

Ashlar Lodge No. 98 Free and Accepted Masons

St. Augustine, FL

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

904-826-4086



November, 2019



STATED COMMUNICATIONS

Masonic Temple

4 Martin Luther King Blvd.

St. Augustine, FL

1ST & 3RD Thursdays

Meal – 6:30 p.m.

Stated Communication — 7:30 p.m.

DEGREE WORK AND PRACTICE

2nd & 4th Thursdays

CHARITY OF THE QUARTER

TBA

More on Ritual

Ritual is not strictly the arcane domain of parish priests, shamans, or Freemasons. Ritual is not confined to a specific place or time, nor is it always defined by a specific compact or relationship between actor and event. It arises out of ordinary business life as well as an expression of devotion to Deity. Masonic ritual arose out of the business practice of obligating an apprentice to a term of service and the necessity of maintaining trade secrets. We are, as humans, inveterate ritualizers. We find fulfillment in linking the mythic and symbolic with our daily lives. We seek, through ritual, to answer questions about ultimateness, awe, eternity, involvement, and the human experience. Ritual provides a means for decoding, interpreting, and internalizing everyday events. The symbols of ritual create a tapestry of our political, social, artistic, intellectual, and spiritual lives. It is the means by which we transmit from generation to generation the symbolism of our culture with their valuable storehouse of information as well as rules for governing that information. Ritual, notes Peter McLaren, is “the pivot of the world . . . the foundation of institutional life . . . the essential constitution of classroom life.”

Ritual is not, however, entropic gestural noise accompanied by random motions which lack predictability, syntax, and patterns of meaning. Ritual is “not sporadic, compulsive,” nor lacking in rhythm or meaningful gestures. It possesses the capacity to *point beyond* the symbol so that the meaning becomes greater than the gestures, words, or the ritual itself.

Ritual has been studied, at some level, as a forceful cultural experience for at least one hundred and fifty years though originally in its relation to theology and drama rather than as a philosophical, psychological, and physiological phenomenon. It is more than a tool for understanding social occurrences and dramatizations; it is a window into the human experience. Ritual influences both social cohesion and equilibrium, and, through experience and performance, it contributes directly to understanding. It facilitates the integration of belief and behavior; tradition and change; the real and the ideal. But ritual is, above all, doing. Just like swimming, riding a bike, or engaging in sports, we learn about ritual by doing it. And once we have mastered the doing, we take the next logical steps and begin to think, read, write, and theorize about the process. At this point, our thinking about ritual moves beyond the physical to the sublime and our ideas about it are shaped by the text as well as the experience.

Virtually all sacred texts contain a number of descriptions detailing how rituals are to be performed, but these texts also contain critical reflection on the value of rituals in terms of social cohesion and moral meaning. The great Confucian texts, for example, provide an abundance of information about the relationship between religious ritual and social harmony. And the Hebrew *Bible* often discusses ritual in moral as well as societal terms. Even Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, which describes in such vivid imagery a fictional pilgrimage beginning at the Tabard Inn outside London and ending in Canterbury at the shrine of St. Thomas Beckett, is ritualistic in form in that it is the tale of a journey. Masonic ritual is of the same format: the re-counting of a physical and intellectual journey. (More on ritual next month.)

November 2019

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

					1	2
3 Daylight Savings Time Ends	4 OES	5	6 RAINBOW 7:00 PM	7 STATED COMM. 6:30 PM	8	9
10	11	12 SHRINE CLUB 7 PM	13 Dist. Instruction Middleburg No. 107 6:30	14 Lodge Practice MM Degree	15	16 OPEN BOOKS PINELAND 9-NOON
17	18 OES	19 York Rite Chapter/Council 6:30 pm	20 District Assn. Palatka 6:30 pm RAINBOW	21 STAT-ED COMM. 6:30 PM	22 Fried Chicken Shrine Club 5-7 pm	23 MM Degree 11:00 am
24	25	26 York Rite Commandery 6:30 pm	27	28 Thanksgiving day	29	30

Presentation Made to Horse Play Therapy Center

Horse Play Therapy Center in St. Augustine, FL was presented a check for \$6,000.00 by Ashlar Lodge No. 98 Free and accepted Masons on Friday, September 27, 2019 to provide funds to support hippotherapy therapy for children with special needs. Hippotherapy is treatment with the help of horses.

