



The Kentucky Keystone



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Volume 27 Number 3

Published Monthly by the Grand Chapter of Kentucky, Royal Arch Masons

December 2015



ME Companion Stewart F. Strickland Grand High Priest Message

Dear Companions of the Royal Arch Chapters of Kentucky:

Merry Christmas! This is a wonderful time of year for most people. But Psychologists also tell us that this is the highest season for depression. So let's not neglect those who need our care, benevolence and outreach. I hope that this Christmas will be most blessed and joyous for each of you.

Even now, our families, churches and lodges are planning for dinners, parties, special events and opportunities to give to the needy. Participate in as many of these things as you can because we are happiest when we are with others, together in celebration and giving.

My itinerary is a bit skimpy during this final month of the year because I have a lot planned with Church and family. So let me simply leave you with a little exhortation about Christmas.

I don't want to sound too "preachy," but since the York Rite is the "Christian" Rite, allow me some leniency once in awhile, perhaps. Are you ready for Christmas? How do you answer that question? Will you be ready for Christmas when the decorations are all in place and the tree is decorated?

Will you be ready for Christmas when the presents are all bought, wrapped and tagged? Will you be ready for Christmas when the parties are planned, the menus are planned, the families are invited and the food is ready? Well, those are our thoughts, generally.

But if Christmas is first and foremost about the coming of Jesus, and John the Baptist came about preaching, as recorded in Matthew 3:3, "prepare ye the way of the Lord," then that is the preparation we are to do. That word, in the Greek is *hetoimadzo* and has its root meaning "to clear." Thus we are only ready for Christmas when we clear a place in our busy lives for Jesus Christ.

Therefore, I ask you again, are you ready for Christmas? Have you cleared a place for Him, for whom this season is all about? I do wish you a very Blessed Christmas, one with Jesus as the center

Fraternally,

Stewart F. Strickland

Grand High Priest, 2015-2016

December Education Talk

Emanuel: "God With Us" –The Christmas Story, The Tabernacle, and Us.

Matthew 1:23 reads, "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which translated means, God With Us." John 1:14 says it like this: "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."



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Both of those scriptures say essentially the same thing about Jesus Christ, that He was the Son of God, that He came from God, became flesh, and dwelt among man. We more readily see how this story fits with Christmas, for Christmas is about the birth of Jesus, the incarnation of Deity or coming of God, in the form of Humanity, to dwell among us. But, you may ask, how does this fit in with the teachings of the Royal Arch? Well, it has to do with the Tabernacle, which has a pretty important part to play in the allegory and ritual of the Royal Arch Degree.

The Tabernacle was the forerunner of the Temple. While the children of Israel were wandering in the Wilderness, prior to their becoming settled in Judah, they lived a Nomadic existence. Their place of worship was the Tabernacle, also called the Tent of Meeting. It was the place where they offered their sacrifices, and where God would meet with them. It was a mobile edifice that they could disassemble and carry with them. In our ritual, before the Temple was complete, we say that the Council first held their meetings in a Tabernacle. The Masters of the Veils were stationed within the veils of the Tabernacle. The Royal Arch Captain guarded the Fourth Veil, where incense burned on the Alter day and night. When the people settled in the Promised Land, they built the permanent worship place, the Temple in Jerusalem. But while they were moving through the Wilderness, they worshipped in the Tabernacle.

In the John 1:14 verse above, the Greek word “dwelt,” means “tent or tabernacle.” If we could put it into the form of a verb, we might word it like this: “the Son of God “tabernacle” or “tented” among us.” In Jesus, God came to “dwell” among us (hence, Emmanuel, God with us), just as he used the Tabernacle in the wilderness and the Temple in Jerusalem as the places wherein He “dwelt” among His people.

Today, we do not need a literal tabernacle built of a wooden frame and draped with skins and cloths or temple made of stone, brick or mortar. In fact, if you follow the allegory of Freemasonry all the way through, you come to understand in the Most Excellent Degree, and even earlier, if you are studious, that the building of a temple structure is always speaking of building a moral and spiritual temple, the temple of our lives in which God

dwells, not made with hands, eternal, heavenly, which edified us and is pleasing unto God.

The Christmas story is about Jesus being born into the world. It is the culmination of God desiring to be with his people in the most personal and intimate way possible. As the Tabernacle and Temple speak of God’s dwelling and point to God’s indwelling, our Masonic teachings, observed rightly, direct our focus on God desiring to indwell us, spiritually, thus enabling us to rise above merely what the world can make of us and soar the heights of what God desires us to be, and what he created us to be. That goal is summed up in another scripture, which is also Masonic in nature, Ephesians 2:22, “in whom you also are being built together into a *dwelling* of God in the Spirit.

(Reading and discussing this in open Chapter counts as an educational meeting on your annual inspection. Please record such in your minutes.)

Grand High Priest Itinerary December 2015

- 1-Plain City Lodge 449
- 3-Shelbyville Chapter
- 5-North Ballard Lodge 537
- 8-Bowling Green Chapter
- 13-Paducah Commandery
Christmas Observance
- 14-Glasgow Chapter
- 15-Russelville Chapter
- 17-West Kentucky Scottish Rite
- 21-Antioch Lodge 332
- 22-Paducah York Rite
- 25-Spend CHRISTMAS with
Family



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Carl A. Jones
Most Illustrious Grand Master

Companions:

Thank you so much for the warm reception I have received as I travel around the state. It is pleasing to hear the ideas and different events Companions are working on to increase participation at their meetings.

I would like to recognize the following people for their accomplishments and work they have put into the Ritualist Program.

Kentucky Grand Council Ritualist Award Recipients

Royal Ritualist

York Rite Festival Danville 10/24/2015

Jim King

York Rite Festival Richmond 11/14/2015

Buddy Joe Smyth

Lonnie Clem

Select Ritualist

York Rite Festival Danville 10/24/2015

Jimmy Reynolds

Clint Durham

Grand Master's Proficiency

Larry Carte 11/17/2015

As we enter into this special time of year, let us not forget the true meaning of Christmas and keep Christ in Christmas. From Brenda and I, we wish you and your families all a very 'Merry Christmas'.

Fraternally thine,
Carl A. Jones
MIGM

*"And she brought forth
her firstborn son, and
wrapped him in
swaddling clothes, and
laid him in a manger;
because there was no
room for them in the
inn. Luke 2:7"*

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Grand Chapter of Kentucky Royal Arch Mason

First Area Meeting of 2016 is set to be held at:

Franklin Lodge No. 28
400 N. 4th Street
Danville, KY 40422

On January 9, 2016 at 1:00 pm (EST)
(enter through the Smith Street side door)

There will be a Secretary training session at this meeting.

Glasgow York Rite will be holding Festivals

Chapter festival

To be held on January 16, 2016 9:00 am (CST)

Council and Commandery Festival

To be held on February 6, 2016 9:00 am (CST)

2nd Annual Paintsville York Rite Festival

Chapter degrees will begin on January **15th** at **6:00 pm(EST)**, remaining **Chapter** degrees and **Council** on **January 16th** starting with **Breakfast at 8:00 am (EST)** and conferral of **degrees at 9:00 am(EST)** with lunch included.

Then we will meet on **January 30th** to confer the **Commandry Orders**, **Breakfast at 8:00 am(EST)**, **Orders at 9:00 am(EST)** and lunch will be included again.

For more information, contact Tony Skeans at 606-791-2902, Chris Griffith at 606-792-6568, Lee Vanhooose at 606-369-7280, or Moose Vanhooose at 606-371-2898.