

# Ashlar Lodge No. 98 Free and Accepted Masons

St. Augustine, FL

Chartered January 18, A.D. 1888, A.L. 5888

904-826-4086



February, 2019



## STATED COMMUNICATIONS

Masonic Temple

105 King Street

St. Augustine, FL

1<sup>ST</sup> & 3<sup>RD</sup> Thursdays

Meal – 6:30 p.m.

Stated Communication — 7:30 p.m.

## DEGREE WORK AND PRACTICE

2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays

## CHARITY OF THE QUARTER

St. Augustine Youth Services

## INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS 2019

Ashlar Lodge No. 98 F. & A.M. installed officers for 2019 in due and ancient form on St. John's Night, Dec. 27, 2019. Worshipful Master--Matthew Sweeney; Senior Warden--Kenneth Schaffner; Junior Warden--James Carrick; Chaplain--Oscar Patterson III; Senior Deacon--Christopher Clarke; Senior Stewart--Thomas Torretta; Junior Steward Kenneth Smith; Tyler--Ronald DeRoco. Continuing elected officers are Treasurer--Robert Gagnon and Secretary--David Pierucci. Junior

Deacon--Robert Wilson and Musician--Brian Iannucci will be installed in January. The Installing Officer was Charles Metcalf, Past Master and the Installing Marshall was Troy Usina, Past DDGM.

Photo : L to R, 1<sup>st</sup> row—Robert Gagnon, Kenneth Schaffner, Matthew Sweeney, James Carrick, Ronald DeRoco

2<sup>nd</sup> row –Christopher Clarke, Thomas Torretta, Charles Metcalf, Kenneth Smith, Oscar Patterson



# February 2019

Sun                  Mon                  Tue                  Wed                  Thu                  Fri                  Sat

					1	2
3	4 OES	5	6 RAIN-BOW	7 STATED COMMUNICATION 6:30 PM	8	9
10	11	12 Shrine Club 7:00 pm	13 DIST. INST. MID-DLEBURG 6:30 PM	14	15	16 Sweet-heart Lunch 11:00 am Open Book Pine-land 9-noon
17	18 OES	19 YORK RITE CHAPTER/COUNCIL 6:30 PM	20 RAIN-BOW District Association Palatka 6:30 pm	21 STATED COMMUNICATION 6:30 PM	22 Fried Chicken at Shrine Club 5-7 pm	23
24	25	26 YORK RITE COM-MANDERY 6:30 PM	27	28 FC Degree 6:30 pm		

The month of February being identified with the birth of George Washington, patriot, soldier, statesman, father of our great country, and outstanding member of Freemasonry, as well as with other notable Masonic events; and Love of country and our flag being a principle basic concept of Freemasonry in America and freedom of assembly, thought, and religion being essential to the practices of our Masonic tenets, it is fitting that we take time to show our appreciation for our great heritage and as Masons to exemplify and promote patriotism and demonstrate our dedication to the great democratic principles which have made us a great nation.

THEREFORE, I DO NOW PROCLAIM AND DIRECT: That the month of February, 2019, be designated as "AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP MONTH" for the Masons of Florida and that all Particular Lodges participate in special programs to emphasize our loyalty and continued support of our American institutions and our democratic way of life. Such programs should include our Masonic families, friends, and our Youth Organizations. Dated at Jacksonville, Florida, this 6th day of December A.L. 6018, A.D. 2018. John E. Karroum, Grand Master.

**NOTICE: All members of Ashlar Lodge No. 98 should immediately send their date of birth—day, month, and year—to the Lodge Secretary.**

## March 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4 OES	5	6 RAIN-BOW	7 STATED COMMUNICATION 6:30 PM	8	9
10	11	12 Shrine Club 7:00 pm	13 Dist. Inst. Cabul 6:30	14	15	16 Pilgrimage Day Masonic Home 10:00 am
17	18 OES	19 York Rite Chapter/Council 6:30 pm	20 Rainbow Open Book Pineland 6-9	21 STATED COMMUNICATION	22	23
24/31	25	26 York Rite Commandery 6:30 pm	27 District Association Lake No. 72 6:30 pm	28 Lodge Instruction 6:00 pm	29	30

