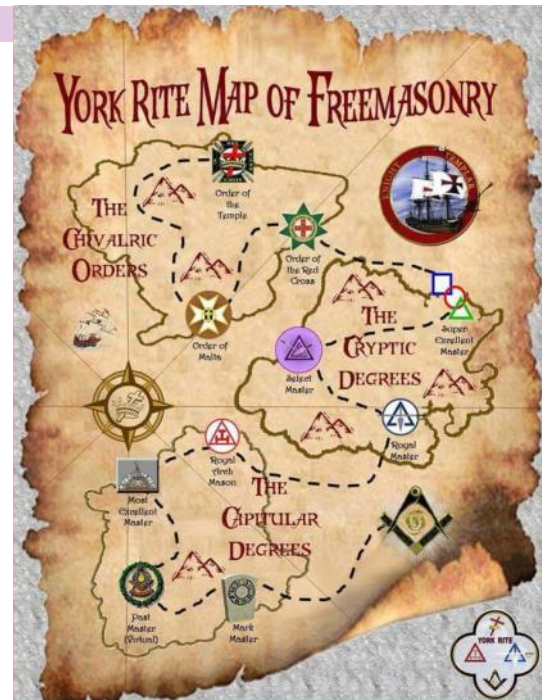


Letters from York

A Quarterly Publication of the Grand York Rite of Kansas



Masonic Unity Council Meeting 2025



This year's Masonic Unity Council Meeting was a bit different from those held in the past. It was decided to provide leadership development to those who were in attendance rather than just an update from each body. In the past, there was a time to introduce and speak about each of the Masonic bodies represented at the Unity Council Meeting, with a luncheon, and a few speakers. This year the meeting had several speakers who each made presentations on various topics of leadership and hosted questions and answers from those who were able to attend.

The morning started with Right Worshipful Brother Justin D. Crippen, Grand Lodge Assistant Unity Council Liaison, and Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons Unity Council Representative. Brother Justin welcomed the group and facilitated introductions and a brief synopsis from each of the leadership of the appendant and concordant Masonic orders. The speakers for the meeting followed, and included Masons as well as non-masonic local speakers from the McPherson community, who had their own special talents in specific leadership areas. Their topics included Leadership with the Right Intention, the Tribe Over Teams, Followership, Change Management, and Effective Communication Skills and Practices. Each was well received and several were asked to present later to a larger gathering of some of the bodies represented.



Brother Bob Shively spoke briefly after the luncheon about the Kansas Masonic Foundation and how it supports leadership and all Freemasonry in Kansas. The Grand Master, Most Worshipful Brother Derik L. Hockett, addressed the gathered Unity Council to close the day. Once the meeting was adjourned, there were discussions about what each body could do to better equip their leadership as they move through the various leadership lines. There were representatives from the York Rite and York Rite Appendant Bodies, Scottish Rite, Eastern Star, Job's Daughters, Rainbow, DeMolay, Shrine, and others. It was an excellent day of leadership development, discussions, and focus on gaining a better understanding of how the Masonic Orders in Kansas are working together and can move forward with innovative thinking on mentoring, recruiting, and retaining members.

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Special Interests

- 2025 Grand Master's Classes
- Maggie Valley Masonic Marker Visit
- New CMMRF Support Jewel
- Great Smokies Summer Assembly of York Rite Masons
- Chapter, Council, Commandery Reports and Updates

News of the Ark



2025 has already been quite busy for the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Kansas.

The three class in honor of the Most Worshipful Grand Master of Kansas, M.: W.: Brother Derik L. Hockett, have been completed and we are pleased to announce there are now 25 new Royal Arch Masons in Kansas. Some of those exalted received a special communication from the Grand High Priest before the Council and Commandery Classes so they could continue to advance through the York Rite. Add those new members to the new Royal Arch Masons exalted at Baldwin City for Leavenworth No. 2 and Lawrence No. 4 and



there are 29 new members in Kansas. While that is a fantastic start to the year, we know there are yet even more Master Masons who desire to learn more about the York Rite. We just need to ask them to join our ranks and become members of the Holy Royal Arch.



