant to represent that Temple we are building within ourselves, to the rebuilding of the Second Temple and discovery of Truth, if we never completed the first task?

Given these facts it would be quite easy to believe in the long-told story that it was Thomas Smith Webb who penned the Ritual for Most Excellent Master, in order to create the perfect conclusion to the Blue Lodge system and the transition into the Red Degree of Holy Royal Arch. Indeed, that is what many researchers both assumed and wrote in their books. However, the story is far more complicated than that.

In the previous session we learned that St. Andrew's Royal Arch Lodge conferred the Excellent Master Degree, which is believed to be an early form of the Past Master Degree. However, they also conferred a Degree called the Super Excellent Master (not to be confused with the Degree of the same name conferred in a Cryptic Council). The name 'Excellent' was already used in several degrees in existence in the mid-1700s. While a number of members had connections with Irish Masonry, which included Degrees with names such as 'Excellent' and 'Excellent', there is a likely candidate in the 19th Degree of Scottish Early Grand Rite, called 'Most Excellent Master', which closely resembles our present Degree. The Candidate is admitted on the Keystone, and the Most Excellent Master who presides tells the Candidate: "This degree was founded to commemorate the finishing of the first Temple..." It is the conclusion of the authors of the official history of the Royal Arch Degrees, commissioned by the General Grand Chapter, that this is the most probable source of the Most Excellent Master Degree, despite the fact that there is no clear trail showing how the Degree



traveled from Scotland to America. They add the interesting comment that the name ‘Excellent’ almost certainly came from the Geneva Bible (which was commonly in use in the colonies at the time, alongside the King James Bible, from a footnote to I Kings, 5:18 which said: “The Ebrew worde is Giblim which some say, were excellent masons” (sic).

Also of note, while the Degree might have come from Scotland, the Degree called ‘Excellent’ in their system nowadays is a required precursor to receiving the Royal Arch Degree, but its Ritual now encompasses the Passing of the Veils. It was also noted above that some researchers believe the Most Excellent Master Degree may originally have been a part of an extended version of the Mark Degree, in which the Keystone, having been lost and found, was then used to complete the Temple.

Whatever its origin, it was not the original work of Thomas Smith Webb. Records show that, in 1783, St. John’s Lodge No. 2 in Middletown, Connecticut formed a Chapter, at which several members were introduced into the “sublime degree of most excellent Masons.” However, the records show the ceremony took no longer than 30 minutes, which would scarcely have allowed time to place the

Keystone, and certainly not enough time to perform the Dedication Ceremony.

In the 1797 Temple Chapter, a Royal Arch Chapter, was founded in Albany by Webb and others, with Webb being installed as High Priest. At the following meeting, in mid-February, five Candidates (Ezra Ames among them) had the Degree of Most Excellent Master conferred upon them. However, Webb and his colleague, John Hanmer had already learned of this Degree in 1796, when they visited Cyrus and St. Andrew’s Chapters. The version they observed and recorded was the shorter one which only included the placing of the Keystone. While not the author of the Most Excellent Master Degree, most researchers are confident that he was the ritualist who expanded the Degree into its present form, including the important processions and the Dedication of the Temple.



Interior of Old Convention Hall, Kansas City

While this Degree can be performed with dignity by a relatively small cast, it has always been the one which has attracted the most opulent performances. Of course, modern laws forbid the burning of incense or the lighting of banks of candles in many locations, and in particular the extravagant pyrotechnics which were the culmination of this Degree, when the Shekinah descended from heaven to light the pot of incense. In 1922 in the old Convention Hall in Kansas City, Missouri, in the presence of the General Grand High Priest, Dr. William Frederick Kuhn, over one thousand Candidates received the Degree before an audience of over eight thousand Companions. A seventy-five-piece orchestra and one hundred fifty-strong choir provided the music; and the processions contained between two or three hundred participants! However, the opulence of the Ritual should not take away from the important message: that one cycle has ended and a new cycle – a more spiritual one – is about to begin.

Purpose of the Degree

The Degree is what is sometimes called a ‘pivot

Degree', in that it completes one story cycle and prepares for the next cycle. Indeed, in mainland Europe the Royal arch has played such a role in the past: in both the Rite of Strict Observance of Baron von Hund and the Scottish Rectified Rite of Jean-Baptiste Willermoz in the late 1700s, both being Christian Orders, the Royal Arch story was used to lead the candidates from the Old Testament stories to the New testament. Hiram was depicted as having risen from the dead, as an Exemplar for all Masons who having completed the physical Temple, now needed to see it torn down – symbolized by Hiram's resurrection.



In this sense, the preceding Degrees are now crowned by this final scene. As participants in the building of the Temple, the Craftsmen who discovered the assassins, who marked their work and received wages, and who were installed as Masters, as the Overseers of other more junior Workmen, and who thereby proved their proficiency in all the preceding Degrees, are finally recognized as Most Excellent Masters. We have competed our labors upon the physical Temple in the physical Sphere, and are now going to Graduate, in a sense, before taking up more spiritual labors. In this Degree we

physically enact a great spiritual Truth: the completed Temple is now fit to house the Ark of the Covenant, just as our Great Work upon ourselves – that work of spiritual alchemy – has transformed ourselves from rough, crude stone into a Temple holiness and morality fit to house the Divine Spark of Truth.

Since then the one major change made to the Ritual in many States has been the elimination of the Most Excellent Masters song, penned by Webb himself. We are fortunate in New York that the song is still included in our Ritual. Every attempt should be made to sing it: the best tune to use is O Come All Ye Faithful (Adeste Fideles), since many people know the tune. The penultimate line needs to be repeated three times. If that is not possible, if there is a soloist of any worth in the Chapter, they may sing it as a solo. The atmosphere then becomes more powerful for the focus it brings to the ceremony.

The Six Circumambulations

Following the admission, there is a challenge, in which the candidate is tested with the Keystone. Having carried it as someone else's work in the Mark Degree, now he is finally identified with it himself. This symbolizes the fact that he is now passing to a higher level, and as this Most Excellent Master Degree represents, in a way the second turn of the cycle of development, so in this Degree, which follows the usual form of all the proceeding Degrees (with the exception of the Past Master degree, which requires no challenge at the door of the Lodge), we can see the progression of tools and objects with which the candidate is challenged tells its own story.

The Profane entering the Lodge is challenged with no particular instrument, other than being told that it is sharp. In England, it is a dagger or poignard; but the important thing is that it is sharp, and he feels it. There are many meanings to this symbol, from the prick of conscience to the simpler barring entrance.

However, once he becomes a Mason, he is challenged with a progression of implements, from the Square, then the Compasses, then the Engravers Chisel, and finally here the Keystone. This is no random progression. His first challenge is with the symbol of the Terrestrial World – the Square. Then he is challenged by the symbol of the Grand Architect and the Celestial World – the Compasses, as he completes his journey through the Blue Lodge Degrees. Next he is challenged by the Chisel which, as we have seen, begins to hint at the internal world and the beautification of the work. He is now in symbolic possession of all the implements required

to cut and prove the Keystone, for which his labors on the perfect ashlar are shown to be but a preparation. By mastering both himself and the lessons of the previous Degrees he is finally allowed to be touched by – or represent – the Keystone, that Peculiar Stone which completes the Temple, whose base is firmly seated on a terrestrial foundation, and whose cap or ‘cape’ extends upwards like a rainbow, striving towards the heavens. And upon this Peculiar Stone is written a Name...



Moslems circumambulating around the Ka'aba

This time he circumambulates, or circles six times clockwise about the Altar, pausing before the Right Worshipful Master each time to salute with the sign and due guard of each ascending Degree. At each circumambulation, the Chaplains recites verses from Psalms 24, which tradition says: “accompanied a ceremony of the entry of God (invisibly enthroned upon the Ark) into the Temple.” (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops).

Now the number six – and the number seven – have great symbolic significance in the Bible. God created the heaven and the Earth in six days, and on the seventh He rested. In our Ritual we perform six circumambulations, and the ceremony of completion ends with the placing of the Keystone signifying the work is done. We are told to remove our aprons. In other words, we rest. We have built our Temple in six days, and now man has been perfected, there is rest.

