

In the



Daylight

Clarence F. Smith Daylight Lodge No. 866, F.&A.M.
14750 Sherman Way, Van Nuys, CA 91405
Ed: davidikarp@karpmediation.com

December 2025

Masonic Rituals (and Rites)

Foreword...

Rituals or rites mark milestones in our lives, whether in family, religion, education, organizations or other situations. Here are a few that come to mind: In families: births, birthdays, marriages, anniversaries, divorces, deaths, etc. In religions: baptisms, circumcisions and baby namings, communions, bar or bat mitzvahs, weddings, funerals, burials, or whatever. In education: commencements, graduations, white coat ceremonies for medical students, swearing-in ceremonies for new lawyers, and more. In organizations, there are interviews, hirings, promotions and raises. Even our daily lives have rituals – what, where and when we eat, sleep, work, watch TV or read, what we do and don't do.

In all rituals or rites, there are repetitions and familiarities. They center us. They unite groups. They celebrate. They are stepping stones to the next horizon. They divide our lives into identifiable segments. They give us something to look forward to. Or they help us through grief and mourning.

In Masonry, we have our rituals too. They mark the initiation of candidates and advancement through the degrees. They open and close our meetings. They mark the difference between Freemasonry and other social and fraternal organizations. They are reminders of who we are and what we believe and aspire to, and they bring us closer together in unique shared experiences.

Our rituals and rites bind us together as men and Masons. To some degree, they reflect ancient practices, use archaic or elevated language, and focus and educate us. As our Grand Lodge writes:

“Because we’re a 300-year-old organization with a love for symbolism, we also have a lot of pomp and circumstance: fancy regalia, unusual titles, very old rituals. That means when you join a Masonic Lodge, you are joining an important part of history, with traditions that you won’t find anywhere else.”

So, without giving away any secrets, let’s explore the importance of our rituals/rites in our lives as men and Masons. Enjoy the read.

Fraternally,

Bro. David I. Karp

Editor



December Trestle Board appears on page 2.

Lodge dues for 2026 \$230 inclusive of “per capita” for Grand Lodge. Please pay promptly to stay in good standing



Degree Rituals at the Heart of Freemasonry

Editor's Note: The following is excerpted from a web page of Hillcrest Masonic Lodge #1318, Dallas, TX, at <https://dallasfreemasonry.org/freemason-rituals#>

“While Freemasonry is not a secret society, Masonic Lodges do have their secrets. These secrets are delivered in the form of Freemason rituals. Masonic Rituals, or masonic rites as they are sometimes called, are ancient ceremonies that the candidate go through to learn the Masonic symbols, and their applicable interpretations of meaning. Each degree has its own Freemason ceremony highlighting different meanings that are applicable for the candidate at that point in their Masonic journey.

“These secret Masonic rituals have been conducted by Lodges, since before recorded history of them began. Since the Masonic Lodge rituals were so secret, in previous times, Masonic Lodges would not even record them in their minutes, so we really do not have conclusive proof on when they began. We do know that the first two degree existed at least as far back as the mid-17th century. While that is as far back as we know for sure, there are indicators that make many believe the first degrees dated back hundreds of year prior to that....

“While we cannot discuss the details of what members experience when joining a Masonic Lodge, we guarantee you that our Masonic rituals are nothing frivolous or mischievous.... Without giving away any of our Freemason initiation

ritual secrets, our ceremony for joining a Lodge does not consist of anything that silly or nefarious.

“While Freemasonry is a fraternity, this is like no other fraternity you could have joined in the past. Masonry is a solemn order, and we conduct our degrees with the utmost seriousness. Our aim is to build good men into better men, and we don't do that by breaking them down through hazing or any type of paddle ceremony. All members are talked with days prior to their Masonic joining ritual and explained the seriousness and solemnity of our rituals, and provided comfort in knowing that our Masonic initiation rituals are near identical to those that men have gone through for hundreds of years, including George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and Voltaire.”

December Trestle Board

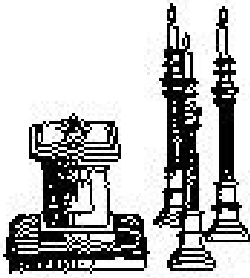
(We meet in person each month on the first and third Saturday of the month at 10:00 AM at the Van Nuys Masonic Center, except as otherwise noted. Always subject to change.)

