



Letters from York

A Quarterly Publication of the Grand York Rite of Kansas

2025 Grand York Rite Sessions Report

The 2025 Grand York Rite Sessions, which included the 159th Annual Convocation of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Kansas, the 158th Annual Assembly of the Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of Kansas, and the 157th Annual Conclave of the Grand Commandery of Knight Templars of Kansas, were held August 1-3, 2025, at the Bluemont Hotel in Manhattan, Kansas.

The sessions were well attended. Each session had legislation to amend or delete certain bylaws which pertained to committees, and each passed. The second large piece of legislation involved the creation of a strategic plan for the Grand York Rite of Kansas. This plan, *Securing Our Future*, was overwhelmingly adopted and approved to move forward.

The new officers were elected, advanced, appointed, and installed within each of the Grand York Rite bodies. Congratulations to Most Excellent Companion Patrick C. Carr, Grand High Priest of Kansas, Most Illustrious Companion Gary B. Strout, Illustrious Grand Master of Kansas, and Sir Knight Fred R. Kemp, Right Eminent Grand Commander of Kansas. They each selected well informed and qualified members as their appointments. The three leaders of these bodies have been working

together for the last year to plan on the implementation of the *Securing Our Future* plan, and to work towards closer unity within the Grand York Rite of Kansas.

The annual banquet was held on Friday evening, and several of the members were recognized for their service to their respective Grand York Rite bodies. Sir Knight Robert Beardsley received the Knight Templar Cross of Honor, Illustrious Companion Dale Morrow received the Christopher D. Tomlinson Ritualist of the Year Award, Excellent Companion Erick Bergquist received the General Grand Chapter Bronze medal, and Caeleigh Harris Rieg received the General Grand Council Youth Leadership Award. Miss Rieg was unavailable and will receive her award at a later date. From the many out of state visitors and dignitaries, the presence of the M.:W.: Grand Master of Kansas, Derik L. Hockett, and the heads of the Masonic Youth Orders in Kansas, there was a lot of fun and fellowship as the Grand York Rite completed the work of another year. We all look forward to meeting again next year!



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News of the Ark



The Grand Chapter of Kansas has begun the 2025-2026 year's work very quickly.

The first of the Grand Master's Classes, in honor of M.:W.: Derik L. Hockett, was held in an old abandoned quarry near Council Grove and Alta Vista, Kansas. The degrees were conferred and there were 11 Brother Masons who took the degrees of Mark Master and Past Master. Afterward, 10 of the Brothers placed their petitions with subordinate Chapters to continue their York Rite education and journey.

The second Grand Master's Class will be held in Russell on May 24, 2025, and there are

currently 7 Brother Master Masons who have registered to take the two degrees.

The M.:E.: Grand High Priest issued several edicts at the installation for new offices created to be utilized during the 2025-2026 term. These are the Ark Bearers (M.:E.: Wayne Rolf, M.:E.: Jarrod Adkisson, & M.:E.: T. Michael Fegan), a Grand Chapter Unity Council Representative (R.:E.: Justin Crippen), and a Personal Representative of the Grand High Priest (R.:E.: Matthew Rutkowski).



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

Look for more communications from our Grand Presiding Officers in 2025

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. Rolf, PMIGM
Arch Master: H. Wayne Rector, PMIGM
Arch Master: Jamie L. Carwell

From the Ninth Arch



Most Illustrious Grand Master Gary B. Strout has announced his official visit schedule on the Grand York Rite website. He, along with the other two heads of their respective Grand York Rite bodies, will be visiting all the Councils in Kansas during the next year. Be sure to check the Grand York Rite website and calendar for any updates or changes to the schedule.

The 2025 Annual Inspection of the Cryptic Deposit at Pike's Peak has been changed for the year. The Companions of the Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of Kansas will make the trip to Colorado on August 1-3, 2025. This is an earlier date than prior years, but it has been planned with more time for fellowship and touring. Instead of traversing the mountain on Sunday, it will now happen on Saturday morning, which leaves plenty of time to visit Garden of the Gods for a self tour and to enjoy dinner together on Saturday evening. More information on the trip, the meals, and the hotel, is available on the Grand York Rite website.

The 2025 Great Plains Rendezvous will be held in Cheyenne, Wyoming, on Saturday, June 28, 2025. This is a fantastic time to join with the Companions of Colorado and Wyoming and to discover the unique traits of their individual rituals. Kansas will be conferring the Select Master, and will need to put a degree team together. Contact the M.:I.: Grand Master to volunteer and to receive a part in the degree.



The Chivalric Orders



The Grand Commander will be visiting each of the commanderies within the jurisdiction within the next year and he looks forward to meeting and speaking with each of the members in Kansas at these official visits. The visits are posted on the Grand York Rite website and on the Grand York Rite calendar.

