



Grand Commander



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We Need Your Help!

Please send event news from your local commanderies to us for inclusion in the State News!

- ✘ Submissions must be received by the 20th of the month for inclusion in the upcoming edition. Submissions may be altered to fit.
- ✘ Please send emails with subject line "KT State News" to the editor.

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Grand Commander's Message

Greetings, Sir Knights!

The month of December has been a wonderful one for me. My counterparts, GHP Will Chriscoe and GIM Jeff York, and I have travelled all over the state to participate in Christmas observances. Without exception, we have enjoyed excellent fellowship and hospitality wherever we went. For this, we offer you our sincere gratitude. I especially was glad to see so many Commanderies making the special effort to put on the Christmas observances, in some cases for the first or second time in many years. I also had the privilege of participating in the annual Christmas parade hosted by the City of Wilmington, where I joined with a group of Sir Knights from Plantagenet #1. The following weekend, I returned to Wilmington for their bicentennial celebration and Christmas observance. The Sir Knights of Plantagenet #1 and Palestine #20 of Fayetteville joined forces to make this a truly spectacular event. I was delighted and proud to be a part of it.

I thank you all for a wonderful 2021 which exceeded my expectations. Anyone who has doubts as to the health and vitality of North Carolina's York Rite bodies needs only to accompany the Grand High Priest, the Grand Illustrious Master, and I as we continue to travel across this great state and behold the work you are all doing.

Just a reminder, Sir Knights, we are still in the process of selling tickets for our annual Grand York Rite Fund-raiser. We are raffling off a pig, the meat of which (when processed) should weigh approximately 250 pounds, cut to order. All proceeds will go to the York Rite charities. The drawing will be held at the Grand Conclave in

March. If you are interested in supporting this fund-raiser, please contact me or any of your local Grand York Rite officers for tickets or information.

For better or for worse, the year 2021 has drawn to a close and we now head into 2022. Most Commanderies have elected and installed a new slate of officers to lead us through this upcoming year. For all the newly-installed Commanders, if you are in search of any materials or resources that may be of use to you in your term of office, please feel free to reach out to me or the Grand Secretary for assistance. I am committed to helping you succeed. May you and your loved ones all have a very Happy New Year!

Fraternally,

Ludwik J. Wodka
Grand Commander

From the Editor

This past year marked a monumental shift in our communications to our members. Our old format where we issued a monthly supplement to the Knights Templar magazine was dis-continued in favor of an electronic newsletter that can be posted on the Grand Encampment website and shared via email. This has created both challenges and opportunities. These opportunities include:

- ✘ Greater flexibility in communications from the Grand Commandery to our members and communities
- ✘ More space to report important local and state news and events
- ✘ Room for photos from past events
- ✘ Ability to provide links to enhanced content with-out taking up excessive space in the newsletter
- ✘ A new way to get the word out about the great work our North Carolina Knights Templar Commanderies are doing across our great state!

I hope you have enjoyed this new format as much as we have had in creating and evolving it forward.

There have been some challenges, however. The most notable one is that many of our Sir Knights don't have email addresses on record, or they don't have access to the internet at all. This digital divide may create feelings of isolation, especially given these past couple of years under pandemic lockdowns and the total disruption of our lives. I encourage every officer in your respective Commanderies to continue to reach out, however possible, to our Sir Knights and keep the bonds of brotherly love and Christian fellowship strong. Leave no Sir Knight behind!

Finally, I want to emphasize that this newsletter would not be successful without **YOU**. Please continue to send in articles and pictures from past events and let me know of upcoming events in your local area.

Please print out this newsletter and give it to Sir Knights who are not able to access it digitally. Feel free to post copies at your local lodges, churches, and community centers. Our Sir Knights are doing great work, help us spread the word!

Courteously,

Larry Aydlett
Editor, NC Knightly News

Grand Commandery Celebrates 200 Years

Wilmington – On Saturday, December 18, the Sir Knights of Plantagenet #1 and Palestine #20 (of Fayetteville) gathered to celebrate the bicentennial of North Carolina's oldest Commandery. The members of Palestine #20 participated as this Commandery was originally formed in Fayetteville prior to moving to Wilmington in the late 1840s.

Master of Ceremonies Charlie Ponton introduced the guests of honor: Susan Dean Wooster, widow of PGC Don Wooster, and Helga Lewis. In attendance were GHP Will Chriscoe, GIM Jeffrey York, REGC Ludwik Wodka, and the Mid-Atlantic Department Commander, James Steele. EC Stephen Quesenberry of Palestine #20 was also present. A musical program was given by Briely Nguyen, a member of the local DeMolay chapter and son of SK Binh Nguyen.



