

# Templars of the Plains

A Publication of the Grand Commandery of Kansas

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Gary Mason, REGC 2024-2025

## From the Grand Commander

Sir Knight Justin D. Crippen, Eminent Grand Captain General

*The Right Eminent Grand Commander has asked the current Grand Commandery Officers to write articles for this supplement. This month we hear from our Grand Captain General, Justin D. Crippen.*



I hope this communication finds you all well. I am writing to you today to discuss Masonic Unity which is something that must be at the forefront of our strategy moving forward. It needs a place in the plans of all successful Masonic bodies. We have been fortunate here in Kansas that this is taking place at a faster rate than in other jurisdictions, by providing what you, our Sir Knights have been asking for, more light! We are providing that very thing! We desire to see no more boring meetings. Our meetings across the state are working again, performing the beautiful Orders that we all love. They have been moving away from the unnecessary things like paying bills or reading minutes from a month ago. We are focused on providing education, learning the parts and signs of the Order, and learning the sword movements. Its just awesome the energy and excitement we have. The Goodland area in Northwest Kansas, along with help from the Hays York Rite bodies, are on fire right now. These Sir Knights are pushing themselves to learn the work, so they can start to bring in more new Sir Knights. This is happening here!

This has spilled over into other 22 Masonic bodies under the umbrella of the York Rite. It has helped reinvigorate many of those organizations. Many have started to restructure the meetings to follow the same plans as laid out above. This has caused us to combine many of these meetings, that were held on separate occasions. To put them on the same day, which in turn has increased members showing up to their meetings and created growth. Yes Growth, which in turn let us open new "Lodges" of these Orders in Junction City and soon in Newton. This has helped to bring whole new Orders and Degrees to the State. A court of the Masonic Order of Athelstan was brought in and others are coming. Meals are happening before or after meetings, which leads to fellowship, which leads to stronger bonds between the Sir Knights and their families. That is a blessing from the lord if I have ever seen one. We are doing fun things as well, like degrees at night and in rock quarries. Just trying to provide the best masonic experience as possible and to learn to be better tomorrow than we are today.

Lastly if you take anything from this, please think outside the box. Provide what we promised: education, fellowship, love, charity which create bonds which last a lifetime. Change your meetings and stop with reading the same stuff and paying bills repeatedly. Have fun together, learn together, grow those bonds together. Mentor the new Sir Knights, show them that we can still live in peace and happiness. Remember, Energy begets Energy, you will see everything change for the good if you do this.

May God be with you and your families, may he use our swords not for death, but for life, to pierce our way into the future together as our faith teaches us to be brothers and sisters. May our shields protect us from the injustices of the world and unite us under one unbreakable front, against our enemies of darkness.



## Grand Encampment Triennial



The Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Kansas was well represented at the 69th Triennial Communication of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America.

The event was held in Salt Lake City, Utah, from August 17-21, 2024. Kanas was represented by the Right Eminent Grand Commander, Gary A. Mason, Eminent Grand Generalissimo, Patrick C. Carr, Eminent Grand Captain General, Justin D. Crippen, Eminent Grand Musician, Kelly J. Long, and two Right Eminent Past Grand Commanders, Wayne H. Rolf and Butch Blackman.

The event started on Sunday with a beautiful Divine Service led by the Grand Prelate, Terry Plemmons. After the service, the Prelates in attendance from the constituent Grand Commanderies present, with the Commissioned Templar Chaplains, were called to the front of the sanctuary to join in prayer and a healing service for those who requested it. This is templary in action.

Day two of the session started with greetings from the represented bodies who were in attendance. There were representatives from the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar, Prince Hall Affiliation, several Grand Priories from across the globe, the Scottish Rite Southern Jurisdiction, the Masonic Order of Athelstan, the United Grand Imperial Council of the Red Cross of Constantine, the Commemorative Order of St. Thomas of Acon, and several others who made the trip to Salt Lake City to enjoy times of fellowship and refreshment with the Sir Knights from across the country.

The second session of the day involved various reports from the Grand Encampment concerning the business of the preceding triennial term. The Knights Templar Eye Foundation presented a national award to Dr. Thomas C. Lee, MD, for his dedicated work in fighting childhood blindness. He is the Chief of Ophthalmology, Director of the Retina Program in the Vision Center, and the Associate Chair of Ophthalmology at Children's Hospital Los Angeles. He is also the Associate Professor of Clinical Ophthalmology at Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California, a Knights Templar Eye Foundation Grant Recipient, and a member of the Knights Templar Scientific Advisory Committee.



Day three started with the business of the session. Several articles of business were presented to the delegates. Two passed and two failed. The two which passed were to allow the candidates in the asylum while the opening of the Order of Malta was conducted, and to make a change to the short form of the Malta ritual to include the declaration of faith from the regular conferral ritual. The two which failed were concerning having no work on the Thursday, Friday, and Saturday before Easter, and changing the per capita if a Sir Knight belonged to two separate commanderies.

The election was held during the second session and Sir Knight David Kussman was reelected to serve as Most Eminent Grand Master, Sir Knight Jeff Bolstad was elected as Deputy Grand Master, Sir Knight Jack Harper was elected as Grand Generalissimo, Sir Knight James McGee was elected to start the line as Grand Captain General, Sir Knight David Studley was elected as Grand Treasurer to replace a retiring Sir Knight Bobby Simmons, and Sir Knight Larry Tucker was elected once again to continue as Grand Recorder.

Sir Knight Larry Bureson was elected to the nine year term on the Permanent Fund and Sir Knight Lon Kvasager was elected to the three year term. The Knight Templar Eye Foundation had two trustee positions open and Sir Knights Jeremy Vaughn and were elected.



We are all looking forward to the 70th Triennial Session in 2027!