December 6, 2025 10AM, Masonic Education

December 6, 2025 11AM, Stated Meeting. Lunch donation \$15/person.

December 20, 2025 Second Degree Conferral

Additional information, including any changes to the calendar, may become available subsequently. So, look to Messenger for the Master's postings or contact him directly. Ed.



The Purpose and Power of Masonic Rituals

Editor's note: The following is excerpted from an online article entitled "What is the Purpose and Power of Masonic Ritual?" by Right Worshipful Brother Christopher J. Busby, Grand Lecturer of the Grand Lodge of New Hampshire, published on May 29, 2020 at <https://www.nhgrandlodge.org/what-is-the-purpose-and-power-of-masonic-ritual/>.

"Our ritual is the heart and soul of the Fraternity. All our tenets, philosophies, and myths reside there. Without it, we would simply be another social or charitable club. Our ritual sets us apart. It binds us with each other and with every Mason throughout time.

"Masonic ritual is not simply made up of the words. Indeed, any individual with access with the internet can obtain a wealth of information about the forms and ceremonies of the Craft.

"Does one that simply reads the ritual become a Mason? Of course, the answer is 'no'.

"Without the right men to join us, and without the right experience to act as a catalyst for transformation, the words are merely ideas.

"One may look upon our ritual as a meditation. The opening and closing of the Lodge, the floorwork of a Degree, our charges are inculcated to center us to our labors. To teach as well as to remind. To unite us around a guiding set of principles and awaken our spirits.

"Our ritual is performed in Consecrated Temples [i.e., Lodges] which are meant to be sacred and separate from the everyday world. There we navigate along our paths from the material to the spiritual. Our Temples are the vessels in which we individually and collectively channel communication to the Divine.

"Every time we enact or experience one of our Degrees, we are living and moving together in sacred time and space. We are being initiated again and renewing our obligations...."

CFS Daylight's Officers for 2025

Worshipful Master Bro. Gerald J. Alvarez
Senior Warden Bro. Joseph ("Joe") R. Chavez
Junior Warden Bro. Roland ("Letroc") Cortel
Treasurer Bro. Ely Ayao
Secretary Bro. Akram Al-Awar
Asst. Secretary
Bro. Thomas K. Sheehan - deceased 2025
Chaplain
WB Archimedes ("Kim") S. Cabanig, PM
Senior Deacon Bro. Lloyd Donasco, Sr.
Junior Deacon Bro. Elvis L. Alvarez
Senior Steward Bro. Ibrahim Hannoun
Junior Steward Bro. Marvin De Guzman
Marshal Bro. Mkhitar ("Mike") Mkrtchyan
Organist Bro. Earl Austria
Tiler WB Fernando ("Jhonny") Lebrilla PM
Officers' Coach
WB Archimedes ("Kim") S. Cabanig, PM
Candidates' Coach Bro. Aldrin Perez
Inspector WB Leland H. Celestre, PM

Contact information:

Master:
Worshipful Gerald J. Alvarez

Secretary:
Brother Akram Al-Awar



Some Ideas for Memorizing Ritual Text

Editor's note: The following is excerpted from a web page of Wisconsin Freemasonry (Grand Lodge of Wisconsin) at <https://wimasons.org/2016/10/rough-ashlar-lodge-memorization/>.

“As Masons, one of the first things we do is ask our new candidates to memorize the obligation.... Think about this for a second. We ask our new candidates to memorize a fairly lengthy and complicated piece of memory work right off the bat. Do we teach him how to memorize? Or do we just throw him into the deep end of the pool?

“Now before we throw our brother (candidate or new officer) into the deep end of the pool let's talk about some strategies for memorizing.

“Learn it in chunks! Most folks can tackle a sentence or two at a time. Teach your brothers to learn a small chunk and then progressively a bigger chunk.

“Read it out loud! Memorizing is half brain and half muscle memory. You need to move your lips and speak out loud to memorize. The sooner you begin saying it out loud, the sooner you'll memorize it.

