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## **Greetings from the Grand Secretary**

**The Grand Lodge Messenger**

January 2021

*Message From M.W. Chris J. Coffman*

My Brothers,

As we begin a new year, it is my hope that it will bring: joy and happiness; an end to the COVID-19 pandemic: and some semblance of normality to our lives. I am hopeful that we will be able to hold regular Lodge meetings and meet again on the level as Brothers.

The approval of vaccines is a huge step forward. While the end of this period of preventative measures imposed to control the spread of COVID 19 will end, we are not there yet. After nine months of closed schools, restaurants, in-person Lodge meetings, social distancing, face masks, demonstrations due to racial injustice, and over 350,000 COVID 19 deaths, our nerves are on edge. We are not as patient with those with whom we disagree as we were a year ago. Civility in public discourse is becoming even more difficult to find.

It is time we reflect on our Masonic virtues and duties. The Closing Charge reminds us to be diligent, prudent, temperate, and discrete. Further, it tells us that our duties to others go beyond members of our Gentle Craft, but that every human being has a claim on our kind offices.

I have read some social media posts from some Brothers that I am sure were written without pausing to consider if they could be toned down. I am reminded of Netflix educational piece my grandchildren (age 6 and 8) have viewed several times. It pointed out how easy it is to be critical of others when you do not have to do it face to face. The Grand Lodge has adopted Social Media guidelines. I believe we should all read it again and take it to heart. Here it is:

The Grand Lodge of Washington recognizes that the use of social media has grown exponentially in recent years and has a goal of supporting the appropriate, regular and extensive use of these communication media. Many Brethren regularly connect by social media platforms. Remember members of the general public as well as the Masonic Fraternity are reading your posts online. As Masons, we must be mindful that our individual postings not only reflect our own individual character but reflect on Freemasonry across the Grand Jurisdiction, our nation, and the world at large. We must be aware that our postings are a permanent record; therefore, our conduct with a positive or negative post may influence the world opinion about not only the author, but the organizations to which he belongs.

For example, posting a comment related to the Fraternity and then later posting a separate, disparaging comment about a social or political stance can easily be misconstrued by readers that your stance is representative of Masonry and all Masons.

Ultimately, because you are a Mason, your actions online should promote the highest standards of civility, morality and integrity. A Mason is always a Mason and should always conduct himself as a Mason in all of his interactions regardless of whether those interactions are in person, or through social media. This includes compliance with the Washington Masonic Code and all of your obligations.

#### Social Media Guidelines:

##### 1. A Mason:

- Should conduct himself with the same courtesy on social media as he would in front of the general public;
- Should never use disparaging comments, obscene, vulgar, etc. when posting; including, but not limited to, graphics, photographs, video and audio recordings which may be referred to in your posts;
- Must never post “ritual” or “tyled” information;
- Should not use social media to obtain personal advantage in promoting political, religious or business activities by targeting other Masons; and
- Should not use social media to contact other Grand Jurisdictions unless you are also a member of that Grand Jurisdiction. Remember, all inter-jurisdictional communication is to be conducted by and between Grand Secretaries

discuss past events, video sharing and discussion of times of fellowship and promotion of Masonic bodies.

3. A Lodge maintaining a social media page or platform should always ensure a minimum of two (2) officers have all necessary usernames and passwords and are established “administrators” of said page or platform.

4. The Washington Masonic Code prohibits certain actions including:

- Discussion or other sharing of information regarding an application, background or investigation of an applicant for the Degrees of Masonry or
- Disclosure of how a Brother balloted on a candidate.

5. Brother-to-Brother intervention should be the first course of action if something improper has been posted.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the Grand Secretary, at (253) 272-3263 or at [grandsecretary@freemason-wa.org](mailto:grandsecretary@freemason-wa.org).

Remember the Past, Visualize the Future

Chris Coffman  
Grand Master

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## ***Message From R.W. Cameron M. Bailey Deputy Grand Master***

My Brothers,

It is with a heavy heart that we had to make the decision to cancel the 2021 Lodge Leadership Retreat. Given the current Governor's Covid related orders, and projections over the next few months, neither the Grand Lodge, nor the Convention Center believed that we would be able to hold our annual training event in the spring of 2021.

