



Letters from York

A Quarterly Publication of the Grand York Rite of Kansas

New Grand Master Installed

The 2025 Annual Communication of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Kansas, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, was held in Manhattan on March 13-15, 2025. This was the 169th Annual Communication of our Most Worshipful Grand Lodge and it was an excellent event.

This year, the cost was only \$35 to attend the Annual Communication. That price included registration, Thursday night food and silent auction, Friday lunch, and the KMF banquet on Friday night. This was made possible by a generous underwriting from the Kansas Masonic Foundation.



The officers were elected, appointed, and installed into their respective stations for the next year. Our newly installed Grand Master, Most Worshipful Brother Derik Hockett, gave an oration on time. Time is something we all live through each day and something we never seem to have enough of during our daily lives. The rest of the officers were installed during the session on Saturday morning and there were many active members of the Kansas York Rite Chapter, Council, and Commandery who had their names called and were installed into their respective offices within the Grand Lodge.

The Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Kansas provided an honor guard and arch of steel for the introduction of officers and dignitaries on Friday at the Annual Communication and for the installation of the Grand Master and constituent officers on Saturday.

This is going to be an excellent year and the unity between the Grand Lodge and the rest of the Grand York Rite bodies will continue to grow as we work together to advance our Craft within the jurisdiction. Watch the Grand Lodge and Grand York Rite calendars for more information concerning the exciting opportunities we have to participate together in the coming year.

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News of the Ark



Our Royal Arch Chapters within the state of Kansas have been extremely busy during the last quarter of 2024 and the first quarter of 2025.

Wichita Chapter No. 33 met twice to confer the degrees of Mark Master, Virtual Past Master, Most Excellent Master, and the Holy Royal Arch on several of their candidates and a few visiting candidates.

Junction City Chapter No. 17 met and worked the Most Excellent Master degree on two of their candidates to get them ready to

participate in the degree work at Wichita Chapter No. 33 so they could receive the Holy Royal Arch Degree. This is what can happen when Chapters work together to accomplish their plans and desires. We hope to see more Chapters active in conferring the Capitular Degrees within Kansas in the future.



Grand Chapter Officers

Grand High Priest: John Staton
 Grand King: Patrick Carr
 Grand Scribe: Gary Strout
 Grand Treasurer: T. Michael Fegan
 Grand Secretary: Allan Jackson
 Grand Chaplain: Steven DeBerry
 Grand Capt. Of Host: Tom Krauss
 Grand Prin. Sojourner: Robert Beardsley
 Grand Royal Arch Capt.: Andrew Mosley
 Grand Mast. 3rd Veil: James York
 Grand Mast. 2nd Veil: Dan Owens
 Grand Mast. 1st Veil: Daron Woelk
 Grand Sentinel: Frederick Kemp
 Asst. Grand Musician: Dennis Reed

DDGHP Dist. #1: Andrew Mosley
 DDGHP Dist. #2: Warren Hughes
 DDGHP Dist. #3: Wayne Drake
 DDGHP Dist. #4: Ron Mozingo
 DDGHP Dist. #5: Patrick C. Carr

*The Grand Session is an opportunity for your voice to be heard.
 Please be sure to attend. All are invited!*

Grand Council Officers

Grand Master: L. Kent Needham
 Deputy Grand Master: Gary Strout
 Grand PCW: Robert Haynes
 Grand Treasurer: T. Michael Fegan
 Grand Recorder: Allan Jackson
 Grand Chaplain: Kelly Long
 Grand Capt. Guard: Wayne Drake
 Grand Cond. Council: Patrick C. Carr
 Grand Marshal: Justin Crippen
 Grand Cust. Work: Warren Hughes
 Grand Steward: Frederick Kemp
 Grand Sentinel: Andrew Mosley
 Asst. Grand Sentinel: Thomas Krauss
 Grand Organist: Dennis Reed

Arch Master: Wayne Rolf
 Arch Master: Wayne Rector
 Arch Master: Jamie Carwell

From the Ninth Arch



Most Illustrious Grand Master L. Kent Needham continued his travels across the jurisdiction. He planned to visit each Council within the state and he was able to accomplish that with all who were able to meet and have our Most Illustrious Grand Master in attendance.

M.I. Companion Needham's travels continued and he was present at Masonic Week 2025 where he was fortunate to be the active candidate in a few of the degrees conferred during the annual meetings.