“Read it twice, then recite it from memory. Whatever size chunk you choose to work on, make a system out of it. Read it out loud twice through then hide the words and try it from memory. As you start getting it down pat, you'll only need to read it through once before you try

it from memory. This works great with a coach. This is also a great way to avoid memorizing your own 'version' complete with a few wrong words.

“Start at the end. Once you begin tackling bigger parts, start your practice session by doing the last page or paragraphs. When we always start at the beginning we have a tendency to repeat the first paragraphs many more times than the last. We get interrupted or distracted. The first page gets lots of practice. Turn this around, especially with longer parts. If you start with the “end”, you will actually practice the ending twice every time you work on the part. You'll know the last portion better, and when you get to that section you'll feel a sense of relief as you tell yourself ‘I got the rest of this!’

“Practice with others. We all have the ability to deliver perfect memory work to our dogs, or to our steering wheel. Delivering that part in front of real Brothers in a live practice session is the essential final step before doing it in lodge.

“Slow it down. Memory work needs to sound like it is coming from the heart. Delivering your part really fast doesn't mean you know it better than anyone else. Reciting it with meaning, at a meaningful tempo, is the goal....”





A Retrospective

Editor's note: The following was originally published in the April 2020 edition of this newsletter:

Trudy Lee, whose parents called her "Tru," married a Freemason from London named Dooley in the early Eighteenth Century.

Shortly before the war of Independence, they emigrated to Boston, Massachusetts, and took up residence in the town.

Dooley was a tailor by trade. His wife, Tru, worked in his shop as a seamstress. She helped during the time when colonists wanted locally made clothing because of taxes on imported English goods including cloth.

Dooley affiliated with St. Andrews Lodge, of which Wor. Paul Revere was Master. One might recall that St. Andrews Lodge owned the Green Dragon Tavern where the Lodge conducted its business, and where, incidentally, the Boston Tea Party was planned. See, e.g., <http://www.boston-tea-party.org/mystery.html>.

Dooley and his wife received a commission to prepare costumes, Native American regalia, and they worked diligently on the project. After the Tea Party, some of the costumes were left at the Lodge.

One evening during an EA degree which happened to take place on Halloween, the SD was startled by the candidate's attire — one of those leftover Mohawk costumes.

Flabbergasted the SD demanded to know if he was "*Dooley and Tru Lee prepared?*"

Apparently he was. DIK.

Masonic Recognition

Past Masters of Clarence F. Smith Daylight Lodge No. 866, F. & A.M.

Steven A. Wolvek (2017-2018)
Rogelio ("Roger") L. Soriano (2019)
Celso V. Cardano, Jr. (2020-2021)
Edgar O. Yeghiazaryan (2022)
Fernando ("Jhonny") O. Lebrilla, Jr. (2023)
Spartak ("Spo") Khachatryan (2024)

Past Masters by Affiliation

Archimedes ("Kim") S. Cabanig, (2021)
Celso V. Cardano, Jr. (2012)
Omar Cervantes (2021)
Emmanuel D. Espiritu (2014)
Bruce L. Ewald (2004-2006)
Bruce L. Hawley (1984)*
Luc Paul, Jr. (2018)

Past Masters who are "Honorary Members"

Jovito ("Jovi") R. Rivera (2017)
Timoteo ("Tim") Zuniga (2020)

Hiram Award (for dedicated Service)

Akram Al-Awar (2024)
Archimedes ("Kim") S. Cabanig, PM (2022)
Celso V. Cardano, Jr., PM (2022)
Keith S. Cotton (2017)
Bruce L. Ewald, PM (2011)
Bruce L. Hawley, PM (2000)*
David I. Karp (2020)
Fernando ("Jhonny") O. Lebrilla, Jr., PM (2025)
Barry Mann (2021)
John T. Seletos (2017)
Thomas K. Sheehan (2014)*
Rogelio L. Soriano, PM (2018)
Steven A. Wolvek, PM (2019)

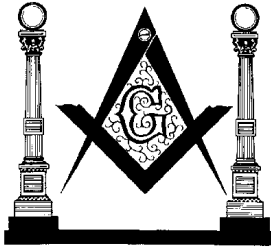
Sciots' Cornerstone Award

Ely D. Ayao (2025)

Daniel Carter Beard Masonic Scouter Award

Steven W. Engstrom (2022)
David I. Karp (2007)

* Deceased.



