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December 1, 2025

Companions,

By the time you read this, Thanksgiving will be over. This is a time when our thoughts naturally turn toward our blessings, our friendships, and the quiet mercies that have sustained us throughout the year. In the Cryptic Rite, we are taught to look beyond the surface of things, to seek meaning and purpose beneath the visible structure of life. This season encourages that same contemplative spirit. It invites us to pause, give thanks, and rediscover the treasures entrusted to us.

I am deeply grateful for the fellowship we share as Companions. In our Councils, we find a sanctuary of trust, unity, and brotherly affection. We labor together beneath the symbolic arches and within the hidden vaults of our ritual, learning lessons that speak not only to our minds but to our hearts.

As the days grow shorter and darkness deepens around us, we are reminded of one of Masonry's most enduring truths: that Light, even when concealed, is never lost. It is preserved, guarded, and prepared for its appointed return. This makes the coming of December 21st, the Winter Solstice, all the more meaningful.

On the longest night of the year, nature itself teaches the central lesson of Cryptic Masonry: that even in the deepest darkness, Light is quietly gathering strength. The Solstice marks the turning point when light triumphs over shadow, and hope returns, when creation whispers its assurance that renewal always follows decline. This cycle of nature mirrors the very journey we take within the Secret Vault.

As we look toward the Solstice, let us reflect on the light within ourselves. What have we preserved this year? What treasures of character, faith, or brotherly love have we safeguarded in our own symbolic vaults? And how might we bring that light forth again to bless our families, our communities, and our Craft?

It is my honor to serve as your Most Illustrious Grand Master, and I am grateful beyond words for the dedication, kindness, and steadfast labor of the Companions throughout Kansas. May the Great Architect of the Universe bless you and your loved ones during this season of gratitude and illumination.

Fraternally,

*Gary B. Strout*

Gary B. Strout, Ed.S.

Most Illustrious Grand High Master, 2025-2026

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