Congratulations to Junction City Council No. 22, Iola Council

No. 8, and Wichita Council No. 12 for their hard work and preparation for their joint conferral of the Cryptic Degrees on six Companions, held in Newton on February 28, 2025. When our Councils work together there is virtually nothing they cannot accomplish. They made sure their candidates were ready and able to attend the Knight Templar Orders in Russell, Kansas on March 8, 2025.



The Grand York Rite sessions are almost here! They will be held on May 1-3, 2025, at the Bluemont Hotel in Manhattan. Please consider being in attendance. We will be voting on a strategic plan for our Grand York Rite bodies as we move into the future. It is important for our delegates to be at the meetings and to have their voices heard. This is YOUR Grand York Rite, and it is important to have our leadership in attendance from each of the constituent bodies.

The Chivalric Orders



Templary in Kansas continues to be an active and exciting part of the York Rite. Our members are busy not only within their own Commanderies working the beautiful Orders of Templary but are active in working degrees in all the bodies of masonry in Kansas.

Right Eminent Commandery Gary A. Mason traveled to Masonic Week 2025 in Alexandria, Virginia at the beginning of February. He was received into several of the honorary and invitational bodies which met during that session, and he received membership into the Sovereign Order of Knights Preceptor, an, honorary body for Past Commanders.

The Grand Commandery of Knight Templars of Kansas met on March 8, 2025, in Russell, Kansas to confer the Order of Malta, Illustrious Order of the Red Cross, and the Magnanimous Order of the Temple on 15 candidates from across the state.

Thank you to all who attended and worked the different parts for the conferral of the Orders. Your hard work impressed upon our new Sir Knights the beauty of our Order.



The Honor Guard, along with many other Sir Knights, provided an arch of steel for the 169th Annual Communication of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Kansas at their opening session. During the installation of officers, our Honor Guard and gathered Sir Knights provided an arch of steel once again for the installation. Thank you to each of you for your hard work and for representing Templary in such a fine manner.

Templary in Kansas continues to be well represented and during the last year has worked in the public view to assist at Memorial Day in Western and Central Kansas, Veterans Day in several locations throughout the state, and the 2nd Annual Easter Sunrise Service, scheduled for April 20, 2025 at Coronado Heights near Lindsborg.



Grand Commandery Officers

- Grand Comm: Gary Mason
- Dept. Grand Comm.: Frederick Kemp
- Grand General.: Patrick C. Carr
- Grand Capt. Gen.: Justin Crippen
- Grand Sr. Warden: Gary Strout
- Grand Jr. Warden: Ivan DeTevis
- Grand Prelate: Dan Owens
- Grand Treasurer: T. Michael Fegan
- Grand Recorder: Allan Jackson
- Grand Std. Bearer: Dale Morrow
- Grand Sword Bearer: Warren Hughes
- Grand Warder: Robert Beardsley
- Grand Sentinel: Andrew Mosley
- Grand Musician: Kelly Long
- Grand Guard: Juanito Ernacio
- Grand Guard: William Koonce
- Grand Guard: Robert Haynes

- Aide-de-camp: Kent Needham
- Aide-de-camp: T. Michael Fegan
- Aide-de-camp: Wayne Drake

- Honor Guard Members:
- Commander: Justin Crippen
- Commander: Patrick C. Carr
- Member: Fred Kemp
- Member: Michael Smith, REPGC
- Member: Kent Needham, REPGC
- Member: Robert Haynes
- Member: Gary Mason, REGC
- Member: Bill Koonce
- Member: Andrew Mosley

Athelstan Grand Court of the USA Consecrated



On Thursday, February 6, 2025, the last meeting of the Provincial Grand Court of the Masonic Order of Athelstan was held at Masonic Week in Alexandria, Virginia. As was agreed at the Grand Court meeting in England in October, 2024, the Provincial Grand Court was to be dissolved and constituted as the Grand Court of the Masonic Order of Athelstan for the United States of America.

The Grand Master of the Order in England, MW Brother Paul Johnston, was in attendance and provided his support for the constitution of the Grand Court of the USA and both he and his officers constituted the new Grand Court in a beautiful ceremony.

The new officers of the Grand Court were appointed and installed into office. The Grand Master for the Order in the United States of America is Most Worshipful Brother D. Allan Surrat. Right Worshipful Brother Bryce Hildreth, the Past provincial Grand Master of the Order in America, was installed as the Assistant Grand Master.