The Ritual of Circumambulation

Editor's Editor's note: The following, omitting certain historical references, is excerpted from the Grand Lodge of Wisconsin's Masonic Study Series, Volume 2, issue 1, September 2016, at <https://wimasons.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/MSS-Circumambulation-September-2016.pdf>, written by R.:W.:Brother Robert Strader for the Education Committee, Grand Lodge Free and Accepted Masons of Wisconsin.

"To show they are *duly and truly prepared* [emphasis added] to be initiated, passed and raised in the first three Masonic degrees, candidates for Freemasonry are caused to circumambulate the lodge, also referred to as a perambulation....

"The word 'circumambulation' is derived from two Latin words; 'circum' meaning 'around' and 'ambulare' meaning 'to walk and literally means 'a walking around'. Too often in our degrees it is believed that we walk in circles just for time filler or a chance to read scripture but the good Mason knows it has to go much deeper than that.

[...]

"The candidate's circumambulation of the lodge room is intended to symbolize the state of spiritual attainment associated with the degrees of Masonry. The newly initiated Entered Apprentice Mason learns to humbly submit himself to the fact that he knows little about what the Craft teaches. In his state of ignorance, the initiated candidate is introduced to the tools of

learning that, when studied under the guidance of the more experienced brethren, will enlighten his spirit. A Fellowcraft is presumed to have mastered the rudiments of Masonic symbolism and be knowledgeable about the fact that Masonry uses symbols to impart wise and serious truths. His spirit is in need of solid food [as in "food for thought"] and he is led to the study of the liberal arts and sciences, which he is expected to read and understand through the prism of spirituality instilled by Masonry. While continuing to require spiritual food, the Master Mason is expected to take the lessons he has learned and usefully offer them to the community in which he resides by living the spiritual life he has been taught. The circumambulation not only symbolizes the candidate's spiritual state, but also the three stages of preparation necessary before the world may expect to benefit from that spirituality....



[Members of our Lodge having a great time in San Francisco for the Grand Lodge Annual Communication, October 25, 2025!]



Go Right: The Two Rites of American Freemasonry

Editor's Note: The following selections are excerpted from a very full explanation of the Scottish Rite and York Rite of Freemasonry found at <https://www.travelingtemplar.com/2018/09/the-two-rites-of-american-freemasonry.html>. Be sure to go to the website for more information; here is an overview.

A Comparison

"The York Rite and Scottish Rite are often seen as two branches in competition, particularly in American Freemasonry, but in reality, they both seek to impart further Masonic light to a willing aspirant.... The rituals themselves ... differ as the York Rite rituals keep with the same storyline of the Blue Lodge while the Scottish Rite follows a slightly different storyline. That being said, however, you'll see some similarities between the degrees. The best way to describe it is that if the York Rite and Scottish Rite were college degrees, the York Rite would be a history degree and the Scottish Rite would be a philosophy degree...."

Scottish Rite

"The Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, or simply known as the Scottish Rite is perhaps the most known appendant body of Freemasonry, maybe second only to the Shriners. It confers a series of progressive degrees. This Rite is one of several appendant or concordant bodies in the Masonic fraternity. They confer from 4° to the 33°. These degrees

build upon the ethical and moral teachings and philosophies offered in Craft Masonry, or more commonly known as the Blue Lodge, through dramatic presentations. These degrees should not be seen as superior to the first three degrees of Craft Masonry, but just a continuation of one's search for more Light in Freemasonry. These degrees are conferred by several controlling bodies: The Lodge of Perfection confers the 4° through the 14°, the Chapter of Rose Croix confers the 15° through the 18°, the Council of Kadosh confers the 19° through the 30°, and the Consistory confers the 31° and 32°. For certain members who have given meritorious service to the community and to Freemasonry, the Rite may confer the 33°.