The theme can also be seen in the Book of Joshua, when the Israelites circumambulate the city of Jericho in silence for six days, and on the seventh circumambulate seven times with shouting and noise. We can also see the movement in the Hajj, when Moslems circumambulate the Ka'aba – this time anticlockwise – seven times. In each Degree the

Candidate has circumambulated, or walked in a circle, one extra time for each higher Degree. It should be recognized that in most religions and magical practices the act of circumambulating is symbolic of raising energy or rising to a higher plane. This is the principle, for example, behind walking labyrinths, which we can see in many cathedrals, as well as outdoor groves.

One accomplished, the Candidate approaches the Altar to take the Obligation.



Joshua and the Walls of Jericho

The Obligation, Penalty, Grip and Word

Once the Candidate is in due form, the Companions gather in a circle about him, emphasizing that peculiar symbol of the point with a circle – now physically represented by the altar and Candidate within the Fraternal Circle of his Brethren, just as Brethren formed the Symbolic Temple in the Blue Lodge at the time of taking the Obligation. The Square has become a circle; and the Brethren now symbolize that circle first seen in the Mark Master Degree upon the Keystone.

The most important part of the obligation, which otherwise follows the usual formula, is that of promising “to dispense true Masonic light and knowledge to my less informed Brethren to be best of my ability.” Having become proficient in the knowledge of all the preceding Degrees, the Brother promises to become a beacon, or a mirror, to reflect that Light and Knowledge upon other worthy Masons.

It is interesting that the penalty this time emphasizes the removal of the organs of physical life and their being thrown back onto the earth to rot (the term ‘dunghill’ is poetically used). In other Degrees an offending part of the anatomy was usually removed – for example, the right hand in the Mark Degree for improperly seeking wages not one’s due – but here the element is that of Earth. We will return to this later.

The Grip is called the ‘Cover Grip’ since it covers, or includes, all the preceding grips (really it

only covers the Enter Apprentice, Fellowcraft and Master Mason grips – but we shall see why in the section below called ‘Esoteric Implications’).

The Word, ‘Giblim’, means ‘Most Excellent Master’ according to the Geneva Bible, as we have read. As such the title means little in itself in the English language, since it is but an honorific, and is used in the preceding Degree. However, the Hebrew word ‘Rabboni’ makes a powerful statement. It is only used once in a footnote in the Old Testament,, and but twice in the New Testament. It can also mean ‘My Great Master’, and is the term uttered by Mary Magdalene upon seeing the resuscitated Jesus. It was also used by the blind man in Mark 10:51 when he asks Jesus to restore his sight. We must remember that both Operative and Speculative Masonry developed in countries where Christianity was the predominant – if not sole – religion. It is hardly surprising, therefore, to find this word taking on a much stronger meaning. So, in the Bible the word is never actually used to indicate a good craftsman: it is used to indicate a man considered to be without sin; in this context the word becomes a very powerful statement indeed. Again, in many continental rituals of a Christian nature, Hiram becomes Christ, and of course one famous name for Christ is the Word.



The Keystone set in place.

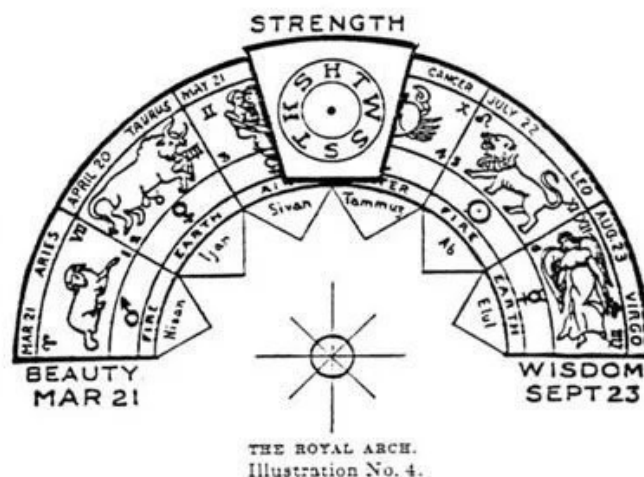
The Completion of the Temple

The theme has been comprehensively covered already. The only point to be made here is that the

anthem tells us “To bring forth the cape-stone”. Now, the copestone, or capstone is the final stone which tops off a building. It is not the Keystone, for that key and search together. In most States, the word has been modified to say ‘Keystone’. Albert Mackey, former General grand High Prest, makes much of this point in his Monitor. Perhaps the confusion is deliberate: the Keystone has an important significance due to its shape, and its central position in the Arch, which has often been portrayed as holding up the canopy of heaven like the arch of Noah’s rainbow, perhaps therefore harking back to the Mark Mariner Degree, the stones forming the zodiacal signs between the Solstices which at one time marked the six monthly term of the Lodge Master in a number of tradition. On the other Hand, the Capstone marks the true completion of a building, yet its shape is of little interest, since it could be just another rectangular ashlar.

Removal of Aprons

The removal of Aprons is a powerful symbol that we have come to the end of the Symbolic Degree cycle. It also represents that seventh day of rest, referred to above. Everything in this Degree emphasizes and stresses completion, and end of a cycle and the beginning of a new one. But to proceed from one cycle to the next it is important that one has learned the lessons of the previous one.



Arch and Keystone related to the Zodiacal Signs

In the circumambulations of this Degree we were reminded of Creation. Indeed, many papers have been written linking the building of the Temple with the story of Creation. Consider again the number ‘seven’. The Temple was ‘seven years and upwards’ in its construction (in Leviticus 25:4 the seventh year is called a Sabbath, which was the day God rested). It was dedicated during Feast of Tabernacles, a seven-day festival held in the seventh month.



Adam and Eve chased from Eden

In the context of Creation, what could remove one's apron symbolize? Genesis 3:7 says: "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons." Note that in this case the Geneva Bible is most definitely not referenced: it is also known as the 'Breeches Bible' since it says they made themselves breeches! So, a key external symbol of man's fall and imperfection is the wearing of the apron. Yet once the work upon ourselves is completed we remove the apron. We have in a way

atoned – we have created a Temple for for the Lord to dwell in.

Once more we see a reference to the fact that we have completed external work and are now ready for the internal work which will be our task in the next level, plane, or phase of our development.



**MWB Emmett J. Bryson Grand Master &
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Happy Hanukkah
Happy Holiday
Happy Festival of Lights



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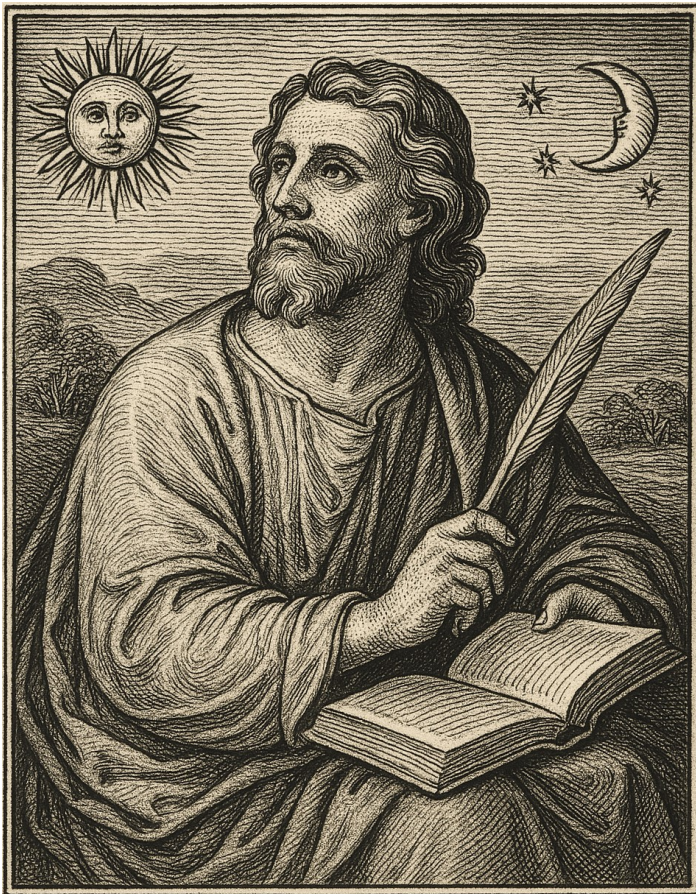
Merry
Christmas



Between the Winter Lights: The Feast of St. John the Evangelist in Masonic Tradition

By F Brad Fowler

Within the rich heritage of Freemasonry, few figures outside the ancient Operative tradition hold a more honored position than the two Saints John, the Baptist and the Evangelist. While both are revered in the Craft, St. John the Evangelist, whose feast is celebrated on **December 27**, holds a particularly profound significance for speculative Freemasons, symbolically mirroring our aspirations toward spiritual knowledge, moral balance, and the light of divine truth.



