

St. John's Lodge No. 9, F. & A. M.

Trestleboard

December 2023

Jim Russell, editor



Serving Seattle since 1860

meets: 7910 Greenwood Ave. N.
Lodge phone: (206) 623-0261
jimrussell58@frontier.com
[web: www.seattleMasons.org](http://www.seattleMasons.org)

FROM THE EAST

[Eric Koteles](#), Master



Eric Koteles
Master

Brethren,

As the year draws to a close and we find ourselves amidst a season marked by reflection, renewal, and the promise of new beginnings, I extend my heartfelt greetings to each one of you. This period, resplendent with its universal spirit of hope and joy, offers a unique opportunity for us to introspect and envision the path ahead for our beloved Lodge.

In these times, where the world around us blooms with a sense of camaraderie and goodwill, let us, as a fraternity, embrace the essence of this spirit. It is a moment that transcends boundaries and unites us in a shared experience of looking forward with optimism. As we stand at the threshold of a new year, let us carry this universal sentiment of renewal into our endeavors, striving to enhance the bonds that tie us together and the principles that guide us.

Our Lodge, a beacon of fellowship and enlightenment, is perpetually evolving, much like the cycle of the seasons. The lessons of the past year have been invaluable, shaping our understanding and strengthening our resolve. It is with this wisdom and the collective strength of our brotherhood that we look ahead, ready to embrace the opportunities and challenges that await.

In the spirit of moving forward, let us renew our commitment to the tenets that define us - Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth. These principles, timeless in their relevance, guide us in our personal growth and in our contributions to the wider community. As we reflect on our journey, let us also acknowledge the importance of growth and change. Change is the law of life, and those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.

Our path forward is illuminated by the light of our shared values and the strong foundation laid by those who have walked before us. Let us step into the coming year with a renewed sense of purpose, a deepened commitment to our brotherhood, and an unwavering dedication to the ideals that define us.

I wish each of you a period of joy, reflection, and rejuvenation. May this time fortify our bond and inspire us to greater heights in our personal lives and in the life of St. John's Lodge No. 9.

Fraternally, best wishes for a harmonious and prosperous future,
WM. Eric Koteles

Master, St. John's Lodge No. 9



CALENDAR



- December 8 (6pm): Master Mason Rehearsal [Friday]
- December 13 (6pm): Officers meeting Zoom *Notice time change*
- December 20 (6:15pm) 7:30pm: St. John's 9 (dinner) Stated meeting
- December 27: Feast Day of St. John the Evangelist
- December 31: **Deadline to pay 2024 Lodge dues**
- January 1: *Happy New Year*
- January 3 (7pm): Education & Fellowship Night Zoom
- January 5 (7:30pm): University Lodge 141
- January 8 (7:30pm): Eureka Lodge 20
- January 11 (6pm): Officers meeting Zoom
- January 17 (6:15pm) 7:30pm: St. John's 9 (dinner) Stated meeting and Master Mason Degree?
- January 20: *Martin Luther King Day*
- February 6 (7pm): Education & Fellowship Night Zoom
- February 11: *Super Bowl LVIII*
- February 14 (6pm): Board of Trustees
- February 15 (6pm): Officers meet
- February 21 (6:15pm) 7:30pm: St. John's 9 (dinner) Stated meeting

St. John's Lodge No. 9 meets every 3rd Wednesday at 7910 Greenwood Ave. N., Seattle

- Social "hour" 5:30pm
- Free parking available after 6pm on the St. John Catholic Church playground. Located ½ block west of Greenwood Ave. N. on southside of N. 80th Street.
- Dinner 6:15pm
- Stated Communication 7:30pm
- Refreshments & fellowship following

ST. JOHN'S TO REVIEW AND ACT ON PROPOSED 2024 BUDGET

Copies of the proposed Lodge budget as prepared by the Board of Trustees were distributed in October. Worshipful Master WBro. Eric Koteles identified those items that reflected increases or decreases from this year's budget. Our portfolio has slightly increased this year, allowing for roughly \$19,000 more available in 2024. The brothers were afforded an opportunity to question any of the line items with the understanding that action will be taken in November. Due to the installation of officers in November, action was held over to December.

