

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

Trestleboard

October 2024

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
Worshipful Master

Brethren,

As we enter the month of October, let us take a moment to reflect on one of the core tenets of our Masonic principles: charity and support for one another. Life's journey is often unpredictable, and even the most diligent among us can encounter difficult times. It is during these moments that we, as Masons, must stand ready to assist our brothers in need, offering them the hand of fellowship and support.

We are reminded in our Masonic charge to "do good unto all," especially to our fellow brothers. This is not just a moral obligation but a sacred duty. If one of our own is struggling, whether financially, emotionally, or otherwise, it is our responsibility to extend compassion and help. No brother should ever feel shame in asking for assistance, for there is no dishonor in falling upon hard times — only in allowing pride to prevent you from seeking the support of those who care.

As brothers, we are bound together by the principles of love, relief, and truth. We are stronger together, and it is in times of need that these bonds become most meaningful. Remember, asking for help is not a sign of weakness but a demonstration of the trust and fellowship we have cultivated within our Lodge.

Let this be a reminder to all of us: if you find yourself in need, do not hesitate to reach out. Your brothers stand ready to help, and your Lodge is here for you. The strength of our fraternity lies in our willingness to lift each other up and support one another through life's challenges.

In closing, let us renew our commitment to living our Masonic values, ensuring that no brother walks alone in difficult times. Together, we can make a difference in each other's lives, just as our Masonic forefathers intended.

Fraternally yours,
Worshipful Master Eric Koteles
St. John's Lodge No. 9

CALENDAR



- **October 9 (6pm):** Board of Trustees
2025 Budget preparation
- **October 10 (7pm):** Officers meeting
teleconference
- **October 16 (6:15pm) 7:30pm:** St. John's 9 (dinner) Stated *Past Masters Night, Election of Officers*
- **October 26 (10am):** Quarterly meeting Masonic Service Bureau
- **November 7 (7pm):** Zoom Fellowship
- **November 13 (6pm):** Board of Trustees
- **November 14 (7pm):** Officers meeting
- **November 20 (6:15pm) 7:30pm:** St. John's 9 (dinner) Stated *Installation of Officers*
- *November 28: Thanksgiving Day*
- **December 18 (6:15pm) 7:30pm:** St. John's 9 (dinner) Stated
- *December 25: Christmas*
- **December 27: Feast Day of St. John the Baptist**
- **December 31: Deadline for payment of 2025 Lodge dues**

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 FETES PAST MASTERS, ELECTS OFFICERS THIS MONTH

Past Masters of St. John's are encouraged to be present at this, our October stated communication. While many continue to reside outside of the Seattle area, 24 are well within our fifty-mile attendance area.



We have arrived at that time of the year when we elect a new Master and other officers of our Lodge. The offices of Master, Senior and Junior Wardens, Treasurer and Secretary will be selected for next year, as well as one representative to the Board of Trustees. Worshipful Master WBro. Eric Koteles, following two years in the East, will be stepping down. WBro. Russ Johnson has indicated his desire to serve as Master for the coming year. WBro. John Louderback continues to offer his support



in the West, if it's the desire of his brethren.

It's believed that WBro. Dennis Archambault and WBro. Eric Koteles will be available to serve in the South. The position of Trustee, a three-year term, will also be open as WBro. Hans Wehl has indicated his desire to retire after many years diligently and faithfully serving our Lodge in that position. WBro. Koteles has announced his desire to serve as a Trustee.

Any member of the Lodge is eligible to seek these offices. The Master should have demonstrated Proficiency in Lodge Management.

St. John's brothers extend a sincere "thank you" for the leadership shown by our Master of this year, WBro. Koteles. He has shown skills much-needed by any Lodge. The fulfilment of the duties of a Master requires much personal inconvenience, and some sacrifice of time. The interests of a Lodge, alike with its immediate welfare and ultimate prosperity, depend upon the skill and understanding of the Master; while the general peace and harmony of its members take their tone from his conciliating courtesy, or suffer from his want of so vital an attribute.