Two Kansas York Rite Masons received appointments as officers of the Grand Court. Worshipful Brother Jarrod A. Adkisson was installed as the Grand Almoner and Very Worshipful Brother Patrick C. Carr as the Grand Marshall.

Grand York Rite Communication in May

The time for the Grand York Rite sessions has been announced and the sessions will have a new format for 2025. All meetings will be held at the Bluemont Hotel in Manhattan, Kansas for the third consecutive year. The hospitality of the hotel, and the meals provided by the caterer, have made this an easy choice to once again hold the meetings there.

The session will start on Thursday, May 1, 2025, at 8:00 AM with a meeting of Kansas College No. 125 of the York Rite College. Afterwards, Ashmole Court No. 181 of the Masonic Order of Athelstan will meet at 9:00 AM. The conferral of the Order of the High Priesthood for sitting or past High Priests will start at 10:00 AM. Lunch will be at noon and it will be followed by the conferral of the Order of the Silver Trowel at 1:00 PM. This Order will be conferred on sitting or past Illustrious Masters of a council of Cryptic Masons. At 3:00 PM, the Kansas Association of Past Commanders will induct new members who are either current or past Eminent Commanders of a Commandery of Knight Templars. The Past Grand Presiding Officers Association will have their annual meeting at 5:00 PM and will be followed by dinner at 6:00 PM. At 7:00 PM, all will gather to commemorate the lives of those who have passed to the celestial lodge above at the necrology service.

On Friday, May 2, registration starts at 7:30 AM and the 159th Grand Convocation of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons will have a public session at 8:00 AM which will be followed by the tiled session at 9:00 AM. Installation for the 2025-2026 Grand Chapter Officers will be held at 11:00 AM with lunch to follow at 12:30 PM.



The Most Illustrious Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of Kansas will start the 158th Grand Assembly with a public session at 1:30 PM which will be followed by the tiled session at

2:30 PM. Installation for the 2025-2026 Grand Council Officers will be held at 4:30 PM. The Perpetual Life Committee will have their annual meeting at 6:00 PM, and the annual awards banquet will follow at 6:30 PM.



Saturday, May 3, will be the last day of activities for the 2025 Grand York Rite sessions and will start with a breakfast for the Past Grand Commander's wives at 6:30 AM. The Knights of the York Cross of Honor will have its annual meeting to elect worthy and qualified candidates at their 6:30 AM breakfast meeting. Registration will open at 7:30 AM and the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Kansas will reconvene its 157th Grand Conclave at 8:00 AM with a public opening session and the tiled meeting will start at 9:00 AM. Installation of the 2025-2026 Grand Commandery Officers will be held at 11:00 AM.

Registration information will be available online at www.kansasyorkrite.org and will include online registration and an option to mail your registration to the Grand Recorder. Please be sure to let the Grand Recorder know in advance of any dietary restrictions you may have.

Be sure to register and attend these sessions. It is highly encouraged for the dais officers of all three bodies to be in attendance to support and represent your subordinate bodies at Grand Chapter, Grand Council, and Grand Commandery each year. We look forward to seeing you there!

Masonic Week 2025 Wrap-Up

The 2025 Masonic Week annual gathering was impressive as it has been in the past. This time there were six members of the Kansas York Rite who attended the gathering and either joined or participated in the conferral of several of the degrees and orders. Those in attendance included Wayne Rolf, L. Kent Needham, Gary A. Mason, Patrick C. Carr, Kelly J. Long, and Butch Blackman. This was the largest group to ever attend Masonic Week from Kansas.



The event kicked off with two of the Kansas members attending Ye Commemorative Order of St. Thomas of Acon meeting. This Order is recognized in Kansas but there is not a Chapel operating within the state yet. After the meeting, and the luncheon which followed, most of the group attended the conferral and meeting of the Sovereign Order of Knights Preceptor. Sir Knights Needham and Mason joined the Order.

The Masonic Order of Athelstan held their annual meeting of Grand Court. More information on this meeting is located in another article in this publication. After the Athelstan Banquet was over, Companions Long and Carr attended the Order of the Bath, and Carr was appointed to the progressive line of that Order. Companions Needham, Mason, and Rolf were initiated into the Masonic Order of Pilgrim Preceptors, which is hopeful to start a Conclave in Kansas at Masonic Week 2026, now that there are seven members in the jurisdiction to serve as officers of the anticipated Conclave.



Friday started with the conferral of Knight Commander of the Royal Order of the Red Branch of Erie and Companions Mason, Rolf, and Needham received the honor.

