

## TENNESSEE SUPPLEMENT

Robert B. Beam, P.C., Editor  
200 Tower Drive  
Knoxville, Tennessee 37912  
beamerkt@yahoo.com



Ralph Burks Taylor  
Grand Commander

### WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY AND PRESIDENTS DAY

Presidents Day is observed the third Monday of February, to honor those men who have served in our nation's highest office. It originated to observe the birthday of our First President, George Washington. While some decry the change from Washington's Birthday to Presidents Day, a brief history of the holiday is interesting and informative.

Originally, Washington's Birthday was celebrated on February 22 each year. The observance began shortly after Washington's death in 1799 and became official in 1879. In 1968, the Uniform Monday Holiday Act moved the dates of certain federal holidays to the nearest Mondays to allow federal employees a three-day weekend. Washington's Birthday was moved to the third Monday of February (5 USC §6103). This meant that Washington's actual birthday would always fall after that day.

Likewise, President Lincoln's birthday is in February, although his birthday is not a federal holiday. Further, like Washington's birthday it lies outside the possible dates of the third Monday. Because that day falls between these birth dates, it is commonly stated that Presidents Day is intended to honor both men.

However, contrary to popular belief, the holiday remains officially Washington's Birthday. Presidents' Day is the name commonly used and is the name given to a number of state holidays. In Tennessee, the day is designated Washington Day and is a state holiday (TCA § 15-1-101). Thus, the day still honors George Washington, in addition to honoring any or all other Presidents.

To Masons, this is a day to remember and remind others that fourteen Presidents were members of our Fraternity (fifteen if you count EA Bro. Lyndon Johnson) and of the contribution that Masonry has made to our nation's life and history. It is an opportunity for us to remember our civic obligations and to encourage others to do remember them also. As we observe this day, we may be justly proud of the role Masonry has played in the history of our nation and its government.

Sources (All accessed Jan. 1, 2019)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington%27s\\_Birthday#Official\\_state\\_holidays](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington%27s_Birthday#Official_state_holidays)

<https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/presidents-day>

<https://www.usa.gov/life-in-the-us#item-37617>

### REMINDER OF UPCOMING FESTIVALS

Knoxville: Feb. 9 and 16; Middle TN: March 8-9; Upper East: Apr. 20 and 27

### GRAND COMMANDER'S MESSAGE: LONGING FOR GOD

*As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my food day and night. While they continually say to me; "Where is your God?" When I remember these things; I pour out my soul within me; For I used to go with the Multitude; I went with them to the house of God, With the voice of joy and praise, With A multitude that kept a pilgrim feast (Psalms 42:1-4.)*

If I could line up everyone that that will attend our Grand Commandery session in March, I would ask each Knight present two questions. The first is, "Do you want to go to heaven?" I have no doubt that every single Sir Knight would answer yes. I don't think there is a single person who believes in God that doesn't really want to go to heaven. The second is, "Do you want to go today?" I think with that question, I wouldn't get the resounding yes answer that I would get with the first question, but I think that I would get many different answers. People want to go to heaven, but none are in a hurry to get there.

Let's think about the first question again. "Do you want to go to heaven?" What does that really mean? Well it means that we are going to be with God all the time. If that is the case, then we have that now, we have the best of both worlds; we can have our cake and eat it too.

I enjoy Commandery and I enjoy being here, in this place, with all of you! There is something about coming together with brothers in Christ who share a common bond with one another, who have the same major goal in their lives. When I am here, I feel safe, not threatened by outside influences, and try to concentrate on the reason why I am here. Apparently, the psalmist felt the same thing. The word "pant" is usually expressive of a spiritual thirst for God. The psalmist feels distant from God's presence among His people and he longs for intimacy with God.

As Templars, if we are going to walk the walk then we must strive to have a personal relationship with God/Christ. That's what God and Christ both want. God wants us to surrender ourselves completely and totally to him. God wants to help us with every facet of our lives.

When God put us here on this earth, he didn't promise us "a bed of roses"; he didn't say that it would be easy living here on this earth; that there wouldn't be heart aches, sadness, grieving the death of a loved one, wondering why "bad things happen to good people." But, if we have that "personal relationship" with God, then that is what is the most important and in the end what really counts. God can help the hurt to go away and only he can comfort a troubled soul.

Psalms 121:1-2, I will lift up my eyes to the hills – from whence comes my help? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

Philippians 4:13, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

James 4:8, Draw near to God and he will draw near to you.

What I hope you take from this lesson is that if you have a solid personal relationship with God/Jesus, turn over your life completely to Him, always stay near to God, then everything else in life will fall in its place.

In His Service,

Burks Taylor, Grand Commander