Grand Chapter Officers

Grand High Priest: Patrick C. Carr
Grand King: Gary B. Strout
Grand Scribe: Thomas M. Krauss
Grand Treasurer: T. Michael Fegan, PGHP
Grand Secretary: Allan D. Jackson, PGHP
Grand Chaplain: Anthony J. Pence
Grand Capt. Of Host: Robert D. Beardsley
Grand Prin. Sojourner: Andrew G. Mosley
Grand Royal Arch Capt.: L. Kent Needham
Grand Mast. 3rd Veil: William P. Leonard
Grand Mast. 2nd Veil: Kelly J. Long
Grand Mast. 1st Veil: Wayne D. Drake
Grand Sentinel: Glenn O. Davis
Assist. Grand Sentinel: James A. Lyle
Grand Piper: Caleb J. Long
Grand Musician: Dennis L. Reed
Grand Orator/Lecturer: Delmus R. Morrow

DDGHP Dist. #1: Kenneth E. Foster
DDGHP Dist. #2: Juanito J. Ernacio
DDGHP Dist. #3: Curtis A. Utley
DDGHP Dist. #4: Gary A. Mason
DDGHP Dist. #5: Michael K. Colbary

Visit the Grand York Rite Website (www.kansasyorkrite.org) for more resources!

Grand Council Officers

Grand Master: Gary B. Strout
Deputy Grand Master: Robert B. Haynes
Grand PCW: Wayne D. Drake
Grand Treasurer: T. Michael Fegan, PMIGM
Grand Recorder: Allan D. Jackson, PMIGM
Grand Chaplain: Kelly J. Long
Grand Capt. Guard: Patrick C. Carr
Grand Cond. Council: Frederick R. Kemp
Grand Marshal: Justin D. Crippen
Grand Cust. Work: Warren L. Hughes
Grand Steward: Andrew G. Mosley
Grand Sentinel: Thomas M. Krauss
Asst. Grand Sentinel: Kenneth E. Foster
Grand Organist: Dennis L. Reed
Grand Lecturer: Jamie L. Carwell
Grand Piper: Caleb J. Long

Arch Master #1: Wayne D. Drake
Arch Master #2: Curtis A. Utley
Arch Master #3: Juanito Ernacio
Arch Master #4: Gary A. Mason, PMIGM
Arch Master #5: Michael K. Colbary
Arch Master: Wayne H. Rollf, PMIGM
Arch Master: H. Wayne Rector, PMIGM
Arch Master: Jamie L. Carwell



The Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of Kansas has already held their Grand Master's Class for 2025 and are pleased to announce 25 new Cryptic Masons received the degrees of Royal Master and Select Master. This was the culmination of many hours of planning over the last year with the Grand Lodge of Kansas and the Grand Master, Most Worshipful Brother Derik L. Hockett. Thanks to their assistance, and willingness to help get the word out, these new Cryptic Masons, including our Grand Master and Grand Senior Deacon, completed their Cryptic Degree experience. Congratulations to all who attended and a heartfelt thanks to those who assisted in making the Grand Master's Class for Cryptic Masonry a success.

The annual Great Plains Rendezvous was held in Cheyenne, Wyoming for this year. There was a small turnout of Kansas Cryptic Masons but those who attended witnessed excellent degree work, fellowship, and several fine meals. Our Grand Council will host the Rendezvous for 2026 and Right Illustrious Companion Robert Haynes, Illustrious Deputy Grand Master, will announce the location soon.

The annual Pike's Peak Cryptic Deposit Inspection was held in Manitou Springs, Colorado in early August. This was a change in date, and format, for the event. It was well attended and those who were there had a wonderful time. We are happy to report the Deposit is still in excellent shape!



The Chivalric Orders



The first Grand Commandery event for the 2025 Templar year was the Annual Memorial Day event in Junction City, Kansas, at Heritage Park in front of the memorial. This year we saw an inordinate amount of rain and the event was moved inside to the Methodist Church. There were several speakers from the community and it was an overall wonderful event with our Sir Knights in their Class A uniforms.

The Grand Master's Class was held at Newton after the Grand Council's degree conferrals and there were 24 Cryptic Masons who were knighted at the event. It was an excellent day of Templary and Bethel No. 21 of Job's Daughters provided yet another excellent meal.

The annual Knight Templar Feast was held in late July in Emporia, Kansas at Champions Gate Golf Club, and was well attended. Those who attended witnessed an excellent evening of Templary and education. Sir Knight Steve Tiner, Past Grand Prelate of the Grand Commandery of Arkansas, and also Senior Pastor of Levy Baptist Church in Little Rock, Arkansas, spoke about the importance of the Holy Land Pilgrimage program and his personal experience with the program when he visited Israel.