The Grand Council of Knight Masons of the USA held their annual meeting and W. Ron McKenzie Council No. 134 received the distinction as an Honor Council.

The rest of Friday was spent attending meetings of the Holy Royal Arch Knight Templar Priests, Grand College of Rites, Society of Blue Friars, and the conferral of several of the past installed chair degrees for the Allied Masonic Degrees. After the annual Philalethes Society banquet, the 99th Annual Cellar of Ye Anciente Order of Corks conferred their Order upon many brothers.



On Saturday, the final day of Masonic Week started with the conferral of the first Four Grades of the Scarlet Cord. Companions Needham and Mason received their Fourth Grade. The Grand Council of the Allied Masonic Degrees held their annual communication before the Grand Banquet closed out the event for 2025.

It was a fantastic long weekend at Masonic Week. There were several other Masonic Orders and Degrees, and some interesting non-masonic side-orders conferred or exemplified at the gathering. If you have an interest in attending in 2026, speak with any of the Brothers who attended and they will surely assist you in getting registered.



Visit kansasyorkrite.org for more info.



The Masonic Order of the Bath



The original Order of the Bath (designated as the Wahoo Band until 1938) provided for a national body with subordinate bodies made up of members in an individual Lodge of Freemasons, Only one such body was formed and the members were called Active when it was decided to take in other members not of the Lodge, the latter being termed Honorary.

The Order was founded on June 21, 1921 in Red Bank, New Jersey by nine members of Mystic Brotherhood Lodge, No. 21, F. & A. M., as the Wahoo Band. The Order continued to add new members to their ranks as they grew.

In 1941 it was decided to rename the Organization as The Masonic Order of the Bath, and the Wahoo Band became an appended degree.

The Masonic Order of the Bath is a "fun" and convivial degree. It elects and confers the Order upon Master Masons in good standing at Masonic Week annually, and sometimes at other communications around the U.S. when opened for that purpose. The Order is led by a High Council whose officers include: Commander-General, Deputy Commander-General, Lt. Commander-General, Captain General, Keeper of the Bath Keys, Keeper of the Bath Records, Keeper of the Bath Door, and Keeper of the Bath Mat.

Membership in the Masonic Order of the Bath is \$25 and is a lifetime membership. The candidate receives a handsome neck jewel and two pins representing membership in the Order. It is, after all, a Masonic Order so there must be pins involved!

It is a "fun" and interesting Order with a long and storied history here in the United States. It is proud to have members from across the globe.

2025 Knight Masons/AMD In-Gathering Date



The Fourth Annual Knight Masons/Allied Masonic Degrees In-Gathering is scheduled and the committee is ready to reveal more information concerning the day.

The In-Gathering will be held at Emporia Lodge No. 12 and will commence with registration at 8:30 AM as in previous years.

The morning will start with the conferral of the Knight Masons degrees by the three Councils currently operating in Kansas. There has been planned a consecration of a new Knight Masons Council for Kansas which will be located in Topeka. This consecration will happen immediately before lunch.

15 Knighted in Russell

Sir Knights from across the jurisdiction gathered at Russell Lodge on Saturday, March 8, 2025, to conduct a knighting for those who were eligible to become Knight Templars.

The morning started with refreshments at registration and soon thereafter the Grand Commandery of Kansas was called from refreshment to labor by the Right Eminent Grand Commander, Sir Knight Gary A. Mason, for the purpose of conferring the Orders upon 15 Cryptic Masons who were in waiting to receive the Orders and become Kansas Knight Templars.

The Illustrious Order of the Red Cross was conferred by Sir Knight Justin Crippen, Grand Captain General of the Grand Commandery of Kansas, and the Order of Malta was conferred

After lunch, the four Councils of the Allied Masonic Degrees will open and exemplify four of the degrees for the assemblage.

At the end of the AMD exemplifications, the Order of the Scarlet Cord will once again be offered and conferred. The three grades of the Scarlet Cord will be conferred as they were in 2024 at the last In-Gathering. Any member of the Allied Masonic Degrees is eligible to receive the three grades of the Scarlet Cord.

If you have taken the First Grade, you will be able to take the Second Grade and the Third Grade if you so desire. The cost to take the Grades are \$50.00 per grade and must be paid in advance.

Registration information will be coming in the next few months. Watch the Grand York Rite website and this publication for updates as they are made available.

by Sir Knight Gary A. Mason, the Right Eminent Grand Commander of Kansas.