Copies of the proposed 2025 budget will be distributed for brief discussion at this communication before final action in November.



2025 Annual Membership Fees Due No Later Than December 31, 2024

All Brothers are encouraged to join us for our 6:15 dinner preceding our stated communication. Please make your dinner [reservations](#) with the secretary at 206 623-0261 by Friday, October 11. Doors open at 5:30. 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 and an enjoyable dinner!



Notices for annual dues will be mailed to all dues-owing members of St. John's in October. 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.



Table of Contents [linked](#)

From the East, Master's Message	page 1
Calendar of Events	1
Past Masters, Election of Officers this month	2
Membership Fees Due December 31	2
Wardens' Messages	3
Candidates for Junior Grand Warden	3
Masons Raised in October	3
Past Masters Honor Night.....	3
Burning Paper	4
Freemasonry Solution to Men's Loneliness?	5
Master's Reflection on This Year in Lodge	7
Working on My Rough Ashlar	8
Visit Our District 5 Brethren	8
Perfecting Freemasonry	8

- 2025 dues structure for membership in St. John's:
1. Past Masters, Life Members, 50-year members = \$0
 2. Age 65+ = \$75 + \$31 = \$106*
 3. Residence 50+ miles from Lodge = \$75 + \$31 = \$106*
 4. Other Raised Master Masons = \$200+\$31=\$231*

***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).

FROM THE WEST

WBro. John Murray Louderback



I recently was honored by receiving an invitation to attend the Rubicon Masonic Society's 12th Annual Festive Board co-hosted by Lexington Lodge No. 1, William O. Ware Lodge of Research, and The Philalathes Society and Ritual Conference in Lexington, Kentucky. The Documentary will most likely be available on the internet.

The Festive Board was held at Spindletop Hall, a mansion of classical architecture with 40 rooms, 11 fireplaces with 145,000 square feet of floor space situated on 1,066 acres of farmland. The Festive Board dinner was wonderful.

During the Ritual Conference the next day, the presenters were WB Andrew Hammer who spoke about William Preston, RWB Timothy L. Culhane who spoke about Thomas Smith Webb, III S Brent Morris spoke about Jeremy Ladd Cross and WB John W. Bizzack spoke about Rob Morris.

I had considerable time to have conversations with the presenters as well as many other Brothers.

I presented WB Russ Johnson's three books on Masonic Curriculum to Rubicon Masonic Society Chairman Brian T. Evans, Jr.

The Rubicon Masonic Society and Lexington Lodge No. 1 has hosted Festive Boards at Spindletop Hall since 2013 as well as hosting Masonic Perspectives and Scholar Nights, two national conferences and other Masonic related events.

May we continue to act with poise, dignity, and as gentlemen in our labors to become better men. - **Opening Charge To Master Masons**

CANDIDATES FOR JUNIOR GRAND WARDEN ANNOUNCED

Four brothers have announced their availability for election to the Grand South next June. They are WBro. Scot Patrick Sageser (Past Master of William Upton Naval and Military Lodge No. 206 and Franklin Lodge No. 5), WBro. Jaimie M. Speicher (PM of Unity Lodge No. 198), and WBro. Jeremy B. Yielding (PM of Steilacoom Lodge No. 2). All have served as Deputies of Grand Masters.

MASONS RAISED IN OCTOBER

Date Raised:

10/25/1948	Donald J. Zuck
10/31/1964	Gary G. Jentoft
10/31/1970	Louis A. Van Der Wel
10/24/1985	Dennis J. Archambault
10/3/1986	Roger A. Barnstead
10/12/1988	Allan B. Pinch
10/31/1992	Brian P. West
10/30/1993	Paul G. Winter
10/12/1996	Storrs L. "Skip" Albertson
10/12/1996	James A. Wold
10/29/2015	Blair J. Neumann



FROM THE SOUTH

WBro. David Flood



RESPECT

In the aftermath of the recent pandemic many of us have been left feeling isolated and disconnected from our damaged social structure. It's easy in circumstances like these to feel we have no one but ourselves to depend on. Perhaps we've begun to feel that others don't matter much since it's all up to us.

