

TENNESSEE SUPPLEMENT

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Dear Companions,

Due to concerns about the coronavirus (COVID-19) and suggestions from many Past Grand High Priests, Past Grand Illustrious Masters, and many other Companions in the state, it is with regret that your Grand Chapter and Grand Council leadership has decided to postpone the planned Grand Chapter and Grand Council Sessions scheduled for August 1, 2020, until March 22, 2021. Maybe this delay will also allow time for Grand Encampment General Order #12 to be lifted so that Grand Commandery will be able to meet together with us in March.

This decision is a difficult one, however, with the prevailing pandemic, our main concern is the safety and health of our members.

All Chapters and Councils are urged to attend their regular scheduled meetings in accordance with your local health mandates and under those conditions prescribed of the Most Worshipful Grand Master of Tennessee, Robert Reed, on May 28, 2020. Please continue to open, practice, and plan/confer Chapter and Council degree work. This may also be a great time to contact your District Deputy Grand High Priests and your Grand Council Instructors for some Schools of Instruction.

Your Grand Chapter and Grand Council leadership, and the Grand York Rite Office, will continue to be available for any needs that may arise.

Most Excellent Grand High Priest

Most Illustrious Grand Master

FREEMASONRY AND LABOR DAY

The history of Labor Day began with the Labor Movement of the late nineteenth century, which began as a result of the changes in society and economics during the Industrial Revolution. According to the Department of Labor, the day was conceived as a “national tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity, and well-being of our country.”

While Labor Day was not created by the Masonic Fraternity, the history of Labor has connections to Freemasonry. Our Fraternity originated in the Guilds of the Middle Ages, which included early craft unions. Those guilds promoted the interests of the members by providing jobs, lodging, and needed assistance, in addition to maintaining production standards and other activities. Historically, Freemasonry evolved from medieval craft and labor unions.

During the later Industrial Revolution, as workers saw the need to band together for their common interest, many of those leaders were Freemasons. Men such as Samuel Gompers and Uriah Stephens were Masons and the Knights of Labor based their rituals on those of Freemasonry. The ideas of social equality and fairness in trade and personal dealings are both found in Masonic teachings as well as being goals of the Labor Movement. The idea of an eight-hour work day can be traced directly to Masonic ritual and teaching.

Labor Day was introduced in 1882 and over the next decade efforts were made to make it a national holiday. This was done in 1894 when President Grover Cleveland signed legislation establishing the first Monday in September as Labor Day.

Freemasons can take pride in the fact that our Fraternity has been active in promoting the economic prosperity of our nation throughout its history. By promoting the values of hard work, fair dealing, uprightness and honesty, we have a part in ensuring the strength and productivity of our nation. By promoting social equality and justice, we promote the opportunity for all citizens to share the blessings of liberty and economic prosperity.

References:

- 10 fascinating facts about the Labor Day holiday* - National Constitution Center. (2019). National Constitution Center – Constitutioncenter.Org. <https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/10-fascinating-facts-about-the-labor-day-holiday/>
- History of Labor Day* | U.S. Department of Labor. (2018). Dol.Gov. <https://www.dol.gov/general/laborday/history>
- Knights of Labor: An Early Labor Organization*. (n.d.). U-S-History.Com. Retrieved August 2, 2020, from <https://u-s-history.com/pages/h933.html>