Our Lodge Leadership Committee, under the very able leadership of VW Jeremy Yielding, had put together an excellent suite of classes and events. All of that work will carry over into 2022, when we do expect to be able to have a superb Lodge Leadership Retreat, and at which we hope attendance will be great, given just how vital the information shared is to the future success of our Lodges.

In the meantime, our Lodge Leadership Committee will continue to offer periodic classes via Zoom. We hope that you find these classes valuable and interesting, and that you will continue to participate in that forum until we can meet again as Masons.

Fraternally,  
Cameron M. Bailey  
Deputy Grand Master

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***From the Desk of R.W. Clinton M. Brown, Jr.  
Grand Secretary***

I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday and a happy New Year. Due to the restrictions imposed by the Governor, the Grand Lodge staff continues to work from home. However, we continue to respond to emails, check the mail and check our messages. This is not the ideal situation and we all hope that we can return to the office very soon. But we want you to know that we continue to conduct the business of Grand Lodge and we will answer your inquires and questions as quickly as possible. Please be patient with the Grand Lodge staff during this time.

There are a couple of things that the Grand Lodge team has been working very hard to bring to the Lodges. First, we are putting the final touches on the new Grand Lodge of Washington website. The website itself is just about finished and I anticipate that we will have it up and running next week. The website's primary focus will be to let men who are interested in joining the Fraternity know what Freemasonry is about and how to join. However, there will be lots of information for current members as well. We also have made it much easier to navigate and hopefully much more visually appealing. The website address will remain the same, [www.freemason-wa.org](http://www.freemason-wa.org). Check back later next week as I hope to have the site up and running by then.

I'm sure many of you have heard by now that we have had to cancel the Lodge Leadership Retreat scheduled for March 2021. However, the Lodge Leadership Committee continues to work on presenting classes via Zoom until we can meet again in person. Here is a list of the upcoming classes along with the dates and times.

- Saturday January 23rd at 10:00 a.m.- Lodge Finances - RW Clint Brown
- Saturday February 20th at 10:00 a.m. - WM and Secretary Relationship - VWB David Colbeth
- Saturday March 20th from 10:00 a.m. - Ritual and Masonic Education - VWB Zane McCune (round 2)
- Saturday April 17th at 10:00 a.m. - The Elephant in the Room - WB Ken Lane
- Saturday May 15th at 10:00 a.m. - Long Range Planning - VWB Larry Foley

If you are interested in attending one of these classes, please log on to Grand View ([wa.gvsoftware.com](http://wa.gvsoftware.com)) where you will find more information about the class along with the Zoom meeting link. Please do not share these links with anyone who is not a Mason or on any social media platform.

Last but not least, **don't forget that your Annual Return is due no later than February 1, 2021.** Every Lodge received instructions for completing the Annual Return in early December. If you cannot find the instructions, the Lodge Secretary can access them on the Grand View Dashboard under Resources/Forms. Here are some answers to frequently asked questions regarding the Annual Returns.

- Do I have to print out and sign the annual return? Yes. However, **either** the Secretary or Worshipful Master can sign it. We do not require both to sign. You can also scan and email your return to [lynneb@freemason-wa.org](mailto:lynneb@freemason-wa.org) if you would like to save on postage.
- Do you need a copy of our 990 with the Annual Return? Yes. However, if you file the long version, we only need a copy of the front page showing that it has been filed. Remember that the code says that you must send in your last filed 990. So, if you haven't filed your 990 for 2020, please send in your 2019 filing. Also, don't forget to include a copy of the Temple Board 990 as well.
- Will I receive an invoice from Grand Lodge for our Grand Lodge fee? No. Your invoice is the cover page from Grand View for the Annual Return. The Grand Lodge fee is due no later than April 15, 2021. However, you can send in a check with your completed Annual Return if you wish.

Remember that the Washington Masonic Code states that you will be charged \$5.00 per day if you are late filing your Annual Return. Please do not hesitate to email either myself or Lynne if you have questions.

Happy New Year and stay safe.

## ***From The Desk of V.W. Clayton LaVigne Assistant Grand Secretary***

Holiday Greetings!

Most of the time, we regard this time of the year as a new beginning, a way to start with a clean slate, with an agenda of “New Year's Resolutions” to improve ourselves, change old, bad habits, and to continue the upward trend in our lives over the years. But, as many of us know all too well, most of those new years resolutions fall flat before even springtime, and the new year ends up becoming a carryover of the previous year.