Members of Palestine #20 perform the traditional toasts

The Sir Knights of Palestine #20 conducted the Christmas Observance ceremony, with a wonderful Christmas message delivered by Past Grand Prelate, Rev. John Frazier. A wonderful dinner was catered by Middle of the Island Catering Company.



Past Grand Prelate, Rev. John Frazier delivered an inspiring Christmas message

SK Ponton gave the bodies a brief overview of the history of Plantagenet Commandery. Then, a "birthday cake" of the Commandery was cut by REDC Steele and REGC Wodka, assisted by EC Cameron Bridger and EC Stephen Quesenberry. Closing remarks were given by the Grand Commander and Department Commander Steele.



REDC Steele and REGC Wodka, flanked by ECs Bridger and Quesenberry

A beautiful replica of the 1921 Centennial Program booklet was prepared for this event, along with a commemorative coin. A ribbon for the Sir Knights to wear was also prepared by Susan Wooster.



Commemorative Coin for the Bicentennial of Templary in NC

REGC Wodka described the event as “an amazing event with approximately 100 guests in attendance. A big thank you goes out to the Wilmington Scottish Rite for allowing the use of their facility (which they also did back in 1921!). The planning committee from Plantagenet #1 and Palestine #20 is to be commended for a wonderful and successful event. Congratulations!”

Charlotte #2 Knights Templar Participate in Wreaths Across America



A member of Charlotte Commandery lays a wreath at a Veteran's grave

Charlotte – On December 18, Charlotte Commandery #2, along with six other local organizations, laid over 75 wreaths on local veterans' graves. This was part of a National Day of Remembrance for the brave men and women who have fought to preserve and defend our Republic.

Joining the Sir Knights were members of a local Boy Scout Troop, Charlotte DeMolay, Charlotte Assembly #91 Rainbow Girls, Order of the Amaranth, and Sir Knights from the Monroe York Rite as well as many wives of our members. Wreaths were presented for every Branch of Service including one for POW/MIA service members.

Charlotte #2's Secretary, Ron Whitener reports, “Wreaths Across America is a worthy event that has become a tradition with our York Rite. This was our fourth time to participate. Our future plans are completing construction of the unfinished part of our Temple in 2022. This completion will allow us to become a fully active Masonic Center for all Masonic Orders and Community events!”



New Commandery Nazareth #41 Hosts Its First Christmas Observance

Southern Pines – North Carolina's newest Commandery held its first Christmas Observance on December 1 at the Southern Pines lodge. There was a very good turnout of Knights and visitors for the event. The traditional toasts were given, and a Christmas message was delivered by Sir Knight Rev. Bill Hart.



Sir Knight Rev. Bill Hart



PGC Mike Daniels

PGC Stencil Wilson assisted in equipping the Asylum for the event, and PCG Mike Daniels gave a very impressive musical performance. Finally, EC Trent Carter presented CG Dilles Walker a medal for meritorious service.

Durham #3 Christmas Observance Held in Chapel Hill

Chapel Hill – In the spirit of the season, ancient basketball rivalries were set aside as University Lodge hosted Durham Commandery #3 for a public Christmas observance.

The ceremony was solemn and impressive with a Christmas message delivered by the Rev. Mark Stephens. Visitors were in attendance from Raleigh Commandery #4, Ivanhoe #8, and Oxford #39.



Durham Commandery #3 Officers and Members with REGC Ludwik Wodka

Durham is the only Cap-and-Mantle Commandery in North Carolina. Refreshments followed with musical entertainment provided by WB Jeff Troccoli, the DDGL for NC District 20.

Salisbury #13 Presents Awards and Hosts Annual Christmas Observance

Salisbury – On December 6, Salisbury #13 held their Christmas observance at the Salisbury Masonic Temple. GHP Will Chriscoe, GIM Jeff York, and REGC Ludwik Wodka were honored to attend as guests. Eminent Commander Andy Foust, Grand Warder Sam Henline, and PGC Kirby Matthews did a terrific job preparing the event. The Christmas message was delivered by SK Scott Ostrowski, who explained the Christmas nativity according to the Gospel of Mark and how we as Knights should conduct ourselves spiritually.



Pictured: GIM Jeff York, SK Jason Resendes, GHP Will Chriscoe, SK Will Fulbright, REGC Ludwik Wodka

Mason of the Year awards for 2020 and 2021 were presented to SK William Fulbright and SK Jason Resendes. The grand presiding officers were presented with engraved crystal decanters by the Salisbury bodies. The event was well attended, spirits were high, and the evening was enjoyed by all.