Freemasonry helps us see the worth of our fellow humans and gives us a path out of isolation and separation into a greater wholeness. German philosopher Immanuel Kant felt that the basis for a just and upright life was to view all humans as deserving respect. Why? Because every human is a person able to make choices, and exercise free-will. That holds true regardless of status, success or social position. Our apron lecture reminds us that the honors of princes and potentates have no bearing on our life as men and as masons.

In modern terms one of the four great values held by Freemasons along with Integrity, Friendship, and Service is Respect. Our daily existence depends on hundreds of thousands of fellow men and women. They make up the supply chains that bring us our water, electricity, transportation, food and a whole universe of services. Regardless of how major or minor their contribution, we owe them appreciation and respect.

We show our respect in Lodge by upholding our ancient usages and customs of friendship and courtesy to each other. As for the wider society in which we as Freemasons take part, the noble words of our closing charge admonish us that every human being has a claim upon our kind offices.

St. John's Past Masters Honor Night



Dinner 6:15pm
Wednesday, October 16

Reservations Requested

206 623-0261

LET'S LOOK AT THAT A LITTLE CLOSER



. We need to be cautious not to quit our studies otherwise we will, as told in Fahrenheit 451, be in danger of losing our culture. If our Fraternity fails it will not be due to outside influences, it will be because we chose to favor a simplistic view of what we teach and suppress the ways of the past in favor of work that fits between commercials or can be explained in a headline.

Burning Paper

JAMES G. HAMLIN, 33°

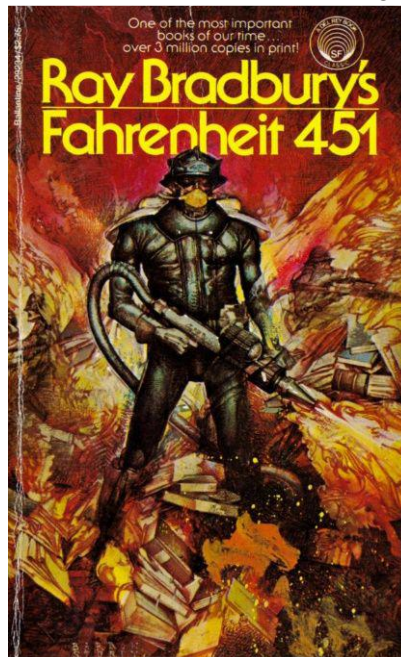
Personal Representative
of the S.G.I.G.

Many years ago I read a book written in 1953 by Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*. I remember watching a 1966 movie by the same name and just the other night I saw a 2018 remake. Neither movie was as good as the book, but each offered a slightly differing emphasis on censorship. For those who are unfamiliar with the story, in the near future firemen do not put out fires. Rather they are tasked with destroying all printed material, paper, film, video/audio tape. Bradbury titled the novel after the then common belief that paper ignited at 451° Fahrenheit. The only acceptable media was government broadcasts to a “parlor wall” in most homes.

According to reports, Bradbury’s reasons for writing this novel has shifted from a reaction to the McCarthy era censorship in the early 1950s and Stalin’s crack-down on authors and artists in the Soviet Union to, “In a 2007 interview, Bradbury maintained that people misinterpret his book and that *Fahrenheit 451* is really a statement on how mass media like television marginalizes the reading of literature.”

This book was burned in Apartheid South Africa, banned by school boards over the years and even in 1967 the publisher subjected the book to expurgation by changing the words hell, damn and abortion in 75 passages (this continued until it was brought to Bradbury’s attention in 1979).