The Trustees have recommended that in the event members of the Lodge elect to change meeting locations this coming year, any related expenses be budgeted outside this proposal.

Budgeting is necessary to attain our desired goals and to keep our planning within the realm of reality. It requires a systematic evaluation of estimated income and expenditures to ensure that funding is available for programs, activities and rental. Oh, yes, and with enough resources to support our beloved charities. St. John's is fortunate in that over the years, we have wisely managed our income to allow membership programs AND community outreach.

St. John's will open on the Master Mason degree and call down to a lower degree if warranted. Members will have an opportunity to participate in the rehearsal of the Master Mason drama.



Please make your dinner reservations with the secretary at 206 623-0261 by Friday, December 14, prior to the meeting. If you need a ride, the secretary will be happy to find one for you. Do you know of a brother who has not attended Lodge in a while? Call him and ask if you can pick him up and bring him to Lodge.

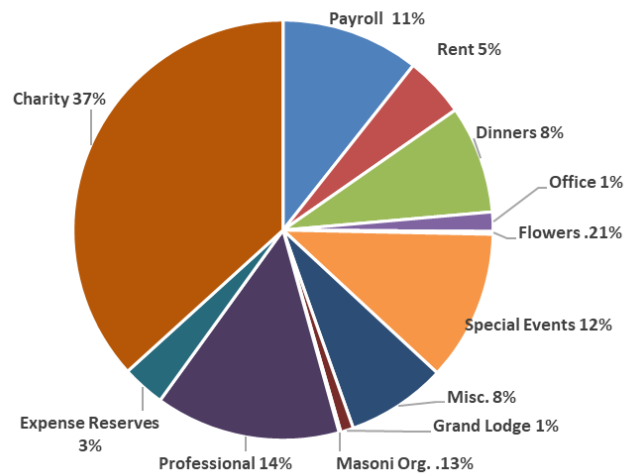
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Christmas Cruise on Lake Washington

WBro. Tom Lamb reports that his efforts to solicit interest in a family outing on the Lake Washington Christmas Ship this month has generated little response, with only a few brothers expressing interest. The event will be re-introduced with better lead time next year.

Proposed 2024 Budget

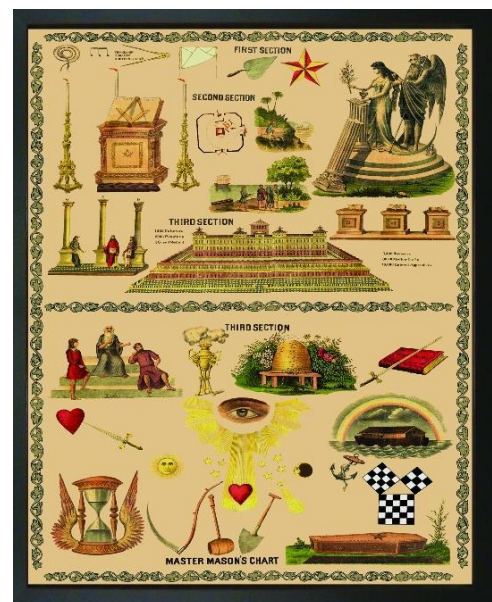


Master Mason Degree re-Scheduled for January

Fellowcraft Bro. Louis Turner will be Raised a Master Mason next month, at the Greenwood Masonic Center. Initially scheduled for early December, it has tentatively been re-scheduled for January 17, our stated communication that month.

Every active member of St. John's is expected to take a role in performance of this degree. All speaking roles have been assigned, but those who have not yet volunteered for a part in the degree should contact [WBro. Russ Johnson](#), Master of Ceremonies.

Bro. Louis Turner has dedicated a substantial effort to his Masonic studies, and it's only fitting that we put forth the same level of commitment to make his degree ceremony truly special.



FROM THE WEST

[WBro. John Murray Louderback](#)



What does it mean to be on a winning team and what does that feel like?

Perhaps you understand what I mean?

