

# Tennessee Knight Templar News

SIR KNIGHT RONALD J. COATES, RIGHT EMINENT GRAND COMMANDER  
GRAND COMMANDERY KNIGHTS TEMPLAR OF TENNESSEE

May A.D. 2025 / A.O. 907

Edited by: Jesse J. Harper, KCT



Knights from Appalachia Commandery #45 marching in for their Easter Observance. The Observance took place on Palm Sunday in the outdoor meditation garden of the church next door to their Commandery. The message was given by Sir Knight Ethan Ritter, who is currently enrolled in Bexly Seabury Episcopal Seminary.

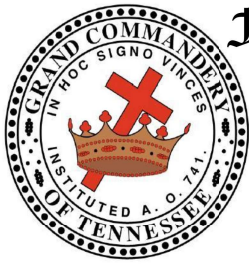
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If you are aware of any members who are not currently receiving this monthly newsletter, then please have them send an email to Steve Guendert with their name, email address, and Commandery number: [sguendert@ieee.org](mailto:sguendert@ieee.org)

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.





# From the Right Eminent Grand Commander

RONALD JASPER COATES

RIGHT EMINENT GRAND COMMANDER

Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Tennessee



## Where Are Our Roots?

Unfortunately, like the roots of most living plants, our Masonic roots are difficult to see. The one thing that we do know for certain is that in London, England, organized Freemasonry was born when four lodges met at the Apple Tree Tavern and constituted a Grand Lodge in due form. They resolved to hold the annual assembly and feast, then to choose a Grand Master from among themselves until they should have the honor of a noble brother at their head. Accordingly, on June 24, St. John the Baptist Day, 1717. The assembly and feast of the Free and Accepted Masons was held at the Goose and Gridiron Alehouse.

We may never know for certain what events took place prior to the creation of the Grand Lodge of England, but speculations and theories have been and will continue to be written. We must remember, all that is known concerning the institution of Freemasonry prior to 1717 was handed down by oral tradition. There are no existing manuscripts or documents that in any way give authentic proof as to where Freemasonry may have originated or the sources from which it sprang.

Although the origins of Freemasonry are not known, historians, Masonic and non-Masonic, have proposed many theories. Adam has been referred to as the first Mason, probably because he wore an apron made of fig leaves. Noah has been declared a member of the Craft and given credit for having organized the first lodge in the Ark. So much reference is made to King Solomon and his temple in our Masonic ritual that many Masons honestly place the origin of Freemasonry at the building of the temple and consider King Solomon to be our first Grand Master. There are those who feel Freemasonry originated with the building of the Great Pyramids in Egypt, while others trace it to King Athelstan of England in 930 A.D. Some historians have put the origin of the fraternity back to the ancient mysteries of Egypt as well as classical Greece and Rome.

A few of the more interesting theories that have been suggested to answer the question regarding the roots of Freemasonry are explained below:

The Transition Theory of Masonic history states that when the medieval stonemasons began to organize themselves, they created lodges as a means of organizing and protecting their craft. They developed simple entrance ceremonies as well as secret modes of recognition so that they could move from one location to another seeking employment. It has been suggested that the training of the apprentices was not limited to the craft but included instruction in ethics and morality. These lodges began to admit men not actively involved in the operative masons trade. As the building industry declined, these speculative Masons eventually took over the Lodges and turned them into Lodges of Speculative or Free and Accepted Masons. Hence, there existed Transitional Lodges and Speculative Lodges.

The Knights Templar Theory suggests that our roots began during the Crusades. During the Crusades, the Templars became aware of some of the esoteric traditions of antiquity of the Near East, as well as the history and mythology of Jerusalem's destroyed Temple of Solomon.