Bradbury said that you do not have to burn books to destroy a culture, you just need to get people to stop reading them. In one of the movies philosophers were specifically attacked as they tended to make people think and could become sad as a result. It appears that we as a nation have become headline-readers, more interested in topics that fit in between commercials, while newspapers across the country are shutting down printing presses. Many appear to discern fact from fiction by memes posted on social media. Our Fraternity would have to exist underground in a society as presented in this novel. Through our teachings we are instructed to study and interpret for ourselves, to question, to explore and to examine. Throughout *Fahrenheit 451* we see the dangers



of state sponsored censorship and are also warned of censorship from the populace. Both lead to an illiterate society.

In our Second Degree we are instructed to study the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences, consisting of the trivium (grammar, rhetoric, and logic) and the quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy). Traditionally, the trivium was taught and then the quadrivium. I see this as we should learn to communicate and discuss so we can better understand God’s creation as may be revealed in the study of the quadrivium. All this to help us in our search of truth (light).

The degrees and teaching of Ancient and Accepted

Scottish Rite has us delve deeper into what others have found in their quests. Albert Pike, in *Morals and Dogma*, has us explore many different religions and philosophies. Our degrees should arouse curiosity to further our study. If we only perform degrees without examining their meanings or lessons, we are short-changing some of the beauties of the Scottish Rite.

But we have seen in some of our blue Lodges and even within the A.A.S.R. the focus seems to have shifted from the quest for truth through study and examination to more social and philanthropic endeavors. Social and charitable work is important but should not be placed in front of what each of us has said we are searching for. We do good work because we have become

better men, we do not do good work to become good men. We need to be cautious not to quit our studies otherwise we will, as told in *Fahrenheit 451*, be in danger of losing our culture. If our Fraternity fails it will not be due to outside influences, it will be because we chose to favor a simplistic view of what we teach and suppress the ways of the past in favor of work that fits between commercials or can be explained in a headline.

Jim Hamlin 33°

Personal Representative to the Valley of Everett



What if the Solution to Men's Loneliness Is ... Freemasonry?

What makes a guy decide to join a really old fraternal order in 2024?

By [Allegra Rosenberg](#)

A nondescript building in New York City's Chelsea neighborhood houses, variously, the offices of the Fader magazine, the offices of the National Institute for the Psychotherapies (and various therapists' rooms therein), and the infrastructure consulting firm AECOM.

Visitors to the building, coming in through the 23rd Street entrance, might glimpse some strange imagery decorating the lobby—a mural full of odd symbols, men in aprons moving blocks of stone around a pyramid featuring a golden sun.

The Masonic Hall was built by Freemasons in 1873, and is still owned and operated by them. The 23rd Street half of the city-block-spanning building is the commercial side, rented out to tenants, but the other side is entirely occupied by Masonic Lodge meeting rooms, libraries, and administrative offices, and has been for over 150 years.

For the uninitiated, a Masonic “Lodge” (a word the organization uses in a nongeographical sense) is an affiliation of local Freemasons. As for what a Freemason is—well, he's a member of a Masonic Lodge.

Every Tuesday, after seeing my therapist on the 14th floor, I would head down in the elevator alongside a guy about my age whose appointment clearly ended at the same time as mine. Stepping out into the Masonry-themed lobby I wondered to myself, half-jokingly, if he ever considered becoming a Freemason to assuage whatever personal or psychological issues were bringing him to the National Institute for the Psychotherapies.

Officially, women cannot become Masons; nor can atheists. To become a Mason of a recognized, “regular” Lodge, you need to be a man of legal age who has a belief in “the Great Architect of the Universe.” A nondenominational belief, that is — Jews, Muslims, Christians, deists and agnostics alike can join, although for a Catholic, joining risks excommunication.

After a few months of weekly visits to the building, I was finally curious enough to take the free tour offered on a plaque in the lobby. Accompanied by Masons from around the world and their more than slightly reluctant-looking wives and children, I was led up and down the building by an elderly Mason named Shlomo.

I marveled at the huge, colorfully decorated, pristine meeting rooms for each Lodge and the history on display in the foyers outside —famous faces from Harry Houdini

to Fiorello La Guardia had once been Masons meeting inside, as Shlomo proudly explained.

Clearly Masonry was still thriving, at least in New York City, making use of these spectacular meeting spaces. But who are the Masons today?