"The Lodge of Perfection is presided over by a "Venerable Master," the Chapter of Rose Croix is presided over by a "Wise Master," the Council of Kadosh is presided over by a "Commander of Kadosh," the Consistory is presided over by a "Master of Kadosh," and all of these bodies unite under a body referred to as a "Valley." These Valleys unite under an "Orient" which is presided over by a Sovereign Grand Inspector General (SGIG). These Orients fall under the auspices of a central authority known as a Supreme Council. The Supreme Council is composed of 33 active members of the 33° and the presiding officer is known as the Sovereign Grand Commander. This is the structure according to the Southern Jurisdiction; other Scottish Rite jurisdictions may have some variations in their names and officer titles."

York Rite

"The York Rite is a branch of Freemasonry. The term York Rite is a misnomer though and should more accurately be called the American Rite as this rite is comprised of degrees and orders uniquely structured in America in comparison to that seen in such places as the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Scotland. The York Rite is composed of three main

[Continues on next page, see "Rites"]

["Rites," continued from page 7]

organizations that each operate with their own hierarchy and enjoy their own autonomy. These three bodies have united in a confederate system to ensure mutual continuation and prosperity. These three bodies are known as the Royal Arch Masonry, Cryptic Masonry, and Knights Templar.

"True to all 3-bodies of the York Rite, there is a local body, Grand body, and International body. For the Royal Arch, there is the Chapter, Grand Chapter, and General Grand Chapter. The presiding officer of each of these levels respectively is High Priest, Grand High Priest, and General Grand High Priest. For the Cryptic Masons, there is the Council, Grand Council, and General Grand Council. The presiding officer for each of these levels respectively is Illustrious Master, Most Illustrious Grand Master, and the Most Puissant General Grand Master. For the Knights Templar, there is the Commandery, Grand Commandery, and the Grand Encampment, Knights Templar, USA. The presiding officer for each of these levels respectively is: Eminent Commander, Right Eminent Grand Commander, and the Most Eminent Grand Master.

"There are 9-degrees and orders that are conferred by these three bodies. The Chapter of Royal Arch Masonry confers the degrees of Mark Master, Past Master, Most Excellent Master, and Royal Arch Mason. The Council of Cryptic Masonry confers the degrees of Royal Master and Select Master. The Commandery of Knights Templar confers the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross, Order of Malta, and Order of the Temple. The Royal Arch and Cryptic degrees enlarge upon the legends and ceremonies of the Blue Lodge and provide answers to many of the questions that a newly Raised Master Mason may have. The Chivalric Orders transition from the story of Craft Masonry to the legendary Christian knighthoods during the Crusades and the virtues they were founded upon."

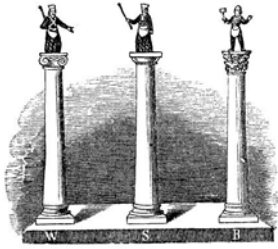


[Stated Meeting, November 1, 2025]

In Memoriam

Bro. Thomas K. Sheehan
1956-2025
19 years a Master Mason
Raised in Granada Hills 378, 10/25/2006
Hiram Award, 12/3/2014
Inaugural Member of Clarence F. Smith
Daylight No. 866, 4/23/2017 and Assistant
Secretary *par excellence*





From the East

To my dear Brethren, I hope you're all doing well.

Firstly, I'd like to offer my heartfelt congratulations to our newly elected officers, who will be leading us through the upcoming Masonic year. I have every confidence that they'll govern our lodge in a spirit of harmony and cooperation, carrying out their duties with dedication and integrity. Of course, they'll need our support and guidance, especially from those of us who have served as Past Masters. Let's get behind them and offer the same level of support we've given to previous officers. It's not easy to take on the responsibilities of office, but as Masons, we're committed to ruling ourselves with discipline, humility, charity, service, and purpose.

It is with great sorrow that we announce the passing of our beloved Brother Tom Sheehan on November 6, 2025. As one of the founding members of our lodge, he was a shining example of dedication and commitment. His selflessness and perseverance in the face of health challenges inspired us all to strive for excellence. Brother Tom's absence will be deeply felt at our meetings and events, and his memory will continue to motivate us to uphold the values of our Fraternity. He will be deeply missed, and his legacy will never be forgotten.