On Friday, October 13th, 1307, the arrest and execution of the Knights began. Many of the Knights fled to Scotland, where Robert the Bruce, the King of Scotland, did not obey the Papal Bull ordering the arrest and execution of the Knights. However, not all of the Knights Templars went to Scotland. Many hid out in other countries and needed to find a way to regroup and to communicate with the other Templars. This created the need for secret modes of recognition as well as other rites. Their rites and ceremonies continued and formed the basis of what subsequently became known as Freemasonry.

Another theory suggests that Masonry originated by a group of philosophers and moralists who adopted architectural allegories—including the tools of the medieval operative masons—as a method of expressing their concepts of the values and ethics of life.

There have been those who have believed that our roots came from Rosicrucianism. The primary basis for this is the incorporation of certain Rosicrucian symbols into Masonic rituals: the square, compasses, triangle, three Grand Masters, the sun, and the moon. The fact that some of the early speculative Masons were considered to be Rosicrucians is put forward as some sort of proof that Freemasonry was the public face of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood.

There seems to be a general consensus today that the roots of Freemasonry go back to the medieval operative masons who built the great castles and cathedrals, many of which still exist today. There is a new theory being examined by economic and social historians. They are looking at the origin of Freemasonry in its charitable aspect. There was no welfare state in 17th-century England. Those who fell on hard times were forced to rely on the charity of friends or the harshly run state Poor Laws. There is evidence that in the 17th century many trades and crafts would hold weekly social evenings in the local tavern. During these meetings, those present would put money into a box with the knowledge that if they fell ill, had an accident, or fell on hard times, they could apply for assistance from "the box." There is evidence that these social gatherings became more formalized. The collecting of money and its disbursement required some form of simple administration with officers to preside at the meetings, look after funds, and keep records.

There is also evidence they began to use initiation ceremonies and that toward the end of the 17th century, they began to admit members who were not of their trade or craft. Although over 300 years have passed since that first assembly and feast of the Free and Accepted Masons in London, the search for the roots of our Fraternity continues.

Respectfully in your service,

Ronald J. Coates  
Right Eminent Grand Commander  
Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Tennessee



# Battalion Meetings

All Sir Knights are encouraged to attend, but especially Commanders, Generalissimos, Captain Generals, Recorders, Treasurers, Membership and Engagement Chairs.

Attendance of this meeting is to be included in Commandery Engagement.

Topics to be covered:

- Battalion and Committee Structure
- Passport Program
- Traveling Sword
- Uniform Guide
- Charities
- Observances
- Duties of Membership Chairman
- New Inspection Structure
- Commandery Leadership

May 3, 2025 –  
Upper East Battalion  
Meal at 12 PM EST at Kingsport Lodge No. 688

May 10, 2025 –  
Southeast Battalion  
Meal at 12 PM EST at Chattanooga Masonic Center

May 31, 2025 –  
East Central Battalion  
Meal at 12 PM EST at New Providence Lodge No. 48

June 7, 2025 –  
North Central Battalion  
Meal at 9 AM CST at Dickson Lodge No. 468

June 7, 2025 –  
Southwest Battalion  
Meal at 2 PM CST at St. John's Lodge No. 332

June 28, 2025 –  
South Central Battalion  
Meal at 9 AM CST at Mt. Moriah Lodge No. 18

June 28, 2025 –  
Cumberland Battalion  
Meal at 1 PM CST at Lebanon Lodge No. 98

