

State of Maryland March 2022 message KT magazine

March is a happy month in our household. Many of our plants will begin to bloom, perennials will begin popping their new shoots out of the ground for the coming growing season, birds that have fled the cold will begin to return and fill our gardens with song and color. The trees will start to send out small leaves that will grow to give shade for the coming hotter months. Yay!

It is a happy month for Masonry as well as we shed our winter cold and snow and ice and rummage through our suits and coats for lighter wear. March 'comes in like a lion out like a lamb' as the old saying goes and those men and women held back by the long nights and freezing weather will be able once again to head out to meeting halls to take part in ritual and fellowship denied to them by icy roads. Let's welcome them and all get to work with the job of education and fraternal lessons of history for our new members. We have much to do in the coming season with reinvigorating our Knights Templar programs.

This month marks the 2-year anniversary of the dreaded plague that has changed the world and shut down the normal behavior of ourselves and our friends and neighbors. It has been a long haul of doubt and fear as the nerve-wracking unknown has made its way through our lives and caused the words quarantine and seclusion to enter our vocabularies as never before. Now is the time at last for that to be shed as we enter a new period. Let's get Moving!

Your Grand Commandery plans to do just that as we embark on a concerted effort to visit many of our Commanderies and offer the new programs outlined in previous of these messages. Please plan to attend along with us the Grand Visitations to your commandery as we outline the steps to assist in getting Templary back to work. We are ready to help as your Commandery welcomes new members that have been long awaiting the opportunity to join. You can help to by attending your Blue lodges and letting new Masons and Old know that the York Rite is alive and well and working to bring in those searching for more light. Your Blue lodges have been active with the installation of new officers and those ceremonies were well attended. We'll need to all let our Brothers know of the opportunities available to them through the ritual of the Chapter, Council and Commandery.

We also prepare for the upcoming Easter season, an important period in the Templar year. As a Christian organization our Sir Knights and their families will be preparing to honor our Lord during this anniversary of his crucifixion and resurrection. The annual Easter Sunrise service at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial is coming up. We'd like Maryland to show up in a big way this year. I hope you can plan to set aside some time to join the rest of the country as we embark on the plans to attend this moving service. This year the Grand Encampment has decided to return to celebrating the Easter service all in one place at the Memorial. In the past few years, there have been 3 locations for this service. At the GWMNM, in the Midwest, and on the west coast. This year it will again return here to Alexandria Virginia alone.

In the past we have had a bus leave the Cockeyville to transport Knights Templars and their families to the ceremony. This year, if there is enough interest, we'd like to offer that bus ride to other areas of the State. My thought is to offer a bus leaving from the Eastern shore (Denton?) as well as Western Maryland (Frederick?) in addition to the bus that departs Cockeyville. The size of interest will dictate the use and size of the busses.

This will require some organization. So those of you reading this message, please let your Eminent Commander and Recorder know of your interest in participating as soon as possible. The Commanders and Recorders are asked to contact Grand Recorder Kris Brown to let the Grand Commandery know of interest and numbers of individuals traveling. This is a family event and all are welcome to the memorial for this early morning service. Sir Knights are asked to participate in full uniform and most importantly their black chapeaus. The State of Maryland traditionally marches in unit and heads into the rows of benches on the East facing Memorial steps to form a living cross with our Black uniforms and Chapeaus amid a sea of white chapeaus. The more participants the larger the cross we can form. I can tell you that this is a moving experience especially in clear weather. The sun rising in the East and illuminating the steps of the Memorial with hundreds of Knights Templar in place is transformational. The service provided by the Grand Prelate and his Associate Grand Prelates is moving and emotional. The Grand Commanderies of Maryland and the other states marching with their banners and the American flag are patriotic and glorious. Please plan to participate this year.

We'll be announcing in the coming year our opportunity to participate further in the George Washington Masonic National Memorial as in 2023 the Nation celebrates the 100th anniversary of the completion of the Memorial. Stay tuned for information on that celebration.

We are blessed to be able to continue in the efforts throughout the State of Maryland to offer the Fraternity of Freemasonry to men of good character. Please attend and support your Blue lodge, your York Rite Chapter and Council, your Commandery and those other fine Masonic organizations available to you as a Brother Master Mason. Your further support of the Ladies of the Beauceant and Eastern Star as well as the youth groups- Job's Daughters, Rainbow Girls and Jacques DeMolay are welcome and needed.

See you all soon,
yours In His Service,
John H. Austin,
Right Eminent Grand Commander Knights Templar of Maryland