This year is showing to be exactly that, so far. As I type this article, our state, and our nation, is in the middle of turbulence that it hasn't seen in many years. The blatant incivility is shocking and embarrassing. The divisiveness in our society is worse than many of us can remember. And this is carrying on in the middle of a Pandemic that is ravaging not only our country, but the entire world. It is true that tribulation is nothing new to our civilization, but that familiarity doesn't make things any easier.

However, even in situations such as this, Freemasons have always been known to be the voice of civility. The leaders who lead by example. The ones who the troubled turn to in times of distress. The ones whose actions are guided by justice, but at the same time, compassion and benevolence. If these things sound familiar to you, that's great, as they should. Read the Charges of the three degrees, the Closing Charges, and in addition, the Charges and regulations of the Worshipful Master, Wardens and the Lodge in the ceremony of the Installation of Officers. Study them and make those characteristics a defining part of who you are, and perfect those qualities in yourself.

We have more ways to communicate with our fellow community members than we ever had in history. The tools are there to shine our beacon in these dark times. Some of us have done exactly that, and I am proud to see those Brothers who refuse to fall into the trap of divisive, combative behavior and take the road of civility, even-handedness, and wisdom.

Please remember that there many in our communities that wish to join us for that very reason. By your good example, you will inspire even more good men to join our ranks. And that, my Brothers, gives me hope that even if this year is off to a rough start, the growth of our Masonic Institution will make a positive difference in our communities that will compound, and in due time will prevail over our country, and the world.

Never lose sight of the optimism and hope that each new year provides. May the year 2021 be indeed a better year than last year!

Fraternally,  
Clayton LaVigne  
Assistant Grand Secretary

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## ***Sickness & Distress – Masonic Outreach Services is Here to Assist***

Do you know a Mason, Masonic widow, or member of our Masonic family who needs assistance due to age, illness, disability, or hardship? Maybe you could use a little help yourself? Masonic Outreach Services' Care

daily needs.

Please, if you know someone who can use our assistance, help them connect with us by calling, toll free, (844) 288-3531 or [outreach@masonscare.org](mailto:outreach@masonscare.org)

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## Grand Lodge Events

***January 9, 2021 - 11:00 AM - District 10 Meeting - Zoom Teleconference  
Links to the meeting are on the Seminar page on GrandView.***

***January 9, 2021 - 3:00 PM - District 9 Meeting - Zoom Teleconference  
Links to the meeting are on the Seminar page on GrandView.***

***January 12, 2021 - 7:00 PM - Grand Master's Open Forum - Zoom Teleconference  
Links to the meeting are on the Seminar page on GrandView.***

***January 15, 2021 - 3:00 PM - District 7 Meeting - Zoom Teleconference  
Links to the meeting are on the Seminar page on GrandView.***

***January 23, 2021 - 10:00 AM - Lodge Finance - Zoom Teleconference  
Links to the meeting are on the Seminar page on GrandView.***

***January 30, 2021 - 12:00 PM - District 8 Meeting - Zoom Teleconference  
Links to the meeting are on the Seminar page on GrandView.***

***February 20, 2021 - 10:00 AM - WM and Secretary Relationship - Zoom Teleconference  
Links to the meeting are on the Seminar page on GrandView.***

***February 26, 2021 - 6:30 PM - District 3 Meeting - Zoom Teleconference  
Links to the meeting are on the Seminar page on GrandView.***

***February 27, 2021 - 5:00 PM - District 4 & 5 Meeting - Zoom Teleconference  
Links to the meeting are on the Seminar page on GrandView.***

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***The Grand Lodge Office is closed due to the impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Grand Lodge staff remain available by email during normal business hours.***

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## **Lodge Secretary Corner**

### **2020 End of Year Report**

#### **IMPORTANT DATES:**

**January 8th, 2021 – You must have all your information for the 2020 year entered into the Grand View system.**

**February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 – Your 2020 End of Year Return from Grand View, 2020 Financial Annual Report and 990's must be received or postmarked to Grand Lodge.**

The End of Year packet is be available for you to download a copy from the Grand View database under forms & Docs. (2020 End of Year Forms and Procedures)

#### **Secretary Resources**

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## **Grand Lodge Website**

### **Contact Us**



### **Subscribe**

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