As we embark on the 2026 Masonic year, we're counting on your support to keep our membership thriving. It's time to pay your annual dues — our dues amount for 2026 is \$230 — and we've provided several convenient payment

options for you. You can pay by check payable to Clarence F. Smith Daylight Lodge 866, or via Zelle to cfsjuniorwarden@gmail.com without any fees. Alternatively, you can pay through iMember, but please note that this option incurs a \$5 fee. If you've already set up automatic payments, you don't need to take any action, you're all set. Your prompt payment will help us maintain our good standing membership status, and we appreciate your commitment to our craft.

Fraternally and Respectfully Yours,
Gerald Alvarez
Master

From the West

Hello Brethren,
As we look forward to enjoying the holidays with friends and family, may the spirit of unity, charity and brotherhood continue to guide our steps into the new year. I am truly humbled and grateful for the opportunities and experiences this year has brought, and hope that every moment is memorable and treasured.

I would like to congratulate Brothers Wynn and Rolly on an exceptional delivery of their First degree proficiency, as well as brother Harlem who did an outstanding delivery of his Third degree proficiency.

Remember, you are not alone and have the support and guidance of Brethren who are a phone call away.

Sincerely and Fraternally yours,
Joseph Chavez
Senior Warden

From the South

Brethren, Good Day.
As the holiday season approaches, I wanted to take a moment to extend my warmest greetings to you and your loved ones, wishing you good health and high spirits.

I would like to congratulate Bro. Joseph Chavez, WM-Elect, and the rest of our newly elected officers for the Masonic Year 2026 of Clarence F. Smith Daylight Lodge No. 866 F. & A.M. May your leadership be guided by the principles of wisdom, strength, and virtue, and may peace and harmony prevail. Wishing you a fantastic year ahead, filled with harmonious camaraderie and a continued commitment to serving the Craft and our community.

I'd also like to express my genuine appreciation and extend heartfelt congratulations to Worshipful Johnny Lebrilla, PM, on receiving the well-deserved Hiram Award. Your hard work and dedication have truly paid off, and your persistence and commitment have led you to this moment of triumph. Congratulations, WB Johnny Lebrilla, on this incredible achievement.

Brethren, since this publishes in November, Happy Thanksgiving. May this season bring kindness to your hearts, happiness to your homes, and gratitude to your spirits.

Fraternally yours,
Bro. Roland Cortel
Junior Warden

Bonus Article: The Ritual of Gratitude and a Tribute to a Brother

Occasionally there remains a blank space on the last page. Sometimes, I fill it with Dad jokes or similar from the internet. Sometimes I write more thoughtfully. This month I write about gratitude thankfulness inasmuch as this entry publishes just before Thanksgiving and just after our

Lodge's presentation of the Hiram Award to WB Jhonny on November 23. Both are rituals. This piece, however, focuses on the latter.

It is no secret that the Hiram Award ceremony is a ritual of gratitude. We are thanking a Brother for his dedicated service to the Lodge and the fraternity. It is a serious and usually public ritual that occurs only once a year if at all. It reminds Brothers, family members, friends and guests that we wish to illuminate a Brother's devotion to the Craft. It also inspires others to connect more deeply with the values and traditions of Freemasonry. It is an honor to witness the Hiram Award presentation and it is an honor to receive the award.

Our Brother, Fernando ("Jhonny") Lebrilla, Jr., PM, was this year's Hiram Award recipient. What touched me is how he humbly expressed his own gratitude when he spoke. I seem to remember a part of his background: how when he came to this country he was alone and on his own, and how when he joined Freemasonry he found a family and friends in the Craft and felt at home at last. (I hope I got that right.)

Bro. Jhonny gave his heartfelt thanks during his award ceremony both to the assembly and to individuals who have helped him along his path in Freemasonry. He spoke sincerely to all of us and it was heartwarming to hear him lovingly speak about his wife and children who have supported him in his Masonic career.

In fine, Bro. Jhonny exemplified the ritual of gratitude which so often is missing from daily life. I was grateful to witness this Mason humbly accepting our thanks for just being who he is and what he does. And I was reminded that thanking someone can be formal or informal and should be a regular practice among us. Thank you Jhonny and thank you all.

Sincerely,
Bro. David I. Karp
Editor.