\*\*\* Schedule Subject to Change \*\*\*



# **GRAND COMMANDERY KNIGHTS TEMPLAR OF TENNESSEE – 2025 INSPECTION SCHEDULE**

Wk	Day	Date	Commandery	City	Time
1	Saturday	Sept. 6, 2025	Southwest No. 31	Memphis	1:00 pm CST
	Saturday	Sept. 6, 2025	Phillip Lacy No. 46	Selmer	7:00 pm CST
2	Saturday	Sept. 13, 2025	Greeneville No. 43	Greeneville	1:00 pm EST
3	Friday	Sept. 19, 2025	West TN Regional No. 13	Jackson	7:00 pm CST
	Saturday	Sept. 20, 2025	Paris No. 16	Paris	1:00 pm CST
	Saturday	Sept. 20, 2025	Clarksville No. 8	Clarksville	7:00 pm CST
4	Thursday	Sept. 25, 2025	Appalachia No. 45	Knoxville	7:00 PM EST
	Friday	Sept. 26, 2025	Cyprus No. 23	Maryville	7:00 pm EST
	Saturday	Sept. 27, 2025	Chevalier No. 21	Oak Ridge	1:00 pm EST
	Saturday	Sept. 27, 2025	Coeur de Lion No. 9	Knoxville	7:00 pm EST
5	Friday	Oct. 3, 2025	Cumberland No. 26	Cookeville	7:00 pm CST
	Saturday	Oct. 4, 2025	Baldwin No. 7	Lebanon	1:00 pm CST
	Saturday	Oct. 4, 2025	De Payens No. 11	Franklin	7:00 pm CST
6	Friday	Oct. 10, 2025	Watauga No. 25	Johnson City	7:00 pm EST
	Saturday	Oct. 11, 2025	St. Omer No. 19	Bristol	1:00 pm EST
	Saturday	Oct. 11, 2025	Kingsport No. 33	Kingsport	7:00 pm EST
7	Friday	Oct. 17, 2025	Carter No. 37	Unicoi	7:00 pm EST
	Saturday	Oct. 18, 2025	Cyrene No. 42	Dayton	1:00 pm EST
	Saturday	Oct. 18, 2025	Lookout No. 14	Chattanooga	7:00 pm EST
8	Saturday	Oct. 25, 2025	Manchester No. 40	Manchester	1:00 pm CST
	Saturday	Oct. 25, 2025	Murfreesboro No. 10	Murfreesboro	7:00 pm CST
9	Saturday	Nov. 1, 2025	Nashville No. 1	Nashville	1:00 pm CST
	Saturday	Nov. 1, 2025	Dickson No. 41	Dickson	7:00 pm CST

**\*\*\*Schedule Subject to Change\*\*\***

# **From the Eminent Grand Prelate**

**Sir Knight Dickie W. Johnson, PGC**

## **Prelates Devotion for May**

### **BEHIND LOCKED DOORS!**

"So the other Disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord. But he said to them, 'Unless I see the nail marks in His hands and put my fingers where the nails were and put my hand into His side, I will not believe it.'" John 20:25)

The most wonderful and memorable day in the history of the world was drawing to a close. The sun, whose rising beams had shone upon the empty tomb, had now set. Ten of the Disciples were together behind locked doors. They were disappointed and perplexed. Yet, there was inquiry, excitement, wonder, and speculation among them. They had heard the message from the women and the two from Emmaus. Mary was sure that she had spoken to Jesus! The news had awakened eager interest and most conflicting emotions. It had also brought them together.

Then Jesus appeared to them: "On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.'" Notice that Jesus did not knock on the door and wait for someone to answer. He was in his resurrected body, yet he appeared the same. This tells us that our resurrected bodies will be different, as Jesus' was, yet we will be able to recognize each other!

Then Jesus breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they will be forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." Jesus gave them the privilege of telling new believers that their sins have been forgiven because they have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior. He gives us that privilege also!

Thomas was not with them when Jesus first appeared to the disciples. "Now Thomas (called Didymous), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came." When the other disciples told Thomas that they had seen Jesus, he did not believe them. He stated that he would have to see Jesus with his own eyes before he believed them.

A week later, the scene happens again. This time Thomas is with them. Jesus gave Thomas the opportunity to reach out and touch Him. Thomas did see and did believe, saying, "My Lord and My God." Then Jesus said, "Thomas, you have believed because you have seen me. Blessed are those who have not seen me and yet have believed."

Jesus was not hard on Thomas for his doubts. Sometimes doubts can be good if they lead to questions; questions lead to answers, and our faith increases.

