

GRAND COMMANDERY KNIGHTS TEMPLAR OF TENNESSEE

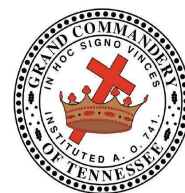
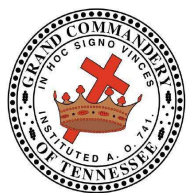
Tennessee Knight Templar News

SIR KNIGHT JOHN W. SIMMONS II, RIGHT EMINENT GRAND COMMANDER

January AD 2025 / AO 907

Managing Editor: Jesse J. Harper, KYCH

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The Murfreesboro York Rite Bodies have experienced outstanding turnout for their meetings this year. They reported having thirty-four Companions and Sir Knights present for their January 2024 meeting and remained consistent throughout the year, as they had thirty-three Companions and Sir Knights present for their December 2024 meeting.

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If you are aware of any members who are not currently receiving this monthly newsletter, then please have them send an email to Steve Guendert with their name, email address, and Commandery number: sguendert@ieee.org

Only about half of our membership is receiving this newsletter on a monthly basis. Assist us in getting this newsletter distributed to every Sir Knight on our rolls.



JOHN WISEMAN SIMMONS II
RIGHT EMINENT GRAND COMMANDER
Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Tennessee



January Message from the Grand Commander

Sir Knights,

I hope you had a wonderful Christmas, and I wish you the best new year.

We constituted two new Commanderies in 2024. While studying the constitution ceremony, I learned something interesting. At one point in the ceremony, after the Grand Commander constitutes the new Commandery, he asks the Grand Prelate to pronounce words of dedication. The Grand Prelate then begins: "To our Most Eminent and Worthy Patron, St. John the Almoner, I do solemnly dedicate this Commandery..."

As Freemasons, we are used to having our Lodges dedicated to St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist. In the Order of Malta, we receive a new member "in the name of St. John the Baptist, the patron Saint of the Order." So, who is St. John the Almoner, and why is he the Patron of the Masonic Knights Templar?

John the Merciful, also known as John the Almoner, lived around 560-620. He was born and died in Cyprus, but served as Patriarch of Alexandria in Egypt from 606 to 616. He is said to have built sixty-three new churches, cared for the poor in Alexandria, visited hospitals, and freed slaves. When the Persians attacked Jerusalem in 614, John sent relief to the Christian refugees.

One interesting story from John's time is that he protected and refused to punish Vitalis of Gaza for appearing to patronize prostitutes. Vitalis came to Alexandria at age sixty, where he learned the identity of every prostitute in the city. He would work during the day and at night take most of his wages to one of the prostitutes, paying her to remain chaste. Many prostitutes were converted because of his work. A man of the city killed him because of his suspected consorting with the prostitutes. Only after his death did the nature of his charitable work become known.

John the Merciful was the original patron of the Knights Hospitallers, or Knights of Malta. He probably became associated with the Masonic Templars when the Knights of Malta did, and it is likely because of his assistance to the Christian refugees of Jerusalem.

The feast of John the Merciful is on January 23. That of Vitalis is on January 11. Take some time to learn about and meditate on the charitable actions of these men. They encourage us to persist in charity, even to think out of the box about how to do it. Let us make this a great year for Templary!

Please make your plans to attend our Grand Conclave in March. Also, do not forget that we are going to have some pageantry. I want every Commandery to bring its Beauceant and a stand for it. We are going to process in with the Beauceants and line them up across the west of the Asylum. It will be impressive.

Courteously,
John Simmons REGC TN
Grand Commandery of Knights Templar, Tennessee

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From the Very Eminent Deputy Grand Commander

John L. Palmer, KGC

The Final Words

Last month, I spoke to you about the importance of a common understanding of the meanings of some of the words that we use when communicating with each other as Templars. They were words that we use as we work together as a team to accomplish our mission. If you do not know what our mission is, you can find it printed elsewhere in this newsletter. If you do not know what our mission is, it will be impossible for you to assist as a team member, a soldier of the cross, to accomplish it. Last month, I offered expanded definitions of the words "Morality," "Integrity," and "Character." This month, I would like to begin with a discussion of the word "Trust."