### Chaplain's Corner

Masonry is not a religion. Masonry is not a religious order or religious organization of any kind. Masonry is not meant to replace religion in a man's life. Be that as it may, however, prayer is an essential part of the form, substance and content of Masonic assemblies and meetings. Men in the Masonic Order denied the right of dictation by any church and were conscious of the tendency to persecution by governments under whose protection they resided. In this vein, they initiated the prohibition of religion and politics as discussion topics within the Lodge. This prohibition is jealously guarded to this day. Masonry, nevertheless, is so far interwoven with religion as to lay men under obligation to pay that rational homage to the deity which at once constitutes their duty and their happiness. It leads the contemplative to view with reverence and admiration the glorious works of creation and impresses them with the most exalted ideas of the perfection of the Creator. Short Talk Bulletin , 2000.

Actions Are More Powerful Than Words  
*Well done is better than well said.*  
Bro. Benjamin Franklin

What is ritual? The English word does not appear until the middle of the seventeenth century. It was derived from the Latin “ritus” and “ritualis” which mean custom and were used primarily about judicial or legal proceedings. In 1614 *Rituale Romanum* was published by the Catholic Church and the term implied the proper order for a religious service—a “prescription.” In 1771 the *Encyclopedia Britannica* entry for “ritual” describes it as a book containing directions for divine services or the celebration of religious ceremonies. By 1910, however, the definition had changed considerably:

Ritual is now regarded as a type of routine behavior that symbolizes or expresses something and, as such, relates differentially to individual consciousness and social organization. That is to say, it is no longer ***a script*** [emphasis added] for regulating practice but a ***type of practice*** [emphasis added] that is interpretable as standing for some further ***verbally definable*** [emphasis added], but tacit event.

There is, however, a common denominator in all types of ritual: they mark a transition from an old state to a new one in three phases. First, the old state or social position is set aside by, for example, being divested of old clothing and provided new ones in some way specified to the ritual that is to come. Second, the candidate finds himself in a transactional state, both physically and mentally. He has been removed from the outside world but is not yet part of the new world that lays beyond the door. And finally, when the door is opened, the candidate is aggregated or incorporated into the new, laying the old behind him. This distinct division between the profane---what which is passed—and the sacred—that which is to come—is physical not mental, defined by action, not words. It is the physical passing from one state to another that is paramount, not the words that are spoken.

Such ceremonies or rituals have from time immemorial represented a renewal of life, a second birth, or, if you will, a symbolic resurrection. The old self has been discarded, and the candidate is welcomed into a special fellowship of understanding, being, knowledge, and *gnosis*. He has, symbolically, moved from the ignorance and simplicity of childhood—the profane condition—into a “new normal” with limitless horizons. He has become a “blank slate” upon which will be inscribed the knowledge and wisdom of the group. And while the candidate has become in some manner a page to be inscribed upon, he has also attained a new status and position in the society into which he sought admission.

Ritual, by its very nature, is a form of esoteric communication. Ritual is also a form of thought or a way of thinking. It is highly symbolic. It is a physical manifestation which uses images, symbols, movement, touch, sound, light, and smell to express doctrinal tenets and, in some cases, transmit group mythology. The central part to any initiation, however, is the ceremony, not the words. Actions came first, long before words, and should remain paramount in all ritual.

The Bruniquel Cave in France contains what are accepted by scholars to be the most ancient physical evidence of possible ritualization by proto-humans. Over 170,000 years ago, proto-humans inhabiting the cave in southern France crafted stalagmites into circles more than 1,000 feet from the cave’s entrance. These circles demonstrate human-like planning and activity.

They were deliberately constructed by Neanderthals, cousins of modern humans (about two percent of modern DNA among Europeans, is of Neanderthal origin) and used for a definite purpose that does not appear to have been essential to existence and may not have included the use of words.

### **Actions Before Words**

The issue of actions coming before words is firmly based in research into the origins of language. This research may be categorized into two specific theories:

Continuity theory – language is too complex to have appeared and, therefore, must have evolved from some form of pre-linguistic communication system founded in our primate ancestors.

Discontinuity theory—language is a unique trait which cannot be compared to any non-human trait or activity and appeared fairly suddenly in human evolution.

Sub-theories focus on:

Language as an innate facility that is genetically encoded into humans.

Language as a cultural system that is learned through social interaction.

