



## Grand Commander



Michael M. Hoff

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### **We Need Your Help!**

Please send event news from your local commanderies to us for inclusion in the State News!

- ✘ Submissions must be received by the 20th of the month for inclusion in the upcoming edition. Submissions may be altered to fit.
- ✘ Please send emails with subject line "KT State News" to the editor.

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## Grand Commander's Message

Greetings Sir Knights,

As we approach the holiday season of the Nativity, we give thanks for the joyous event of the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. This time of reflection calls upon us, as true Soldiers of the Cross, to renew our commitment to the enduring principles of **Chivalry, Christianity, and Templary.**

Let us remember our vow to be valiant defenders of our holy religion and to practice the virtues we hold so true: to **feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and bind up the wounds of the afflicted.**

May the peace, love, and joy of Christmastide be with you and your loved ones, and may God's abundant blessings guide us all in the new year.

In a world that often sways with uncertainty, the message of Christmas remains a beacon of hope and light. We celebrate the birth of Jesus, the "Great Light" who breaks through the darkness and offers us a new hope.

This season, let us embrace the true meaning of the living Christ within us and strive to become better, more compassionate, more responsive Knights of the Cross. Let our appreciation for God's Greatest Gift manifest in good deeds and charitable acts.

December, fraternally, is going to be fast-paced, with overloaded schedules for most of us. There will be Christmas Observances, parades, elections, and installations, along with other holiday events. Remember, while we are going to all these events, that we must also slow down, take a deep breath, and take time to be with our families.

I personally would like to wish each and every one of you Merry Christmas. Some may gather with friends and family for a big feast. Some may enjoy holding their loved one's hand at Christmas Mass. Some may enjoy the laughter and giggles of the children. No matter what your plans are, I wish you all peace, joy, and a prosperous New Year.

### **Luke 2:12-14**

*And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. And suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace among those with whom He is pleased!"*

### **Matthew 1:20-21**

*But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying "Joseph, Son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."*

Fraternally,

Michael Martin Hoff  
R.E.G.C.  
Grand Commandery of Knights  
Templar of North Carolina





### **NC Grand Commandery Confers Order of the Temple at Castle McCullough**

**Jamestown** – The Grand Commandery of North Carolina conferred the Order of the Temple last month at Castle McCulloch, for a class of 18 candidates. Most Worshipful Mack Sigmon, Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina for 2019, served as Eminent Commander for the ceremony. The cast for the conferral consisted of several Grand and District officers for North Carolina, including several Past Grand Commanders. The event also featured a strong visiting contingent from the Grand Commandery of South Carolina.

The conferral of the Order was offered as a special fundraising event, which raised \$3500 to benefit two of the Grand Commandery's charities: the [Holy Land Pilgrimage](#) and the [Knight Templar Education Foundation](#). This total included two separate \$500 donations, each of which earned the Jerusalem Jewel. The Jerusalem Jewel supports the Grand Encampment's Holy Land Pilgrimage Fund, and is officially authorized for wear as part of the Class A Uniform. Proceeds go directly toward sending pastors to the Holy Land.

Following the Order of the Temple, a banquet for around 70 was prepared by Rodney Gallimore, Victor Gallimore, and Christian Williams. In addition, a public conferral of Knighthood was held at the banquet, for a class of 24 Sir Knights, with Right Eminent Michael Daniels (Past Grand Commander for 2019-2020) presiding. Sir Knight Mike also conferred the honorary orders of Lady of the Temple on about a dozen of candidates' wives and girlfriends.

Several of their children were also dubbed Squires, and Maidens in Waiting of the Court.



*Right Eminent Grand Commander Mike Hoff and  
Past Grand Commander Michael Daniels enter the Castle*

Most Worshipful Mack and the conferral team did an outstanding job, which was made all the more solemn and meaningful by the impressive setting. All who attended were struck with the beauty and dignity of the ceremony. The Castle Degree was truly a splendid occasion for the Grand Commandery, and the several officers who participated earned the grateful appreciation of the new Sir Knights.



*The Scenic Castle McCulloch in Jamestown, NC*

## NC Commanderies Celebrating Christmas

As we enter the Yuletide season this month, several of our local Commanderies will be holding their traditional Templar Christmas Observance ceremonies.

**Grand Commandery of North Carolina** – The Grand Commandery will celebrate a special Christmas Observance on Sunday, December 14 from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. The Observance will be held at the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford: 600 College St., in Oxford. All Sir Knights and their guests are welcome to attend.

**Wilkes Commandery #40** – Wilkes Commandery #40 will hold their Christmas Observance in conjunction with Lenoir Commandery #33, on Monday, December 15. The location will be North Wilkesboro Lodge #407 at 203 Temple Street. This Observance will feature a festive meal at 6:00, with ceremony to follow at 7:15. The event is open to the public – all are welcome to join the Sir Knights in celebrating the birth of Our Lord and Savior.

**Charlotte Commandery #2** – Charlotte Commandery #2 warmly welcomes all Sir Knights and their families and friends to our annual Christmas Observance, to be held on Sunday, December 7 at the Charlotte York Rite Temple on N. Sharon Amity Road. Festivities will include a meal and traditional toasts, beginning at 2:00 and continuing through the afternoon to 5:00. Please plan to come out and join us to celebrate this special event; RSVP to Ron Whitener, Recorder, at (704) 560-4810.