There are two distinctly different kinds of trust. If we are to succeed while working together as a team and especially as a military unit, we must trust each other with both kinds. The first is to trust someone's character. We defined character last month, and as Freemasons, we should, by definition, have high character. As an example, if I were to ask you to lend me \$20, and promised to repay you, I have little doubt that most of you would agree to do so, whether you were personally acquainted with me or not, based on the fact that you know that I am a Freemason and as a result, infer that I have high character and am therefore "Trustworthy."

The other kind of trust has to do with competency. As an example, let us suppose that you had been diagnosed with a potentially deadly but operable brain tumor and that the cost of the surgery necessary to cure you was in excess of \$500,000. If you know me, it should be obvious to you that I am not a brain surgeon, I am an engineer. Suppose I offered to remove the tumor for you at a cost of just \$50. I sincerely hope that you would not trust me to do so. This means that you do not trust my competency to do the work. So, the two kinds of trust are trust in character and trust in competency. My incompetency in brain surgery does not make me a bad person or a stupid person, just an ignorant person. This brings me to the next word of interest, "**Ignorance.**"

I have just admitted that I am ignorant about the finer points of brain surgery. This does not embarrass me because I know that I am ignorant about many subjects. Indeed, I believe that we are all born ignorant about just about everything and then spend the rest of our lives learning about those things we are interested in, those things that are important to us. When I was a young boy, it was common for us to try to insult each other by calling each other ignorant. Then as I matured, I discovered that as human beings, we are all ignorant, just about different subjects. This is one of the

main reasons we form and work together as teams, so that we can pool our talents and minimize the “ignorance” of the team and enhance our chances of accomplishing our shared mission.

The next definition I would like to offer is one for the word “**Humility.**” This is a commonly misunderstood word, which often results in miscommunication. We tend to associate this word with low self-esteem, the opposite of self-confidence. The definition I offer is one of “teachability,” the attitude that we know that we are ignorant of many subjects and that we still have much to learn in our life’s journey. It is the opposite of the word “**Arrogance.**” Arrogance is the idea that we have nothing left to learn, that we have essentially conquered ignorance. Humility is another essential trait of both a Knight and of a leader.

If you combine ignorance (which we all are) with arrogance, then we get “**Stupidity.**” If, on the other hand, we combine our ignorance with humility, then we achieve the beginnings of true “**Wisdom.**” Wisdom is something that we should all be seeking to achieve, as it is something which allows us to work together as Christian soldiers. It is crucial because it allows us to accomplish our mission as Templars. Wisdom helps us to achieve our best destiny as human beings, as poor and weary pilgrims traveling this path which leads to the rewards promised by our Redeemer and to our happiness while here on earth.

I hope that you will see fit to join your fellow Templars by actively engaging in the activities of your Commandery while we all press forward to the accomplishment of our mission. We need your competence to offset our ignorance, and we also need your efforts to accomplish our mission. I hope that you will re-join us as active members of your Commandery, as we enter this new era in the life of our order of modern Templary. If your Commandery is not yet able to tell you how you can contribute, contact me. I can.

