

Tuckahoe Lodge Memorial Service – 2017



This memorial service was originally written and presented in Tuckahoe Lodge in 1981. Since then it has been revised many times and is presented annually in December. It is appropriate for presentation in a tiled Lodge or as a public ceremony. Accessories needed for the service: A small table draped in black near the podium or in the East. On the table: one white candle, a white leather apron, one carnation, and one sprig of evergreen. The overhead lights are extinguished; as a background, soft piano music begins as the Speaker moves to the podium. Music continues softly throughout the service, pausing during the reading of the masonic records. The Lodge Musician should choose appropriate background music. The Speaker approaches the small draped table. He lights the lone candle and begins:

Speaker: As Masons we have gathered in the presence of Almighty God to pay our last tribute of respect to the memory of six departed Brethren of our fraternity. May these last acts of love and respect that we pay tonight be lessons to the living. This service is a time of memorial...a testimony to the good lives of our Brethren. It is not a ceremony of bitter grief, but of Faith, it is not offered in despair, but in Hope.

For us today to view present-day Masonry in its true perspective, we need to go back centuries into antiquity when our ancient Brethren and forbearers 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 Masonry to the veneration of God, and the purification of the heart.

Today, as members of the Masonic fraternity, we labor only in speculative Masonry. We put our trust in the highest power...in God. At every opportunity 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.

Each Mason has a task to perform....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 indelibly inscribed on our moral and spiritual trestle board – the book that occupies the center of our Lodge....the Holy Bible.

Masonry further endeavors to teach us that we direct all our energies and efforts to the building of our spiritual Temple so that it will rise stately, magnificent, inspiring...a joy to the beholder, a serene satisfaction to ourselves, and that it will be acceptable in the sight of Almighty God.

Our hearts are saddened and our vision is dimmed by this great mystery of death, the most profound mystery of all human experiences...a change which sooner or later must come to each of us. All expect it, and none escape it. By it we are reminded of the uncertainty of human life and a sense of grief weighs heavily on those nearest and dearest.

Our gentle craft emphasizes that we should live each day of our lives so that we can welcome the grim tyrant of death, and receive him as a kind messenger sent to transition 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 these beloved friends and Brothers have gone to rest, we are somehow lifted above the plane of everyday life and our souls are permitted to catch faint glimpse of the spiritual world. It's then that we are comforted by His words, and are again reassured that we have a future home in the Grand Lodge Above, a house not made with hands, eternal in heaven.

For four score and 14 years it has been the practice of this Lodge to put aside the business of the Lodge and offer a memorial ceremony for those that God has called Home. Brother Secretary, be pleased to read the Masonic records of those whom we honor tonight.

James Carl Mc Gonigal 12/2/16
Allen Oscar Ballinger 4/8/17
Shirley Elvin Tuck, Jr. 5/7/17
Zolton Julius Phillips, III 5/10/17
Gordan Andrew Roach 6/4/17
Carroll Benjamin Durrer 11/22/17

The music pauses while the Secretary reads the Masonic record and date of death, of the brethren to be honored. When the last record is read the music continues.

Today, we of the Masonic Fraternity, still revere the implements of operative Masonry, and regard them as emblems of our speculative science. As such, we have placed different values on these implements than our ancient Brethren did. 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 toward that undiscovered country from whence no traveler returns.

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. A Masonic Apron was the Fraternity's first tangible gift to our Brother. It is recognized as ancient and most honorable. It is the badge of a Freemason recognized around the world. Also, it's a symbol of service...and we believe he who serves his fellowman, ultimately serves God.

Of no less importance as an emblem of our Fraternity is this sprig of Acacia, or 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 of souls 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 eternal.

Brethren and friends, please rise as the Chaplain offers our evening prayer.

Chaplain: Merciful and Eternal God: Thou has given us life, and determined the number of our days and our months. We acknowledge Thee in this sweetly solemn moment, remembering our fallen Brethren as we honor their memory, reaching forth in expectation to commit them for eternity into Thy tender care and keeping. Bless us in these moments that we shall take from them renewed inspiration, courage and dedication to our faith and to our Masonic principles. We thank you for the peace and serenity that comes to us in times of grief when we stop and realize that you are always in our presence. Teach us day by day that we are but pilgrims and strangers upon this earth, that here we have no continuing place of refuge. As the ties of family are broken one by one, and kindred and brethren pass from our sight, give us the grace to place our affections more and more upon the things that are spiritual and enduring, now and forever more. Amen

Speaker: When we leave this place and mix again with the world, take with you in your heart the memory of the Brethren whom we remembered tonight. May God's *light* surround you, may His *love* enfold you, may His *power* protect you, and may the *presence* of God watch over you. Peace be with you, now and forever more. So mote it be. Amen.

The music ends, and the overhead lights are again turned on.



..... #112, and last, in a series of 'Nuggets from the Quarry of Freemasonry'.SM

Douglas M. Messimer, PM, LEO Tuckahoe Lodge 347 12/2017