Modern Freemasonry, a voluntary organization of men known as a fraternal order, emerged in the 18th century in England, out of existing associations of literal, actual medieval stonemasons. “Accepted” or “speculative” masons—those who were interested in belonging to such a respected brotherhood, but did not lay brick and stone for a living — first began to be admitted to Scottish and English Lodges made up of actual masons in the 16th century. Soon enough, Freemasons were, for the most part, not hardworking tradesmen but educated gentlemen of the Enlightenment, who adopted the guild structure and the allegorical, spiritual vibes of the Freemasons as the basis for a more general-interest, semisecret members-only society.

A central body, the Grand Lodge of England, was founded in 1717, marking the beginning of modern

Freemasonry. Its genteel membership found in Freemasonry an appealing in-group with staunch principles, rituals, and history dating back to biblical times, which they then proceeded to imbue with modern principles of toleration, progress, and experimental science, alongside traditional values of brotherhood and hard work.

Freemasonry is what I would call an elevated subculture. By virtue of being populated and promulgated from the very start by

elite and wealthy Western men, and because its internecine squabbles and general popularity the world over have become public knowledge thanks to various anti-Masonry campaigns which have aimed to discredit its members, it has acquired prominent cultural standing and power which is, some might say, disproportionate to its actual substance.

As a “secret society,” it has been the target of large-scale conspiracy theories, immortalized by *The Illuminatus! Trilogy* and *National Treasure* films, to say nothing of the Dan Brown books, which placed Masonic myth and legend on center stage.

While not a religion in and of itself, Freemasonry is far from secular. principles of self-improvement are based in Abrahamic fundamentals, with a dash of Orientalism, and the symbolism of the biblical temple and its architect are central to the rituals which make up the meat of official Masonic meetings.

An answer to my question—*Where are all the masons, in 2024?*—can be found on the thriving [/r/freemasonry subreddit](#), where dozens of



enthusiastic young Masons from around the world practically knocked down my door in order to gush about their experiences in the fraternity.

While Masonic numbers are down since the boom days of the 1940s and '50s, there are still nearly 1 million Masons in the U.S., belonging to 50 state Grand Lodges plus one for Washington, D.C., and 6 million Masons worldwide. Most Lodges are engaged in active recruiting. The stereotype of Masons being entirely stodgy old boomers is only half true.

Older and serious or younger and casual

Tyler Lee, a 26-year-old Mason based in Boston, joined a local Lodge after being frustrated with the difficulty of making friends after college. He checked out a few Lodges, ones full of older guys and ones that were super serious about ritual, before landing on one made up of mostly younger men who were slightly more casual about the whole thing.

Like most Lodges, Tyler's Lodge meets once a month for "official" meetings, where members perform Freemasonry's secret and elaborate rituals, but informal meetings are far more frequent — like the group of college friends he had been missing, they organize over group chats to have barbecues, go to baseball games, and just hang out.

Tyler says that to be a Mason, you need to be a stand-up guy. "Anyone who's a good guy who's looking for a little bit of community, that's what we're looking for," he said, telling me about his role in admitting new members to his Lodge. Specific admissions criteria vary from Lodge to Lodge, but broadly, an emphasis is placed on trustworthiness, friendliness, sincerity, honesty, and openness to experience. Essentially, guys have to pass a vibe check from the other brothers of the Lodge before being officially asked to join.

Freemasonry is a force for good

The consensus among the group of enthusiastic Masons that my Reddit outreach self-selected for seems to be that Freemasonry is a force for good in their life, helping them be even more of a stand-up guy than they were before joining.

"Freemasonry has fundamentally changed my worldview for the better and made me a genuinely more accepting and open person," said Nicholas Bell, a 33-year-old Mason in Washington state. Joseph, a 24-year-old Mason in the U.K., agreed that "Masonry has really helped me find my place in the world since [the pandemic]."

