

WLN20 Trestle Board

November 2023



From the East

Mauro Lara - Worshipful Master

Hello Brethren, Family, and Friends.

Here we are anticipating the holidays at the end of the year one more time. For me, these last few months of the year seem to go by faster than any other time. As each of us looks forward to the various celebrations, gatherings, family reunions, and other such types of get-togethers, let's be mindful of a couple of things. First, our family and friends. Without these connections and support, many of the challenges and successes we experience would be for naught. Secondly, our Brethren. As we continue in our Masonic Journey, we become better men, in no small part, due to the guidance, support, and friendship of our brethren. As you can see, we have much for which to be thankful this **Thanksgiving** season. More on this later.

And let's not forget about another holiday observance in November: **Veteran's Day**. The brave men and women who served, continue to serve, and in many cases, gave the ultimate sacrifice, need to be remembered and receive our gratitude for maintaining our freedom. Prior to Veteran's Day, Memorial Day is observed for those who made the ultimate sacrifice. Armed Forces Day is celebrated to recognize those who are continuing to serve. And now, Veteran's Day to honor and recognize those who served. We are blessed for their dedication and sacrifice. We are thankful for their service. More to follow.

For activities, the last few months each year bring a slower pace for events in our Lodge. For the most part, anticipation and plans build for the following Masonic year. This season is no exception. Your Officers have been burning the midnight oil preparing for qualification in their next office. Our Lodge continues to be blessed with a fabulous group of dedicated

gentlemen on an ongoing basis. As I look at the current crew of Officers and contemplate the upcoming line, our Lodge shows the depth and diversity that is needed to be a success in these times. We can be at peace knowing that the future of our Lodge is bright.

EVENTS LAST MONTH (OCTOBER)

Other than our monthly Stated Meeting and some committee meetings, October was a relatively quiet month. As mentioned, officers met with the Masonic District Inspector for their qualifications, and everything is proceeding on schedule.

The Grand Lodge of California held its Annual Communication on October 27-29, 2023. As I mentioned before, this is the one time where Masons come together from all over our state to connect with one another and to discuss and vote on a variety of new initiatives that impact Masons throughout the state and beyond. It is also the time when Grand Lodge Officers are elected and installed. Indeed, a very worthy event.

EVENTS THIS MONTH (NOVEMBER)

November 4th at 6:00 PM is the **Annual Ladies' Night** being held in the ballroom. I hope you have this on your calendar and join in celebrating all the ladies associated with our Lodge. This is our opportunity to recognize them and offer them a time of joy and celebration to honor them. I want to thank Brother **Joseph Wallach** for planning and executing this traditional event. All indications are that it will be most enjoyable and a lot of fun.



November is also the time when the **Annual Election of Officers** is held for the ensuing Masonic Year. It is conducted at our Stated Meeting for the month; this year, on November 2nd.

Please join us for dinner at 6:00 PM. Our Cordon Bleu Crew will fix a traditional dinner to commemorate Thanksgiving: Veggie Spread, Chips and Jalapeño Dip, Green Salad, Dinner Rolls, Butter, Bob's Turkey, Potatoes with Gravy, Veggies (Cream of Beans), and a "Smokey" Pumpkin Pie with Whipped Cream.

This is also an opportunity to participate in our election process. Brethren, I hope to see you there.

EVENTS NEXT MONTH (DECEMBER)

Mark your calendars and join us on December 17th at 2:00 PM for our **Annual Installation of Officers**. Let's fill our Lodge room with as many Brethren and guests as the room will hold. This event is very much worthwhile to experience. The installation ceremony is quite beautiful and filled with much tradition.

THANKSGIVING

A few words about Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving, celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November in the United States, is a time for gratitude, family gatherings, and reflection on the blessings of life. While Thanksgiving is a secular holiday with roots in early American history, it also holds significance for various cultural and religious groups, including the Freemasons.

Masonic Influence on Early American History

Freemasonry has had a profound influence on the formation of the United States and its founding fathers. The Masonic principles of brotherhood, charity, and community service played a pivotal role in shaping the moral and ethical values of the American society. As Thanksgiving embodies values of gratitude, unity, and charity, it is not surprising that Masonic principles influenced its development.

The Masonic Values of Gratitude and Charity

Gratitude and charity are fundamental values in both Freemasonry and Thanksgiving. Freemasons are encouraged to be thankful for their blessings and to extend charity to those in need. The Thanksgiving holiday, with its tradition of sharing food and resources with those less fortunate, aligns closely with these Masonic values. The act of giving thanks and showing kindness to others is an integral part of both Thanksgiving and Masonic principles.

Masonic Symbols in Thanksgiving Traditions

Various symbols associated with Freemasonry can be found in Thanksgiving traditions. One such symbol is the cornucopia, a horn of plenty filled with an abundance of food and resources. The cornucopia represents prosperity, abundance, and the sharing of blessings, all of which are values held dear by both the Masonic fraternity and Thanksgiving celebrations. The cornucopia serves as a reminder of the importance of generosity and gratitude.