Who Was St. John the Evangelist?

St. John the Evangelist is traditionally identified as:

- The youngest of the Twelve Apostles
- The author of the Fourth Gospel
- The writer of the Book of Revelation
- The author of three canonical epistles

He is known as “the beloved disciple”, leaning upon the breast of Christ at the Last Supper, a sign not merely of affection but of **intuitive, contemplative, and mystical understanding**. His

Gospel, unlike the synoptic gospels, begins not with a genealogy or narrative, but with a profound metaphysical declaration that resonates deeply with Masonic symbolism:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”, John 1:1

This declaration elevates the discussion from historical to eternal, from literal to philosophical, from physical temple to spiritual temple, the very transition operative Masonry underwent in its evolution into speculative Masonry.

The Feast Day, December 27

St. John the Evangelist is commemorated on **December 27**, within the season of Christmas, a time marked by themes of:

- Light entering the world
- Renewed faith and rebirth
- Celebration of divine wisdom
- Contemplation of the mysteries of spiritual life

In early Masonic tradition, many lodges held meetings, installations, or celebrations around the feast day of St. John the Evangelist, just as others did around the feast of St. John the Baptist (June 24). Together, these two feast days formed the two great points marking the Masonic year, creating a symbolic balance between:

St. John the Baptist

June 24, Summer Solstice
Zeal, moral repentance
Outer purification

St. John the Evangelist

December 27, Near Winter Solstice
Contemplation, spiritual knowledge
Inner Illumination

This union forms what is sometimes referred to as the “**Parallel Lines**”, depicted on the Masonic Tracing Board, representing the **balance between action and contemplation, operative and speculative, zeal and wisdom**.

Why St. John the Evangelist Matters to Freemasonry

Although Freemasonry is not a religion, nor a substitute for one, it draws heavily upon the moral

teachings, allegories, and historical figures of sacred tradition. St. John the Evangelist represents **the spiritual, philosophical, and contemplative side of the Craft**.

He embodies **three key Masonic ideals**:

1. The Pursuit of Light

His writings explore light and darkness not merely physically, but spiritually and intellectually, mirroring the candidate's journey from ignorance into illumination.

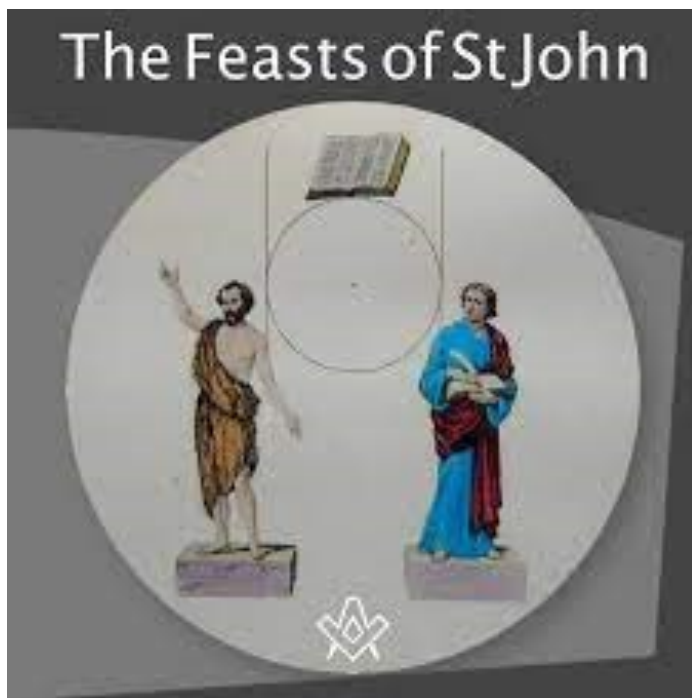
2. The Power of the Word

In Masonry, the search for the Lost Word is symbolic of truth, meaning, and divine wisdom. St. John's Gospel begins with The Word, **Logos**, the very principle of creation and reason.

3. The Temple Within

Revelation and his Gospel shift focus from physical temples of stone to the **internal temple of the human soul**, the same Temple speculative Masons are obligated to build.

St. John, the Circle, and the Parallel Lines



The symbolism associated with St. John the Evangelist reaches its height in the familiar Masonic emblem of **a circle bounded by two parallel lines**, representing **the two Saints John** with the Volume of Sacred Law at the center.

- The **circle** represents eternity, without beginning or end
- The **vertical lines** mark boundaries of moral and spiritual conduct
- **The Sacred Law** at the center is the anchor of truth and duty

The Initiate is taught to walk uprightly, maintaining equilibrium between **faith and reason, heart and mind, zeal and wisdom**, just as one remains centered within the circle.

Conclusion

St. John the Evangelist stands within Freemasonry not simply as a Christian figure, but as an archetype, a symbol of inner revelation, mystical understanding, and the pursuit of divine truth. His feast day offers an annual moment of reflection, inviting the Mason to consider:

- How far has Light penetrated my personal darkness?
- What does the Word mean to me in my daily conduct?
- Am I building my inner temple with wisdom, balance, and purpose?

As Masons, we are reminded each December 27 that the work is inward, the temple is eternal, and Light is forever calling.

Festive Board Toast

You may use this as written, shorten it, or convert it into call-and-response form.

Brothers, be upstanding.

Brethren, tonight we honor St. John the Evangelist,
Whose words opened not merely the eyes of men,
but the understanding of their hearts.

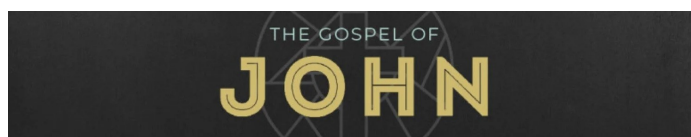
May his example remind us
that Light is more than knowledge,
and Truth more than information,
for Light must be lived,
and Truth must be walked.

May we, like him,
seek the Word behind all words,
the meaning behind all symbols,
and the Temple not built with hands,
eternal in the heavens,
yet reflected within our own hearts.

So let us labor with wisdom,
act with harmony,
and love with understanding,
until the Great Architect shall declare
that the work is finished.

Brethren, I give you, St. John the Evangelist!

(Response: "St. John the Evangelist!")