Mainline Freemasonry's dependence on tradition—no women, no atheists — might be a turnoff to some, but in our lore-obsessed culture, Freemasonry fits right in as a fount of nearly infinite history, ritual, symbolism, and mystery, which is the icing on the cake of close-knit and reliable community.

Freemasonry can be addicting, and often expensive. Once a Mason is initiated, he can spend a lot of his free

time organizing Lodge events, visiting other Lodges, or adding on bonus degrees and organizations. Once you get through the basic three degrees (levels) of Freemasonry, there is a veritable bouquet of appendant bodies to choose from, all with their own lore and traditions — the Scottish and York Rites, the Shriners, the Order of the Eastern Star.

There's something for everyone in Freemasonry. A reliable "found family" of loyal friends on hand when you need them, as Tyler recounted, or deep dives into the centuries of Masonic lore and history, for the nerds. Community service is a big part of Masonry and associated groups like the Shriners, and men find support for big life events like divorces, deaths, raising children, and career changes from among their Lodge family, including from older men who have been through it all before.



"I think that fraternal orders can satisfy [both] the desire for male companionship and mentoring without toxic masculinity," said Paul, a 28-year-old Mason from Ontario. He grew up in Hamilton near the Scottish Rite building and always wondered what happened inside. Eventually, posts on Reddit convinced him to

join, and he soon found himself a member of a nonjudgmental

brotherhood which has become a vital support system for him. "There's a sense of community and trust that I have never found anywhere else, that nothing is off-limits."

Andre LaFleur, a 32-year-old Mormon Mason based in Salt Lake City, enjoys all aspects of being a Mason, including the deep connections between Mormonism and Freemasonry — founder Joseph Smith himself was a Freemason. "I love the camaraderie and the ceremonies that we perform for new candidates," he told me, adding that Freemasonry in his experience includes all sorts of guys, from more intellectually oriented "Renaissance men" to dudes who are mainly there for the barbecues.

There is a general understanding that *some* work needs to be done in order to make the somewhat obscure traditions that Masonry centers on turn into a productive and fulfilling community.

I heard over and over again the truism that a man gets out of Masonry what he puts into it. The official prerequisites of age, sex, and belief are accompanied by unofficial ones: A guy has to be ready to approach the objectively strange and un-modern habitus of Masonry with earnestness, sincerity, and commitment. "To make the most out of Freemasonry, a prospective candidate

needs a desire for self-improvement and an open mind,” Paul said.

“If you show up, help get a dinner going, socialize, attend Lodge, discuss deep topics with brothers, really put your all into memorizing ritual and making a Lodge meeting something impactful and meaningful,” agreed Nicholas Bell, “then you will get a lot out of Freemasonry and will become a better man by doing it.”

Henry (a pseudonym) is a 38-year-old trans man in the north of England who became a Mason a few years ago. He’d never considered Freemasonry until after the pandemic, when he was unemployed, searching for community, and found himself walking past a local Lodge near his home and seeing lots of guys hanging out outside.

“The sense that we’re all working together on something that is ultimately pointless is very nice,” he said, before clarifying that it isn’t that the rituals are *pointless*, per se—in fact “the whole point of the enterprise is to spend time with each other, and to do these sort of morality plays together.” Masonic rituals, the scripted rites that Masons act out at official meetings, have an emphasis on teaching morals through allegory.

One of the most important Masonic allegories is of the fable of the building of the Temple of Solomon, starring the mythological architect Hiram Abiff, whose life and death are acted out during Masonic ceremonies.

These rituals are at the very center of what it means to be a Freemason. A brother has to memorize his part in the rites and aim to perform them well. But, Henry continued, it’s not like at work or at home, where a mistake could cost people time, money, or hurt feelings. Being a Mason is a low-stakes but high-reward way to spend your time.

While Henry isn’t out as a trans man to his Lodge, and doesn’t plan to let them know, he’s out as gay and says his brothers have all been very accepting of him and his partner. Freemasons tend to be “the kind of people that want to join; very sociable and friendly and human-focused,” he said, acknowledging that while in his experience the Grand Lodge of England is generally LGBTQ+-positive, he’s heard differently about state Grand Lodges in America.