Horse Play Therapy Center is dedicated to treating children with autism, cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome, brain injury, developmental coordination disorder, and Dysphagia by providing them a warm and supportive environment in which they can achieve their highest goals.

The Center uses Hippotherapy under the direction of specially trained physical therapists, occupational therapists, and speech therapists. The Centers goal is to provide their clients with a foundation for developing life skills that improve their overall quality of life in a safe and caring environment.

The presentation was made at the Center's facility on State Road 207 west of St. Augustine. Receiving the check on behalf of Horse Play Therapy Center was Ms. Vicky Carregal, the center's director, assisted by Ms. Tori Kistler, and Captain, one of the therapy horses. Representing Ashlar Lodge No. 98 were James Carrick, Christopher Cannan, William Roberts, and Oscar Patterson.

December 2019

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

1	2 OES	3	4 RAIN-BOW 7 PM	5 STAT- ED COMM.	6	7
8	9	10 SHRINE CLUB 7 PM	11 DIST. INSTRUCT. CABUL NO. 116	12 LODGE PRACTICE Installation officers	13	14
15	16 OES	17 York Rite Chapter/ Council 6:30 pm	18 RAIN- BOW 7:00 pm Dist Associa- tion Lake 72	19 STAT- ED COMM. 6:30 PM	20	21
22	23	24 Christmas Eve	25 CHRIST- MAS DAY	26	27 INSTAL- LATION OF OFFICERS 6:00 PM	28
29	30	31				



LODGE OFFICERS 2019

Worshipful Master

Matthew Sweeney 904-806-0571

Senior Warden

Kenneth Schaffner 386-864-9162

Junior Warden

James Carrick 904-501-4348

Secretary

David Pierucci 904-460-9477

Treasurer

Oscar Patterson III 904-955-9175

Chaplain

William Roberts 904-825-1594

**OTHER 11th MASONIC
DISTRICT LODGES**

Palatka No. 34

Palatka—2nd & 4th Mondays

Lake No. 72

Crescent City—1st & 3rd Mondays

Pineland No. 86

Peniel—1st & 3rd Thursdays

Melrose No 89

Keystone Heights—2nd & 4th Tuesdays

Middleburg No. 107

Middleburg—1st & 3rd Tuesdays

Cabul No. 116

Green Cove Springs—2nd & 4th Thursdays

Hastings No. 183

Hastings—2nd & 4th Tuesdays

Bunnell No. 200

Bunnell—1st and 3rd Tuesdays

FRATERNAL NOTICES AND DATES

O.E.S. Chapter #12.....1st & 3rd Mon-
days

Rainbow Assembly #42.....1st & 3rd
Wednesdays

York Rite Bodies.....3rd & 4th Tues-
days

Masonic Etiquette

ADDRESSING THE CHAIR:

The rules of order in Freemasonry *do not permit side discussion's*, during a Communication, among members. The member who has anything to say to the Lodge, whether it be to enter discussion or to make or second a motion, must rise to his feet, wait to be recognized by and then address the Worshipful Master.

ALTAR

Our customs and traditions prohibit any Brother from passing between the Altar and the Worshipful Master while a Lodge is open. From ancient times the precinct between the Altar and the East has been deemed sacred ground, not to be trodden under foot; there should be no obstruction between the East and the Three Great Lights; and since the Great Lights and the Charter of the Lodge are the particular responsibility of the Worshipful Master, no Brother should ever obscure his view of them. The fact that during the exemplification of the Work Candidates are sometimes placed there, does not mitigate against the interpretation, but rather supports it; for if the ground between the Altar and East is otherwise held sacred, the fact will make all the more impressive those initiation ceremonies which require that a Candidate be placed there. The ballot box should never rest upon the Bible but by its side or on a little stand at the Altar. The Altar must not be covered or decorated by the national or any other flag. Any embroidery, sign, or any other indications of any individual or any organization other than the Lodge itself or Grand Lodge is strictly forbidden.

Digest of Masonic Law
Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons of the State of Florida

26.17 It is the duty of every Master Mason to become proficient in the work and lectures of the Three Degrees in Freemasonry as soon as possible after being Raised, and it is urgently recommended that the Masters of Particular Lodges endeavor to promote this end.

Why Is Ritual Important in Freemasonry
(From "A Beacon of Masonic Light, February 2008)

First, this is not going to be an article ABOUT Masonic ritual, I do have an obligation to maintain. However, this this will examine ritual as it pertains to Freemasonry. Please, read on and let me know what you think about ritual. The next blog entry will discuss the probable sources of Masonic ritual. As Always when discussing a subject of import, let's start off with a definition and progress in the examination.

