



**Missouri Supplement**  
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## Getting Back to Work with Caution!

### GRAND COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Greetings Sir Knights,

First, I would like to thank all the Sir Knights and Ladies who have supported me this year. Secondly, I want the Sir Knights of the Grand Commandery of Missouri to know that the decisions the Grand Officers and I have made for the upcoming year were not taken lightly. It is my hope that you will support these decisions and support York Rite Masonry in Missouri.

#### He is Risen!

Sir Knight Clark A. McLemore, Grand Commander

### 2020 GRAND SESSION

Sir Knights,

To say that 2020 has been a turbulent year thus far is a tremendous understatement. The novel coronavirus known as COVID-19 (or technically SARS-CoV-2) exploded first in China then around the world. The United States has not been spared from the resulting pandemic.

As most of you know by now, Sir Knight McLemore, Right Eminent Grand Commander, suspended all official and unofficial Commandery activities until further notice with 2020 Grand Commandery General Order No. 2. This General Order is still in effect as of the writing of this article in late April. However, by the time that you read this article the General Order may have been lifted.

This action was necessary as the number of persons infected with this highly contagious and potentially deadly virus were increasing in the United States and throughout the world. In March cases of COVID-19 had been confirmed within Missouri. It had also been established that the virus posed a danger to vulnerable persons such as the elderly and those with underlying medical conditions. This was a sobering fact since the average age of our members is 68 to 69. In addition, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention urged persons to "avoid all nonessential travel" and to take other appropriate measures to prevent community transmission of the virus, for example, avoiding large gatherings.

Our Commandery activities have been effectively shut down for the last 6 weeks, but your Grand Commandery has not been idle during that time. The

Grand Commandery Fraternal Activities Committee has been very busy designing a virtual outreach program to bring us back together for fellowship and education. Sir Knight Michael C. Rohman, Committee Chairman and our Grand Senior Warden, together with Sir Knight Bobbie E. White, Committee Vice-Chairman and our Grand Standard Bearer, Sir Knight Terry D. Coppotelli, Committee member and our Grand Warder, and Sir Knight David R. Phillips, Committee member, have designed the first program. The Fraternal Affairs programs will be delivered using the Grand York Rite's Cisco WebEx system. To prepare our Missouri Commanderies for participation in this program a series of experimental WebEx meetings were held during May (these are actually still in the future as of the writing of this article).

One of the biggest questions on the minds of the Grand Officers of the Grand Commandery was, "How is COVID-19, social distancing, and avoiding large meetings going to impact the 2020 Grand Sessions?"

On April 26th, the presiding Grand Officers from the Grand Chapter, Grand Council, and Grand Commandery together with the corresponding "Deputy" Grand Officers (Grand Scribe, Grand Principal Conductor of the Work, and Deputy Grand Commander, respectively), the two Grand Secretary/Recorders, and the collective Jurisprudence Committee members held a WebEx meeting to discuss the situation and potential solutions.

One issue of concern addressed early in the meeting was the status of the Grand York Rite Hotel contract. The Capitol Plaza Hotel had informed the Grand York Rite Office that, should it be necessary to cancel the 2020 Grand Session event, they would let us out of the contract without penalty.

A second issue of concern addressed early in the meeting was the limited "seating" (simultaneous logins) of 200 with our current WebEx plan should we decide to hold a virtual 2020 Grand Session. The Grand York Rite Office had determined that a plan that would accommodate 1,000 seats was available and affordable.

Each of the Grand Presiding Officers and "Deputy" Grand Officers expressed their personal feelings about the situation. The group then heard from the Jurisprudence committee members. An open forum discussion was then held. Finally, the presiding Grand Officers and the "Deputy" Grand Officers were asked to consider and vote yes or no on essentially four questions: hold a face-to-face Grand Session (all voted no), postpone the Grand Session up to 6 months (all voted no), hold a virtual Grand Session (all voted no), and cancel the Grand Session (all Grand Officers would serve another year), but hold a special meeting for critical business (all voted yes).

Therefore, there will not be a face-to-face Grand Session at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in June. The Grand York Rite Office is working on several items in order to accommodate this decision. As of the writing of this article, the Grand Commandery of Missouri is working diligently to obtain permission from the Grand Master of the Grand Encampment to cancel the 2020 Grand Conclave.