Nevertheless, Masonic Lodges are commonly referred to as “safe spaces” by brothers — oases of support and male camaraderie in a modern desert of political division and the noxious temptations of the manosphere. It’s a phones-down, eyes-up escape from the mundane into the symbolic, one which — as one Mason described it to me — will “inculcate a deep respect and love for the human condition.”



Hiram Abiff during building of King Solomon's Temple

Master’s Reflection on This Year in Lodge

Eric Koteles

I am filled with pride and a sense of gratitude. Serving as your worshipful master since 2022 has been one of the greatest honors of my life. Together, we embarked on a journey of renewal and revitalization.

When I began this role, it was clear that St. John's needed a fresh direction - one that would not only preserve our traditions but also breathe new life into them.

We needed to create an environment that not only attracted new members, but provided real value to everyone in our brotherhood. This was the genesis of the **Renaissance Plan**, a vision designed to bring our Lodge back to its full potential.

And, I'm proud to say, brethren, that this vision is coming is becoming a reality. Tonight, we stand on the brink of welcoming another young man into our Lodge – a part of young brothers who will be the future torchbearers of St. John's. They are eager, full of potential, and ready to contribute to our ongoing labor. They do not just represent new members, they are the future leaders who will carry forward the Masonic principles we have worked so hard to uphold. Their arrival is a testament to the work we've all done to make this Lodge a place where good men come to grow, to learn, and to build meaningful connections.

The **Renaissance Plan** we initiated focused on education, fraternity, and respect - bringing the Lodge back to its core purpose: making good men better. We listened to one another, we adapted, and we introduced initiatives that are not just relevant to the past but are critical for the future. We have rekindled the light within this Lodge, and I am confident that the steps we have taken will continue to guide us well into the future.

Our Lodge is part of a legacy that stretches back over 164 years, a history beautifully chronicled in the mural at the Husky union building at the University of Washington.

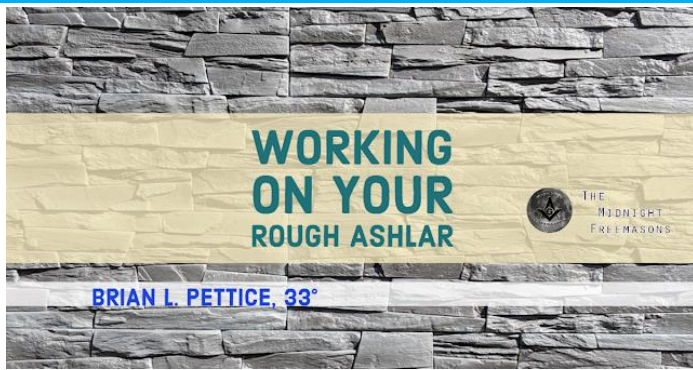
But more than history, we are custodians of a living tradition. As we celebrate our past, we must also look forward, ensuring that we pass on an even stronger Lodge to the next generation.

Brothers, this Lodge’s strength lies not in its walls or even its rituals, but in the bonds we forged together. We have become a close-knit fraternity, a group of men united not just by our Masonic obligations but by genuine brotherhood. It is this spirit that will keep St. John's thriving.

As I prepare to pass the torch to our next Worshipful Master, I do so with optimism and excitement for what lies ahead. We have set a course for success, and I am confident that we will continue to build upon the foundation we've laid together. The future is bright, and it is full of possibility.

Thank you, my brothers, for your trust, your dedication, and your support. Together we have navigated challenges, embraced new ideas, and made our Lodge stronger. I am deeply grateful to each and every one of you. And so, as we close this chapter, let us look to the next with hope and enthusiasm. St. John's Lodge No. 9 is in good hands - your hands - and its future has never been more promising.

Thank you, and may the Great Architect of the Universe continue to guide us on our journey.