A team is comprised of individuals that form a dedicated community striving to achieve a goal.

Every organization or team is only as good as the effort of individuals that make up the team, their dedication and accomplishments - and how efficiently they work together. The very nature of TEAM is that it is made up of individuals, not just one person. If you call yourself a Freemason and member of a Lodge, are you a Mason, a builder - a team member that contributes to the success of your Lodge?

If you are not helping your Lodge can you truly consider yourself a contributing member? Now is the time for all good Mason's to come to the aid of their Lodge. Imagine the potential if everyone contributes to the Masonic Labor.

Be engaged - do your part! Be part of the success of the winning team!

The Masonic Funeral Ceremony

A man is walking through a mostly deserted cemetery when he comes upon a memorial service in progress. The gathering seems different somehow. Curious, he stops to listen. Dozens of men of all ages are lined up in pairs, side by side. They march toward the casket, all dressed in dark suits and wearing simple white aprons. Upon the casket lies another apron.

The speaker's eulogy is full of arcane terms and esoteric references. At last, he holds up a sprig of acacia, and on behalf of those present, offers the deceased a final valediction. "Thy spirit shall spring into newness of life and expand in immortal beauty, in realms beyond the skies," he recites. "Until then, dear brother, until then, farewell!"

This is a Masonic funeral service. Apart from the cornerstone-laying ceremony, a Masonic funeral is one of the most visible public displays of Freemasonry there is.

The Masonic funeral ceremony is one of the most conspicuous examples of Masonic values materialized into action. It's also very often the prism through which outsiders first encounter the craft—a rare glimpse into the lodge life of the deceased that many know little about. That's fitting, because the concepts of death, rebirth, and legacy are important elements to the teachings of Freemasonry.

Historically, managing death has been one of the most important functions of the fraternity. Making sure that a departed brother received a proper burial and remembrance was traditionally one of the most important benefits of Freemasonry. Even now, the fraternity plays an important role in times of death.

FROM THE SOUTH

[WBro. David Flood](#)



Closing Thoughts - Thoughts from the Closing

Here is some practical advice from Atomic Habits author James Clear that we, as Masons, can apply to our daily activities. His book has sold over 15 million copies and been translated into 50 languages. In a recent newsletter he wrote:

"Forget about peak performance. Would your results improve if you simply focused on being reliable in the normal moments? Show up when it's easy to skip. Do the fundamentals and do them well. Before you make it complicated, remember there are always simple improvements waiting to be made."

By the Plumb

The next time we hear the Worshipful Master ask in closing "How act?", we can review how well we have regulated our day. As men and Masons, how uprightly are we walking in the performance of our daily obligations? Is the standard of the 24-inch gauge in use by us. Have we applied the masonic virtue of Prudence to the activities of our day as taught in the first degree? Every small daily improvement we make is another chip off our personal rough ashlar.

Within Due Bounds

James Clear states: "You have to live with your mistakes, but you don't have to compound them. To follow up an error with a foolish reaction is to lose twice. Given the reality of where you are right now, what is the best next action? A wise response may not erase a dumb mistake, but it can redeem it."

These are thoughts to close out the year that is rapidly drawing to an end, and likewise thoughts and aspirations to carry into the new year.

Credit: jamesclear.com/3-2-1

DECEMBER BIRTHDAY CELEBRANTS

Day

- 5 Albert K. Gustafson
- 9 Dennis J. Archambault
- 11 Gilbert N. Hain
- 11 Mark A. Gfeller
- 13 Ian S. Webb
- 14 James R. Maher
- 14 Paul T. St. Clair
- 23 Joseph H. Oates, Jr.
- 24 William A. Feldner
- 25 Scott M. Yerger
- 28 Serco S. Tokatlian
- 28 Kenneth D. Wehl
- 30 Phillip J. See



IT'S TIME TO RENEW
YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

Let's LOOK AT THAT A LITTLE CLOSER



Christmas of 1851 found a great change at New York Alki, the place of the very beginning of our city of Seattle. Only six short weeks had passed since the Arthur Denny party had made their historic landing from the small schooner, Exact, in a drenching, pouring-down rain. Dorothea Nordstrand (1916-2011) contributed this story of Seattle's first Christmas. The story is based on her wide reading in Seattle's early history.

