



Tennessee Knight Templar News

SIR KNIGHT JOHN W. SIMMONS II, RIGHT EMINENT GRAND COMMANDER

May A.D. 2024 / A.O. 906

Edited by: Jesse J. Harper, KYCH



Left: The newly installed officers and Sir Knights in attendance for the constitution and consecration of Appalachia Commandery #45 in Fountain City (Knoxville) on April 13, 2024. Including guests and visitors there were over sixty people in attendance.

Right: The newly installed officers of Phillip Lacy Commandery #46 in Selmer on April 6, 2024. The charter Eminent Commander will be Most Illustrious Past Grand Master David Lacy, whose father the Commandery is named in honor of.



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Sir Knights,
 If you are aware of any members who are not currently receiving this monthly newsletter then please have them send an email to Steve Guendert with their name, email address, and Commandery number: sguendert@ieec.org
 Currently only about half of our membership is receiving this newsletter on a monthly basis. Assist us in getting this newsletter distributed to every Sir Knight on our rolls.



JOHN WISEMAN SIMMONS II
RIGHT EMINENT GRAND COMMANDER
Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Tennessee



May Message from the Grand Commander

Sir Knights,

Thank you again for the opportunity and honor of serving you as your Grand Commander!

April has been a historic month for the Grand Commandery of Tennessee. We constituted two new Commanderies, something that has not happened for many years.

On April 6, I constituted Phillip Lacy Commandery #46 in Selmer at Selmer Lodge #338 and installed Phillip's son, David Lacy, Past Most Illustrious Grand Master of the Grand Council of Tennessee, as its first Eminent Commander. Most of the members and officers installed had only received their Order of the Temple that morning in Lexington Commandery #36 at Constantine Lodge #64. The ceremony was well attended by Sir Knights and families.

On April 13, I constituted Appalachia Commandery #45 at Bright Hope Lodge #557 of Fountain City in Knoxville. Kevin Boles is the first Eminent Commander. The members here have had a Chapter and Council for a long time. They now have their Commandery. This fulfills a long-time goal to have a complete set of York Rite bodies in one building. Before the installation, they unveiled a portrait of Right Eminent Past Grand Commander Robbie Beam in their entrance hall. It was a fitting tribute to one who has served well.

It was a great honor to constitute these new Commanderies. I am pleased to see the enthusiasm and interest in these bodies and look forward to seeing them grow and prosper.

The Grand Dais Officers continue to have Zoom meetings to discuss plans for the Grand Commandery. Among other things, we have been discussing revamping the inspection process to make it better serve its purposes. A change coming this year is that the time traditionally used by the Grand Commander to address the Commandery will be used for dialog with the Sir Knights present to gather information to help improve participation and engagement of our members. Starting next year, we plan to begin inspecting on all three of the Commandery orders on a rotating basis. We want to encourage every Commandery to become able to confer all the orders in an impressive manner.

On April 22, I represented you and brought greetings from the Grand Commandery to the Grand Session of the Tennessee Grand Chapter, Order of the Eastern Star, meeting in Memphis. I am also pleased to have been able to represent you at the Grand Conclave of Indiana on April 26-27 and will again do so in Georgia on May 3-4.

Sir Knights, if I or the other Grand Officers can be of assistance to your Commanderies, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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**From the Very Eminent Deputy Grand Commander
John L. Palmer, KGT**

Sir Knights,

We are turning over a new leaf in Tennessee Templary. The Templar tradition has come down to us through the centuries from the ancient Templars, and our values and objectives have remained essentially the same since 1118 AD. The ancient Templars did not invent knighthood. We believe that the idea originated with the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, Charlemagne, around 800 AD. He wanted to set apart a few of his Christian warriors who had distinguished themselves in the struggle against the Muslims who were invading Christian Europe at that time. Since that time, the title of "Knight" rapidly evolved into a concept of "Chivalry." The Templars picked up on this idea around 1118 AD and improved on it by establishing superior standards of behavior, a set of chivalric values, and a set of "rules" defining how a Knight should have the highest ethical standards and should devote his life to the service of others.

Since that time, many orders of knighthood have been established. Most have been created by one king or another, but several have followed the example of the Templars and are not subject to any king or country. In every case, however, any order of Knighthood is intended to set the knights apart as having superior character, standards of excellence, and courage.