We cannot reach out and touch Jesus physically, but we can touch Him spiritually. We can talk to Him through prayer and find Him in the pages of the Bible. But we must reach out to Him in faith, believing, even though we have not seen Him. Hebrews 11:1 tells us that faith is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

If you can believe, Jesus can be as real to you today as He was to Thomas that day over 2,000 years ago!

In His Service

Dickie W. Johnson, PGC, Grand Prelate



## **A Time For Rebuilding and Reconsecrating, Part 1**

By Burt D. Pearson, PGC, Minnesota

Chairman, Committee on Religious Activities of the Grand Encampment

Originally printed: *Knight Templar Magazine*, April 1965

It is assumed that Masonry as an institution tried these centuries in the cross currents of mankind's aspirations to build a finer society has not been found wanting – on the contrary, it is, indeed, an indispensable entity which has consistently promoted the common good when given the opportunity, and this through the instrumentality of votaries dedicated to its philosophy and tenets.

It was tried in the crucible of this nation's first struggle for freedom, the Revolutionary War, and the events which preceded the conflict. Boston, Philadelphia, New York, Lexington, Concord, Brandywine. Yorktown, these were the three, five, and seven steps to victory in the Battle for Freedom. Patriots of staunchest devotion, because they were Masons and church leaders, never failed General (and Brother) George Washington. Masons were a privy council to be trusted during dark days.

All of this nation's history – indeed, the brighter pages – is a chronicle of an Order's transcendent contributions to making America great. Brethren of the craft were the trusted statesmen of generation on generation. Knights Templar, as exemplars of the Creed of the Nazarene, were a significantly large total in the Masonic Councils which shaped the future of the United States to this present day.

It was only yesterday that the Mason, and in particular the Knight Templar, was preferred above others – all other qualifications being equal – in the selection of officials, high and low, for public office. Many a President, beginning with the immortal Washington, was a Mason and of tall stature as a Christian.

These particulars here recited would encourage a belief that Masons – again with emphasis on Knights Templar – were the consecrated political, industrial, civic, and business leadership of America! But leadership alone is impotent unless there are those to follow it. The record of this nation reveals that the general body of Masons – again with accent on Knights Templar – did provide a solid phalanx of informed followers. There was unanimity in opinion, not division.

However, this is 1965. The glory of the past, the gift in citizenship expression which Masons (including Knights Templar) did make to rear America a beacon light to a distraught world, belongs to yesterday.

If vanished glories, the heritage of another day, are to be recaptured to spur new generations to consecrated duty and challenge, then the contemporary populace must be roused from lethargy, from sloth, from avarice, greed and a gamut of delinquencies. Of a surety, the call is to those dedicated Americans who have not yet succumbed to the blandishments of something for nothing, for free!

It seems to me that the challenge is one which Templary must embrace, not in isolated and feeble attempts to stem the utter selfishness of the present and the emphasis on material things, but in full strength and in a mood so united that we shall draw recruits. The prize is an America preserved into perpetuity, if we acquit ourselves in total effort.

We seek numbers, greatly increased numbers – members – for Templary, for the York Rite. We seek them not for the sake of numbers in themselves but as a vital requirement and ingredient in girding Templary for its finest hour in this country's history. To make the task and challenge a successful one, we

must exalt ourselves and the Order as the handmaiden of the Christian Church. Every Christian Mason a Knight Templar! Yes, but more important, every Knight Templar a member of an established church, a professing member, militant in his espousal of Jesus Christ as the saviour of the world.

In its report to the 49<sup>th</sup> Triennial Conclave of the Grand Encampment Knights Templar of the United States, the Committee on Religious Activities revealed in brief how in the Grand Jurisdiction of Missouri Knights Templar are purposing an intimate collaboration with the Christian Church in establishing a common front against the enemies of mankind. They aim to make this union the ultimate in a grand design to promote Christ's Kingdom.

