

Tennessee Knight Templar News

SIR KNIGHT ROY T. SUTTON III, RIGHT EMINENT GRAND COMMANDER
GRAND COMMANDERY KNIGHTS TEMPLAR OF TENNESSEE

April A.D. 2026 / A.O. 908

Edited by: Jesse J. Harper, KCT



The newly elected Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Tennessee Officers for 2026-2027.

Please be sure to share any photos from your conferrals or events so that they can be publicized.

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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 Jesse Harper with their name, email address, and Commandery number: jesssharp@comcast.net

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
ROY T. SUTTON III, KTCH
RIGHT EMINENT GRAND COMMANDER
Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Tennessee**



GENERAL ORDER NO. 1

March 24, 2026
Kingsport, Tennessee

To the Officers and Knights of the Grand Commandery, Knights Templar of Tennessee, and to the Officers and Knights of the Constituent Commanderies thereof:

I am not able to express in words the appreciation I have in the Knights of Tennessee for electing me to serve as your Grand Commander in the ensuing year. My journey to the position has been one of the greatest honors in my life and it has also been an absolute privilege to serve this Grand Commandery. I have tried to serve each position to the best of my ability and will continue to do so this coming year. I also want to thank all the Grand Officers for their willingness to serve the Grand Commandery. I have absolute confidence that they will represent the Grand Commandery with honor and dignity.

We will continue our goal of growing our Order by growing our constituent Commanderies. My Officers and myself are here to help you in any way possible. If your Commandery is planning on conferring any of the Orders, please reach out to me or any Grand Officer in your area for assistance and support for our new members.

I also want to encourage all Commanderies to participate in our charitable endeavors. We will be having a golf tournament this year to benefit the Knights Templar Eye Foundation. I will also be selling my coins with all proceeds also going to the Knights Templar Eye Foundation. I will have Grand Commander knives for sale with the proceeds going to the Holy Land Pilgrimage Fund. Also, please remember to support our Education Foundation. This is a less known charity that gives scholarships to young students.

I ask for all Knights to support our youth organizations. If you have a DeMolay or Rainbow Chapter in your area, please try to support our future members. We as Knights Templar should lead by our example and this is a great opportunity to show our youth what Templary can offer in their future endeavors.

I ask for the Commanderies to continue to be active outside our Asylums. Please continue to have social nights and enjoy meals together with your families as a Commandery. I would also encourage the Commanderies to attend a Church service together and show the world that we are a Christian Organization.

Again, Sir Knights, thank you to all the Knights of Tennessee for this honor and please feel free to contact me anytime.

Roy T. Sutton III
Right Eminent Grand Commander
Grand Commandery Knights Templar Of Tennessee



GENERAL ORDER NO. 2

March 24, 2026

Kingsport, Tennessee

To the Officers and Knights of the Grand Commandery, Knights Templar of Tennessee, and to the Officers and Knights of the Constituent Commanderies thereof:

Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: and as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day raise again.

-Luke 24:1-7

As a Christian Order, we celebrate the cornerstone of our religion, the Resurrection, the very foundation of Christianity and ask all Knights to remember the words of our Savior:

Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

-John 20:27-29

I ask all the Sir Knights of Tennessee to come together in their Commanderies and celebrate Easter with their families. I encourage each Commandery to hold an Easter Observance and, if possible, to attend an Easter Service together. Let us begin this Templar year by joining together to celebrate the resurrection of our Savior and show the world what Templary in Tennessee stands for.

Roy T. Sutton III
Right Eminent Grand Commander
Grand Commandery Knights Templary of Tennessee



Grand Commander's Biography

Roy Tillman "Tim" Sutton III was born August 12, 1984 in Kingsport, TN to Roy T. Sutton II and Linda Sutton. Tim attended public schools and graduated from Sullivan South High School in 2003. Tim received an AAS in Electrical Technology from Northeast State Community College in 2009. He is currently employed at Johnson Controls as a Systems Controls Tech.

Tim married the former Lindsey Katherine Ramsey in 2009. They have two children, Ellen Love Roxanne Sutton, and Benjamin Tillman Sutton. Ellen is currently attending East Tennessee State University to attain a BS degree in Biology with a concentration in Biomedical Science, and Benjamin is an active DeMolay at Kingsport Chapter and is a Past Master Councilor. Tim and Lindsey are members of Sullivan Baptist Church in Sullivan Gardens where they currently live.