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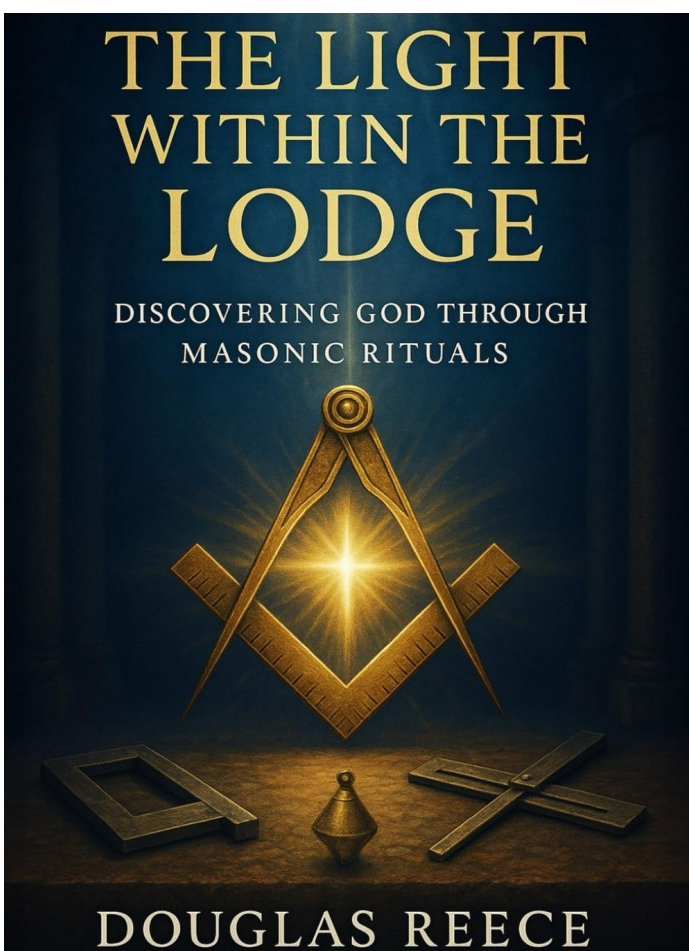
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Our fraternity is blessed with having so many talented Masonic authors. Not so surprising is that there are many from Missouri. Some have written articles, while others have written books. Last month we spotlighted some of the books written by Brother Brad Fowler. This month, we look at some of Brother Dr. Douglas H. Reece publications. If you are looking to further your knowledge in Freemasonry, one of these books would be a great start for the reader.

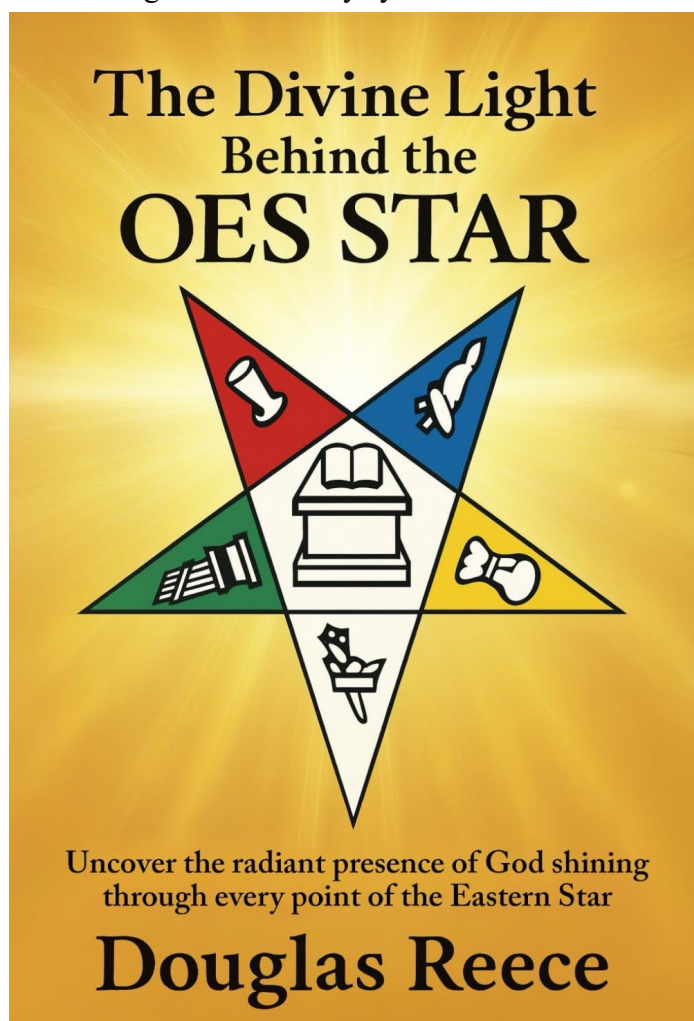


Freemasonry is filled with profound symbols, carefully chosen words, and timeless ceremonies. Yet, for many, the deeper spiritual truths within these rituals remain hidden in plain sight. The Light Within the Lodge invites readers on a transformative journey to uncover the divine fingerprints woven throughout the Craft.

Rather than viewing ritual as mere tradition, this

book shows how each degree, symbol, and charge is designed to open the eyes of the soul. Step by step, it reveals how the rituals of Masonry mirror the eternal truths of Scripture, leading the initiate beyond the veil of form and into direct encounters with the presence of God.

Drawing on biblical wisdom, historical insight, and the living experience of Masonic practice, this guide helps the Mason recognize the sacred rhythm beneath the ceremonies where the square and compass, the working tools, and even the lodge itself become instruments of divine revelation. Whether you are a newly initiated Mason or a seasoned Master seeking fresh light, The Light Within the Lodge will deepen your understanding of the Craft and awaken your heart to the One who is the true Light behind every symbol.

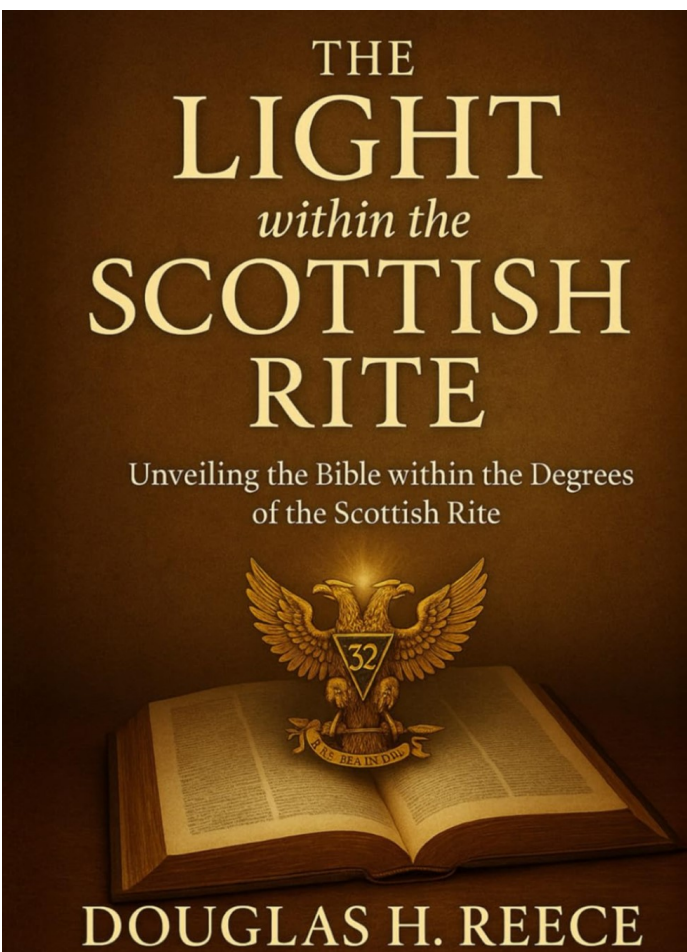


For generations, members of the Order of the Eastern Star have gathered beneath the emblem of the five-pointed star, honoring virtues that trace back to the lives of five remarkable women: Adah, Ruth, Esther, Martha, and Electa. Yet beyond the ritual, color, and ceremony lies a deeper illumination: the presence of God Himself.

The Divine Light Behind the Star unveils the sacred layers of spiritual meaning within each star's point, showing how every color, symbol, and story reveals a divine truth. Through careful reflection on Scripture and ritual, this book guides readers to recognize God's fingerprints in the Order's oaths, prayers, and moral lessons.

From Adah's obedience to divine command to Ruth's steadfast loyalty, Esther's intercession, Martha's faith in resurrection, and Electa's enduring love, each heroine becomes a vessel through which God's light shines. By seeing the ritual not merely as a ceremony but as a sacred instruction, readers will come to understand that the Order itself is a reflection of heaven's harmony calling every member to walk in God's radiant path.

Whether you are a new initiate or a lifelong member, this book will help you see that the Eastern Star's greatest secret is not hidden; it is divine light revealed to all who seek it.