Our Grand Commander continues to make his official visits to the constituent Commanderies located in Kansas and has been well received as he has made his travels. Thank you to the Grand Officers for being willing to make visits with our Grand Commander, and for their willingness to assist in the 2025 Grand Master's Knight Templar Class.



Grand Commandery Officers

Grand Comm: Frederick R. Kemp
Dept. Grand Comm.: Patrick C. Carr, CTC
Grand General.: Justin D. Crippen
Grand Capt. Gen.: Gary B. Strout, CTC
Grand Sr. Warden: Delmus R. Morrow
Grand Jr. Warden: Andrew G. Mosley, CTC
Grand Prelate: H. Wayne Rector, PREGC
Grand Treasurer: T. Michael Fegan, PREGC
Grand Recorder: Allan D. Jackson, HPREGC
Grand Std. Bearer: Warren L. Hughes
Grand Sword Bearer: Anthony J. Pence
Grand Warder: Robert D. Beardsley
Grand Sentinel: Robert D. Haynes
Grand Audio-Visual: Dennis L. Reed
Grand Piper: Kelly J. Long
Grand Guard: Juanito J. Ernacio
Grand Guard: Kenneth E. Foster
Grand Guard: William Koonce

Aide-de-Camps:

Aide-de-camp: Kent Needham, PREGC
Aide-de-camp: H. Wayne Rolf, PREGC
Aide-de-camp: Wayne D. Drake, PREGC

Inspectors:

Inspector #1: Gary B. Strout
Inspector #2: Andrew G. Mosley
Inspector #3: Warren L. Hughes
Inspector #4: Justin D. Crippen
Inspector #5: Robert B. Haynes

Templar Honor Guard:

Justin D. Crippen, Captain
Patrick C. Carr, Co-Captain
Michael Smith, PREGC
Gary A. Mason, PREGC
Andrew G. Mosley
Kelly J. Long
Gary B. Strout

Grand Council Jewel for Supporting CMMRF



The Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of Kansas, sponsored by the efforts of Most Illustrious Grand Master Gary B. Strout, created a new jewel to support the efforts of Cryptic Masons Medical Research Foundation. This jewel can be available for a donation of \$120. Those who donate for the jewel receive not only the Kansas CMMRF Jewel, and the \$100 pin from CMMRF as well. This is because \$20 of the \$120 is kept to purchase and replace jewels, while the other \$100 is sent in the name of the person making the donation to CMMRF.

This jewel is much like the one created by the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Kansas and the same funding and donation model is being used.

The jewel is available for purchase through the Grand Recorder, or by using the link provided on the Grand York Rite website.

Grand Master's Council & Commandery Classes



The Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of Kansas, and the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Kansas, continued the Grand Master's Classes which were first utilized in 2023 under Most Worshipful Brother Robert D. McClarty.

This year's Grand Master Classes were a bit different from the previous ones. Because of the busy and full schedules of the Grand York Rite of Kansas, it was decided the Grand Master's Classes for the Council and Commandery would be held on the same day. This was a daunting task because it meant there would be more time needed to accomplish the personal knighting of each Sir Knight in attendance who took the Valiant and Magnanimous Order of the Temple.

The morning started with the Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of Kansas being opened in Ample Form by the Right Illustrious Deputy Grand Master, Robert Haynes. Once the Council was opened, 25 Companions of the Holy Royal Arch received the degrees of Royal Master and Select Master. The degree work was planned and executed well and the new Cryptic Masons stated they enjoyed the pageantry of the Cryptic Degrees.

After a wonderful lunch provided by Bethel No. 21 of Job's Daughters, the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Kansas was declared open by the Right Eminent Grand Commander, Sir Knight Fred Kemp.

The Illustrious Order of the Red Cross and the Order of Malta was conferred upon the awaiting Cryptic Masons in short form because of the number of candidates, and the number of degrees performed on the same day.

The day ended with each Sir Knight receiving all the benefits and beauty which are a part of the Order of the Temple. At the end of the day, there were an additional 25 Sir Knights who were knighted and added to the ranks of the Grand Commandery of Kansas.