Tim was raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason on August 22, 2013 in Kingsport Lodge No. 688 where he served as Worshipful Master in 2018 and as Treasurer from 2019 to 2023. He was elected to Secretary in 2024 and is currently serving in that position. He is a plural member of Johnson Lodge No. 274 and District Deputy Chairman for District 23.

On August 24, 2013, he was Exalted in Lynn Bachman Chapter No. 195, serving as Excellent High Priest in 2016. He received the Order of High Priesthood in March 2016. Tim served the Grand Chapter as the Excellent Grand Master of the 3rd Veil in 2018. He served as Most Excellent Grand President of the Order of High Priesthood in 2021.

Tim was greeted as a member of Kingsport Council No. 117 on August 24, 2013, serving as Illustrious Master in 2017. He received the Order of the Silver Trowel in March 2017 and received the Grand Council Adult Youth Leadership Award in 2022.

Tim was Knighted in Kingsport Commandery No. 33 on September 20, 2013 and served as Eminent Commander in 2018. He received the Knight Crusader of the Cross in March 2018. He is also a member of Carter Commandery No. 37, Watauga Commandery No. 25, and served as Eminent Commander of St. Omer Commandery No. 19 in 2022 and 2023. He served the Grand Commandery as Grand Senior Warden in 2019 and 2020 and Grand Junior Warden in 2021. He received the Knights Templar Cross of Honor in 2020. He served as the Knights Templar Eye Foundation State Chairman from 2021 to 2024. Tim is currently serving as Secretary/Recorder of the Kingsport York Rite Bodies and is a Life Member of Kingsport Lodge No. 688 and the Kingsport York Rite Bodies.

Other Masonic affiliations include Tennessee Priory No. 15, KYCH, Charles Newton Bush Past Masters Association, Life Member of the Tennessee Lodge of Research, Past President and Life Member of the Upper East TN York Rite Association, Preeminent Governor of Northeast TN York Rite College No. 153, St. Julian Conclave, Red Cross of Constantine, Scottish Rite Valley of Knoxville and Past President of the Sullivan County Scottish Rite Club, Decorated KCCH in 2021, Royal Order of Scotland, Tennessee Court No. 122, Masonic Order of Athelstan, Cornelius Chapter No. 22, Commemorative Order of St. Thomas of Acon, Charter member of Volunteer Chapel No. 42, St. Thomas of Acon, Charter member of Filius Dei Tabernacle No. 84, Holy Royal Arch Knight Templar Priests, Charter member of Ordo Rosa et Crucis College Societas Rosicruciana In Civitatibus Foederatis, Charter member of Raven and Eagle No. 47, Masonic Order of Pilgrim Preceptors, Past Sovereign Master of Jacob R Denny Council No. 459, Allied Masonic Degrees, Past Excellent Chief of WW Cannon Council No. 96, Knight Masons, Chattanooga Asylum No. 2, Knight Commanders, Charter member and Past Knight Commander of Kingsport Asylum No. 3, Sovereign Order of Knight Preceptors, Sam Davis No. 125, Sword of Bunker Hill, Honorary member of Andrew Jackson DeMolay Chapter, and currently serving as Adult Advisor of Kingsport Chapter of DeMolay, Yellow Dog, and the Order of the 4 Black Llamas.

Tim was appointed to Eminent Grand Captain General on August 19, 2022 and elected as Grand Captain General on March 21, 2023 and advanced each year. He was elected Right Eminent Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery of Tennessee on March 24, 2026.

GRAND COMMANDER'S COIN

\$20.00



**PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE
KNIGHTS TEMPLAR EYE
FOUNDATION**

GRAND COMMANDER'S KNIFE

\$50.00



**PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE HOLY
LAND PILGRIMAGE**



2026 Grand Commandery Officers



Right Eminent Grand Commander		
Roy Tillman Sutton III (Tim) (19/25/33/37)	rtsutton3@gmail.com	423-384-5011
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Eminent Grand Warder		
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Eminent Grand Sentinel		
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From the Eminent Grand Prelate

Sir Knight Gary W. Coates

Prelates Devotion for April

Anticipate Miracles In Your Life

“Behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.” Matthew 28:2.

As we reflect upon Matthew 28:2, we uncover several valuable lessons. One resounding lesson is the power of faith. The removal of the stone is a compelling reminder that our faith in God helps us overcome life’s challenges. We should remain steadfast even through the storms of life, trusting that darkness doesn’t hold the final word.