Michael Tomasello, co-director of [Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology](#), and professor of psychology at [Duke University](#), contends that speech evolved from gestural precursors. Other scholars see a relationship between dance (action) evolving into song (words) and on into speech. Noam Chomsky of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, however, contends that a mutation in human development about 100,000 years ago installed a component in the brain that permitted development of language as a human communication technique.

A recent study of Neanderthal bones indicates that they contain the same version of the [FOXP2](#) gene as modern humans. This gene is accepted as playing a role in controlling the orofacial movements required for intelligible speech. Also, intelligible speech is linked to the development and placement of the hyoid bone in the throat. This bone, which is found in many mammals, is accepted to relate directly to human speech and its placement is the key factor in the production of intelligible speech. It is generally accepted that the earliest Homo species dating to about 2.5 million years ago were not capable of speech. It is also generally accepted that some form of symbolic communication developed among *Homo habilis* about 1.8 million years ago with speech proper being an artifact of about 150,000-200,000 years ago—about the time that the Bruniquel cave structures were created.

Language originated, most probably, from a system of signs, gestures, and actions utilized by primitive man to communicate within a social structure. Some words may have originated as imitations of the cries of beasts and birds. Others may have come from the emotional interjections caused by human pain, surprise, or pleasure. Still others may have originated in the pleasurable sensation caused by natural resonance in the human vocal structure. Yet other theorists suggest that words developed from the sound of rhythmic labor such as breathing, huffing, and other muscular activities. While others suggest that the earliest human words came from physical tongue movements that mimicked manual gestures or labor and thus replicated an action. Words may even have originated in the imitation of sounds of nature that may still be found in rituals, rites, and communications systems of primitive peoples.

The problem with words as opposed to natural sounds is that words are easy to fake. Communication with words depends upon shared meaning and a peculiar feature of human language is that of displaced reference which refers to use of a word to refer to a topic outside the current situation. This property of language makes it difficult to corroborate meaning in the “here and now.” Essential to all human communication using words is mutual respect and shared meaning which renders to language an authority over human behavior not found in any other animal.

Human language is, above all, an adaptation that enables us to communicate symbolically. Words in and of themselves have no value other than that assigned by those engaged in the communication. But words alone do not make a language; structure or grammar is also essential. There is a plausible link between the evolution of grammar and the evolution of the human species. Non-verbal cultures are vulnerable to environmental changes and, based on archeological and anthropological research, were unable to adapt sufficiently to change to survive. Early man possessed sufficiently developed brains to create the language connections known as grammar and, in turn, use those connections to adapt to change.

The development of words and grammar was probably preceded by the growth of a mind-set or world perspective that included a need for and justification of intentional communication, persuasion, planning, sharing, and deception. As humans perceived the need to communicate to create and maintain social structure, the process—language—expanded to meet the perceived need.

Yet common to most theories and the preponderance of research is the basic assumption that actions preceded words (language) by millions of years. Humans did things and much later spoke about what they had done or planned to do. Muscle memory is still a dominant part of human life from riding a bike to tying shoes to buttoning a shirt to driving a car. These are actions taught or acquired that are imprinted in the brain and retained in perpetuity. These actions are not forgotten and have distinctive, useful meanings.

Freemasonry is filled with rituals which are a type of behavior used to symbolize or express something and which relate to individual consciousness and social organization. Our rituals are not a script for regulating practice, but rather a physical event what is interpretable and may be then verbally defined. It is the action which is paramount. The Catholic Mass began as a dramatic allegory of remembrance. They took place in a designated space designed to suggest to the parishioners that they were being watched by an invisible God and that the space reflected His divine order. The altar was the focal point of the action and represented the empty tomb. The procession through the building was a dramatization of the search Christ. The mystery was the empty tomb. The procession included signs, kneeling, sprinkling, touching, and laying on of hands which were used to imprint on the mind the meaning of the liturgy. And when words were added, they were spoken in Latin and thus unintelligible to all but the priests. It was action that conveyed meaning, not words.