Thank you to Illustrious Companion and Sir Knight Justin Crippen, and his team of assistants, who made this such a wonderful day for York Rite Masonry in Kansas.

2025 Great Plains Rendezvous

The Rendezvous is made up of the Grand Councils of Cryptic Masons of Colorado, Kansas, and Wyoming, was held in Cheyenne, Wyoming on June 28, 2025. The Rendezvous is a time for the conferrals of the Royal Master, Select Master, and Super Excellent Master Degrees. What makes this a unique event, is each year the conferral of the degrees is rotated between the three Grand Councils. By utilizing this format, those who attend can witness the subtle differences between the degrees in each of the three jurisdictions. This year Wyoming conferred the Super Excellent Master Degree.

The weekend's events started on Friday and was hosted at the Shrine Temple in Cheyenne, Wyoming. It was an excellent time of fellowship shared by all who had the opportunity to attend.



On Saturday, the degree conferrals were held at Cheyenne Lodge and there were several new Cryptic Masons who witnessed the beauty and splendor of the Super Excellent Master Degree. In 2026, the Rendezvous will be hosted by Kansas on June 27, 2026, at the Lodge Hall in Russell, Kansas. Save the date because more information will be coming concerning the 2026 Rendezvous!

Great Smokies Summer Assembly of YR Masons

For the last 80 years, the Grand York Rite of North Carolina has hosted the Great Smokies Summer Assembly of York Rite Masons. This is a time when Royal Arch Masons, Cryptic Masons, and Knight Templars from across the country gather to relax and hear some of the finest speakers available. These speakers typically provide presentations about leadership within the York Rite. This year's Summer Assembly was not different.

The Assembly convened on Sunday, July 13, with a cookout at one of the local parks. This time provides those traveling to Maggie Valley, North Carolina, to register and to have some food and fellowship before the rest of the events start. During the evening, there are ample times for the Companions and Sir Knights to gather at the host hotel and enjoy the cool evening breezes outside under the stars. This year the Cigar and Scotch (or whisky) degree was conferred. It was a wonderful time of fellowship and laughter, accompanied by some libations and cigars, and chocolate cigars for those who do not smoke.



On Monday the Assembly convened and a representative from the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina attended and welcomed the crowd. There were several speakers afterwards, which included different topics on masonic leadership and leadership development. Those speakers provided inspiration for the Companions and Sir Knights in attendance to return to their various jurisdictions and to put into action the energy and plans inspired by the speakers.

After an extended break for lunch, the group traveled up the Blue Ridge Parkway to the Masonic Marker. This marker was erected in 1938 and contains stones from around the United States. Each stone was donated by various masonic bodies, and Kansas has several stones located within the marker. There is an article in this magazine which explains the marker at more length. M.E. Jarrod Adkisson provided a brief presentation on the history.

After the presentation at the marker, there was ample time provided for fellowship before the banquet was held at one of the local golf clubs in Maggie Valley. There is no speaker at the banquet. This is a time to fellowship and to chat among those who attended the Assembly and to meet their ladies and families.



Tuesday commenced with introductions from the Grand York Rite leadership of North Carolina. Afterwards, each of the governing York Rite bodies spoke to the gathered Assembly. Most Excellent Companion Teko A. Foly, General Grand High Priest of the General Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons started the greetings. He was followed by Most Puissant Companion William "Bill" Snyder, the General Grand Master of Cryptic Masons International. The Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America was represented by James Magee, the Grand Captain General of the Grand Encampment.



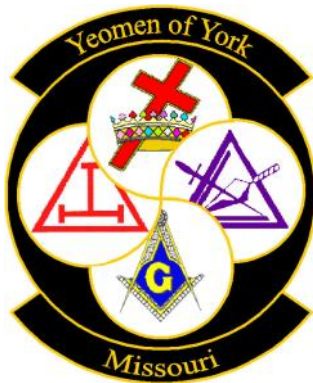
Once greetings was completed announcements were made by those who were making themselves available and seeking election to the line of the national and international York Rite bodies. Several Companions announced their intention to seek the office of General Grand King, and Most Excellent Patrick C. Carr announced his intention to seek the office of General Grand Scribe at the Triennial Session in 2026 which will be held in Washington, D.C. There were several other Companions who made their intentions known concerning their desire to serve as Most Puissant Grand Master of Cryptic Masons International, and one Sir Knight announced his intention to seek the office of Grand Captain General of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the USA. After announcements were completed, the Assembly was closed until the 2026 Assembly. It was a great time of fellowship and inspiration and all are invited to attend.