The first event for the 2025 Templar year will be the Annual Memorial Day event in Junction City, Kansas, at Heritage Park in front of the memorial. Knight Templars should be in Class A uniform for the procession. The event starts with coffee and donuts at 9:00 AM either at First Presbyterian Church or Union Lodge. Please check the schedule for the final location. At 11:00 AM, lunch will be served, and the event

will start at 1:00 PM. Sir Knights should assemble in the park at 12:50 PM to line up and receive orders.

The Grand Master's Class will be held at Newton on Saturday, July 12, and will take place immediately following the Grand Council's degree conferrals. The Illustrious Order of the Red Cross the Order of Malta, and the Magnanimous Order of the Temple will be conferred on those who are in waiting or who have completed the degrees of the Council from the Grand Master's classes.



Our annual Knight Templar Feast will be held on Saturday, July 26, at the Champions Landing Chaber Room in Emporia. More information concerning the Feast is available on the Kansas Grand York Rite website, and includes registration and payment information.

We are, and will continue to be busy within the ranks of Templary in Kansas. Please make the time to visit your Commandery or one of the special events. These are wonderful and provide a time for fellowship, fun, and food, for all who are able to attend.



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

New York Rite Jewels for Supporting Our Charities



The Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Kansas, sponsored by the efforts of Junior Past Most Excellent Grand High Priest John T. Staton, created a new jewel to support the efforts of Royal Arch Research Assistance. This jewel can be available for a donation of \$120. Those who donate for the jewel receive not only the Kansas RARA Jewel, but the \$100 jewel from RARA 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 RARA.

The Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of Kansas is working on a similar jewel. This jewel will follow the same donation guidelines as the RARA Jewel and will be used to support the efforts of Cryptic Masons Medical Research Foundation.

Watch the Grand York Rite website for the announcement of the new Kansas CMMRF Jewel. They are being designed and awaiting approval for purchase.

2025 Grand Master's Quarry Degree

For the second time in the last two years, the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Kansas has offered the Grand Master's Classes. This year's class is in honor of Most Worshipful Brother Derik L. Hockett, was scheduled or three different location.



The first was held on May 10, 2025, in an old abandoned quarry between Council Grove and Alta Vista. This made for a unique, if not unusual, setting for the Mark Master and Past Master degree conferrals. A lot of work was put into creating a Stonemason's Lodge within the boundaries of the quarry. A special thanks to Companions Alex Bolinder, Jakob Edmunds, and Juanito Ernacio, who worked with M.:E.: Companion Patrick Carr a few weeks before the event to remove mud from the floors, move boulders and other rocks to make the seating and the stations, and to create the atmosphere for this event.



The Grand High Priest opened the Grand Chapter of Kansas in ample form for an emergent communication for the purpose of conferring the degrees in the Grand Master's Class.

The Quarry Grand Master's Class was attended by 27 Companions of the Holy Royal Arch and an additional 11 Brother Master

Masons who took the Mark and Past Master degrees.

M.:E.: Companion Carr conferred the Mark Master degree and the cast was assembled from across the state. The degree conferral went well and the change from a lodge room setting to a quarry made a large impact on the candidates as they took the degree. Each who took the Mark Master degree received a Jewish 1/2 Shekel of silver from the Grand High Priest as a gift for taking the degree.



R.:E.: Companion Michael Colbary conferred the Past Master degree with an assembled cast from several different Chapters. It was interesting to make the subtle changes to convert the degree from a lodge room setting to a Stonemason's Lodge in the quarries.



By conferring the degrees in the quarry, and in costumes, it gave those in attendance a strong connection to the Operative Stonemasons who came before our now Speculative Freemasonry.



The next opportunity to take attend the Grand Master's Class will be in Newton on June 21. This conferral will include not only the first two degrees, but the Most Excellent Master and Holy Royal Arch degrees.

AMD/Knight Masons 4th Annual Ingathering

Because of the initial success of the first ingathering of the Allied Masonic Degrees and Knight Masons Councils in Kansas in 2022, there have been three other opportunities for the members of these Orders to come together and confer their degrees.



The 4th Annual Ingathering will be held on Saturday, October 11, at the lodge hall in Emporia. Much like before, the morning will commence with coffee and donuts during registration, before opening the Knight Masons Councils in Kansas for a joint meeting and conferral. The three degrees of Knight Masonry will be conferred on those who have been previously elected to join the invitational order. Each of the three Councils in Kansas will confer one of the three degrees of Knight of the Sword, Knight of the East, and Knight of the East and West.