The Masonic Square and Compass, another iconic symbol, also bears relevance to Thanksgiving. The Square represents morality and honesty, while the Compass signifies self-control and restraint. These symbols encourage Freemasons to lead virtuous lives and to help others. The moral foundations advocated by the Square and Compass align with the ethical principles of Thanksgiving, promoting kindness, humility, and the acknowledgment of one's blessings.

Masonic Lodges and Community Service

Masonic lodges are deeply involved in community service and charitable work. The commitment to helping others in need mirrors the charitable aspect of Thanksgiving. This connection between Masonic lodges and Thanksgiving exemplifies the Masonic dedication to charity and community involvement.

In Summary

Thanksgiving and Freemasonry share common values of gratitude, charity, and community service. The Masonic principles that influenced the formation of the United States also played a role in shaping Thanksgiving as a holiday centered around giving thanks, sharing blessings, and helping

those in need. The Masonic connections to Thanksgiving serve as a reminder of the enduring influence of Freemasonry on American society and its traditions. In this spirit of unity and charity, both Thanksgiving and Freemasonry continue to inspire individuals to be grateful for their blessings and extend kindness to others.



VETERAN'S DAY

Veterans Day is a significant national holiday in the United States dedicated to honoring and expressing gratitude to all military veterans who have served the country. While Veterans Day itself is a secular observance, it is deeply rooted in American history, values, and traditions. The Masonic fraternity, with its long history of supporting veterans and their communities, shares a connection with the principles of Veterans Day.

Masonic Influence on the Military

Freemasonry has a long history of influencing military culture and values, dating back to the founding of the United States. Many notable military leaders, such as George Washington, John Paul Jones, and the Marquis de Lafayette, were Freemasons. The Masonic principles of brotherhood, morality, and community service have played a vital role in shaping the

moral and ethical values of the American military. These shared values have had a significant impact on Veterans Day.

Several Masonic values closely align with the principles of Veterans Day:

1. **Brotherhood:** Freemasonry emphasizes brotherly love and mutual support. Veterans Day celebrates the brotherhood and sisterhood that exists among those who have served in the military. Masons have often supported their fellow members who are veterans, and their dedication to unity and camaraderie mirrors the spirit of Veterans Day.
2. **Service:** Masons are encouraged to be of service to their fellow human beings and their communities. The military embodies the spirit of service to the nation and its people. Veterans Day, in turn, honors the sacrifices and service of military personnel, echoing the Masonic commitment to serving others.
3. **Patriotism:** Both Freemasonry and Veterans Day promote patriotism and love for one's country. The Masonic teachings of loyalty and devotion align with the deep sense of patriotism and respect for the nation's veterans that is at the heart of Veterans Day.

Masonic Support for Veterans

Masonic lodges across the United States have a long history of supporting veterans and their families. This support takes various forms:

1. **Charitable Work:** Masonic lodges often raise funds and contribute to charitable organizations that provide assistance to veterans, including those who may be struggling with physical or emotional challenges as a result of their service.
2. **Veterans Programs:** Many Masonic organizations have specific programs and initiatives dedicated to veterans' welfare. These programs provide direct assistance to veterans and their families, offering resources, education, and financial aid.
3. **Memorial Services:** Masonic lodges frequently participate in or conduct memorial services to honor fallen veterans and express their respect and gratitude for their service to the nation.

4. Community Engagement: Masons engage with their communities to raise awareness about veterans' issues and needs, fostering a spirit of unity and support.

In Summary

The Masonic connections to Veterans Day are deeply rooted in shared values of brotherhood, service, and patriotism. The Masonic fraternity's long history of supporting veterans and their communities reflects the spirit of Veterans Day, a day dedicated to honoring and expressing gratitude to those who have served the nation. The Masonic commitment to veterans underscores the enduring influence of Freemasonry on American society and its traditions. In the spirit of unity and service, both Veterans Day and Freemasonry continue to inspire individuals to support and honor those who have served in the military.

IN CLOSING

“We don’t know them all, but we owe them all.” – Unknown



From the West

Matthew Mason - Senior Warden

Brethren,

I just returned from the 174th Annual Communication in San Francisco.

I was proud of the involvement Washington 20 had in the event. It was an honor to see our own Worshipful **Joseph Dongo, PM**, sitting in the Grand Lodge “room” on the stage as Grand Standard Bearer.

We also got to see our Lodge Master, Worshipful **Mauro Lara**, making an appearance while being introduced by Most Worshipful **Randy Brill**, Grand Master, who was using his gavel to preside over a most interesting day of Grand Lodge. If you never have been, it is a great time to be had.

The Annual Communication is a wonderful reminder of how all Freemasons, whithersoever dispersed, can come together as one brotherhood.

A perfect example of this was on my way to the installation ceremony; I was getting on the cable car to head to the temple and, as I got on, I heard “Good morning, Brother” from someone already seated in the car. He noticed my Square and Compass lapel pin and we started speaking as old friends. Masons are truly a welcoming brotherhood.

