



Grand Commander



Brandon Penley

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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,

I want to first thank my Lord and Savior for allowing me the opportunity to serve you as the Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery Knights Templar of North Carolina. I find it hard to grasp how quickly time passes us by. I think back to when my journey first began in the Grand Commandery line, and in some ways, it seems like only yesterday that I was elected as the Grand Warder. I have had many brothers who have always been willing to lend me a helping hand over the past nine years. I thank each of you for your advice and your guidance.

I was told by several brothers over the years that I should enjoy every moment in this line, and that I should attend as many events as possible. I have tried to listen to this advice and to be present at as many events as possible. I hope that all the officers of the Grand Commandery will do the same, and truly enjoy and cherish the time that they are in this officer's line. I encourage each Grand Commandery officer to study the constitution of the Grand Encampment and the constitution of the Grand Commandery of North Carolina. I think reading these constitutions has helped prepare me to serve as Grand Commander and I am sure that it will help you in your journey as well.

I want to offer a personal note of thanks to the installing officers, Right Eminent Past Grand Commander Phil Presley, Past Most Illustrious Grand Master Russell E. Bridges, and Most Worshipful Past Grand Master Berry Rigdon, who installed the grand officers of the Grand Royal Arch Chapter of North Carolina, the Grand Council of Royal Select Masters in North Carolina, and the Grand Commandery Knights Templar of North Carolina on March 21,

2023. I appreciate all who attended this year's annual conclave, thank you all for your support. I want to encourage all our members to attend next year's annual conclave, I think you will each enjoy the experience, and learn a lot about the York Rite by attending these meetings. Congratulations to Most Excellent Grand High Priest Will Highsmith and Most Illustrious Grand Master Billy D. Poteat on being installed for the ensuing year to serve the Grand Royal Arch Chapter of North Carolina and the Grand Council of Royal & Select Masters in North Carolina. I look forward to working with both of you this year.

I would like to remind the recorders of each constituent commandery of the importance of keeping our database up to date. Please make sure that you are updating MMS on a regular basis so that your individual bodies are not incurring undue costs on your year-end reports. I know that this can seem to be a tedious process, but if regularly kept up to date, then it becomes much easier to manage. Keeping these records up to date throughout the year will also make it easier to fill out your year-end reports, instead of being overwhelmed by trying to do it all at one time. By updating our records throughout the year, it will also help our Grand Recorder in the performance of his duties to our Grand Commandery, as well as giving us an updated membership count.

This year I have already had the pleasure of Knighting twelve new Templars at the joint festival held by the Hickory, Lenoir, and Wilkes York Rite Bodies on March 31, and April 1. On Monday, April 3, I will be attending the Order of the Temple in Salisbury, NC. On Friday, April 7, and Saturday April the 8, several Templars and Grand Commandery officers will be traveling up to Alexandria, VA to attend the Easter Observance service. On Saturday, April 8, I and several other Grand Commandery Officers will have

the honor of participating in a wreath laying ceremony at the Arlington National Cemetery. The dates for the upcoming district meeting are posted on the Grand York Rite website. I hope to see all our members at the upcoming district meetings this year and look forward to working with each of you. Please keep your district officers and Grand Commandery officers updated with any upcoming festivals, Christmas Observances, or any other events that your commanderies may be planning for this year.

Again, thank you all for this opportunity and may God Bless you all.

Fraternally in Christ,

Brandon Penley

Grand Commander

2023-2024 Grand Officers Elected and Appointed at Grand York Rite Annual Communication in Clemmons, NC

Clemmons – The Grand York Rite Bodies of North Carolina held their annual conclave in Clemmons on March 20, and installed the 2023-2024 Grand Officers on March 21.



