

Masonic Memorial Service

This memorial service was originally written, and first presented in Tuckahoe Lodge in 1981. Since that time it has been revised several times and is presented annually in December. Accessories used for the service: A small table, draped in black, placed southwest of the altar. On the table: all of the Master Masons working tools, and one white candle. For the stewards: one carnation for each departed brother. In addition, a white leather apron, and one sprig of evergreen are required. The overhead lights are extinguished; the Speaker approaches the small draped table, lights the lone candle and begins:

Speaker: My Brethren, and friends. For many years it has been our custom in this Lodge to assemble each December, and for a brief time set aside the business of the Lodge. This is an opportunity to pay our last tribute of respect to those Brethren whose span of mortal years came to an end during the past year, and to honor the memory of all those who have entered into joy of our creator. In keeping with this custom, we have assembled tonight as brothers, friends, and family, to console one another in this hour of remembrance, and to ponder within our hearts the significance of this occasion. Thus, this evening we give ourselves to this brief time of memorial for nine of our brethren who have laid down the working tools of life, and are now in the presence and safekeeping of their God.

Soft piano music begins as the Speaker moves to the podium in the East. Music continues softly throughout the service, except during the prayer. The Lodge Musician should choose appropriate hymns.

Speaker: What we say and do here tonight is by no means an empty form, nor should it be seen as excessive veneration of the dead. Rather it is our desire to again, and for one last time, call out and remember the names of those whose service to this Lodge has been cut short by the ever advancing scythe of time.

Tonight we remember our departed brethren for the strong grip of friendship, for their pledge of your defense, and their vow of aid and wise counsel. Remember them for their every virtue and for their every evidence of goodness. They have laid down the working tools of life, God has claimed their souls from their mortal remains of this earth, and His will is now accomplished.

In this time of memorial, however, it's not enough merely to raise eulogies to the dead. We must also look upon their death as an opportunity to further refine our own philosophy and understanding of death and that, my friends, has to be a part of the philosophy of life. Masonry, be it anything at all, is a teaching experience, and not the least of the lessons that it teaches is one of the uncertainty, and frailty of human life. Whether it's where the acacia gave way, or at the graveside of a fallen Brother, or here this evening as we sit in quiet contemplation, Masonry once again says, "Here we view another instance of the uncertainty of human life".

But, because we are Masons, and because we hold a strong belief in the immortality of the soul, we can say with certainty that death is not the end but merely a milestone, and the beginning of another phase that is far beyond what you and I can comprehend. The dust of the mortal frame returns to the earth, and the soul returns to God who gave it.

With such a belief we will call our Brothers' names and raise our voices in their praise, secure in the knowledge that the sound does not echo endlessly through limitless realms of space, but is indeed heard and understood by those of whom we speak. The Stewards will advance West of the altar.

The Secretary reads the name, date of raising, and date of death, of the brethren to be honored. As each Brother's name is read the Jr. Steward places a white carnation on the table for each of the departed brethren. After the last name is read and last flower placed, the Sr. Steward places a white funeral apron and sprig of evergreen on the table, when the Speaker calls for those items.

The lambskin, or white leather Apron, represents innocence and is acknowledged around the world as the time honored badge of a Freemason. It is older than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle, and carries more honor than the Star and Garter, when worthily worn. By it we are reminded of the universal dominion of Death....death from which we cannot escape. The arm of Friendship cannot prevent his coming, nor can the wealth of the world purchase our release.

To a Mason, *the evergreen* is an emblem of our faith in the immortality of the Soul. The evergreen leaves are symbolic of our conviction that life will continue to flourish even after death, and that one day we will be united in the house with many mansions, eternal in the heavens.

As a token of remembrance and our heartfelt thanks, this evergreen is offered tonight in memory of all members of the US military who have served and paid the ultimate price in the ongoing efforts to protect and preserve the freedoms that we all enjoy. May they rest in peace. Brother Chaplain, advance to the altar and offer our evening devotions.

As the stewards return to their places, the WM asks those present to stand; the Chaplain advances to the altar, kneels and offers the following prayer. As the Chaplain kneels, the music ends.

Chaplain: Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, in Whom we live and move and have our being, and unto Whom we ultimately return, we thank Thee for the gift of life; for its wonders and mysteries; for its friendships and fellowships. We thank Thee for the ties which bind us to each other; for the meaning which lies hidden even in the heart of sorrow and grief....And for Thy guiding hand along the way of our earthly journey.

We offer our thanks to Thee for these, Thy servants. We thank Thee for the good and gracious influence in their home and training; for all the goodness and truth that have passed from their lives into the lives of others. We are thankful that our paths in life have crossed, for we are left richer for that experience.

We pray for those whose hearts are heaviest and who in this moment need Thee more than ever. Guide them and bless them and lead them into that unfaltering trust that life does not end with death; that the Father who made us all will indeed care for us beyond the bounds of our vision, just as He cares for us in this earthly world. We pray for a renewal of the gifts of faith, patience, and enduring love in all of us. Help us to walk amid the things of this world with eyes wide open to the beauty and glory of all things eternal. Amen. So mote it be.

Music begins as the Chaplain rises and returns to his place. The Speaker then offers this benediction.

Speaker: What we call Death is but a sudden change....a lasting sleep. Therefore, as mortals, we mourn and we weep. What we call Death is but a release from strife. Our brethren have gone from earthly life....to eternal Life. Tonight, when we mix again with the world, take with you in your heart the memory of those whom we honored and remembered tonight. May the *light* of God surround you, may the *love* of God enfold you, the *power* of God protect you, and the *presence* of God watch over you. Peace be with you, now and forever more. So mote it be.

As the music ends, the WM seats the Lodge, and the overhead lights are again turned on.

Speaker: Tuckahoe Lodge has chosen the name ‘Sister’s of Hiram’ to denote the widows of our members who have passed to the Celestial Lodge. The brethren of Tuckahoe are so thankful that you supported your husband’s involvement in the Masonic fraternity for whatever time he shared your life here on earth. Tonight we acknowledge your presence and want everyone, no matter where you might travel, to be able to recognize you as part of our Masonic family. Tonight we have for each of our ‘sister’s’ the Masonic Blue Slipper pin. Cast in the shape of a ladies slipper, it bears the deep, rich color of blue, representing the color of the starry-decked heavens, and this blue lodge of Masons. It is emblazoned with the Masonic square and compasses, and the all-seeing eye that represents the ever-watchful eye of God.



We selected this emblem in the hope that it would be worn by our “Sister’s of Hiram” on all appropriate occasions, especially when traveling, so that you may be recognized, greeted, and assisted when necessary, by Masonic friends throughout the world.

This Masonic emblem symbolizes our continued concern and honor for the widow of a Brother Master Mason, a Brother whose name added luster to the Craft as he labored with us in the quarries of Freemasonry. Now that his name has been entered upon the Roll of the Celestial Lodge, we cannot forget those things which he loved so deeply, nor can we be un-mindful of our duty to him, and to those who remain behind. With that in mind, Barry Faison, Worshipful Master of our Lodge is pleased to present this emblem to you. We hope you will wear it with great pride. It’s our desire that it be a reminder of your ties to us; a relationship wherein you will find friends who will assist you in times of need, join with you in times of gladness, and welcome you into a continued association with us as we continue our labors of Friendship, Brotherly Love, and Truth.

On behalf of the Worshipful Master and members of Tuckahoe Lodge I extend a sincere thank you for sharing in this time of remembrance.

Lodge Memorial Service written and presented by Douglas Messimer, PM, LEO.
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