As modern Masonic Knights Templar, we hold very closely to the rule and philosophy of the original ancient Templars regarding morality, responsibility, service of others, and support of the Christian religion. Just as being raised did not make you a Master Mason, being dubbed does not make you a Knight Templar. Only you can do that.

A true Templar must have impeccable morals. He must constantly seek opportunities to be of service to others and have a sincere respect for ladies and, indeed, for all of his fellow creatures. He takes responsibility for his actions and has a superior standard of excellence in all that he does. A Templar is also actively engaged in the business of Templary, especially in the activities of his Commandery.

Our Templary here in Tennessee has much to be proud of. In many ways, our Commanderies are superior to those of many of our sister states. However, over the years we have deteriorated. It is apparent that many of us are not very proud to be Knights. Only about ten percent of our members are actively engaged with the activities of our Commanderies. As leaders of the institution, we have allowed our activities to deteriorate and have even forgotten what we are here to do.

This is in the process of changing. Your Leadership Team in Tennessee has established a mission we can all get behind and support. We are determined to make your Templar experience one of the best of your lifetime. We have developed plans, projects, and resources for our local Commanderies to get back where they need to be. We are working very hard to inspire the leadership of our local Commanderies to get on board and work with us to restore to our Order the pride which it deserves.

It may be that to some of our members, the Order of the Temple is "just another Masonic degree." If this is true, they have gotten all that they may expect to receive from us by experiencing the conferral of the Order and have no reason to retain their membership. I suspect that it is more probable that our members who are not currently engaged in Commandery activities have become disillusioned at the mediocrity of what they have found in our Commanderies. If this describes you, then we need you to get involved with your local Commandery to help us implement new programs and new ideas that are valuable to those of us who are truly proud to be Knights. This is a team effort and will require a lot of energy and perseverance.

I invite you to join us in restoring Templary to its former place of respect and value in Tennessee.

John L. Palmer, KGT, Deputy Grand Commander
Grand Commandery of Knights Templar, Tennessee
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From the Eminent Grand Prelate Sir Knight James O. Weir II

In Luke 17:11-19 we find the story of Jesus healing ten men suffering from leprosy, and only one came back to thank Jesus for the healing. I encourage you to read this and consider this question. "Do I love God for what he does for me, or for who he is?"

This is one of those scary questions, because you want to answer one way, but you know what the true answer for your life is. This is one of those go look in the mirror at yourself, stare into your eyes, and ask yourself, forcing honesty to gurgle up from your gut and spew out of your mouth.

If we are honest, we find ourselves relating to the majority of the lepers. The other one though, is a head-scratcher for sure. Perhaps that one is us as well, not the flesh part of us, but the spirit part of us. The part that sees the gospel in this, is the one whose faith made him well. When I examine my own heart, so much of what I know about God seems to be in relation to what He has done for me. He has blessed me with my family, with shelter and food, and with his constant provisions. Deeper than that, He sent His only Son in the incarnation and sacrificed Him so that I could inherit the kingdom. He has done the same for all of you, but how do I interact with Him on the basis of Him and not simply based on the gifts He has given me? More importantly, how does it affect my view of the gospel when Christ himself was the gift and the giver?

Here are some go-to things; to know God, you must know scripture. In Leviticus 3, right after Nadab and Abihu were consumed by fire, this is what God said, "Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified." We fail so terribly as a 21st-century church at paying God his due respect. Most people go to church for what they get out of it, not to worship their Creator and Sustainer. The church is quick to preach about blessings and walking the aisle to be counted, but when do we stop focusing on ourselves and start focusing on the supreme, unmatched, blinding glory of God? We have got to start seeing God through His eyes, the eyes of scripture, rather than seeing Him as we want Him to be.

God does everything for His glory and for us to enjoy that glory and rest in his grace. That we may find life and rest in the giver of all good things. All ten lepers were healed. Great healed! They all ran away, but one of them — a Samaritan — came back praising God and falling down at Jesus' feet. What is the point? The point is that the other people missed it. It was not about being healed but about the healer. This is about Jesus. This is about God; all the miracles Jesus performed were signs that prove that He was who He said He was. The blessings that each of the miracles led to were a deliverance of some sort. Your own life is the same, is it not? The incarnation is just as much a miracle today as it was then. Your rock-hard evil soul, being softened by the gospel, is a miracle in and of itself; the blessing is healing, deliverance, and eternal life, but to what end? It is not for the deliverance itself or the miracle, but to the deliverer, the miracle worker, the God of glory beyond our universe. Your salvation brings Him glory.

