



IDAHO SUPPLEMENT

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A Unique Welcome

Greetings Sir Knights of Idaho!

To be certain, these are not the circumstances which I had anticipated for my first message to all of you in this forum. At the time I am writing this, it is late March. The COVID-19 pandemic has upended life throughout the whole world; Masonry has not escaped the ravages of the disease and all in-person Masonic activity has been suspended by both orders of the Grand Master and the directives of the civil authorities. The Annual Conclave of the Grand Commandery was scheduled to be held by video conference, and as of this writing, I have no way to be certain if it even occurred or if I am actually Grand Commander.

In times of struggle and strife, I frequently find myself reflecting on portions of the ritual work in our great fraternity for strength, comfort, and wisdom from the lessons imparted. Discretion prohibits printing of the specifics in this forum, but I draw particular inspiration from the words spoken by King Solomon to Hiram in the Master Mason ceremony; it's not wrong. Those lines have aided me through several tough times in my life. I know I have been reciting them to myself a lot lately.

The challenges of this situation remind me that the words of our ceremonies are not something to merely witness once and then never revisit. Unfortunately, all too often that is what occurs for many members. Instead, we should remember the purpose of our ceremonies, if not our entire fraternity, is to make our members better men. To me, that includes aiding them with the tools to help them weather the storms of the waves and sands of life. There is much to be drawn from our ceremonies of the various degrees and orders which can help a man to renew his faith and understanding in both good and bad times. We need only to utilize the resources at our disposal.

I hope that by the time you are reading this, the worst of the virus outbreak is behind us and that life is returning to some semblance of normal. I have faith that the better parts of humanity have come through to aid and rebuild our communities, and that in the end, despite the devastation of the disease, the parts we will remember will be the acts of kindness and love that aided our neighbors, and not the panic buying of toilet paper.

While certainly not the most important consideration at this time, it will be particularly necessary for each Mason and Sir Knight to dust off his ritual books, fluff up his chapeau, and reinvest himself in his lodge, commandery, and other bodies, and work to get them back up to speed and operating at full strength. Masonry has shown remarkable resilience in times of trouble. Throughout its history, Masonry has shown a strong ability to adapt and overcome the challenges of society. I have not doubt that it will weather this storm, but it will take the labors of each Mason in the quarry to rebuild the temple and set the craft back to work. The ingenuity and creativity of our brothers in finding new ways to communicate and bond with their brothers during this challenge has been inspiring. The efforts of our brothers in reaching out to each other to make sure they have what they need, if even just someone to talk to, even when they were themselves struggling with uncertainty and doubt, will be the lasting testament to the tenets of our institution and remind us all of why we are Masons. To those that have lost so much during this outbreak, know that the thoughts, prayers, and good wishes of all of your fellow Sir Knights are with you, and we stand by to be called upon to help you where we can.

We'll have a full recap of our sessions and our plans and goals moving forward in future issues. In the meantime, I hope that you and your families have made it through these trying times with minimal disruption and that all are healthy and happy. I thank the Sir Knights for their confidence in electing me as Grand Commander. I look forward to visiting each of the Commanderies in the jurisdiction and working with the Sir Knights to build a stronger, greater fraternity for all to enjoy.

God bless you all!

Fraternally,
Jeremy C. Vaughn, KTCH, KCT, OWS
Grand Commander