So, what IS a ritual: A ritual is a set of actions, often thought to have symbolic value, the performance of which is usually prescribed by a religion or by the traditions of a community by religious or political laws because of the perceived efficacy of those actions.

A ritual may be performed at regular intervals, or on specific occasions, or at the discretion of individuals or communities. It may be performed by a single individual, by a group, or by the entire community; in arbitrary places, or in places especially reserved for it; either in public, in private, or before specific people. A ritual may be restricted to a certain subset of the community, and may enable or underscore the passage between religious or social states.

The purposes of rituals are varied; they include compliance with religious obligations or ideals, satisfaction of spiritual or emotional needs of the practitioners, strengthening of social bonds, demonstration of respect or submission, stating one's affiliation, obtaining social acceptance or approval for some event — or, sometimes, just for the pleasure of the ritual itself.

Rituals of various kinds are a feature of almost all known human societies, past or present. They include not only the various worship rites and sacraments of organized religions and cults, but also the rites of passage of certain societies, oaths of allegiance, coronations, and presidential inaugurations, marriages and funerals, school "rush" traditions and graduations, club meetings, sports events, Halloween parties and veteran parades, Christmas shopping, and more. Many activities that are ostensibly performed for concrete purposes, such as jury trials, execution of criminals, and scientific symposia, are loaded with purely symbolic actions prescribed by regulations or tradition, and thus partly ritualistic in nature. Even common actions like hand-shaking and saying hello are rituals.

In any case, an essential feature of a ritual is that the actions and their symbolism are not arbitrarily chosen by the performers, nor dictated by logic or necessity, but either are prescribed and imposed upon the performers by some external source or are inherited unconsciously from social traditions.

So, it's a set of actions though to have symbolic value that are traditional and are not arbitrarily chosen by the performers. Sounds a lot like Freemasonic ritual so far. Joseph Campbell said:

A ritual is the enactment of a myth. And through the enactment it brings to mind the implications of the life act that you are engaged in. But you don't know what you're doing unless you think about it. That's what a ritual does. It gives you an occasion to realize what you're doing so that you're participating in the inevitable energy of life in its exchanges. That's what rituals are for; you do things with intention, and not just in the animal way, ravenously, without knowing what you're doing. Enactment of a myth is symbolism imposed on the performers. Now that we have defined what ritual is, we should begin to look at the place ritual has in Freemasonry, and what it does for the craft.

One thing that should be noted is that while ritual is the foundational means by which we form Masons from the profanes of the world, it is not the ONLY means of Masonic formation. Yet, in reading that, we must realize that it is the ritual that opens the door, and it is the ritual that effects the fundamental change in the psyche which makes a man a Mason. There are some men who have been made a Mason in a single day, and while they are good men, true brothers, such brothers have been robbed of a valuable and life changing experience.

Are these brothers any less Masons for not having personally experienced the ritual? No, of course not, most of them are active, wonderful brothers. None the less, the manner of their formation took away from them a fundamental awakening of the spirit which they may only achieve with difficult work and contemplation.

It is NOT the intent of this article to discuss the relative merits of one day conferrals, however, but no discussion of the importance of the ritual in the formation of a mason would be complete without at least a nod in the direction of this subject.

Ritual teaches fundamental lessons through symbols on a subconscious level. This is a very powerful teaching tool! Masonry is something slightly different to every man, yet the fundamental truths are always there, and it is the ritual which speaks to the unconscious mind, which slips the fundamental truths of Freemasonry past the conscious defenses and makes fundamental and substantive changes.

So, why ritual? Again, quoting Joseph Campbell: "It has always been the prime function of mythology and rite to supply the symbols that carry the human spirit forward, in counteraction to those other constant human fantasies that tend to tie it back."

Ritual then is the tool which speaks directly to the spirit, it is the three distinct knocks upon the portals of the spirit which cause the doors to open and spiritual eye to open and see more than the material world. By this awakening, we use the spiritual eye (reflected in our lodges as the "All Seeing Eye") to behold Jacob's Ladder, which rises from the material plane to the spiritual plane, and upon which we place our first foot, symbolically, in the Entered Apprentice Degree.

Without the Ritual, Freemasonry would just be another frat club, and would offer nothing more than the Moose or Elks or Eagles... material charity without a spiritual change.