Lunch will once again be provided for those in attendance, and is included in the registration fee. After lunch, the four Councils of the Allied Masonic Degrees will open for a joint meeting for the conferral of some of their degrees. The Allied Masonic Degrees holds many different and various degrees, and the ingathering is their opportunity to work degrees others may not have seen. During the 2025 ingathering, Blarney Stone No. 360 will open the Allied Masonic Degrees and confer the initiatory degree on previously elected candidates, Sunflower Council No. 383 will confer the Grand Tilers of King Solomon, Charles David Williams, III Council No. 596 will confer the Ark and the Dove, and Loch Lomond Council No. 235 will confer the Secret Monitor American version of the degree.



Once the degrees are completed, there will be a short recess for the members of the Kansas State Order of the Scarlet Cord to prepare for the conferral of the First, Second, and Third Grades of the Scarlet Cord. These degrees are available for any member of the Allied Masonic Degrees.

Each Order costs \$50 and includes a patent. The Order of the Scarlet Cord must be preregistered and prepaid. There will be no on-site registration for these Grades and there will be no exceptions.

The banquet will be served at the end of the Scarlet Cord conferrals and the special guest speaker will be Companion Kevin Sample. Companion Kevin is a Past Great Chief of the Grand Council of Knight Masons of the United States of America, and currently serves the Grand Council of the Allied Masonic Degrees as Grand Chaplain.

2025 AMD & Knight Masons Ingathering

Knight Masons 9:00 AM
 Knight of the Sword
 Knight of the East
 Knight of the East and West

AMD Ingathering 1:00 PM
 Ark and the Dove
 Grand Tilers of Solomon
 Secret Monitor (American)

Scarlet Cord 3:00 PM
 1st, 2nd, & 3rd Grade (\$50 ea.)
 Banquets @ 6:00 PM

Guest Speakers: Kevin Sample
 Past Great Chief (KMUSA)
 Grand Chaplain (AMDUSA)

October 11, 2025
 Emporia Lodge No. 12
 424 Merchant Street, Emporia, KS

Registration by September 1, 2025.
 Registration: \$50 per person (Meals and Firing Cannon)
 Meals open to AMD and Knight Masons members
 Scarlet Cord Degrees must be paid for in advance.

Registration Form:
<https://kansasyorkrite.org/sunflower-council-383>



Visit kansasyorkrite.org for more info.



Grand College of Rites



The Grand College of Rites is a regular Masonic body, dedicated to preserving the history and rituals of defunct and inactive Masonic orders. The Grand College of Rites was formed at 9:25pm on May 12, 1932 in Washington, D.C. when the Sovereign Sanctuary of the Egyptian Masonic Rite of Memphis unanimously voted to “surrender the Sovereignty of its three Rites for the purpose of being absorbed by the Grand College of Rites about to be convened.” After its formation several other Masonic organizations also transferred their final authority into the bosom of the GCR, making it the only regular Masonic body in the United States with authority over the Rites of Memphis, Misraim, the Free and Accepted Architects, and more.

Any Master Mason holding membership and in good standing in a regular symbolic Lodge recognized by a majority of the Grand Lodges of Freemasonry in the United States of America may petition for membership in the Grand College of Rites.

The Grand College of Rites of the United States of America meets annually at the time and place of the Annual Meeting of the Grand Council of Allied Masonic Degrees of the United States of America.

The Grand College of Rites publishes its transactions annually. These transactions are known as “*Collectanea*” and are privately printed for the fellows of the Grand College of Rites of the United States of America. *Collectanea* contains the rituals of various organizations lawfully deposited within our archives. All dues current fellows will receive a copy of the current

2nd Knight Templar Easter Sunrise Service



The second Annual Knight Templar Easter Sunrise Service was held on Sunday, April 20, 2024. Because of the impending weather, which ended up being torrential rains in the region for several days, the event was moved from Coronado Heights park near Lindsborg to McPherson Lodge No. 172.

The service included responsive readings with the congregation, several hymns, bagpipe accompaniment for Amazing Grace, both Old

Testament and New Testament scripture readings, and a sermon.

This service is organized and executed by the Commissioned Templar Chaplains in Kansas. There are currently five who have completed the required training and have been commissioned as Templar Chaplains.

Sir Knight Andrew Mosley read the scriptures to the people, Sir Knight Matthew Rutkowski provided the responsive reading, and Sir Knight Patrick Carr brought the sermon and the message to the people assembled.

It was a wonderful service, and thanks to the vision of the last two Grand Commanders, R.:E.: Sir Knights Bill Leonard and Gary Mason, this service has become an annual event.

Securing Our Future—A Strategic Plan

During the 2025 Annual Communication of the three York Rite Grand bodies, a resolution was presented to adopt a strategic plan for the York Rite of Kansas. This plan, which was overwhelmingly adopted by the Companions of the Chapter and Council, and the Sir Knights of the Commandery, is intended to examine and work within three pathways which have been identified as being crucial to the life and growth of the York Rite in Kansas.