The Committee on Religious Activities of the Grand Encampment commends this togetherness in Christ to Templary-at-large. Here lies the future for the Order. The committee hopes that the Missouri plan will be emulated by every segment of the Order from Grand Encampment to Grand Commandery and to Commandery.

But, we shall make little headway in this mission unless as individual Sir Knights – and in the personnel of our families – we rededicate ourselves to our calling as ambassadors of Christ. We shall have to raise our individual and collective standards and stature as American citizens avouched to the highest in moral, spiritual, and economic deportment. America is losing moral and spiritual posture in the world. Too long has this country been living off its past accumulated morality and spirituality. As Knights Templar who are met for a singular and exalted purpose, these lines from Thomas Carlyle may be apropos: "Our main business is not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand."

Of a truth, we are torch-bearers as well as salesmen for Christ. Never should our emphasis be less than the highest in our every role, within or without asylum. This Order may spread itself over the entire world, yet the average person – not a member – will form his judgment of it through his contact with one individual Sir Knight. This could be a devastating judgment. Every Sir Knight, no matter his capacity, becomes a good or a bad salesman for Templary. When we raise individual statures and motivations, we lift the whole body of Templary, giving it its deserved estate among men.

Disturbed authorities say that the fearful lack in today's America is spiritual and moral rectitude. Parents are failing, the general citizen is failing, and the bold, brave dream of the Founding Fathers isn't even a copy-book maxim today. The wassail cup is seemingly a stronger magnet than is the communion cup.

It is a good portent for America that the officers of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America are convinced that this nation's future cannot be taken for granted. The ideals and the noble impulses of antecedents must once again be given the right-of-way in this country. They recognize that a nation which spends "up to \$750 on pleasure, sins, and amusements to every dollar given to church work" is in grave danger.

*Editors Note:* Part 2 to be continued next month.



## Unreasonable Hospitality

Easter Sunrise Service, Murfreesboro Commandery #10

This morning, as dawn breaks and light triumphs over darkness, we gather not just to commemorate the resurrection of our Lord but to reflect on what it truly means for us as Christian Knights.

The Chamber of Reflection is familiar to us as a place that confronts the frailty of life, the certainty of death, and the need for inner peace. In that space, stripped of distraction, we are faced with symbols of mortality and given the Holy Bible for instruction.

Jesus Christ entered His own chamber of reflection—one not symbolic but real. He was laid in the tomb, broken and bloodied, wrapped in death's finality. And yet, on the third day, He rose—in power, with unreasonable hospitality.

Think of it: The tomb where the Lord of Glory was laid is empty! And when He returns, it is not with wrath but with love. Love for Peter, even though he denied Him—He offers him restoration. To Thomas, who doubted Him—He offers proof by showing the print of the nail. To all those hiding in fear—He brings comfort.



That is unreasonable hospitality—the kind that defies human thinking and exceeds all expectations. The hospitality of a King who sacrificed himself for His people, of a Savior who still bears His scars as a sign not of shame but of sacrificial love.

Sir Knights, as Templars, we are men of duty, of honor, and of reflection. Let us remember

we are saved by grace, and our good deeds will ensure a blessed immortality. We are called to extend unreasonable hospitality to a world still walking in darkness.

Today the tomb is empty. The curtain is torn; the stone has been rolled away. The great Captain of our salvation calls us forward—not just to fight for truth, but to serve our fellow man as He has served us with grace and unreasonable hospitality.

Christ is Risen. He is Risen indeed.

