

Tuckahoe Lodge – 2016 Memorial Service

As Masons we are gathered here in the presence of Almighty God to pay tribute to the memory of seven departed Brethren of our fraternity. These last acts of respect and love we pay at this time may be deemed by some as useless ceremonies. We know that they serve as strong lessons to the living. This service is a ceremony not of bitter grief, but one of Faith, Hope, and Remembrance.

For us to view present-day Masonry in its true perspective, we need to go back centuries into antiquity when our ancient Brethren labored in both operative and speculative Masonry. As operative Masons they were designers and builders of centuries-old, world-renowned structures recognized for their architectural beauty and grandeur. As speculative Masons they practiced the scientific application and the religious consecration of the rules and principles, the language, the implements and materials of operative Masons to the veneration of God, the purification of the heart, and the inculcations of a religious philosophy.

Today, as members of the Craft, we labor only as speculative Masons. We put our trust in the highest power...in God. At all times we seek His Divine blessing and pray for His guidance in every worthwhile undertaking. We firmly and steadfastly believe in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.

We believe each of us has a task to perform...a job to do. We are builders all. We, each of you and I, as individuals are obligated to build a Temple...a spiritual Temple worthy of our God-given soul. Masonry endeavors to teach us how to build that Temple as designed by the Great Architect of the Universe, with the plans and designs and rules inscribed on our moral and spiritual trestle board -- the Holy Scriptures.

Our hearts are saddened and our vision dimmed by this great mystery of death, the most profound mystery of all human experiences....a great change which sooner or later must come to each of us. When the time comes we know not. All expect it, and none escape it. By it we are reminded of the uncertainty of human life and a sense of utter grief weighs heavily on those nearest and dearest to these our departed Brethren. Our fraternity emphasizes that we should so daily live that we can welcome the grim tyrant of death as a kind messenger sent to translate us from the imperfect, to that all perfect, celestial world where the Great Architect of the Universe presides.

When life's day has ended and a loved one has gone to rest, we are somehow lifted above the plane of everyday life and our souls are permitted to catch faint glimmer of the spiritual world. It is then that we are comforted by His words, and are again reassured that we have a future home in the Grand Lodge above.

For many decades it has been our usual practice here in Tuckahoe Lodge to hold a memorial ceremony for our Brethren who have entered the Celestial Lodge. It is now our time to remember those who have served us well in the Craft and now have earned their rest. For these Brethren the sands of time have run their course through the hourglass of life. Brother Secretary, be pleased to read the Masonic records of those we honor and remember tonight.

Coleman Drummond Figg 2/15/16
William Snider Ferguson 3/19/16
Floyd Edward Proffitt 5/8/2016
Phillip Franklin Giles 4/28/2015 notified 5/17/16
Edwin Fitzhugh Atkinson 12/11/15 notified 7/14/16
Charles Wesley Nuckols, Jr. 7/21/16
William Young Roper, III 8/25/16

Today, we of the Masonic Fraternity, still revere the implements of operative Masonry, and regard them as emblems in our speculative science. As such, we have placed together different values on these implements than did our ancient Brethren. We view the compasses as encircling the virtues of Friendship, Morality, and Brotherly Love. The Plumb admonishes us to walk uprightly before God and man. The Square measures our thoughts, words, and actions as to honesty and sincerity. The Level reminds us we are traveling on the level of time to that undiscovered country from whence no traveler will return.

Among other emblems we make use of to enhance the teachings of our institution are the white lambskin apron and a sprig of Acacia. In all ages the lamb has been recognized as an emblem of innocence. So it is only natural that the *white lambskin apron* is the Masonic emblem of purity and innocence. This was the Fraternity's first tangible gift to each of these Brethren. It is considered more honorable than any gift that could have been bestowed upon him by a king, prince, or potentate. It is the badge of a Mason, and he was directed to wear it with honor...ever remembering to keep it free of worldly stains, by following the rules as set forth in the Holy Scriptures. Also, it is a symbol of service...and we believe he serves God who serves mankind.

Of no less importance as an emblem of our Fraternity is the sprig of evergreen. It is emblematical of our faith in the immortality of the soul. By its color, the green of Hope, we express our belief in the reunion beyond the grave. By its leaves that flourish and die and return again, we signify our trust in the resurrection and the triumph over death, our belief is that the soul of each of us is immortal, and eternal. The memory of our Brethren we shall cherish in our hearts. Their souls we commend to Almighty God who gave it.

Brethren, Let us bow our heads in reverence as the Chaplain offers a prayer and benediction.

Chaplain: Merciful and Eternal God: We thank Thee for the peace and serenity that comes to us in times of grief when we stop and realize that Thou are always in our presence. We pray Thee, Our Father, to teach us day by day that we are but pilgrims and strangers upon this earth. As the ties of brotherhood are broken one by one and kindred and friends pass from our sight, give us the grace to place our affections more and more within the bounds of things that are spiritual and enduring, now and forever more. *Amen.* Response: (So Mote it Be.)

The Lord bless us and keep us; the Lord make His face to shine upon us and be gracious unto us; the Lord lift up His countenance upon us, and give us peace, both now and forever more, Amen.



...Another 'nugget from the quarry of Freemasonry'. SM © 2010

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