Visit
kansasyorkrite.org
for more info.



Newton Yeoman of York



Yeoman of York is an honorary and invitational body whose membership consists of those York Rite Masons who are members of the Knight York Cross of Honor (KYCH), or who are KYCH eligible. Eligible members are identified as associate members of the Yeoman of York, do not have voting rights, and cannot serve as officers of the Preceptory.

The first Preceptory of Yeoman of York in Kansas was consecrated on Saturday, August 30, 2025, in Newton, Kansas. After consecration of Newton Preceptory, the officers were installed, and performed their first initiation on ten new members from Kansas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. Newton Preceptory received their Charter from the Grand Preceptory of Yeoman of York in Missouri after the officers performed the ritual initiation. Grand Director General of the Order, Knight Yeoman Bobbi White, provided the Charter to the chartering Knight Director General, Knight Yeoman Patrick C. Carr, before the Preceptory was closed.

Twelve members of the Kansas City Priory, who reside in Kansas, petitioned to form the first Preceptory within the jurisdiction of Kansas and it was granted. There were thirty Knight Yeomen who attended the consecration.



Knight Templar Feast 2025

The Fourth Annual Knight Templar Feast was well attended and a great time was enjoyed by all. The Right Eminent Grand Commander, Fred Kemp, held the Feast at Champions Gate Golf Club in Emporia, Kansas. There were well over 60 Sir Knights and their ladies in attendance to witness the posting of the colors by the Kansas Knight Templar Honor Guard and to hear the beautiful strains of *America the Beautiful* played by the Grand Piper, Sir Knight Kelly J. Long.

The evening started with a toast to the United States, and was followed by six additional toasts as the evening progressed. The Grand Commander presented awards to several Sir Knights for their zeal and service to Kansas Templary. Sir Knights Ken Foster and A.J. Pence received Grand Commander's Cups for their thirst for Templary, Sir Knight Wayne Rolf, REPGC, received the Knight Templar Warrior Award for his unceasing defense of Templary in



Kansas, and Sir Knight Patrick Carr received the Kansas York Rite Dynamo Award for his continued high energy and drive for all of the Kansas York Rite.



Sir Knight Steve Tiner, Past Grand Prelate of the Grand Commandery of Arkansas, spoke about his experience with the Knights Templar Holy Land Pilgrimage fund.

Sir Knight, and Right Worshipful Brother Dave Hendricks, Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Kansas brought greetings from the Grand Master, M.: W: Derik L. Hockett, who was unavoidably detained and unable to attend.

It was a spectacular evening of Templary, food, and fellowship, and the 2026 Knight Templar Feast is already being planned. Watch the website, and this magazine, for more information about the plans for the 2026 Fifth Annual Knight Templar Feast.

Securing Our Future—An Update

Securing Our Future, the Grand York Rite of Kansas' strategic plan, is running smoothly so far for the year 2025. Created by a committee of the three Grand York Rite bodies in 2024, and adopted by the Grand Chapter, Grand Council, and Grand Commandery delegates at the 2025 Annual Communication of those respective bodies, it was introduced and put into effect shortly after the sessions closed.

Several different portions of the plan have already been put into place. There has been more communication from the three heads of the Grand Bodies by way of a monthly letter addressed to the membership from each of those leaders. The letter is placed on the front page of the website (www.kansasryorkrite.org) and emailed to the membership as well.

Three new publications have been created and are placed on the website each month as an update to our membership and those same publications are being emailed to the membership on a monthly basis.

New awards have been created and prepared for membership recruitment, retention, and growth for the Grand Chapter, Grand Council, and Grand Commandery and will be presented at the 2026 Grand Communications of those bodies.

Communication was a large part of the plan for *Securing Our Future*, and the three Grand York Rite bodies have placed a high value on those communications to the membership.

The website has more resource options for masonic education for each of the bodies, additional opportunities to purchase items and to register for events utilizing the website, and the communications from the Grand York Rite bodies have been placed on the website.

A new ritual program is being developed, and the new member orientation packets are available for download on the website. These tools are all essential in *Securing Our Future* as we move forward.