Seattle's First Christmas

By Dorothea Nordstrand
HistoryLink.org Essay 4138

Nineteen-year-old David Denny, Arthur's young brother, and John Low had walked from the Willamette Valley in Oregon to select a place for settlement on Puget Sound, finally deciding on the point of land known to the local Indians as "Smaquamox" for their venture. John Low took the long trail back to Oregon to bring the pioneer families, taking with him a note to their leader, Arthur Denny, from David, saying they had found "the place" and to come. The landing of the Denny party, on November 13, 1851, was in answer to that note.

David, an accomplished woodsman, had expected to build log cabins to house them when they arrived, but had only erected the four walls of the first one, when his axe slipped and he cut a deep gash in his foot. When the party arrived on the beach, they were dismayed to find David



1First home on Alki Point built 1851.
Courtesy A.A. Denny, *Pioneer Days on Puget Sound*

terribly ill and shaking with fever and not even one completed dwelling to move into. There were 24 people to shelter in one small, unroofed building. That was in the middle of November.

On Christmas Day, along with that structure, now snugly roofed, there was another, larger log house, and two homes built of split-cedar boards, patterned after the dwellings of the local Indians. Arthur and Mary Anne Denny and their three children, Arthur's brother David, and Mary Anne's sister Louisa Boren, lived in the larger log house. The smaller log structure housed Carson and Mary Boren and their baby daughter. John and Lydia Low, with their four children, and William and Sarah Anne Bell, with their four, occupied the two split-cedar dwellings. Charles and Lee Terry were sort of revolving guests, first living in one home and then in another. These 24 hardy souls were the entire population of the little village on that first Christmas.

Since Arthur and Mary Anne Denny's house was the largest, Christmas was celebrated there, with each member of the party helping with the preparations. Louisa Boren led the children into the forest to gather cedar boughs to use as decorations. They cut armfuls of Oregon grape branches, that Northwest native shrub whose stickery

leaves were like the holly of their earlier home in Cherry Grove, Illinois. They fashioned a wreath for the door from the Oregon grape, and Louisa used her own red hair-ribbon to make a festive bow.

The other women cooked the feast, to which Samuel Maple and Henry Van Asselt, two bachelors from the Collins settlement on the Duwamish, were invited guests. David Denny, now well and strong, provided them with the main course, two wild geese. There were salmon and wild potatoes purchased from the Indians. Pies were made from the few dried apples remaining in their kitchens. There was a small amount of tea for the elders, and the children drank clam juice, though they sorely missed the milk they could no longer have since the settlement had no cow.



Carson Boren's sisters Louisa Boren Denny and Mary Boren Denny. *Courtesy UW Special Collections*

There had been a flurry of washing and mending and the whole company was spruce and clean. Even their shoes, which had been worn to the point of having paper or cardboard liners, had been cobbled, so they were well shod. It was a far different-looking group than it had been just a few weeks earlier. *Courtesy UW Special Collections*

Before they had started their westward journey along the Oregon Trail, Louisa Boren, with her wonderful gift of forethought, remembered that there would be a Christmas to celebrate in their new home. She had secretly tucked in, among her own belongings, small toys and trinkets to surprise and delight the children on the Special Day.

There was good food and family and friends with whom to share it in this new, wilderness home they had come so far, and through so many hardships, to find. It was a truly Joyous Christmas, that December 25, of 1851!

This essay is part of HistoryLink's People's History collection. People's Histories include personal memoirs and reminiscences, letters and other historical documents, interviews and oral histories, reprints from historical and current publications, original essays, commentary and interpretation, and expressions of personal opinion, many of which have been submitted by our visitors. They have not been verified by HistoryLink.org and do not necessarily represent its views.

Sources: Dorothea Nordstrand contributed this story of Seattle's first Christmas. The story is based on her wide reading in Seattle's early history.

