

**District of Columbia Supplement**  
**Sir Knight Kevin S. Matthews**  
**Right Eminent Grand Commander**

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I hope that this message finds you and your families healthy and well during these tough times of social distancing. I have talked with many of you and know that we are going through many difficulties during this COVID-19 pandemic. We have seen a few flu-like pandemics in our lifetimes, but none that are as contagious and deadly, requiring us to change our lifestyles. With transportation, places of work, restaurants, and public places closed, we are all practicing a version of isolation from each other in order to suppress the spread of this disease. But this is also a time for Masonic optimism, and we need to lead the way.

I want to reassure you that the future is the furthest from doom and gloom. I cannot take full credit for the thoughts contained below, for I am sharing recent input from Masons, leaders, captains of industry, and motivational speakers, all which ring true. So, with their inspiration, let me share a few things:

Firstly, we are the Knights Templar, the elite group among many honorable and respected organizations of Freemasons. Within those who share knowledge and light, we are those of noble and Christian virtue. We must believe that as Knight Templars, we are the Masonic First Responders, and we must act as such.

Second, ANXIETY it is be expected. There is no problem having anxiety right now due to the unknown ahead of us. If you do have anxiety, that is normal. Anxiety is good things because it keeps us alert. It keeps our reflexes sharp and helps us make good decisions.

Third, our goal is not to PANIC. Panic pushes us to make hasty and irrational decisions, which is not good. We must strive to take steps to avoid panic that leads to bad decisions.

Fourth, this situation is temporary. This pandemic has caused us to make incredible changes, but these are not permanent. At some point, we will begin to relax our social constraints and return to the way things were. However the world will likely change forever in large or small ways, such as security changes after 9-11, as we emerge from the COVID-19

quarantine. But we need to be ready for the changes and do our part to make them positive.

Fifth, at the end of this ordeal, we will all have a story to tell. Let us agree here and now to write a great story for ourselves and our families. We do not need to write a story that our social and economic world was permanently suppressed or devastated by COVID-19.

Let us instead write a story where we fight against panic, and instead reassure our social circles and increase our connection to each other.

Therefore, as the Masonic First Responders during social distancing, we need to lead the charge of improving the communication between ourselves and our members. Let us use the tools that we have available, the phone and internet, to reconnect with those Brethren whom we have not heard from in a while and see if they are in need. Beyond family and Brother Masons, let us also reach out to co-workers, community, extended family and friends. With this improved communication, let us discuss, but not exacerbate anxiety, defeat panic and provide reassurance, and portray a beacon of positive communication during this lack of social interaction.

And then, as we ultimately emerge from the quarantine, let us be the leaders in our family, communities, jobs, and Masonic organizations to help our fellow citizens re-establish our business and social lives. With safety concerns in mind, we must venture forth with strength to lead our communities in a return of the success of ourselves and our nation.

In conclusion, Sir Knights and Brethren, WE ARE the Masonic First Responders. We can do this. Let us get out there with the electronic tools that we have available and reassure people within our social realms that all things all is well, help is near, and we can emerge even stronger. We can make a difference.

**Yours in the Service of Christ,**

*Sir Knight Robb Mitchell*

**Deputy Grand Commander 2019-2020**  
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