Honor Guard for the Grand Conclave: L-R, Sir Knights Russel Scull, Larry Aydlett, Mark Alexander, Sam Henline, Michael Aycok, Dave Puckett, Doug Bennett, and Marty Spears

The 2023-2024 Grand Commandery officers are:

- ❖ **Grand Commander R.E. Brandon L. Penley**
- ❖ Deputy Grand Commander V.E. Scottie W. Cox
- ❖ Grand Generalissimo E. Michael M. Hoff
- ❖ Grand Captain General E. Raymond B Casey, Jr.
- ❖ Grand Senior Warden E. Edward Allen
- ❖ Grand Junior Warden E. P. Mark Alexander
- ❖ Grand Standard Bearer E. G. Samuel Henline
- ❖ Grand Sword Bearer E. Charles W. Talley, II
- ❖ Grand Warder E. Martin J. Spears
- ❖ Grand Prelate E. Terry David Pritt, PREGC
- ❖ Grand Sentinel E. John David Cashion
- ❖ Chief Instructor-Inspector E. P. Mark Alexander

The 2023-2024 District Commanders & Instructors:

#	District Commander	District Instructor
1	Doug Bennett	Russell Scull
2	Mike Hoff	Jimmy Moore
3	Edward Allen	Fredrick Daniels
4	Michael Shifflet	Ludwik Wodka
5	Matt Kohut	Ken Wical
6	Larry Aydlett	Sam Henline
7	Mark Bagley	Scott Brand
8	Pat Day	Mark Alexander
9	Rick Patton	Matt Peeler

At the awards banquet, there were several Grand Commandery and Grand Encampment awards given. Sir Knights Sam Henline, Marty Spears, Doug Bennett, and Larry Aydlett were awarded the Knight Commander of the Temple by the Grand Encampment, and the Grand Commandery’s Merit Award was given to Sir Knights Marty Spears and Doug Bennett.



Recipients of the Knight Commander of the Temple: Larry Aydlett, Doug Bennett, Marty Spears, and Sam Henline

Earlier that day, at the beginning of the conclave, PGC Ludwik Wodka presented the last of his awards for his term, presenting V.E. Brandon Penley with the Knight Commander of the Temple.



PGC Ludwik Wodka presents VE Brandon Penley with the Knight Commander of the Temple

In Memoriam: Calvin A. Rogers, Jr

Ramseur – The Grand York Rite Bodies of North Carolina is saddened to hear of the loss of our dear brother, Companion and Sir Knight, Calvin A. Rogers on the morning of Wednesday, March 22, 2023. He was 64 years old. The family received visitors on Sunday, March 26, at Loflin Funeral Home in

Ramseur, where the funeral service and Masonic Rites were held due to inclement weather. Past Grand Master and Reverend A. Gene Cobb led a packed and overflowing chapel in offering remembrances to our fallen brother.



Companion/Sir Knight Calvin Rogers

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made in honor of Calvin to the Masonic Home for Children in Oxford, 600 College St., Oxford, NC, 27565, or to WhiteStone Retirement Community in Greensboro, 700 South Holden Rd., Greensboro, NC, 27407 or to the North

Carolina Masonic Foundation in Raleigh, 2921 Glenwood Ave. Raleigh, NC, 27608.

2023-District Meetings Scheduled

Raleigh – The District meetings are planned for the following dates and locations:

#	Date	Host	Night	Time	Opening
1	May 18	Elizabeth City	Thu	6pm dinner, 7:30pm meeting	Council
2	April 25	New Bern	Tue	6pm dinner, 7pm meeting	Council
3	April 18	Rocky Mount	Tue	6pm dinner, 7pm meeting	Chapter
4	April 6	Durham	Thu	6pm dinner, 7pm meeting	Chapter
5	April 5	Raleigh	Wed	6:30pm dinner, 7:30pm meeting	Chapter
6	May 1	Salisbury	Mon	6:30pm dinner, 7:30pm meeting	Chapter
7	May 2	Charlotte	Tue	6:30pm dinner, 7:30pm meeting	Council
8	June 14	Hickory	Wed	6:30pm dinner, 7:30pm meeting	Commandery
9	June 20	Asheville	Tue	7pm meeting	Council

The Grand Officers of the Grand York Rite Bodies are looking forward to seeing you at these meetings.