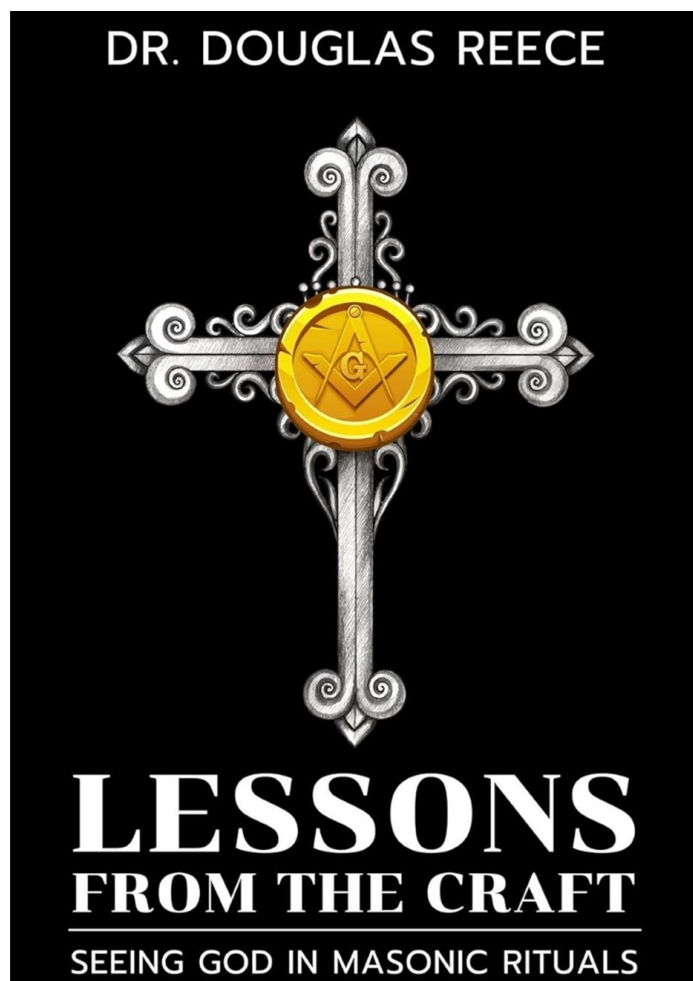


Behind every Masonic symbol lies a sacred echo of Scripture. In this groundbreaking work, *The Light within the Scottish Rite* unveils the biblical foundations woven through each of the thirty-two degrees, from the building of Solomon's Temple to the illumination of the Rose Croix and the revelation of divine truth in the Royal Secret.

Far from being a mere ritual commentary, this volume serves as a spiritual map, a guide for Masons, ministers, and seekers alike, showing how the Word of God illuminates every stone of the symbolic Temple. Each degree is explored through its Scriptural parallels, moral teachings, and spiritual insights, revealing a profound harmony between faith and fraternity, symbol and Scripture, and law and grace.

Through these pages, the reader discovers that the true labor of the builder is not the shaping of stone but the transformation of the soul. For in the end, every emblem and every word of the Scottish Rite points to the same eternal light:

- “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them.” — Revelation 21:3



Freemasonry has some of the best practical life lessons contained in our ritual ceremonies. The Great

Architect of the Universe inspired me to start my ministry and write down within the pages of this book the lessons I have learned for the benefit of the brethren now and in the future. So, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I share with you what I have discovered throughout my search for Christ in the Masonic Ritual. May you find within this book lessons, revelations, meanings, and explanations inspiring enough to start your masonic quest for knowledge and meaning.

DR. DOUGLAS REECE



LESSONS FROM THE RITE OF ADOPTION

SEEING GOD IN MASONIC RITUALS

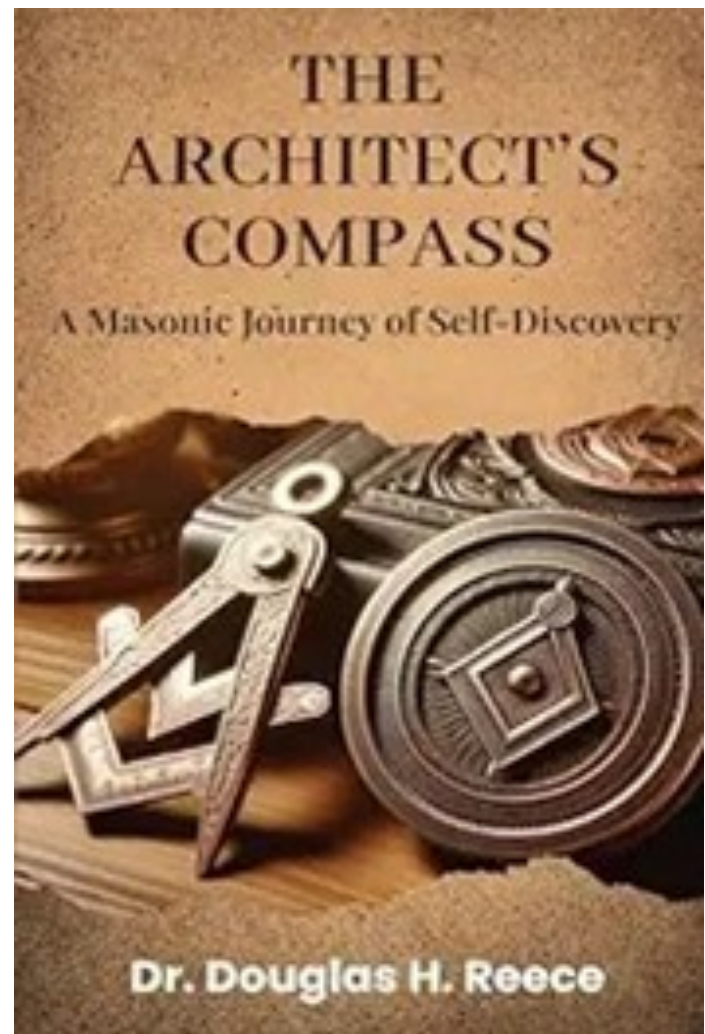
Even the appendant bodies of Freemasonry have beautiful, practical lessons contained within the Holy Scriptures. The pages of this book provide some of those lessons and a brief exploration of seeing Christ in the appendant bodies of The Order of Eastern Star and the Order of Amaranth. May you find the lessons, revelations, meanings, and explanations in these pages inspiring enough to expand your Masonic quest for knowledge and meaning.

The Rite of Adoption consists of the following degrees:

1. The Eastern Star, the first or initiatory degree.
2. The Queen of the South, the second degree.
3. The Amaranth, the third degree.

The rituals of these degrees have been carefully constructed, as has the Matron's Administrative Degree, a subordinate degree no longer used by the

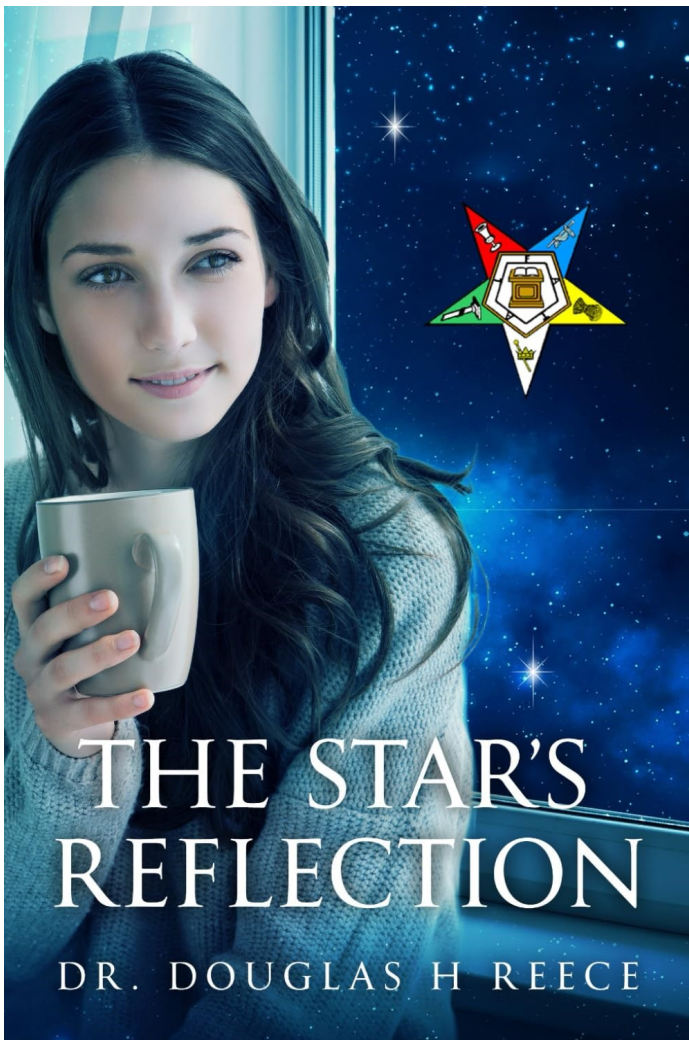
Order of Amaranth. Their inculcation of lofty and noble principles appeals to human nature's best instincts.