Another lesson is the importance of divine assistance. The angel’s presence serves as a powerful reminder that God never leaves us to face our challenges alone. When trouble arises, we can lean on Him for support. He is a refuge and stronghold during our trials, providing clarity and strength. We can intentionally reach out to Him, inviting Him into our struggles.

This passage inspires faith-filled expectancy. Just as an angel appeared, rolling away the stone on that glorious morning, we too can hope and believe that God is more than capable of orchestrating breakthrough moments in our own lives. When we seek Him wholeheartedly, knowing He is at work, our faith has the potential to lead to extraordinary outcomes.

As we move forward, let us meditate on what it means to trust, believe, and anticipate the miraculous in our own lives. Whether we face challenges in our personal journeys, let us always look to Matthew 28:2 and its powerful message of hope for inspiration. May God’s presence be with you always!

In God’s Service,

Gary W. Coates, KTCH
Eminent Grand Prelate
Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Tennessee

An Esoteric Meditation on the Ascension Banner of the Knights of Malta

Part Two

by Sir Knight Mike Nicholson
Junior Warden, Kingsport Commandery #33

The Ascension banner does more than recall encouraging history; it also warns and instructs. In the life of knighthood, as in the life of faith, not every ascent is true. There are false ascents born of pride, ambition, and self-authorization. History is replete with conquerors who ascended to lofty heights only to tumble into ruin. A Sir Knight, steeped in scriptural and historical wisdom, remembers that Lucifer himself was said to have fallen by grasping at God's throne, declaring, "I will ascend." The builders of Babel sought to make a name by raising a tower into the heavens, and they too were cast down and confounded. The medieval Templars chose as their battle flag the Beauséant, half black and half white, and emblazoned their hearts with the motto "*Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed nomini Tuo da gloriam,*" "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Thy Name give glory." This was more than a pious slogan; it was a safeguard against pride, a reminder that any honor or victory the knight attains must only reflect upward to God. When the Knights of Malta took possession of their new domain, they did so not as conquerors claiming spoils but as stewards receiving a charge. They knew how easily ambition's poison could work its way into a warrior's soul. The false ascent for a knight would be to see Malta as personal aggrandizement, an island kingdom for worldly indulgence. The true ascent would be to see it as a *Mount of Olives*, a place of commissioning and service, where they must decrease so that God might increase.

Thus, the Ascension banner also symbolizes a moral checkpoint. Beneath its upward-pointing emblem, the knight is invited to examine his conscience: *Am I seeking to ascend in the eyes of men or in the eyes of God?* The only ascent that matters to a Knight of Christ is the ascent of the soul rising toward virtue, toward enlightenment, toward closer union with the divine will. Christ's Ascension teaches that true exaltation follows true humility. Recall that our Lord first descended into the Incarnation, into the depths of suffering and death, before He was raised and exalted on high. "*Whoever humbles himself shall be exalted,*" He taught, and He proved it with His life. The knight is called to that same paradoxical path. In the ritual of knighthood, the aspirant spends a night in prayer, often kneeling or even lying prostrate before the altar, emulating the entombment and resurrection. This vigil of silence and self-abasement is an initiation into humility. Only then is the new knight elevated by the touch of the sword and the accolade. It is a ceremonial ascent that must mirror an inner ascent in virtue. So the Ascension banner, ever so subtly, urges the knight to remember: *your spurs and title do not elevate you; only your service and sacrifice do.*

In that spirit, consider the interior castle each knight must build. Malta had to be transformed from a sparse island into a fortress-city. The knights constructed walls, bastions, churches, and hospitals, stone upon stone, until Valletta and the other cities of Malta became gems of Christendom. But simultaneously, each true knight was meant to be building an inner stronghold of faith. Each virtue practiced, each temptation overcome, each scripture studied in the quiet of the preceptory library—these are stones laid in the unseen cathedral of the soul. The Ascension of Christ invites the knight to set his mind "on things above, not on things of the earth." It challenges him to seek an *interior ascent*: to ascend from the man of dust to the man of the spirit, from the restless sea of passions to the firm rock of contemplation. The esoteric tradition within Christian knighthood speaks of a ladder of lights, a mystic ascent through successive degrees of self-knowledge and God-knowledge. Each rung corresponds to a virtue or a mystery of Christ's life. How fitting, then, that our Order's banners themselves trace the steps of our Lord's sojourn: from Bethlehem to Nazareth, to Calvary, to the empty tomb, and finally to Olivet's Mount of Ascension. Contemplating each in turn is a lesson in the soul's journey. Ascension, as the final step, represents the soul's return to God, the completion of the Great Work of spiritual alchemy when base desires are transmuted into divine charity, and the knight, purified by trials, is ready to be received into the heavenly city.