Let us bring this full circle. Christ gave Himself out of God's grace and because of God's glory. If God gives his Son and the Son gives Himself for you, then it does not make sense to say we love the gift more than the giver, because the gift is the giver and the giver is the gift. The gospel is where the glory of God and the grace of God meet, and the gift and the giver become one.

The things that you spend your days toiling with at work to earn money will never compare to the richness that has been given to you freely. "Do I love God for what He does for me, or for who He is?" Maybe that question is not so scary after all. What have we to be afraid of by asking that question? What is your answer? The all-sufficient grace of God brings you to His glory through the gospel. Yes, you should be grateful, but more so, you should be humbled because the gift was given to you and so was the giver.

Private Animosity

By: Jesse J. Harper, KYCH
East TN Membership Committee Rep and TN KT News Editor

Last year I wrote a three-part series entitled "*The Partially Neglected Doctrine*," where it was discussed how we are neglecting the Blue Lodge doctrine of brotherly love with our fellow brothers by utilizing an inadequate amount of fellowship time. In this article, I am going to discuss another hindrance we encounter that impacts brotherly love and how we are hurting our Fraternity by harboring unresolved private animosities.

In one of the opening charges of the Blue Lodge, we are ordered to let all private animosities if any unhappily should exist give way to brotherly love. Sadly, like many other charges we are given and obligations we take upon ourselves, this order falls on deaf ears for some of our brethren. This is truly unfortunate because when private animosities are harbored it inevitably harms the Masonic body more than it affects the two quarreling brothers. As with several things in life, private matters tend to remain private for only so long.

There are countless ways these issues can arise inside one of our bodies, and over the next couple of months I will address some of the ones I have witnessed firsthand:

Purposeful avoidance-

This can be as simple as going out of your way to keep from having to interact with particular brothers inside the building to not attending a meeting at all because of a particular brother. I have attended meetings where brothers will literally push tables or chairs out of their way just to keep from talking to someone else. I have unfortunately also heard on more than one occasion "Does Brother AB still belong to Lodge/Chapter/Council/Commandery #XX? Then I will not be coming back or attending." Statements and thoughts like these have a profoundly negative impact on our membership, but it is a harsh reality. If our current or potential future members hear statements like these made, then they will seriously start to question whether our Fraternity is something that is worth investing their time in. With membership and participation at an all-time low, we can not allow things like this to keep happening.

Willful exclusion-

This happens when potential members are blackballed or brothers are disallowed from attending certain meetings. We have all heard the stories of a brother repeatedly blackballing a candidate with the sole intent of testing the candidate's determination. These are behaviors from a past generation of brothers that, quite frankly, need to remain in the past. While it might filter out candidates who are not seriously committed to joining, it can and does also discourage someone who could be a true asset to the Masonic Fraternity.

This also happens when our members form cliques and alienate other members. How many times have you visited a body or attended a meeting where not a single brother greeted you or welcomed you because they were too involved in their own little world? I would venture to guess it is far more often than we would like to admit. Again, when our fraternity is struggling with attendance and membership, we have to strive to keep as many willing participants coming as possible. If someone is turned away enough, then he will eventually stop caring completely.

Sir Knights, can you imagine how unstoppable our Fraternity would be if we were truly cemented in sincere Brotherly Love?

Upcoming Events

Commandery Town Halls

June 1st – Middle Tennessee (1, 7, 8, 10, 11, 26, 38, 40, 41)

Murfreesboro Commandery No. 10

Lunch at 11am and meeting at Noon

June 8th – West Tennessee (13, 16, 29, 31, 36, 39)

Jackson Commandery No. 13

Lunch at 11am and meeting at Noon

The Town Halls meetings are intended for Sir Knights who have joined since 2020. The idea of the meetings is to find out what we are doing right and where we can improve as a Grand Commandery and as appendant Commanderies. I attended the Town Hall meeting for the Knoxville area in my capacity as a Membership Committee member and as Generalissimo of Appalachia Commandery #45. I will refrain from commentary on the meeting to prevent influencing anyone who has not had the opportunity to attend the meeting in their respective area. I will say that while the meetings are intended for newer Sir Knights, I would encourage all Sir Knights to attend. It is a great opportunity to express any suggestions for improvement or concerns you might have.