After a break for lunch, the conferral of the Magnanimous Order of the Temple was held. Many Sir Knights from across the jurisdiction took parts and assisted in the conferrals of the Order. Sir Knight Patrick C. Carr, Grand Generalissimo, conferred the Order in full form on each of the Knights of Malta.

It was another fantastic event for Kansas Knight Templars. Thanks to the hard work of Sir Knight Tom Krauss and several others from across the state of Kansas, there were 15 Companions ready, and each received the Orders of Christian Knighthood.



The Royal Arch Degree: A Brief History

The Articles of Union drafted in 1813 in England brought both the Ancients and the Moderns together in an agreement. Both Grand Masters, The Duke of Kent and the Duke of Sussex, made statements concerning the Articles. One of the Articles stated, "It is declared and pronounced that pure Ancient Masonry consists of three degrees, and no more; viz: those of the E.A., the F.C., and the M.M. (including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch)." This was one of the first agreements concerning the Royal Arch Degree and stated it is a part of ancient craft masonry, alongside the three degrees usually worked today.

The Royal Arch Degree was worked before this 1813 date. Dr. W. J. Chetwode Crawley discovered in the January 14, 1744, edition of the Dublin Journal, an article concerning Youghall Lodge No. 21 and their celebration of St. John's Day on December 27, 1743. The article stated, "in a Masonic procession at Youghal (Ireland) in 1743 two Excellent Masons carried 'The Royal Arch.'" While this does not state the degree was being worked at the time, it does infer the existence of the degree by the importance the craft placed upon the actual Royal Arch and processing it through the city. Other researchers state the Royal Arch degree was introduced and worked in Ireland sometime in 1740.

In the 1738 second edition of Anderson's Constitutions the following statement is included, "It (the temple) was finished in the short space of seven years and six months, to the amazement of all the world; when the cape-stone was celebrated by the fraternity with great joy. But their joy was soon interrupted by the sudden death of their dear master, Hiram Abif, whom they decently

interred, in the lodge near the temple, according to ancient usage." This is interesting because it mentions the cape-stone (or capstone) in use in the Holy Royal Arch degree.

The Holy Royal Arch degree was assumed to either be conferred as a superior degree to the Master Mason degree or as a culmination of the Master Mason degree. Either way, the Royal Arch degree was unique in that it could only be conferred upon those who were actual past masters of a lodge. Some lodges strayed from this concept and usual regularity by conferring the degree on Master Masons who had longevity in the craft, and it was done as an honor for their service. A resolution was passed at the Grand Chapter in England in 1783, and stated working an irregular degree of Installed Master or Virtual Past Master was an abuse of the Royal Arch degree and from thenceforth, the degree could only be conferred upon those who had served as Worshipful Master of a lodge and completed the term by passing the chair.

As for the advent of the fourth Holy Royal Arch degree, it had been stated it was conferred in 1744 in York, England. This means the Holy Royal Arch degree was adopted as a part of the masonic degree system quite early. By being adopted by the several grand lodges of the time, the Holy Royal Arch was seemingly deemed to be an important part of the masonic degree experience and system. While it was not available to all masons, being in part because of the requisite of being a Past Master, the fact lodges were performing virtual Past Master degrees demonstrated its importance to the completion of the three-degree system in place at the time.



Visit
kansasyorkrite.org
for more info.



Our Brethren from “Across the Pond”

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.

One of the great joys of freemasonry is the ability to travel. We take that for granted as we travel throughout the great state of Kansas. Some of our members are afforded the opportunity to travel to other states and witness the beauty, and the differences, of masonic ritual and custom.

There are several times during the year where masons can meet on the level with brothers who travel from England, Scotland, Wales, France, Italy, Romania, Bolivia, Brazil, Honduras, and many other nations. This is truly a blessing to behold when we can all sit together, enjoy a meal and some pleasant conversation, and discuss what makes our masonic journey so unique, but still much the same, as theirs.

During Masonic Week, the Brothers from England journey to Alexandria, Virginia each year to be a part of something wonderful. They attend the meetings, talk about the various orders and bodies in England which we do not have here in America. Some bring interesting “side degrees” which are a part of their masonic life in England. Some may bring non-masonic, yet informative Orders from “across the pond” as well.



No matter what they do, we realize these are our Brothers and they have the same mystic tie which we possess here in Kansas. Try to visit, or communicate online, when you can. It is a wealth of learning and friendship you will always cherish.

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