There is also an ascension in prayer that the banner calls to mind. In older Masonic Templar rituals and indeed in monastic lore, there is the beautiful idea of the oratio, the prayer that lifts the soul heavenward. When a knight kneels in the soft candlelight, sword belted at his side, and recites compline prayers, his spirit can ascend in that moment to commune with the angels. The physical eyes see only the banner cloth and the dark ceiling of

the hall, but the inward eye of faith beholds the heavens opened, where Christ our Captain sits in eternal council. The Letter to the Hebrews offers a powerful image: Christ as our High Priest has “passed through the veil” into the Holy of Holies of heaven, there to intercede for us. When the knights celebrate Ascension Day, they reflect on this truth: our Champion and Mediator stands before the Father’s throne. He is unseen, yet our lives are “hid with Christ in God.” In their vows, the knights pledge loyalty to this unseen king and promise to defend not only the earthly heritage of Malta but also the spiritual Temple of the Lord’s Body, the Church, and the faith of Christ. The mystical subtext of the Ascension banner is that *the real battlefield is within*. As much as the knights trained their cannon on the horizons against enemy fleets, the wiser knights knew the fiercest sieges are those of the soul. Pride, sloth, greed, and doubt—these are the infidel hordes that besiege the citadel of the heart. Only by ascetic vigilance, by study of divine law, and by prayers uttered at dawn’s first light and midnight’s watch can the knight within conquer and ascend beyond these lower instincts. This ascetic knighthood is a quiet affair fought in the cloister of one’s heart, yet it underpins all the public heroics that history records. Without inner victory, outer victory is hollow.

These three concepts form a triad that links Christ’s Ascension to the knights’ ethos. Commissioning: The Ascension was, in a sense, Christ’s final investiture of His followers. He appointed them as His ambassadors to the world. Every Sir Knight, when he stands under the Ascension banner, can almost hear those words spoken to the Eleven on the mount: “*Go forth and teach all nations... and lo, I am with you always.*” The knight’s adaptation of this commission might read, “*Go forth and defend the faith, protect the weak, uphold the Cross... and lo, your Lord is with you, though unseen.*” The banner’s very name, Ascension, implies movement upward and outward; it reminds the knight that he is sent from the base of Malta (or his home Commandery) to higher service. Enthronement: In Christian theology, Ascension is the triumph of Christ the King. He sits at the right hand of God, “*angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him.*” To a knight, this is a comforting truth: no matter how dire the battle, Christ reigns supreme above all earthly powers. The Ascension banner, with Christ rising above, assures him that the *ultimate sovereignty* lies not with any emperor, grand master, or sultan, but with the King of Kings. This knowledge steadies the knight. It also humbles him that his service is to that celestial throne. It calls forth loyalty of the deepest sort: fealty to an unseen Sovereign. In the days when the Order ruled Malta, the knights had a Grand Master and owed courtesy to the distant Emperor who had given them the fief, but in their hearts they knew their true liege lord was Christ ascended. In vigil and in battle, they would whisper prayers to Him for aid, not trusting in their own strength alone. Moral Trial: After the Ascension, the apostles entered a new era where their faith would be tested greatly. They no longer had the immediate voice of the Master to consult; they had to remember His teachings and act. So too did the gift of Malta inaugurate a period of testing for the Order. Would they remain as disciplined and devout on a small island as they had been on mighty Rhodes? Would they govern with justice, defend with courage, and keep their monastic vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience amid new temptations of temporal power? The decades that followed, culminating in the Great Siege of 1565, proved the mettle of their souls. Under Grand Master Jean de Valette, the knights on Malta, vastly outnumbered, withstood the onslaught of the Ottoman armada. Many died, martyrs of their chivalric oath. But they held the island. This victory, won at terrible cost, was a crucible that showed the world the knights’ faith was not mere ceremony; it was steel forged in fire. And in that trial, they likely felt the reinforcement of their ascended Lord, as if the banner of Ascension unfurled over the smoke of battle, reminding them of a higher promise: “*He shall not leave us orphans; He shall return, and His justice with Him.*”