Maggie Valley Masonic Marker

The Great Smokies Summer Assembly of York Rite Masons has been held since 1935 in Maggie Valley, North Carolina. One of the main events of the Assembly is to travel onto the Blue Ridge Parkway and to the Masonic Marker. This is a formal gathering place for masons from across the world annual during the event.

The monument was erected in 1938, with donations of stones from different masonic jurisdictions within the United States, 41 nations, and a stone from every continent. There are 687 stones in all used to create and build the marker. This includes the continent of Antarctica. There are stones used to construct the marker from Plymouth Rock, the Rock of Gibraltar, the Alamo, and the White House. This was a monumental task, and Brother Troy Wyche of Waynesville Lodge No. 259 of North Carolina coordinated the efforts to create and erect the marker.

The land was acquired and donated by Companion J.R. Boyd to the Grand Council of Royal and Select Master of North Carolina.



The intended purpose of the land was to make a deposit of items from 1937 into a copper box, which was hermetically sealed and then laid inside of a black walnut box, which was in turn

buried in a concrete vault at the site of what it now the marker. The deposit was to be opened in 1972, which was done, and the contents are on display at Waynesville Lodge today.

Eventually, a wooden gazebo was constructed around and over the marker to protect it from the elements. Because of the threat of vandalism, an iron fence and locked gate was constructed later to protect the marker even further. Sadly, in June, 2024, the marker received serious damage from vandalism. The marble steps leading up to the marker from the lower area had been struck multiple times and in multiple places by a hammer which chipped away some of the marble. Other portions of the marker itself had been damaged as well during the vandalism.

Shortly afterwards, a campaign to raise funds for the repairs was started.. These were not normal type repairs, as the marker had stones which were irreplaceable because of where and when they were donated. Between the time the damage was done, and July, 2025, the marker was repaired and restored to its former glory. This was made possible by a Brother Mason who owns a company that specializes in this type of restoration work. They polished several stones and returned them to their former beauty and glory, and repaired those with holes from the damages.

There are several stones which have been donated by Brothers, Companions, and Sir Knights from the jurisdiction of Kansas. Pictures of those stones, and their descriptions, are provided below.

The marker is a wonderful testament to what we as Masons can do when we work together for our beliefs in equality, morality, charity, and brotherhood.



Silverdale Quarry stone



Stone from Grand Commandery of Kansas



Polished stone from a Kansas scenic drive



The 3 small stones at the top are from the Kaw River



Visit
kansasyorkrite.org
for more info.



Grand York Rite Attend the Youth Orders

The York Rite of Freemasonry

The York Rite, or more correctly, the American Rite, is based on the early remnants of Craft Masonry that were practiced in the early 1700's. The formation of the first Grand Lodge of England in 1717 specified that the lodges were to confer only the first three degrees of Craft Masonry.

Three bodies were later formed in the United States to work the degrees no longer controlled by the lodges and includes the Chapter of Royal Arch Masons, Council of Cryptic Masons, and the Commandery of Knights Templar. These bodies are technically autonomous Masonic entities, only the requirement of membership in the Royal Arch connects the Cryptic degrees and the Chivalric Orders together.

Grand York Rite of Kansas has been well represented throughout the jurisdiction in 2025. The Grand Master, Grand High Priest, Illustrious Grand Master, and Grand Commander all attended the Grand Session for the newly named Heartland Job's Daughters, which resulted from a merger with Oklahoma. They brought greetings from their respective Grand York Rite bodies and presented checks from each for Job's Daughters.



At Kansas Rainbow Grand Assembly, the Grand Master, Grand High Priest, Right Illustrious Deputy Grand Master, and Grand Commander attended and delivered greetings from the York Rite members within Kansas, and provided checks to the Grand Assembly.

The final of the three Youth Order meetings for 2025 was held in Lawrence for the Kansas Order of DeMolay's State Conclave. The Grand Master, Grand High Priest, Right Illustrious Deputy Grand Master, and Grand Commander attended and wished the new officers well as they installed their 2025-2026 Kansas State DeMolay officers. Donations were given to the Order.



The several Youth Orders are a vital part of the Masonic Unity throughout the jurisdiction of Kansas. Our support is needed now, possibly more than ever before in years past. Take some time and visit a Bethel, Assembly, or Chapter when you have the opportunity. The youth will be happy to see you, and you will enjoy the time spent with them. Get to know them. They are our future membership.

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