John L. Palmer, KGC, VEDGC
Grand Commandery of Knights Templar, Tennessee

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New Year Prayer

Originally printed: *Knight Templar Magazine, January 1965*

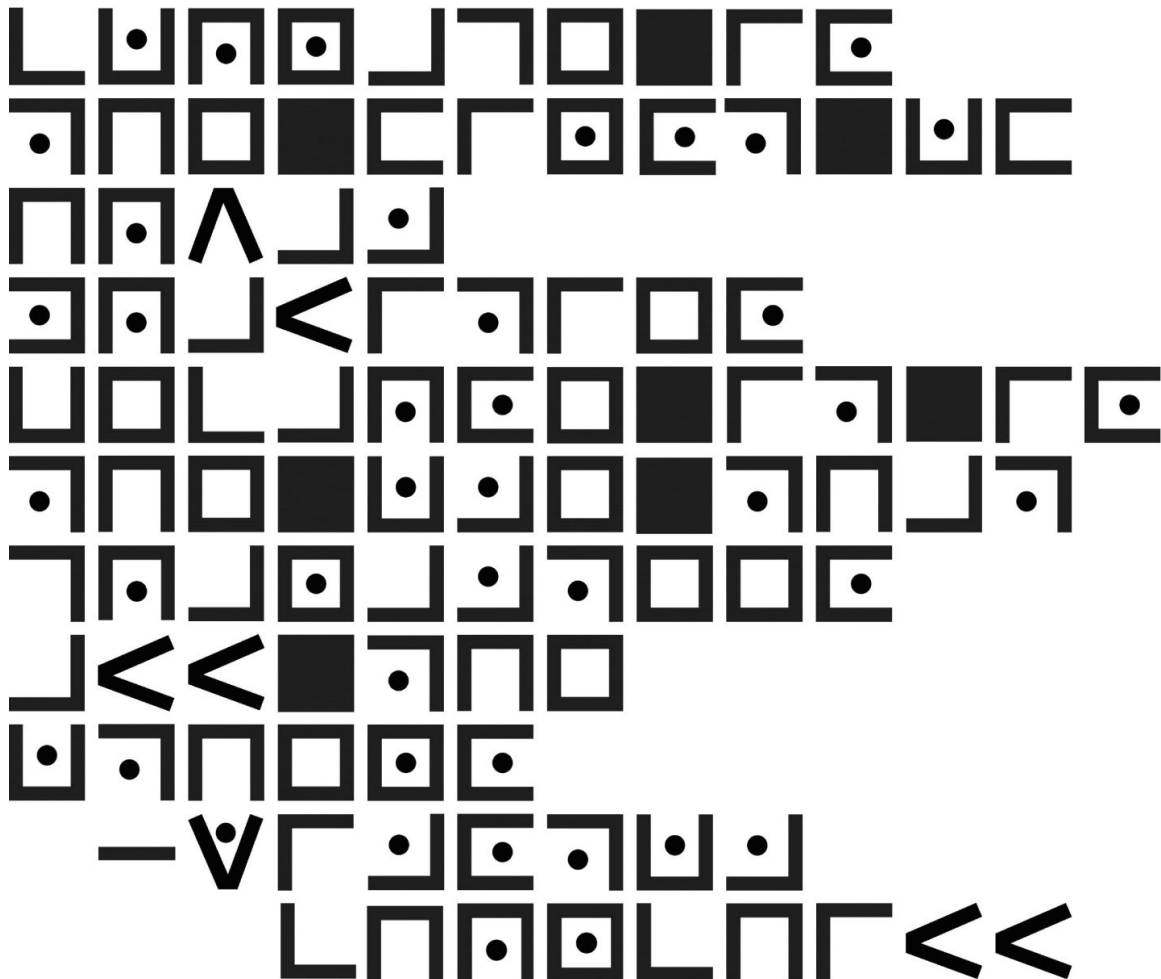
Father in Heaven, thou who from ever-lasting art God, abide with us as we enter into another year. We thank thee that thou hast not yet finished our days, but hast brought us into the new year. We are aware that the years of our lives that thou hast given us thus far have gone forever into the tomb of time and we cannot relive any of them. We confess that there are many hours we regret when we think that they are inscribed forever in Thy book of life.

Now the new year comes as a new white book without any stain upon it. Help us to live every hour of every day of it so full of service and devotion that thou shalt be glorified in our living as the sun is glorified in the stalwart trees. We are grateful that thou hast given us another chance to serve thee better than in the past, gain more knowledge of thee, and make progress toward maturity.

O Father God, the old year is gone but the works of goodness and justice and love are barely begun. Enable us as Sir Knights to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ in charting the shape of things to come. Let the power of faith and the light of freedom dwell in us, for we put our trust in Thee. Send us forth, each one of us, to our several tasks, battles, and ordeals with the courage and confidence that belong to Knights of the Cross. This we pray in the name of Him who is the same yesterday, today, and forever, even Christ our great Captain.

AMEN

Something to Decipher



From the Eminent Grand Prelate

Sir Knight James O. Weir II

Prelates Devotion for January

Like many of you, I spent my new year in front of a fire memorizing my tactics manual. I also watched countless hours of the *Twilight Zone* and rang in the new year with my family.