Freemasonic ritual began as a ceremony that symbolized the allegorical death of the novice and his return to the fellowship of the living. Essential to this new birth is the discovery of or introduction into some sort of secret knowledge. At times, this new or secret knowledge is linked to a deeper understanding of religion. All western esoteric rituals, Freemasonry included, occur in closed societies in which a mystery or secret knowledge is imparted. Let us be clear, though, what constitutes a “secret society.” It is a social grouping not based on blood relationships which utilize some form of ritual secrecy that is confined to initiated members. The central secret is more properly a mystery, a *mysterium magnum*. The mystery is directly connected with the reason for being of the society; it is the groups essence or truth.

Ritual is an intrinsic part of Freemasonry which utilizes the allusive method of layering of meaning. The ritual means more than one thing and the physical motions are intended to impart a psychological impact which constitutes a veil. The experience of the ritual, not the words, constitute the message and the experience is noncommunicable. It is not something that can be communicated adequately to another human but can only be experienced for one’s self. To become a Freemason, a man must *experience* the secret or mystery because it is not something that can be express in words and therefore cannot be divulged. Divested of the experience (action), the symbols become meaningless; and without guidance and sound mentoring, the layers of meaning associated with the ritual are impenetrable.

Common to all Masonic rituals of initiation or acceptance are certain prescribed actions, now commonly accompanied with words.

- A formal opening the Lodge with candidate absent

- The admission of the candidate

- Circumambulation

- An obligation not to divulge traditional secrets such as words, signs, and grips

- Admission into the degree

- Instruction in traditions and secrets

- Receiving a physical token such as an apron

- Formal closing of the Lodge with candidate present.

All esoteric discourse is symbolic in nature. It is the interpreter who determines if the symbol or action possesses esoteric meaning and who explains that or those meanings to the candidate. Freemasonry, unlike religion, is not dogmatic in terms of symbolic meaning. It is left to the individual Mason to interpret the full meaning of each symbol and action for himself. Most, but not all, of the symbols used in esoteric communication are religious or philosophical in nature and thus express a desire to attain more knowledge about an individual’s relationship with Deity. But, as most scholars of ritual emphasize, the importance is properly placed on the experience or action, not on the words. Knowledge comes from a worldview that is facilitated by how a person behaves, not what he says. Masonic ritual should result in *gnosis* or revelatory knowledge.

Esoteric teachings are not just religious or philosophical in nature, they are intended specifically to be of a practical nature. They are not intended to be restricted to the Lodge but are to be practiced abroad in the world. Masonic rituals are intended to cause all who participate whether they be candidates, officiants, or spectators to study, think about, and teach.

**Ernst and Falk: dialogues of Freemason to His Grace Duke Ferdinand by  
Gotthold Ephhriam Lessing, 1778**

Ernst: It is true, my friend, that you are a Freemason:

Falk: The question is that of one who isn't.

Ernst: Of course! But give me a more direct answer. Are you a Freemason?

Falk: I think I am.

Ernst: The answer is that of one who isn't exactly sure where he stands.

Falk: Not at all! I am fairly sure where I stand.

Ernst: For you will surely know whether and when and where and by who you were initiated.

Falk: I do indeed know that; but that wouldn't mean very much.

Ernst: No?

Falk: Who doesn't initiate, and who isn't initiated?

Ernst: Explain yourself.

Falk: I think I'm a Freemason; not so much because I was initiated by senior Masons in a properly constituted lodge, but because I understand and recognize what Freemasonry is and why it exists, where and where it has existed, and how and by what means it is helped or hindered.

Ernst: You answer me as if I were a stranger.

Falk: Stranger or friend!

Ernst: You've been initiated, and you know everything.

Falk: Others have been initiated, and they think they know.

Ernst: Then could you be admitted without knowing what you know?

Falk: Unfortunately, yes.

Ernst: How so?

Falk: Because many who initiate others don't know themselves, but the few who do know cannot say so.

Ernst: And could you know what you know without being initiated?

Falk: Why not? Freemasonry is not something arbitrary or dispensable, but something necessary, which is grounded in human nature and in civil society. So, it must be possible to arrive at it just as easily through personal reflection as through external guidance.

Ernst: Freemasonry is not something arbitrary? Doesn't it have words and signs and customs which could all be other than they are, and which are therefore arbitrary?

Falk: It does have those. But these words and signs and these customs are not Freemasonry.

Ernst: Freemasonry is not something dispensable? Then what did people do before Freemasonry existed?

Falk: Freemasonry has always existed.

Ernst: Then what exactly is it, this necessary, this indispensable Freemasonry?