Proposal to Fund Washington Educator of the Year as a St. John's Noble Project

Brothers,

The Masonic Fraternity has always supported education as a foundation of a civilized society. St. John's Lodge has a long tradition of awarding scholarships to deserving students. As Masons we believe that education is fundamental not only for helping individuals achieve their full potential but also for the proper functioning of a civilization. For this reason, I am proposing the following as a "noble project" for St. John's Lodge.

I propose that St. John's Lodge help fund an endowment and a program to assure that an Educator of the Year is annually recognized in Washington State.

The Washington Masonic Services, as a successor of the Grand Lodge Scholarship Committee, awarded both scholarships for students in Washington AND recognized and awarded an outstanding teacher in Washington State the "Educator of the Year" award. However, for a number of reasons, primarily a lack of applications from lodges, this Award has not been granted for the past few years,

I believe in the need for recognition of scholars and educators so much that I will personally be working this next year to encourage Washington Lodges to nominate both students and educators for these awards.

Michelle Adamson Heeb a teacher for 31+ years at Puyallup High School was awarded Educator of the Year in 2018. I propose that going forward her professionalism, passion for education and, most importantly, passion for the welfare and improvement of all students, be recognized along with the presentation of this Award. To do this we would add this or a similar phrase to the award: Awarded in honor of Michelle Adamson Heeb who displayed those professional and personal qualities of the best Educator in the State of Washington.

Michelle was a St. John's Scholarship Winner. She impressed the Scholarship Committee with her passion for education.

The cost of endowing a \$500 annual award is \$10,000. The Adamson and Heeb families are able to contribute \$5,000. **We request that St. John's consider this as a Noble Project and contribute \$5,000 to endow the Washington State Educator of the Year Award.**

John Adamson, Senior Deacon

MASTER MASONS RAISED IN DECEMBER

Date Raised:

12/29/1961	Joseph W. Ackermann
12/21/1979	Paul T. St. Clair
12/8/1984	Daryl E. Anguish
12/10/1987	Kurt W. Lavrinc
12/8/2001	Thomas G. Eastman
12/8/2001	Frederick A. Eastman



2024 Annual Membership Fees Due

Notices for annual dues were mailed to all dues-owing members of St. John's in October. Don't forget that we no longer issue plastic cards. The new electronic dues cards will not work unless you have paid your dues for the current year. You can access your own dues card on Grand View to print or use electronically on your phone. A quick scan by the Tyler of your printed QR Code will show whether or not you are current for the year.



2024 dues structure for membership in St. John's:

1. Past Masters, Life Members, 50-year members = \$0
2. Age 65+ = \$75 + \$28 = \$103*
3. Residence 50+ miles from Lodge = \$75 + \$28 = \$103*
4. Other Raised Master Masons = \$200+\$28=\$228*
5. Future Plural Members (local residence) prorated quarterly at joining:

- a. Jan. – March 2024 = \$228
- b. Apr. – June = \$171
- c. July – Sept. = \$114
- d. Oct. – Dec. = \$57

***These fees increase by \$5 each month for overdue payment beginning January 2024.**

Members may pay their dues by cash, check, Certificates of Masonic Labor, or a combination of these. Certificates of Labor (now valued at \$30 each) are issued at each stated or special communication (degree or officer installation).

Payment by PayPal is available, **though not encouraged.** St. John's does not have a PayPal account. If you can pay no other way, you can do so through our Treasurer's personal account (his email is jrmaher@comcast.net).

Invitation to visit Finland September 2024

Our Honorary Past Master VWBro. Pekka Granroth of Finland writes: "Being a member of St. John's 9 lodge and having such great memories of your hospitality, and as a master of Savo14 lodge year 2024, I invite you to visit my lodge and at the same time participate in the 100-year festivities of the Finnish Grand Lodge

The program (described on the next page) is just an example for you to understand what your visit might include, so any changes are (and most likely will be) possible.