“Working on my rough ashlar” is a phrase used by Freemasons to mean they are trying to apply the lessons of the fraternity to improve themselves in some way, perhaps morally or spiritually or, hopefully, and most importantly, behaviorally. Freemasons using this phrase are indicating that they are trying to change something about themselves, trying to change how they behave. You have probably heard this or even used said it yourself. But what does it really mean? Do we ever really change ourselves, especially our behavior, or do we just pat ourselves on the back for the “good” men—the perfect ashlar-- we already are?

Let’s look at the ritual. The rough ashlar in the first degree is that “stone taken from the quarry in its rude and natural state” to remind us of our own rude and natural state. The rough ashlar is “made ready” or perfected to be of use to the builder in constructing his temple. How does this happen? For operative masons, the rough ashlar is perfected by subtraction. The common gavel is used to break off the rough and superfluous or unnecessary parts leaving only the beautiful and useful behind. The symbolism is clear, but do we see ourselves in it? Do we see that we are the rude and imperfect rough ashlar that needs to be perfected to fortify and support the building of our own temples? Do we see the rough and superfluous parts that we need to break off and get rid of? Do we see that we have behavior that needs to change? I think an honest look in the mirror will tell us that we don’t.

When you look in the mirror, do you see a man who is full of pride or a Mason who has humility? Do you see a man who clings to and defends his every opinion or a Mason who keeps an open mind? Do you see a man who regularly provokes others to anger or despair or a Mason who is more circumspect? Do you see a man who would fight every fight no matter how petty or a Mason who walks away? Do you see a man who sees things only from his own point of view or a Mason who seeks to understand and easily empathizes with another? Do you see a man who demonizes those with whom he disagrees or a Mason who recognizes that the Divine which lives within him lives within them as well?

So look in the mirror. Do you see the Mason you want to be or the man you don’t? Better yet, look at your Facebook, Twitter, and social media—your post and your

comments—do you see there the man that you want people to think of when they think of Freemasonry? If not, get to work with your gavel. Breakoff and subtract those superfluous parts-- your passions and prejudices. Change your behavior and change your heart. Get rid of the rubbish that you need to remove so that the man that you are can become the Mason you want to be.

My Brother, now more than ever, your country needs you to do this. Your fraternity and your Lodge need you to do this. Most importantly, YOU need you to do this. If you think that you don’t, what are you doing here?

~BLP

Visit Our District 5 Brethren

District 5 Lodges	Next Meeting	Time
St. John’s 9	Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024	7:30pm
Eureka 20	Monday, Oct. 7, 2024	7 pm
University 141	Monday, Oct. 7, 2024	7:30pm
Daylight 232	Saturday, Oct. 19, 2024	10am
Queen Anne 242	Thursday, Oct 10, 2024	6:30pm
Esoterika 316	Tuesday, Oct. 22, 2024	7:30pm

Perfecting Freemasonry

MasonicFind

Freemasonry is not a static institution. Rather, it is a way of existence. A guiding philosophy for how we conduct our lives.

Just as we cannot change fundamental aspects of life like breathing, walking, or the natural elements... we must accept Masonry for what it is; a rich tapestry of history, tradition, principles, and purposes that have endured the test of time. The true essence of Masonry lies in how each of us applies its teachings to our lives.

The value of Masonry today is no less significant than it was a century ago, and its philosophy remains as relevant as ever. Instead of pondering how to modernize Masonry, we should focus on better integrating its teachings into our daily existence.

The modernization of Masonry should occur within the hearts and minds of individual Masons, as there are no limitations to our understanding and growth in this Craft.

Each day presents an opportunity to gain new insights and deepen our appreciation for what Freemasonry means to us. Our hope is that every Mason, through dedicated engagement with our Craft, diligent study, and understanding, will find renewed appreciation.

Let us move beyond vague notions of "Modernizing Freemasonry" and instead wholeheartedly seek to understand what this fraternity truly means to us.

Trust in the Craft enough to admire it, study it, and perfect it. Apply its teachings in your life, and by doing so, you will enhance both yourself and Freemasonry.

After all, this is why we are here.