David Parker, a successful architect at the pinnacle of his professional career, finds himself trapped in a life that feels meticulously designed yet profoundly empty. One unexpected evening, David stumbles upon a Masonic lodge, igniting a journey beyond anything he could have imagined.

In "The Architect's Compass," follows David as he navigates Freemasonry's symbolic teachings, rich rituals, and timeless wisdom. His quest reveals that the true purpose of this ancient fraternity transcends offices, titles, and social gatherings—it is a lifelong pilgrimage toward self-discovery, moral integrity, and genuine community engagement.

Through compelling narratives and profound reflections, David learns that Freemasonry isn't merely about belonging to an exclusive club; it's about embracing vulnerability, navigating uncertainty, and growing continuously toward the best version of oneself. His transformative journey inspires lodges to evolve alongside him, impacting their communities meaningfully.



Spurred by conversations with her friend Becky, Sarah decides to join the Order of the Eastern Star, a fraternal organization. The novel follows her journey as she navigates this new world's complexities, facing internal and external challenges. She grapples with self-doubt and personal insecurities while simultaneously learning the rituals, beliefs, and traditions of the Order. Through participation in meetings, ceremonies, and charitable activities, Sarah develops new skills, builds meaningful relationships with other women, and discovers a sense of belonging and purpose. She confronts her limitations, grows in confidence, and ultimately blossoms into a respected leader within the organization.

**Autographed copies of these books may be
acquired through the author, at
dougreece52@gmail.com
for \$20.00.
Payable through PayPal or Venmo**



Dr. Douglas H Reece

Doug graduated from Pattonville Senior High School in 1970, after which he served in the US Air Force in Boise, Idaho, from 1972 to 1976. He was discharged with the rank of E-4.

Doug graduated from Lael College and Graduate School with a BA in Biblical Studies in 2003 and from Covington Theological Seminary with a Master of Ministry in Biblical Studies in 2007. He is one of the few who has obtained a Doctorate in Eschatology from Luder-Wycliffe Theological Seminary and a Doctor of Theology from Wycliffe Theological Seminary.

Dr. Reece is President of Wycliffe School of Theology and is currently pastor of Faucett Christian Church.

Since his humble begins in DeMolay, to serving on several boards of the Grand Lodge of Missouri, RWBro. Dr. Reece has helped to lead the fraternity that he fell in love with as a young man. Not only has he been a DDGL, DDGM, but has held a Masonic Leader roll in the York Rite, Scottish Rite, and many of the Appendant Bodies in Freemasonry. Along with these accomplishment, he is fluent in the strange, but beautiful language of Masonic Ritual hold numerous ritual cards from the Grand Lodge of Missouri.

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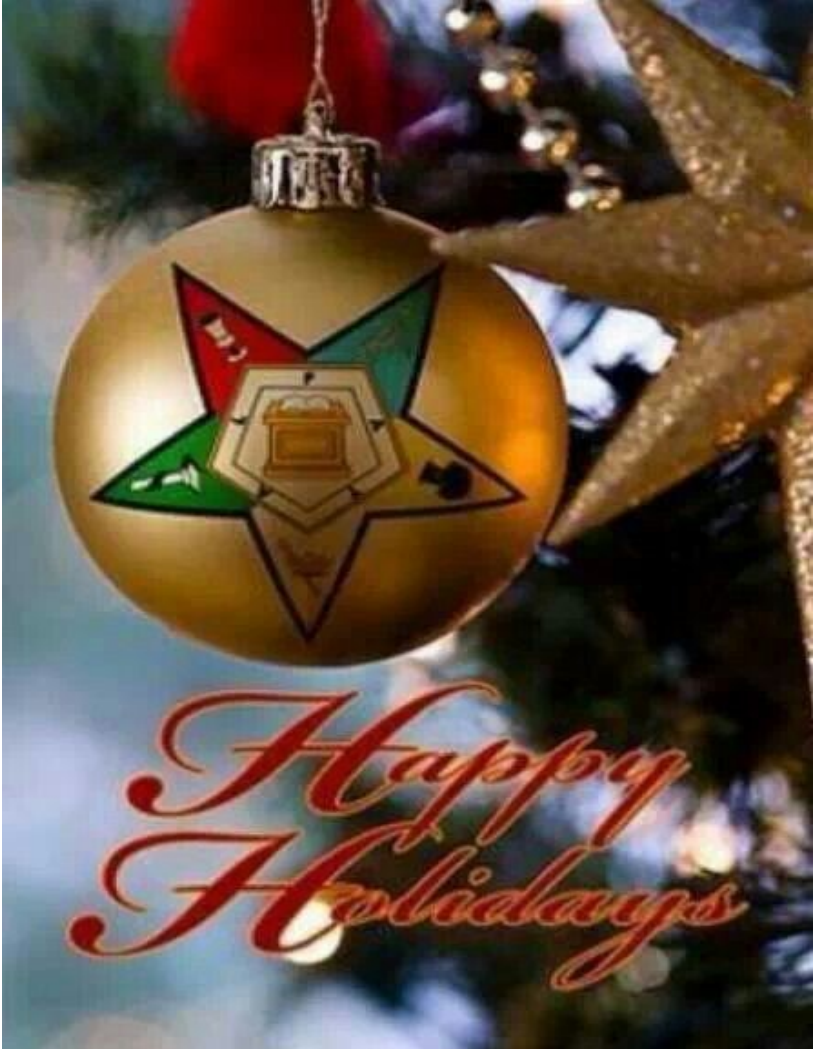


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with a \$10.00 check and get started now!



**Happy
Holidays**
and a
Laybul New Year





Royal Arch Research Assistance (RARA) – FAQs

Q: What exactly does RARA fund?

A: RARA funds scientific research on Central Auditory Processing Disorder (CAPD) through grants to early career researchers at universities and medical centers. We don't fund treatment centers or hospitals directly, but rather the scientists discovering new treatments and diagnostic methods.

Q: How is RARA different from other hearing related charities?

A: Most hearing charities focus on deafness or hearing loss. RARA specifically targets CAPD, where hearing is normal but the brain can't process sound correctly. It's a unique focus area with limited funding sources.

Q: Who reviews research grant applications?

A: RARA partners with the Hearing Health Foundation, which uses a rigorous peer review process with medical experts. Only the most promising research receives funding.

Q: How much does RARA give in grants each year?

A: RARA awards approximately \$500,000 annually in research grants, typically funding 10-12 researchers per year at \$40,000-\$50,000 per grant.

Q: What is the leverage ratio?

A: RARA grants serve as "seed funding" that helps researchers qualify for much larger federal grants. On average, every \$1 RARA donates results in \$27 of total research funding. This multiplier effect maximizes our impact.

Q: Has RARA research led to actual treatments?

A: Yes. RARA funded research has contributed to:

- ⇒ New diagnostic protocols now used in clinics nationwide
- ⇒ Non-surgical treatment options for children with CAPD
- ⇒ Better understanding of CAPD's relationship to autism
- ⇒ Reduced need for invasive procedures

Q: How long has RARA been around?