Helsinki – the capital of



Finland

Kuopio – my hometown some 250 miles north-east of Helsinki (middle of Lake District)

Turku – south-western Finland, ferries to Sweden

The dates are as they are based on the centenary program of Finnish Grand Lodge

-Wednesday/Thursday September 4/5; flight Seattle-Helsinki (price typically \$700-900, today even a direct flight operated by Finnair, price was today 730€, about the same in dollars, 1€ = \$1,1)

-Friday September 6; Studia Masonica Centenary Lecture (history of Finnish Freemasonry) , Sibelius ritual music presentation

-Saturday September 7; centenary festivities (gala dinner if wanted, otherwise drive to Savonlinna by Russian border), local lodge officers, ancient castle, lake district

-Sunday September 8; drive to Kuopio, local summer cabin, sauna

-Monday September 9, visit Kuopio, attend Coffee Lodge

-Tuesday/Wednesday September 10/11; lodge meetings, degree work, visit Kuopio

-Thursday September 12 drive via Sompala masonic camp site to Helsinki/Turku

Two options available; leave from Helsinki OR ferry to Sweden and leave from Stockholm

-Friday September 13 flight Helsinki - Seattle OR

-Friday September 13 ferry daytime Turku – Stockholm (Sweden)

-Saturday September 14 flight Stockholm - Seattle
Accommodation in Helsinki, f.ex. Hotel Crowne Plaza Helsinki-Hesperia 174€/double room

Accommodation in Kuopio, f.ex. Hotel ship Wuoksi 70-100€/double room

Possible transportation (minibus 9 people) about 1000€ / week, otherwise, train (fastest, most comfortable)

More information about the Grand Lodge events can be found Freemasons.fi/100 (password FIN100)

WM Eric Koteles is aware of this invitation and can provide more information on how to proceed as a lodge group if that will be an option. Otherwise, contact directly Bro. Pekka Pekka.Granroth@gmail.com

CHILDREN OF ALL AGES LOVE RUDOLPH

As the holiday season of 1938 came to Chicago, Bob May wasn't feeling much comfort or joy. A 34-year-old ad writer for Montgomery Ward, May was exhausted and nearly broke. His wife, Evelyn, was bedridden, on the losing end of a two-year battle with cancer. This left Bob to look after their four-year-old-daughter, Barbara.

One night, Barbara asked her father, "Why isn't my mommy like everybody else's mommy?" As he struggled to answer his daughter's question, Bob remembered the pain of his own childhood. A small, sickly boy, he was constantly picked on and called names. But he wanted to give his daughter hope, and show her that being different

was nothing to be ashamed of. More than that, he wanted her to know that he loved her and would always take care of her.

So, he began to spin a tale about a reindeer with a bright red nose who found a special place on Santa's team. Barbara loved the story so much that she made her father tell it every night before bedtime.

As he did, it grew more elaborate. Because he couldn't afford to buy his daughter a gift for Christmas, Bob decided to turn the story into a homemade picture book.

In early December, Bob's wife died. Though he was heartbroken, he kept working on the book for his daughter. A few days before Christmas, he reluctantly attended a company party at Montgomery Ward. His co-workers encouraged him to share the story he'd written. After he read it, there was a standing ovation. Everyone wanted copies of their own.

Montgomery Ward bought the rights to the book from their debt-ridden employee. Over the next six years, at Christmas, they gave away six million copies of Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer to shoppers.

Every major publishing house in the country was making offers to obtain the book. In an incredible display of good will, the head of the department store returned all rights to Bob May. Four years later, Rudolph had made him into a millionaire. Now remarried with a growing family, May felt blessed by his good fortune. But there was more to come.

His brother-in-law, a successful songwriter named Johnny Marks, set the uplifting story to music. The song was pitched to artists from Bing Crosby on down. They all passed.

Finally, Marks approached Gene Autry. The cowboy star had scored a holiday hit with "Here Comes Santa Claus" a few years before. Like the others, Autry (a 33rd degree Scottish Rite Mason) wasn't impressed with the song about the misfit reindeer. Marks begged him to give it a second listen

Autry played it for his wife, Ina. She was so touched by the line "They wouldn't let poor Rudolph play in any reindeer games" that she insisted her husband record the tune.

Within a few years, it had become the second best-selling Christmas song ever, right behind "White Christmas."