2024 Southeastern York Rite Conference

Thursday June 13th- Registration

Friday June 14th- General Grand Chapter Session

General Grand Council Session

Saturday June 15th- Grand Encampment Session

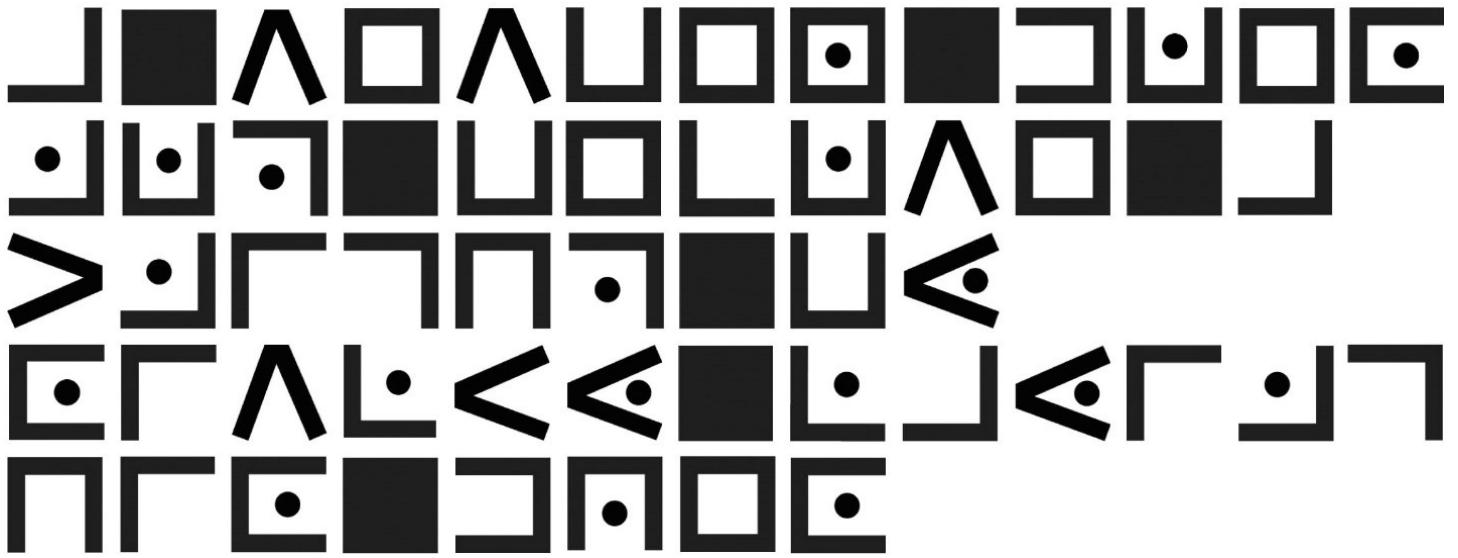
York Rite Leadership Classes

We are looking forward to seeing you at the Southeastern York Rite Conference to be held at the Knoxville Airport Hilton on June 14 and 15, 2024. The Hilton Hotel is on the airport property, so it is convenient for those who are traveling by air to the conference. The Hilton is located at 2001 Alcoa Highway, Alcoa Tennessee, 37701. You can make reservations by calling the Hilton at 865-970-4300 and request the Grand York Rite Rate which is \$145.00 per night excluding tax. The deadline for making reservations is May 14, 2024.

Full conference details available on the Grand Encampment website:

Grand Encampment KT USA www.knightstemplar.org/wp/conferences/

The conference is intended to be focused on York Rite Masonry, but everyone who attends a leadership course will benefit from the class. In the past, DeMolay, Rainbow, Eastern Star, and Blue Lodge Masons who are not York Rite Masons have attended the meeting and have all voiced their great admiration for the knowledge that was imparted to them during the session. Those who wish to take the Leadership classes need to fill out a conference registration form but also contact the leadership training staff at: <http://yorkriteleadership.org>



Request for Submissions!

Sir Knights – We need submissions for the *Tennessee Knight Templar News*. Is your Commandery going to confer any of the orders soon? Did you have some sort of unusual or fun event? Send us an article to share with the other Tennessee Knights and include photos if you have them.

We would also like to have your thoughts and ideas about how we can make Tennessee Templary more fun and exciting. Send us an article! Please send news and events going on in your Commandery to:

TNKTNewsEditor@gmail.com