A: RARA was established in 1974 at the General Grand Chapter Triennial meeting. Over 50 years of supporting research that changes lives.

Q: Is my donation tax-deductible?

A: Yes. RARA is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. EIN: 23-7410576. You'll receive a tax receipt for your donation.

Q: Can I designate my donation in memory of someone?

A: Absolutely. Memorial and honor gifts are welcome. We'll send acknowledgment to the family and recognize the memorial in our records.

Q: Does RARA help adults or just children?

A: While CAPD often presents in childhood, research helps all ages. Many veterans with traumatic brain injury experience CAPD like symptoms. RARA research benefits everyone affected.

Q: What percentage of donations goes to research?

A: RARA operates with minimal overhead through volunteer leadership and General Grand Chapter support. Approximately 92% of donations go directly to research funding.

Q: Can non-Masons donate to RARA?

A: Yes. While RARA is sponsored by Royal Arch Masons, donations from anyone are welcome and appreciated.

Q: How can I learn more about current research?

A: Visit www.givetorara.org or www.hearinghealthfoundation.org/rara to see current grant recipients and research summaries.

Q: What happens if I sign up for monthly giving and need to stop?

A: You can cancel anytime with a simple phone call or email. No questions asked, no hassles. We understand circumstances change.

Q: How does Missouri's fundraising compare to other states?

A: Missouri has tremendous potential. Some states raise \$50,000+ annually. With 30+ chapters and thousands of members, Missouri can become a top contributor to RARA research.



Philanthropy of Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of the State of Missouri, and the General Grand Council of Cryptic Masons, International.

All money collected is used to research: Heart Disease, Diabetes, Blindness, Regenerative Medicine, Leg Circulation, Wound Healing, Arthritis, Stroke and more...

THE PROBLEM

Arteriosclerosis is a disease affecting the blood vessels which carry blood from the heart to all parts of the body. It is commonly called “hardening of the arteries”, and is a process which results in the narrowing of these vessels. It is gradually progressive, and eventually interferes with the flow of blood. When an artery supplying the muscle of the heart is affected severely in this manner, it results in a heart attack. When a major artery supplying the brain is involved it results in a stroke; if the large artery of the leg is greatly narrowed by this process, gangrene occurs (the tissue dies) and the leg often has to be amputated, as the only method of satisfactory treatment.

THE WORK OF CRYPTIC MASONS

Freemasonry seeks to improve the community by improving the individual. Therefore, Councils of Cryptic Masons are found working with Lodges, Chapters, and Commanders, giving more opportunities to improve one’s skills in leadership, public speaking, interpersonal relationships, and administration. This empowers Masons to become better leaders in their career, church, and community. Councils also work with these and other Masonic groups in community service projects to demonstrate Masonic teachings as a way of life.

The General Grand Council established the Cryptic Masons Medical Research Foundation to give Cryptic Masons an opportunity to turn Masonic philosophy into a living practice. Issues like diabetes, stroke, poor circulation, heart failure, wound healing, and many other diseases share the

common denominator of blood vessels, so vascular research is a vital part of treating many different kinds of illnesses. Supporting the ICVBM’s research has the potential to help millions of people.

THE INDIANA CENTER FOR VASCULAR BIOLOGY AND MEDICINE

The Indian Center for Vascular Biology and Medicine is committed to researching the mechanisms of vascular wellness and disease, and to developing leading-edge medical therapies to improve the care of patients with vascular problems. The ICVBM includes more than 40 investigators from a range of basic and clinical disciplines, and approaches vascular research and development from a highly cross-disciplinary perspective. This faculty, as well as the staff and students, work together as a team to complete the primary mission of rapid development and clinical application of new interdisciplinary research in vascular biology. The ICVBM emphasizes reaching patients as quickly as possible so that they can benefit from ongoing developments of gene, molecular, cell- and device-based therapies.

Since 1986, CMMRF has been working with Indiana University & ICVBM. The foundation funds the research & since its inception has contributed more than \$4,500,000 to ICVBM.

All monies sent to the ICVBM is used to research:

- Heart Disease
- Diabetes
- Blindness
- Regenerative Medicine
- Leg Circulation
- Wound Healing
- Arthritis
- Stroke
- and more...

You can send your contributions to your local Recorder, or, contributions can be sent to the Grand Recorder, CMMRF, 107 S. Williams Street, Fayette, MO 65248-1047. Checks should be made out to the Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of Missouri, with CMMRF written on the memo line.



The mission of the Knights Templar Eye Foundation, Inc. is to provide assistance to those who face loss of sight due to the need for surgical treatment without regard to race, color, creed, age, sex, or national origin provided they are unable to pay or receive adequate assistance from current government agencies or similar sources and to provide funds for research in curing diseases of the eye. This includes the correction of strabismus (cross-eyes) in children up to the age of 16 years.

Funds for the operation of the Eye Foundation are obtained in part from an annual assessment of each Knight Templar, contributions made by Masons from throughout the Masonic Family, fund-raising activities, memorials, wills and bequests, and donations from endowment funds or similar sources. Special award programs for contributions include the Grand Master's Sword of Merit (\$25,000), Golden Chalice (\$10,000), Grand Master's Club (\$1,000), Grand Commander's Club (\$1,000 in \$100 annual installments), Patron Certificate (\$100), Associate Patron Certificate (\$50), and Life Sponsor (\$30). Those who are designated as a Life Sponsor or above are relieved from the annual assessment.

Since 1956, over \$98 million has been spent on approved cases, and applications have been received from 80,000 people. Research Grants totaling in excess of \$9.2 million have been awarded to researchers working in the fields of Pediatric Ophthalmology and Ophthalmic Genetics.

Application for assistance from the Foundation can be made through a Knight Templar who is a member of one of over 1,200 Constituent Commanderies of the Grand Encampment. Information is available from the Knights Templar Eye Foundation, Inc., 1000 East State Parkway, Suite I, Schaumburg, IL 60173, Phone (847) 490-3838; Fax (847) 490-3777. The Knights Templar Eye Foundation, Inc. is a co-sponsor of the Seniors Eye Care Program (formally known as the National Eye Care Project) with Eye Care America, a Public Service Foundation of the American Academy of Ophthalmology. The Seniors Eye Care Program helps those persons 65 years or over who do not have an Ophthalmologist. Anyone wishing to contact the Seniors Eye Care Program may do so by calling 1-800-222-EYES and telling them you were referred by a Knight Templar.

The Knight of Siloam special award program in Missouri was created by Sir Knights J. Edward Blinn, REPGC, and Danny L. Ferguson, REPGC, during the 93-94 Templar year as a means of recognizing those Missouri Sir Knights who make substantial contributions to the Knights Templar Eye Foundation, and to encourage others to do so. A special medal and patent is presented to those who donate \$500.00 or more to KTEF either in a lump sum or in installments. The jewel is designated as a meritorious service jewel and may be worn on the Knight.



The Knights Templar Educational Foundation, Division of the Grand Commandery of the State of Missouri, provides financial assistance in the way of low cost student loans to college juniors and seniors, as well as trade school students.



The Missouri Holy Land Pilgrimage Fund is used to pay the expenses of sending a Minister to the Holy Land under the provisions of the Grand Encampment. The Holy Land Pilgrimage Committee of the Grand Commandery can provide more information about qualifying Ministers.

The Missouri Holy Land Pilgrimage Endowment Fund is an endowment, the interest of which is used to generate income for the Holy Land Pilgrimage Fund (above). Commandery Recorders are to ask each Sir Knight on their annual dues statement to remit at least \$3.65 towards the Holy Land Endowment Fund, and Commanderies are encouraged to have fund raisers to generate money for this fund.





THE GENERAL GRAND CHAPTER OF ROYAL ARCH MASONS INTERNATIONAL

Organized October 24, 1797

Post Office Box 34037 - Little Rock, Arkansas - USA 72203-4037

Email: ggs.dbrowning@ggcraml.org

73rd Triennial Convocation



Official Call

To all members of the
General Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons, International

The General Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons
International will convene its 73rd Triennial Convocation
on **Monday, August 31, 2026, at 8:00 a.m. EDT** for the
business at hand at the **Capitol Hilton Hotel** in the city of
Washington, District of Columbia, USA

Registration information will be [sent](#) to the Grand Secretaries
and posted on the dedicated Triennial website:
yrtriennial.org.