Since then, Rudolph has come to life in TV specials, cartoons, movies, toys, games, coloring books, greeting cards and even a Ringling Bros. circus act. The little red-nosed reindeer dreamed up by Bob May and immortalized in song by Johnny Marks has come to symbolize Christmas as much as Santa Claus, evergreen trees and presents.

As the last line of the song says, "He'll go down in history."



Vatican Confirms Ban on Catholics Becoming Freemasons

VATICAN CITY (Reuters) - The Vatican has confirmed a ban on Catholics becoming Freemasons, a centuries-old “secretive society” that the Catholic



Church has long viewed with hostility and has an estimated global membership of up to six million.

“Active membership in Freemasonry

by a member of the faithful is prohibited, because of the irreconcilability between Catholic doctrine and Freemasonry,” the Vatican’s doctrinal office said in a letter published by Vatican media on Wednesday, Nov. 15.

The department, known as the Dicastery of the Doctrine of the Faith, issued its opinion, dated Nov. 13 and countersigned by Pope Francis, in response to a bishop from the Philippines alarmed by the growing number of Freemasons in his country.

The same office said (last month) that transgender people can be baptized, serve as godparents and act as witnesses at Catholic weddings.

The letter on Freemasons cited a 1983 declaration, signed by the late Pope Benedict XVI, at the time the Vatican’s doctrine chief, stating that Catholics “in Masonic associations are in a state of grave sin and may not receive Holy Communion.”

Masonic lodges are normally male-only societies, associated with arcane symbols and rituals. They have also sometimes been linked to conspiracy theories alleging undue influence on world affairs.

According to the United Grand Lodge of England, modern Freemasonry “is one of the oldest social and charitable organizations in the world”, rooted in the traditions of medieval stonemasons.

The group says it has 180,000 male members, with two parallel female lodges in England having another 5,000 members, and estimates global Freemasonry membership at around six million.

It lists the late Queen Elizabeth’s husband Prince Philip, former Prime Minister Winston Churchill, late actor Peter Sellers, former England soccer manager Alf Ramsey and authors Rudyard Kipling and Arthur Conan Doyle as famous Freemasons from the past. *(continued on following page)*

Secrecy and Openness in Freemasonry

This subject, central to our Masonic existence, touches upon the very essence of our traditions, our public perception, and our role in the modern world.

Since its earliest days, Freemasonry has been enveloped in mystery.

Our rituals, symbols, and ceremonies have been guarded with a level of privacy that is both a source of intrigue and, at times, misunderstanding.

This “secrecy” has been a hallmark of our fraternity, creating a sacred space for our members to explore and grow within the bounds of our moral and spiritual teachings.

However, the world in which our ancient fraternity exists has evolved.

The spread of information in the digital age is rapid and unbounded.

Often outpacing our ability to guide the narrative about who we are and what we stand for.

In this context, the veil of secrecy that shrouds Freemasonry can lead to misconceptions, groundless suspicions, and conspiracy theories that misrepresent our values and intentions.

The challenge, therefore, is how we, as Freemasons, navigate this landscape.

How do we maintain the sanctity and integrity of our private rituals and communications, while also embracing a level of openness necessary to foster understanding and trust with the public?

Let us first acknowledge the importance of our private rituals.

These ceremonies are not mere formalities. They are profound experiences that bind us together, encapsulating the essence of our Masonic journey.

They are meant to be personal and introspective, serving as a bridge between our external and internal lives.

The confidentiality of these practices is not about exclusion but about creating a shared experience that fosters a deep and enduring bond among us.

However, while we recognize the value of our privacy, we must also acknowledge the necessity of transparency in certain aspects of our fraternity.

In an age where misinformation can spread rapidly, a cloak of secrecy may do more harm than good, alienating the public and even potential members who might otherwise be drawn to our beautiful Craft.

One approach to this balance is to distinguish between what needs to be kept private, and what can be shared.

The specifics of our rituals, certain symbols, and internal communications can remain within the fraternity.