When the guns fell silent and Malta remained Christian, Europe rejoiced. But the wisest knights gave the glory to God alone. In solemn thanksgiving they gathered in the chapels of Fort St. Angelo and the new city of Valletta, praising Christ Ascended, the Holy Virgin, and all the host of heaven for their deliverance. They knew their own ascent, military and moral, was upheld by divine strength. In the aftermath, the Order redoubled its commitment to be worthy of the trust placed in it. Churches, hospitals, and schools of navigation and medicine flourished. Malta became not just a shield, but a beacon. This reflects back to the symbolism of the banner: *Ascension* is not an end, but a beginning of mission. Christ’s ascension did not close His work; it opened the age of the Church. Likewise, the knights’ ascent to sovereignty in Malta was not a culmination to rest upon, but the dawn of new labors. The banner waving in the Mediterranean breeze told every knight, “*Stand fast. You are watchmen now, atop the tower. Be faithful until your Lord returns.*”

In our present age, a Knight Templar or Knight of Malta no longer defends literal ramparts against corsairs, yet the call to spiritual knighthood is as urgent as ever. The Ascension banner hanging in our Commandery halls continues to inspire and admonish. Its message is deeply esoteric yet also eminently practical. It whispers that each knight's life must become an ascension, a gradual climbing from the base impulses toward the summit of God's will. This ascent is achieved not by the sword, but by the disciplines of the soul. Vigilance, study, and silence are among the knight's most potent weapons in this interior ascent. Vigilance: to stand guard over one's thoughts and actions as steadfastly as the knights once guarded the Holy Sepulcher, ever alert against the incursion of sin or despair. Study: to delve into scripture, doctrine, and the lore of the Order, arming the mind with truth, much as a knight sharpens his blade. Silence: to cultivate an inner quiet where the voice of the Spirit can be heard, echoing that ancient angelic question, "*Men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?*" which prods us to seek Christ not in passive longing, but in active living.

To lovers of books and mystery, to those knights who see their path as one of spiritual formation and transformation, the Ascension banner speaks volumes without a single printed word. It invites meditation on the unseen realities: the "*Cloud of Unknowing*" that we must enter by faith as we pray; the celestial hierarchies and the communion of saints above, who cheer on our earthly battles; and the ultimate ascent of the soul in divine union, which all our lesser ascents prefigure. In the contemplative silence of a late evening, a Sir Knight may sit in the library amidst leather-bound volumes of lore, the Ascension banner faintly visible in the flicker of lamp-light. He ponders how each hero of the Order before him walked this same narrow path of duty and devotion. He reads of L'Isle-Adam's unwavering hope, of de Valette's courage chastened by piety, and of unsung brothers who tended the sick in the language of love. Patterning himself on these, he feels within a stirring, a desire to climb the high road of virtue they climbed. This is the *vowed ascent*: a promise made not to human superiors alone, but to God, that he will strive each day to rise closer to the ideals emblazoned on that banner.

Before concluding his reverie, the knight recalls how the Ascension story itself ends in Scripture: with the disciples returning to Jerusalem "with great joy" and devoting themselves to prayer in the Temple, awaiting the promised Spirit. Joyful vigilance—what a paradox, yet what a perfect charge for a modern Templar! *Gaudete et vigilate*: rejoice and keep watch. Our King has ascended beyond our sight, but not beyond our reach. Through prayer and sacrament we touch the hem of His celestial robe; through righteous action we extend His reign in this world. The knight stands and perhaps offers a final salute toward the Ascension banner as he leaves. It is a salute not to a piece of fabric but to what it represents: the reality of Christ's lordship and the call to serve Him wholeheartedly in His seeming absence.

In the end, the Ascension banner teaches that every true knightly journey is an ascent, sometimes through battle, often through penance, always through grace. It assures us that if we humble ourselves to carry the cross, in God's time we will be lifted up. It beckons us to set our eyes on Heaven's heights even as our feet walk the humble earth. As modern Knights Templar, we hear in its voiceless voice an esoteric exhortation: *Rise, Sir Knight, above the clamor of self. Climb, by the ladder of virtues, to the realm where your Captain awaits. Be vigilant in study and steadfast in silence; let your soul be a watchtower. Wear your white cross purely, let its eight points be eight stars guiding your path. Serve the unseen Sovereign with a loyal heart, and you shall be transformed in the process.* Under the Ascension banner's benediction, we commit ourselves anew to that journey of ascent upward, inward, homeward. In patience and fidelity, in *militiae et silentio* (service and silence), we shall be transformed from glory to glory, until the day the clouds part and our King, who once ascended, returns in the fullness of His Majesty. *Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed Nomini Tuo da gloriam.*



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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