Raleigh #4 Christmas Observance, Awards, and Installation of Officers

Raleigh – Raleigh Commandery #4 held its Christmas observance on December 11 in Raleigh. The event began with a wonderful musical performance of four classical pieces by the Bravura String Quartet, followed by two songs performed by Ilia Scrivano and Josh Booth. Eminent Commander Francesco Scrivano welcomed the guests. PGHP Donald Street introduced the dignitaries and delivered the Christmas message. The Raleigh York Rite Merit Award was awarded to

Dr. Aaron Byrd by GHP Will Chriscoe and REGC Ludwik Wodka.



The Bravura String Quartet performs for the Raleigh Commandery

The observance was followed by the installation of officers for the Raleigh York Rite Bodies. Raleigh's new presiding officers for 2022 are EHP Matt Kohut, IM Aaron Byrd, and EC Calvin Rogers.

NC Templars March with DeMolay in the Wilmington Christmas Parade

Wilmington – The Sir Knights of Plantagenet Commandery #1 participated in the Wilmington Christmas Parade on December 12 in front of one of the largest crowds the city has seen in many years. Our parade unit was assisted by two members of the DeMolay who carried a banner. Although a little brisk, the weather was otherwise very good.



NC Knights Templar and DeMolay March in the Wilmington Christmas Parade

Those attending included Department Commander James Steele, Grand Senior Warden Mike Hoff, Binh Nguyen, James Franklin, Charlie Ponton, and Travis Horrell. Breily Nguyen and Niki Sorenson represented the Order of DeMolay.

Once again, the Knights Templar (and DeMolay!) had displayed themselves impressively in public.

Oxford Commandery Revival Continues with 2nd Annual Christmas Observance

Oxford – Oxford Commandery #39 held its second annual Christmas observance last night (12/13). There was a good turnout of the Oxford members for the ceremony organized by Eminent Commander John Fluke. SK Kevin Otis, Administrator of the [Masonic Home for Children at Oxford](#) (MHCO) delivered the Christmas message, and EC John Fluke delivered the Traditional Toasts. GHP Will Chriscoe and the Grand Commander were recognized.



Oxford's revival continues forward from success to success

Many of those present recall that only a few years ago the Oxford York Rite was in jeopardy. They have recovered since that time to become an active body with great leadership which continues to improve with each year.

New Bern Annual Christmas Observance

New Bern – St. John's Commandery #10 and the Scottish Rite Valley of New Bern held a joint Christmas observance ceremony on Sunday, December 19, the V.E. Deputy Grand Commander Elbert "Sparky" Travis presiding.



Pictured: Michael Sutton, KCCH of the Scottish Rite Valley of New Bern

The ceremony began with the remembrance of the departed brethren and Sir Knights, led by PGC Fred Whitty. The Christmas message was delivered by Johnny Surles. Food, fellowship, and a visit from Santa Claus followed in the dining hall. It was a wonderful event

enjoyed by all. Special thanks to the Valley of New Bern for the courtesies and hospitality they gave our Sir Knights.

Wilkes #40 & Lenoir #33 Host Christmas Observance & Awards Ceremony

North Wilkesboro – On Monday, December 20, Wilkes Commandery #40 along with Lenoir Commandery #33 held a joint Christmas observance at the North Wilkesboro Masonic Temple. It was the first time that Wilkes #40 hosted the event in many, many years.

GHP Will Chriscoe and GIM Jeff York were present along with the Grand Commander. Other visiting dignitaries included Josh Bristol and Todd Trivette from the Grand Chapter line, PGHP Tom Bridges, PGIM Russell Bridges, PGC Mike Daniels, and Grand Warder Sam Henline. Oasis Shrine Past Potentate James Richardson was also present.

EC (and Grand Sword Bearer) Mark Alexander presided over the event. The toast to the flag was given by Ryley Bridges (daughter of Russell). The Knights at the Triangle gave the Traditional Toasts, and the Christmas message was delivered by Rev. Bill Hart.

A delightful musical program consisted of traditional bluegrass Christmas songs performed by Gary Miller and Gwyn Wood on guitar, Judy Triplette on bass, and Charley Tolbert on fiddle.



Local musicians and Sir Knights of Wilkes #40 and Lenoir #33

A 25-year service award was presented by the grand presiding officers to SK and Companion Gilbert Curtis. Honorary membership certificates were presented to the presiding Grand officers as well as to PGC Mike Daniels.