Have you ever played the game two truths and a lie? You just did, and I am sure you can easily guess my two truths and the lie in the above statement. I recently heard a quote from the very well-known psychologist Dr. Jordan Peterson. While I do not know much about him or what he believes, I found myself chewing on his quote about truth, he said, "Telling the truth is an adventure. Only the brave tell the truth. Cowards lie because they live in fear."

He explained that when you tell the truth you do not really know what the outcome will be, but when you lie you are hedging your bets and manipulating the outcome to your favor. With an adventure, you never know what is around the next corner or what the future holds. You are simply just setting the truth out and letting the chips fall where they may.

To me, that is as inspiring as it is convicting. Jesus in Matthew Chapter 5 and Paul in I Corinthians Chapter 6 give a list of attributes associated with those who will enter heaven and those who will not enter heaven. What is at the top of Paul's list? Cheating. What's at the top of Jesus' list? Anger.

Anger is not an emotion, it is triggered by emotion. Sadness, pain, heartbreak, and fear are just a few of the emotions that can trigger anger. So, what do we do to hide our emotions? We put on a brave face so that people think we have it all together and have conquered life. That is a lie. Cheating also is not an emotion, it is a choice. What drives someone to cheat? Again, it is the emotions of sadness, pain, heartbreak, and fear. We have this knee-jerk reaction as humans to avoid pain and heartache at all costs, so we cheat, we lie, we get angry, and we blame others.

Here is the point, that if you live by your emotions, then you will falsely feel safe and in control, but you will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven. If you live by faith, as daring and scary as that may be, you will be able to face any trial with bravery, and one day enter the kingdom of heaven. There will be no cowards in heaven, warriors of the cross only! They fight with the sword of truth, and that sword will cut any lie to shreds. Also, if you live by faith in the truth, then there is no greater adventure. Not only that, but you have nothing to fear, because the truth of the gospel casts away all fear. The truth shall set you free while lies bind you with heavy shackles.

What adventures await us this new year? I encourage you, as you are writing your new year's resolution list, to add living by faith and not emotions to the list. Be brave and bold, and be the greatest Christ follower His grace allows you to be. Wield the sword of truth bravely, and above all else, let it guide you to the Kingdom of Heaven. No cowards are allowed, only mighty people of faith! The mighty live by truth, while the cowards lie not only to the world but also to themselves.

This year, are you going to hold a sword or be bound by shackles?

Commandery Inspection Grades

Rank	Name	#	Grade
1	Baldwin	7	94.89
2	Nashville	1	93.00
3	De Payens	11	92.35
4	Carter	37	92.04
5	Murfreesboro	10	91.24
6	Dickson	41	89.41
7	Watauga	25	89.21
8	Kingsport	33	88.33
9	Greeneville	43	88.12
10	St. Omer	19	87.81
11	Appalachia	45	87.00
12	Manchester	40	85.51
13	Paris	16	83.85
14	Cumberland	26	83.02
15	Clarksville	8	82.70
16	Jackson	13	82.57
17	Lookout	14	80.78
18	Coeur de Lion	9	80.49
19	Cyprus	23	78.95
20	Chevalier	21	78.52
21	Rosemark	39	77.84
22	Park Avenue	31	77.61
23	Athens	34	71.48
24	Campbell County	44	64.19
25	Cyrene	42	DNG

Top Officers

Commander – Hayden Bilyeu KT # 7
Generalissimo – Dickie McKinney KT # 7
Capt. General – Christopher Cooper KT # 7
Sr. Warden - Wayne Elder KT # 7
Jr. Warden – Jay Young KT # 37
Prelate - Dickie Johnson KT # 1
Warder – Tony Hunter KT # 26

Winner of Sid C. Dorris Award:

Baldwin Commandery # 7

Prayer Requests

Sir Knights, there are several of our members across the state who are in need of your prayers. I would ask that each of us remember to keep our fellow Companions and Sir Knights in our daily prayers, especially as the new year begins. If you have a specific prayer request that you would like to share with me, then please feel free to email, call, or text me any time, and I will gladly add you to my prayer list. All prayer requests will be kept confidential.