**Malta Commandery #19** - Malta Commandery #19 will hold their Christmas Observance on Sunday, December 14. A festive meal is planned for 2:00 p.m., with the formal proceedings to follow at 3:00. All are welcome to join the Malta Sir Knights, at Monroe Lodge #244 (520 E. Franklin St.); to ensure there will be plenty of holiday treats for everyone, please RSVP to Robert Mullis, Recorder, at (704) 516-9648.

**Nazareth Commandery #41** - Nazareth Commandery #41 will be holding their Christmas Observance on Wednesday, December 10. The Commandery meets at Southern Pines Lodge #484, at 230 NW Broad St. Please plan to come out and celebrate this special event.

**Cyrene Commandery #5** – Cyrene Commandery #5 will hold their Christmas Observance on Sunday, December 7 at 2:00, at the Asheville Masonic Temple. All are welcome to attend.

## Wreaths Across America Observance

On Saturday, December 13, Sir Knights from Charlotte Commandery #2 and Malta Commandery #19 will be participating in the Wreaths Across America ceremony, to honor departed veterans of our armed services. They will gather at local cemeteries to place wreaths upon the tombs of our veterans, and pronounce each one's name aloud – thus ensuring that the memories of these heroes will live on in perpetuity. If you are interested in participating in this solemn and patriotic ceremony, please contact Sir Knight Ron Whitener at (704) 560-4810 or Sir Knight Robert Mullis at (704) 516-9648.

### Education Corner

*Did you know?*

Our Templar motto, *Non Nobis Domine, Non Nobis Sed Nomini Tuo Da Gloriam* ("Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us but unto Thy Name give glory"), derives from the text of the Psalms.

Sir Knight Jeff McEwen, Eminent Commander of Charlotte Commandery #2, gave a fascinating Masonic Education talk at the December Stated, demonstrating that the motto is taken directly from the Latin of Psalm 115, verse 1. (Equating to Psalm 113, verse 9 in the Latin *Vulgate* version.)

Since the theme of that Psalm is the superiority of the God of Israel over pagan idols, Sir Knight Jeff pointed out how our adoption of the motto reveals the absurd irony of many conspiracy theories, which accuse the historical Templars of the sin of idolatry.

## The Mountains and Valleys of Masonry

For a couple of months I decided to travel to visit the different York Rite Bodies across this great state of North Carolina. I decided to do this for a few reasons. One was to see, hear and experience the different histories associated with these Bodies as well as the Temples they reside in. Second, I wanted to meet the members of these bodies and to share in their fellowship as well as to learn of their own travels through Masonry, and what led them to where they are. A third reason was to take in the beauty of God's creation. Often with our desire for progress in our own travels we are so focused on getting to our destination at the end of our journey that we simply miss so much that passes us by, including moments and views that can simply take one's breath away. This is true also in our life.

One of my many favorite stops across this state is in the mountains near the Masonic Marker in Maggie Valley. Sadly, this time the gate to that part of the Blue Ridge Parkway was closed, so I could not travel to the marker. However, there was a place where you could pull off the road and simply take in the view of the mountains. There is one of these views nearby to the marker, but I felt this one spot right outside the closed gate was calling to me. I simply stopped, got out and, apart from an occasional passing car, I was taken with a sense of awe in full appreciation of the quiet, and the time to connect to my Creator. The scripture from Psalm 121:1-2 came to me: **"I lift up my eyes to the mountains-where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth."** Some people stopped and stood in awe of the view. Others decided to take a photo and move on to their next destination. I was reminded that even the clearest photo or painting of this moment, though beautiful, could not match the absolute beauty of what we were witnessing.

I also thought of the scripture in Psalm 23:3-4, which reminds us of the valley of the shadow of death, and how we are not to fear, knowing God is there to comfort

and protect us. With the upcoming holidays, we are reminded of Masonic brothers and family members who are no longer with us, and how that loss can carry a heavy weight. The stress of the holidays -- not only with worrying about gifts, travel, and the like, but also with the reminder of these losses -- can extract a substantial toll from each of us. But if we will simply stop, take in the quiet moment with our Creator, and be a part of all the beauty God has made, we will be reminded not to fear, or to allow these moments to take away from the calm and peace we are offered.

It is important for a person to stand and appreciate this glorious view of creation, but also to understand that as a part of it, we are living in moments that may appear as symbolic mountains and valleys, within our own lives and those of our brothers.

In comparing the different bodies I have seen so far, I have seen photographs and heard stories of times where the brothers and members of these bodies have traveled to great heights, and others where they felt low, as if in the darkness of a valley -- even, at times, close to the shadow of death. It was at these moments when, no matter the size of the body, or what resources were available, they still came together to help each other.

As we give the closing charge within a Blue Lodge, we are reminded to do good unto all especially the household of the faithful - and most of us stand by this oath. With the recent help offered to those in the mountains who were devastated by Hurricane Helene, and in other parts of the state when needs have arisen, I have truly seen a lifting up of our eyes to the Lord, and to our fellow Masonic brothers, knowing where our help will come from, while being directed and guided by the Lord.

*This article was submitted by SK S. Alex Wilson,  
of Ivanhoe Commandery #8*