The three pathways are Membership Growth and Retention, Ritual Proficiency, and Exceptional Communication. Within each pathway, there are individual items which are already being addressed by the Grand Officers of the three York Rite Bodies.

Within the Membership Growth and Retention pathway, there are actionable items which include better communication from the Grand York Rite and the constituent bodies to our membership, increased opportunities for special events, and a mentorship program.

The Ritual Proficiency pathway encourages our membership to provide a better ritual experience and it will create schools of instruction to teach our members the proper ways to open their bodies, and to encourage the use of the proficiency awards already available from the three bodies.

Exceptional Communication is a pathway which includes more effective communication from the heads of the Grand York Rite by utilizing a monthly “note” from them, a monthly update from a different Grand Officer of each body, and to use the Grand York Rite website to reach out to members and provide more education opportunities, registration tools, and other items.

The Securing Our Future document is available under the Education section of the Grand York Rite website.



Kansas Past Grand Presiding Officer York Rite Jewels

Currently, the Grand York Rite of Kansas presents jewels to those who have been afforded the opportunity to lead in the highest offices of the Grand York Rite. The Grand Lodge of Kansas has a special Past Grand Master's jewel which they have recently commissioned to be recreated. It is a replica of the old jewels which our Grand Lodge has handed out to Past Grand Masters for many years.

The Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons presents a red neck cord with a medallion attached to signify Past Grand High Priests. The Grand Council provides a jewel which is much the same, but attached to a purple cord. The Grand Commandery has a jewel on a purple cord, and the cord is the same style and design as the red cord worn by the Grand Commander when he presides over the Grand Commandery of Knight Templar of Kansas.

It was not always this way! Previously, there were many beautiful and ornate jewels presented to those who served the Grand Chapter, Grand Council, or Grand Commandery as the presiding officer. These jewels have gone away over the years, but thanks to the diligence of several Brothers who discovered these jewels in unusual places, they have been returned to the Grand York Rite. Some are currently being used by officers of the Grand York Rite in Kansas.

These jewels were intended to be returned to the Grand York Rite when

the owner passed away. The jewels were the property of the Grand York Rite of Kansas. Sadly, because of either lack of care or communication, many of these precious jewels have been either melted down for their monetary value or disposed of because of ignorance.

One such jewel was saved from destruction by Companion Justin Crippen, who presented it to the current Grand High Priest, Patrick C. Carr. This jewel was worn by Brother and Companion Otto Raymon Souders, who was Grand High Priest in 1930. The jewel is beautiful, made from 14k gold, and has his name and term information on the back. The back of the jewel now has M.:E.: Companion Carr's name and term information added to it.

Companion Crippen also happened to discover Companion Souders' Past Most Illustrious Grand Master jewel from 1927, when he served as Most Illustrious Grand Master. This jewel contains a replica of the plate from the original Cryptic Deposit at Pike's Peak in 1899.

Before that date, the Council jewels had a different look, which can be seen below. They possessed the emblem of a Past Master on a triangular plate with purple stones at the apex of the triangle.

The last jewel is the most difficult to discover. This is the jewel of a Right Eminent Past Grand Commander of Kansas, and currently resides with the Lodge at Leavenworth.



Visit kansasyorkrite.org for more info.



New York Rite Appendant Orders Coming?

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 to work the degrees no longer controlled by the lodges. The Chapter of Royal Arch Masons, Council of Royal and Select Masters, and the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar. All three bodies are technically autonomous Masonic entities, only the requirement of membership in the Royal Arch connecting the Cryptic degrees and Chivalric Orders together.

There have been several members of the York Rite who have expressed interest in some of the other appendant and concordant bodies which are not currently active in Kansas.

During the 2023-2024 Grand Lodge Annual Communication, the delegates approved the recognition of several Masonic Bodies which were not active at the time in Kansas, but had members within their ranks who were Kansas Masons. Eventually, there became interest in bringing some of those appendant bodies to Kansas. One of the first was the Masonic Order of Athelstan, which has seen continued growth and interest since it came to Kansas.



On the horizon, plans are being made to bring Yeoman of York to Newton. This is an invitational body made up of members who have membership in the Knight York Cross of Honor or who are currently available to be elected to that honor. This body will meet quarterly in Newton with Sunflower Council No. 383, AMD and Kansas Council No. 53, KMUSA.

Another appendant body which has garnered much interest in Kansas is the Commemorative Order of St. Thomas of Acon. There are only four members within our state who travel three times a year to Missouri to take part in the Order. Talks are currently underway to investigate how, and if, the Order can be brought to Kansas. If so, it may meet in Emporia with the Masonic Order of Athelstan and the York Rite College on the same day. Stay tuned! More light is continuing to come to those who live in our beautiful sunflower state.

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