Jesse Harper, Editor *Tennessee Knight Templar News*

TNKTNewsEditor@gmail.com

865-621-8686

How Far Will You Go?

by Jesse J. Harper, KYCH
Generalissimo, Appalachia Commandery #45

Luke 2:15- After that, the angels went away and returned to heaven. Then the shepherds said to each other, 'We should leave the sheep and go to Bethlehem immediately! The Lord God has sent his angels to tell us what has happened. We want to see this baby.'

Matthew 2:1- Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem.

The shepherds not only left their post guarding their sheep, but they also could have potentially given up their livelihood. In biblical times, the sole possession of some shepherds was their flocks, which is why it is so important to note that these shepherds put their flock in jeopardy just to be able to see Jesus.

There are discrepancies as to where the wise men came from, but whether the wise men came from Persia or Babylon, it is theorized that the wise men traveled upwards of 1200 miles to present their gifts to Jesus. It would have taken anywhere between three months and a year for them to arrive.

Looking at these two verses and the added details, my questions to you are:

What are you willing to sacrifice to be in the presence of the Jesus?

How far are you willing to travel to be in the presence of Jesus?

Do you attend church regularly? Do you purposefully include God in your times of fellowship? Do you go out of your way to help others in the name of Jesus? The unfortunate reality is that there are Christians out there who are not even willing to walk across the street to attend church, much less go out of their way to sacrifice anything they do not have to.

I know the counterargument to attending church regularly is the response that, I do not need to attend church to be close to God. My response would be an analogy that one of my old pastors used... If you take the hottest log out of the fireplace and place it right outside the fire on the hearth, it will continue to burn and continue to emit heat on its own for a while, but eventually the fire inside will diminish and its warmth will depend on its proximity to the fireplace.

As Christians, we are not only called to live our lives for the Lord, but we are also called to come together in service, praise, and worship for the Lord. Sometimes these things come in the form of sacrificing our own wants and desires in favor of what the Lord would have us to do.

The Knights Templar are known as Christian Knights; therefore, almost everything we do is in the name of Jesus Christ and for the betterment of others. These mindsets and actions mean far less if we are not also doing these things in our daily lives.

I encourage each of you to evaluate the things that you do on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. It is my hope that if there are places where you could use improvement, that you will make the necessary changes in your life.

Music City Sheraton Grand York Rite of Tennessee Headquarters for 2025

Companions and Sir Knights, we have a new host hotel for the 2025 Grand York Rite Session March 23rd through March 25th, the beautiful Music City Sheraton, located at 777 McGavock Pike, Nashville, TN 37214. I have attached photos of the hotel and hope it meets your approval.

- The cost is \$179.00 plus tax a night. There is a cost for parking of \$15.00.
- Complimentary Hospitality Room
- Complimentary Wi-Fi
- Hotel Restaurant and Bar
- Outdoor area suitable for Cigar and Pipe Smoking
- Nine or more Restaurants located nearby
- Opry Mills and several other shopping locations

You can book your accommodations today, by simply clicking on this link

https://book.passkey.com/e/50908532?utm_source=874&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=295600677&trkid=588083084&linkid=3446720144

Forthcoming will be information concerning meals.



MISSION

The mission of the Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Tennessee is to provide every Christian Freemason in Tennessee the opportunity and resources to develop, be engaged in, and exemplify a Christian chivalric lifestyle.

THE VISION OF THE GRAND COMMANDERY OF KNIGHTS TEMPLAR OF TENNESSEE

The Knights of the Grand Commandery of Tennessee are a group of men who share the Christian faith, exemplary character, a dedication to excellence and the service of others, and a desire to share the chivalric experience with other Christian Freemasons. Our Knights are actively engaged with one another in accomplishing this goal and in maintaining this standard of lifestyle and behavior.



Request for Submissions!

Sir Knights – We need submissions for the *Tennessee Knight Templar News*. Is your Commandery going to confer any of the orders soon? Did you have some sort of unusual or fun event? Send us an article to share with the other Tennessee Knights and include photos if you have them.

We would also like to have your thoughts and ideas about how we can make Tennessee Templary more fun and exciting. Send us an article!

Please send news and events going on in your Commandery to:

TNKTNewsEditor@gmail.com