However, the principles we live by, the charitable work we do, and the nature of our organization as a society focused on moral and personal development can and should be communicated openly. *(continued on following page)*

Vatican confirms ban continued:

Why Is the Church Against Freemasonry?

The first papal condemnation of Freemasonry came from Pope Clement XII in 1738, but it has been reiterated by numerous popes over the past three centuries. The pronouncement was in Clement's papal bull titled *In Eminenti*.

In this bull, Clement commented on the secrecy of Masonic lodges and the "host of grievous punishment" received when violating the oath of secrecy. The bull did not delve into many specific objections to Masonic practices but concluded, based on "certain knowledge and mature deliberations," that "all prudent and upright men have passed the same judgment on them as being depraved and perverted."

Pope Leo XIII greatly expanded on the Church's teaching nearly 150 years later, in his 1884 papal encyclical *Humanum Genus*. The encyclical detailed why Freemasonry is irreconcilable with Catholicism and accused the Freemasons of "planning the destruction of the holy Church publicly and openly" and holding to doctrines that contradict Church teaching.

According to Leo, Freemasonry adheres to naturalism, which he says is the idea that "human nature and human reason ought in all things to be mistress and guide." He adds that "they deny that anything has been taught by God; they allow no dogma of religion or truth which cannot be understood by the human intelligence, nor any teacher who ought to be believed by reason of his authority."

The encyclical expands on the naturalism of Freemasonry, noting that people of all religions can become Freemasons and that religion is "held as an indifferent matter and that all religions are alike," which ruins "all forms of religion, and especially of the Catholic religion, which, as it is the only one that is true, cannot, without great injustice, be regarded as merely equal to other religions."

Leo says that Freemasons desire to secularize marriage as simply civil contracts, desire that children be left to choose their own religion when they come of age instead of receiving proper religious instruction, and desire that governments refuse to recognize God. He adds that this proposed secularization seeks to eliminate fundamental truths from society.

"If these be taken away, as the naturalists and Freemasons desire, there will immediately be no knowledge as to what constitutes justice and injustice, or upon what principle morality is founded," Leo says. "And, in truth, the teaching of morality which alone finds favor with the sect of Freemasons, and in which they contend that youth should be instructed, is that which they call 'civil,' and 'independent,' and 'free,' namely, that which does not contain any religious belief."

Secrecy and Openness continued:

We can openly discuss our history, our purpose, and our role in society without revealing those aspects meant to be experienced rather than explained.

Furthermore, our engagement with the community can serve as a testament to our principles.

Our charitable efforts, our commitment to personal improvement, and our respect for all people, regardless of their background, are powerful narratives that can reshape public perception

When our actions reflect our values, we provide the most compelling argument for the positive role Freemasonry plays.

Brethren, the balance between secrecy and openness is not a simple equation.

It requires wisdom, understanding, and a willingness to adapt to the changing world around us while staying true to our core principles.

It involves an ongoing dialogue within our ranks and a proactive approach to engagement with the world outside our lodges.

As Freemasons, we find ourselves at a crossroads between tradition and modernity.

The path we choose must honor our heritage while acknowledging the realities of the present.



By striking a balance between secrecy and openness, we uphold the sanctity of our private experiences while fostering understanding and trust in our public persona.

Let us move forward with a spirit of openness, guided by the light of our Masonic principles and committed to illuminating the true nature of our fraternity to a world that may benefit greatly from our teachings.

~ MasonicFind.

St. John's No. 9 Officers for 2024

Worshipful Master	Eric Koteles	206 423-5128
Senior Warden	John Louderback	206 999-0484
Junior Warden	David Flood	206 720-1560
Treasurer	James Maher	253 630-0218
Secretary	James Russell	425 778-6823
Chaplain	Vincent DiGiulio	425 8024274
Marshal	Charles Brockway	253 686-2309
Senior Deacon	Kemal Jimmerson	206 661-8354
Junior Deacon	Dennis Archambault	425 918-2065
Senior Steward	John Adamson	253 208-5502
Junior Steward		
Musician	Adam Creighton	206 422-5227
Tyler	Terry Grove	425 387-6909