Falk: As I've already told you, it is something which even those who know cannot say.

Ernst: Then it's an absurdity.

Falk: Don't jump to conclusions.

Ernst: If I have a conception of something, I can also express it in words.

Falk: Not always! And at least as often not in such a way that others derive exactly the same conception from the words as what I have in mind.

Ernst: If not exactly the same, then at least an approximation.

Falk: An approximate conception would in this case be useless or dangerous. Useless if it didn't contain enough, and dangerous if it contained the slightest amount too much.

Ernst: How strange. So, if the Freemasons, who know the secret of their order, cannot communicate it in words, how do they still manage to disseminate their order?

Falk: Through deeds. They allow good men and youths whom they consider worthy of their company to divine and guess at their deeds, to see them, in so far as they can be seen. These others find them to their liking and perform similar deeds.

Ernst: Deeds? Deeds of Freemasons? I know of none except their speeches and songs, which are usually printed more impressively than they are conceived or spoken.

Falk: They share this quality with many other speeches and songs.

Ernst: Or am I to take as their deeds what they boast about in these speeches and songs?

Falk: So long as they just don't boast about them.

Ernst. And what exactly do they boast about? Only such things as one expects of every good person and every

good citizen. They are so friendly, so beneficent, so obedient, so full of patriotism!

Falk: Does that mean nothing?

Ernst: Nothing! Nothing to distinguish them from other people. Shouldn't everyone be all of these things?

Falk: Should!

Ernst: Who doesn't have sufficient motive and opportunity to be all of these things even without Freemasonry?

Falk: But in it and through it, they have additional motives.

Ernst: Don't tell me about the number of motives. It's better to lend as much strength and intensity to a single motive. The number of such motives is like the number of wheels in a machine: the more wheels, the more unreliable it is.

Falk: That I cannot deny.

Ernst: And what kind of additional motive? One which devalues of other motives and renders them suspect! One which claims to be the strongest and best!

...

Falk: For example? So that I can see whether you're on the right track.

[Ernst then gives a list of Masonic philanthropy: orphanages in Stockholm and Dresden and a philanthropic institute in Berlin which Falk suggests may not have been the true deeds of Freemason.]

Ernst: Well, then! I cease to follow you.

Falk: I can well believe it. And the fault is mine. For even *the* Freemasons can do something which they don't do *as* Freemasons.

Ernst: And does that apply to all their other good deeds too?

Falk: Perhaps. Perhaps all the good deeds you've just mentioned are only, to use the scholastic expression for the sake of brevity—their deeds *ad extra* (meaning outward or externally observable).

Ernst: What do you mean by that.

Falk: Only those deeds which people notice; only the deeds which they do simply in order to be noticed.

Ernst: So that they may be respected and tolerated?

Falk: That might well be so.

Ernst: But what about their true deeds? You don't answer.

Falk: Didn't I answer you already? **Their true deeds are their secret.** [emphasis added]

Ernst: Aha! So, they can't be explained in words either?

Falk: Probably not. I can and may tell you only this much: the true deeds of the Freemasons are so great, and so far-reaching, that whole centuries may elapse before one can say, "This is their doing." They have nevertheless done all the good that has so far existed in the world, mark my words: in the world. And they continue to work on all the good that has yet to come in the world—mark my words—in the world.

Ernst: Be off with you! You're having me on.

Falk: I truly am not. But look! There is a butterfly I must have. It's the one from the wolf's milk caterpillar [Monarch butterfly]. Let me just say quickly that the true deeds of the Freemasons are aimed at making all that are commonly described as good deeds for the most part superfluous.

Ernst: And yet they are good deeds, too?

Falk: There can be none better. Think about it for a moment. I'll be back.

Ernst: Good deeds aimed at making good deeds superfluous? That's a riddle. And I refuse to think about riddles. I'd rather lie down under this tree and observe ants.

[Much later this final exchange, must abbreviated]

Falk: [The secret of Freemasonry, as I've already told you, is something which the Freemason cannot put into words, even if it were possible for him to want to. . . the Freemason calmly waits for the sunrise, and lets the candles burn as long as they will and can. To extinguish the candles and not realize until after they are out that the stumps must be relit or indeed replaced by other candles, that is not the Freemason's way.](#)