Collier Hopson, Past Commander  
Murfreesboro Commandery #10 KT

## Upcoming Events

### May

Monday, May 19<sup>th</sup>-

Clarksville Commandery #8

**\*\*Conferral at Queen City Lodge #761\*\***

Order of the Temple

Eat at 5:30 PM

Conferral at 6:30 PM

Tuesday, May 27<sup>th</sup>-

Clarksville Commandery #8

**\*\*Conferral at Queen City Lodge #761\*\***

Order of the Temple

Eat at 5:30 PM

Conferral at 6:30 PM

Wednesday, May 28<sup>th</sup>-

Murfreesboro Commandery #10

Order of the Temple

Eat at 6 PM

Conferral at 7 PM

### June

Monday, June 9<sup>th</sup>-

Baldwin Commandery #7

Order of the Temple

Eat at 6 PM

Conferral at 7 PM

Monday, June 9<sup>th</sup>-

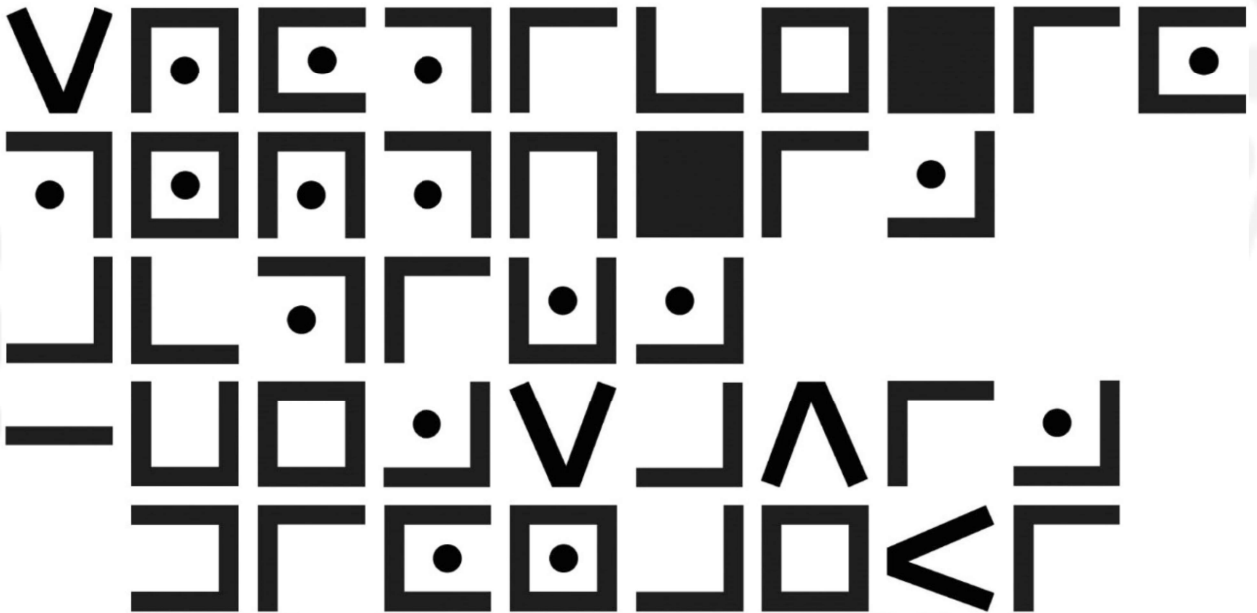
Murfreesboro Commandery #10

Order of the Temple

Eat at 6 PM

Conferral at 7 PM

## Something to Decipher





## Grand Commandery Recap



Newly Elected and Appointed Officers for 2025-2026

Membership Award Recipients  
for Largest Number Knighted  
and Highest Net Gain

Eminent Grand Generalissimo  
Tim Sutton being awarded the  
A.B Church Award for Recorder  
of the Year



### Grand Encampment Honors

#### **Knight Templar Cross of Honor:**

David Andrew Lacy (16/40/46)

#### **Knight Commander of the Temple:**

Orville R. Armstrong (33)

Quentin T. Bolden (10)

Wilbur J. Bowman, Jr. (1/7/41)

Jesse J. Harper (43/45)

Michael C. Lett (9)



Photos Courtesy of Grand Photographer Doug Hunter

## 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.



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## 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**