A Message for the Easter Season from Reverend Alex Ellis, Past Grand Prelate

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

1 The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

2 Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

11 But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre,

12 And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

*15 Jesus saith unto her, **Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?** She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.*

*16 Jesus saith unto her, **Mary.** She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.*

*17 Jesus saith unto her, **Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.***

18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

John 20:1-2, 10-18 (KJV)

A weeping Mary enters His tomb. It would seem that neither Peter nor the disciple whom Jesus loved offered any words of comfort or encouragement. At this point, however, Mary does not find an empty tomb. While the body of Jesus is not there, two angels present. In response to their almost ridiculous question, (of course she should be weeping,) Mary repeats her interpretation of the situation; the theft of

her friend's body. She repeats that question once again to a man whom she believes is the gardener. This may not be as ridiculous an understanding as it seems. It could be that John is giving us clues on how we might understand what has happened. Two things drive us back to the beginning of John's gospel encouraging us to view this, not as the end of the story, but a new beginning.

In the opening of John's gospel, Jesus' first words are a question directed at the disciples of John the Baptist. *"What are you looking for?"* (John 1:38) And here, in this beginning, this new creation, Jesus asks Mary the very same question, *"Whom are you looking for?"* (John 20:15)

A new ministry is beginning, a new story. Is Jesus asking the same question of us this Easter? What are we looking for? It was when Jesus called her by name that Mary recognized her beloved Rabboni. Is Jesus calling our name? And when John's disciples called out to this Rabbi, he invited them to *"Come and see"* (John 1:39). Are we being called to see the new things that God is doing in our lives and in our world?

Unlike the synoptic gospels that begin at dawn, John's account begins in darkness. This is the writer who, at the opening of his gospel, took us to the very opening of creation, *"In the beginning."* Could it be that John is taking us back, once more, to that primordial darkness when *"the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep"* (Genesis 1:2)? The author is echoing Paul's declaration that in the death and resurrection of Jesus we are experiencing a new creation, *"everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!"* (2 Corinthians 5:17).

And where are we? In a garden. Without knowing it, Mary has correctly identified Jesus as the gardener who is bringing a new world, a new life, and a new creation into being, as He had done before: *"All things came into being through Him, and without Him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in Him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it"* (John 1:3-5).

In the first creation story God drove Eve and Adam out of the garden. In this new creation Jesus sends Mary out of the garden rejoicing. She is sent out to tell everyone the darkness has not overcome the Word made flesh who had lived among us. She has seen her

Rabbi, and she now understands that she has seen *"the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth."* (John 1:14) *"I have seen the Lord."* (John 20:18) Her message declares to us the new beginning that God has prepared for all of us.

Sir Knight, what are you looking for? Is Jesus calling your name?

We are called to see the new things, the good things that God is doing in our lives and in our world. We are called to continue the proclamation, *"I have seen the Lord."*

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

In His Service,

Alex Ellis

Immediate Past Grand Prelate, and Pastor of Davis Grove Baptist Church, Saratoga, NC

Important Reminders:

- April 3:** Order of the Temple, Salisbury Masonic Temple, 7:00pm.
- April 5:** District 5 meeting, JJ Crowder Lodge, Raleigh, NC, dinner at 6:30pm, meeting at 7:30pm.
- April 6:** District 4 meeting, University Lodge, Chapel Hill, NC, dinner at 6pm, meeting at 7pm.
- April 8:** Wreath laying at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Arlington National Cemetery.
- April 9:** Easter Sunrise service in Alexandria, VA at the George Washington Memorial.
- April 15:** Order of the Temple, Fayetteville Masonic Center, 8:00am.
- April 17:** Bethlehem #29 hosts the annual Easter Candlelight celebration, starting at 7:30pm at the Greenville Masonic Temple, 1104 Charles Street, Greenville.
- April 18:** District 3 meeting, Morningstar Lodge, Nashville, NC, dinner at 6pm, meeting at 7pm.
- April 25:** District 2 meeting, New Bern York Rite Temple, New Bern, NC, dinner at 6pm, meeting at 7pm.
- April 29:** Eastern NC York Rite 1-Day Festival, 8am, New Bern York Rite Temple, New Bern, NC.