All resolutions effecting changes to the Constitution and Standing Regulations of the General Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons International, in order to be considered by the delegates at this Triennial convocation, must be received **on or before February 28, 2026**, in the office of the General Grand Secretary, P.O. Box 34037, Little Rock, AR 72203 USA.

Given under my hand,
this tenth day of December 2025
In the city of Little Rock, Arkansas:

Teko A. Foly
General Grand High Priest

Attest:

Dick E. Browning
General Grand Secretary



Happy Holidays Everyone,

Here we are at the end of another year. We have had cold weather, snow, and the joyous tunes of Christmas Carolers. Even though this is the season of Christmas, this is not the only holiday or celebrations this month. We also have Advent, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Feast of St. John the Evangelist, Winter Solstice, etc.... However, we only have so much space, we have included articles related to Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and the Holy St. John the Evangelist. We hope you will enjoy them.

Next, we are really excited with our new section of promoting Missouri Freemasons who are authors. Our hopes are that you pick up a few of them and learn a few lessons on our craft.

Lastly, we have several ads of important upcoming events that you all should look at and attend. They will be a lot of fun and memories.

Since we are at the end of the year, I would like to thank several people who supported and put up with so much from me in the production of this magazine. Thank you Donald McCormack, for some of the poke that I made towards you in this section and all the artwork that you provided me and helped me in creating. Thank you Kevin Sample, for being one of the three who came up with the idea of this magazine and letting me make this my own. Kevin, also for some poking I did of you in some of the previous issues. Finally, thank you everyone on this committee, Steve, Roger, Russell, Lloyd, Donald, Kevin, Mike, and Jacob. You all have added to this magazine in one form or fashion.

Thank you each and everyone out there who pick up this magazine to read. You make this job special. You are why we work on this magazine everyday of our life.

With that, I will say a due as I am running this issue past our normal publication time. So I leave you with this. May God's Blessing shine down on you and your family, may your holiday season be full of love and giving, and we will be seeing you all on down the trail.

Peace be with you all,

Larry



Companion and Sir Knights:

On December 12, 2025, Greenfield Chapter No. 38, Royal Arch Masons, consolidated with Springfield Chapter No. 15 uniting the Companions and continuing the Capitular work under the banner of Springfield Chapter No. 15; Bert S. Lee Council No. 58, Royal & Select Masters consolidated with Zabud Council No. 25, bringing together the Companions and preserving the Cryptic work within Zabud Council No. 25, and Constantine Commandery No. 27, Knights Templar consolidated with St. John's Commandery No. 20, uniting the Sir Knights and continuing the chivalric traditions under St. John's Commandery No. 20.

Donald MacCormick
Grand Secretary, Grand Chapter
Grand Recorder, Grand Council

Roger D. Fleer
Grand Recorder, Grand Commandery



York Rite Bulletin Board

Interactive Maps for Local York Rite Bodies

Exciting news all!!! The Grand York Rite of Missouri has now added interactive maps for Chapters, Councils, and Commanderies to help you easily find a meeting location, and find directions to assist you in planning your travels. We hope they help

You can find those maps at the following webpages:

<https://moyorkrite.org/royal-arch-chapters-in-missouri/>

<https://moyorkrite.org/councils-in-missouri/>

<https://moyorkrite.org/commanderies-in-missouri/>

Your Help is Needed!!!

Did you know that you can make changes to your own MMS Profile Page? You can!

Simply click this link: <https://www.masonic-web.com/mms/memberbio/default.aspx> and use your membership number which can be found on the side of any of your York Rite dues cards with your name and date of birth. You have only one Profile Page which links to each Chapter, Council, and/or Commandery where you have a membership.

The information on your Profile Page helps us stay in contact with each of you. Please carefully check the information on your Profile Page:

- Full name: First, Middle, and Last Name (No Abbreviations) with any prefix or suffix.
- Birth location: City and State.
- Current Address: Where mail comes.
- Phone Numbers: Home and/or Cell.
- Email Addresses: Home and/or Work.
- Spouse's name: First, Middle, and Last Names.
- Her Date of Birth: Month and Day (We like to send birthday cards!)
- Your children's Names: First and Last Names
- **Information about your job (Optional)**

Our office will not share this information with any person, business, or other institution. This is YOUR Profile Page. Thank you for your time.

Past Grand Officers

History is a wonderful thing. It reminds us of our great accomplishments and mistakes. Either way, we learn something from both. However, below are links to our Past Grand High Priest, Past Grand Masters, and Grand Commanders here in Missouri. Take a look, one of them might be a relative you did not know had been honored by these great positions.

Past Grand High Priests

<https://moyorkrite.org/past-grand-high-priests/>

Past Grand Masters

<https://moyorkrite.org/past-grand-masters/>

Past Grand Commanders

<https://moyorkrite.org/past-grand-commanders/>

Upcoming Events

**ROYAL ARCH CHAPTERS
IN MISSOURI**

COUNCILS IN MISSOURI

MISSOURI COMMANDERIES



**GRAND CHAPTER
RITUAL
PROFICIENCY**

CONGRATULATIONS!

**Allen Lee Ward
Rolla Chapter No. 32
Part 1**

Complete Opening and Closing of a Chapter

Grand Officers Coins for Sale

The Grand York Rite has numerous items for sale. One of which is the Grand Officers coins. For a small donation of \$20.00 you may obtain their coin or \$60.00 for all three coins through our Grand York Rite Offices (660) 248-5100.



2025-2026

MEC Kevin M. Ritter, Grand High Priest Coin



2025-2026

MIC Dennis W. Houck Grand Master Coin



2025-2026

SK Ronald L. Skiles, Right Eminent Grand Commander Coin

These coins are in limited production. So, hurry and purchase one now as they will soon be out of stock. All donations go to the Grand Officer's charity. Thank you for your consideration.



Distinguished Chapter Award

Chapter Secretaries and current High Priests will soon be able to access the updated Distinguished Chapter Award Form, which will include the new addition of the Chapter Proficiency Ritual Card section.

Every proficiency card newly earned or renewed will earn **100 points for the Chapter**. These points are unlimited.

This is being added to highlight one of MEC Ritter's goals for the year - his own goal of earning his Part 1 Ritual Card.

The Chapter Proficiency Ritual card plan can be found on the moyorkrite.org website.

Chapter Proficiency Certificate Plan:

<https://moyorkrite.org/DocsChapter/Chapter%20Proficiency%20Certificate%20Plan%202023.pdf>



ILLINOIS MASONIC REGALIA

Website - www.illinoismasonicregalia.com, Etsy shop link on Website.
Business Owner - John Grant 402-321-2317

Your one stop shop for all your Masonic merchandise! We offer a variety of items for your Masonic Lodge, Ceremonies or to show off your Masonic Pride. Lapel Pins, Car Emblems, Decals, Daggers, Swords, Rings, Ties, Bow Ties, Cravats, Bolo Ties, Pocket Watches, Watches, Briefcases, Rod Toppers, Tablet Covers, Coins, Garment Bags, Wallets, Tie Bars, Tie Chains, Button Covers, Officer pins and much much more!

Masonic Lodge
Collars
Aprons
Apron Briefcases



York Rite
Collars
Aprons
Medals/Jewels



Most items can be customized. Aprons personalized under the flap or make your own design. Decals or metal name plates for your briefcases. Nametags of all shapes and designs. Please contact us with your orders or to set up at one of your events.

Save the Date

175th Anniversary of Springfield Chapter No. 15 Royal Arch Masons of the State of Missouri



**Please help us celebrate this milestone in
Conjunction with the 250th Anniversary of the
Of Route 66 in Springfield, Missouri**

Saturday, May 16th at 10:00 a.m.

**1940 West Catalpa Street
Springfield, Missouri 65807**

RSVP to springfielddyorkrite@gmail.com