Speaking of installations, please remember that ours will be on Sunday, December 17th, at 2:00 PM. Please be there by 1:55 PM if you are able, as we want to start on time. It will be attended by Most Worshipful **Sean Metroka**, Grand Master, as the Installing Officer. There will be a cocktail reception with hors d’oeuvres and drinks after the Ceremonies.





From the South

Joseph Wallach - Junior Warden

Brethren,

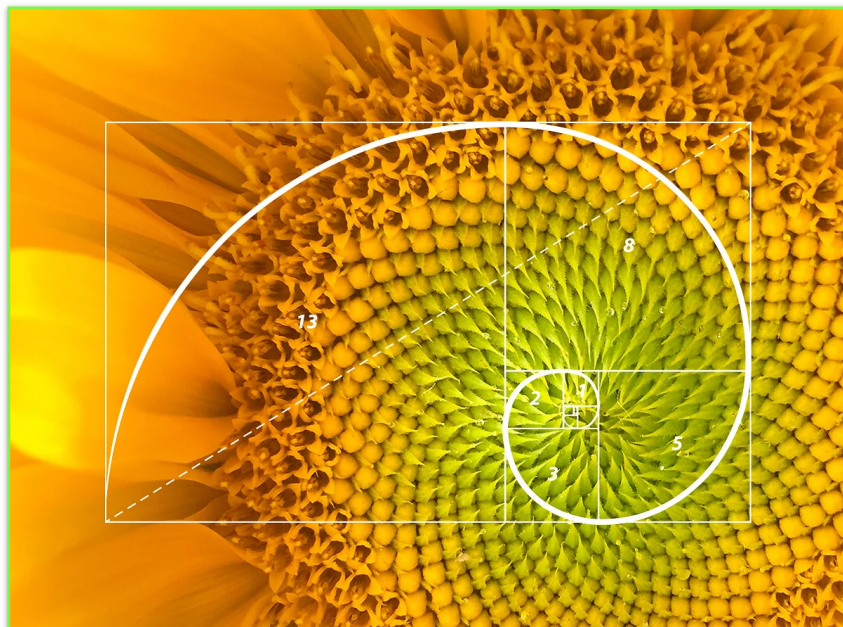
November has arrived and, with it, the Holiday of Thanksgiving.

A time to be with family and friends, and reconnect over a meal, drink, and conversation. As we consume the meal before us we also consume the stories, some old and some new, of our travels in life through the past ten months. The joys, the successes, the failures, and the sadness of the events that weave the fabric of our story.

There is another Holiday on November 23rd (11/23), Fibonacci Day. The date being chosen as 1123 is a Fibonacci sequence. The Fibonacci series of numbers produces a ratio, a Golden ratio, that is found in the beautiful proportions of nature.

We have 17 birthdays this month, including our Treasurer Worshipful **Eric Hixson, PM**.

I look forward to seeing you at our Stated Meeting.





Masonic Education

Francisco Marques (PM) - Secretary

Stoic Influence on Freemasonry

When most people think of philosophy, they imagine philosophers arguing about something impractical or irrelevant to personal lives or current issues. I do believe, however, that philosophy is more useful and important to the average person today than at any other time in history.

Especially after experiencing the pandemic and being forced to exile in our own homes, I think we all need personal philosophy to keep us with a steady purpose of mind in search of the light at the end of the tunnel. Otherwise, we risk wandering on this planet and responding to random stimuli and information with little or no impact on our long-term goals (supposing you have one in mind.)

I first made contact with the philosophical realm in my pre-Freemasonry years and found myself enraptured by the opportunity to study the great Greek Philosophers of ancient times, who have inspired the world since the seventh century B.C.

Ancient Greek philosophy distinguishes itself from other early forms of philosophical and theological postulations theorizing for its emphasis on reason (Wisdom) as opposed to emotions (Passions).

During that era, five prominent philosophical traditions originated: the **Platonist**, the **Aristotelian**, the **Epicurean**, and the **Skeptic**. Several centuries later, **Zeno of Citium** emerged and acclaimed the virtues of **Stoicism**, the philosophical backbone of the Roman Empire and - one may argue - of Freemasonry itself, a philosophy of **Logic** and **Reason** that encouraged the individual to form a personal ethical system and obey it unsparingly and without compromise.

Marcus Aurelius, the philosopher emperor of the early Roman Empire, would march this philosophy across the Mediterranean world and leave its influence wherever he reigned. His **Meditations**, which he wrote to and for himself, offers readers a unique opportunity to see how an ancient person

(indeed an emperor) might try to live a Stoic life, according to which only virtue is good, only vice is bad, and the things which we normally busy ourselves with are all indifferent to our happiness. The difficulties Marcus faced putting Stoicism into practice were philosophical as well as practical, and understanding his efforts increased my own philosophical appreciation of Stoicism.

After joining **Benjamin Franklin Lodge No. 1181 (Grand Orient of Brazil)** and venturing through studies with my late coach and mentor, Worshipful **Antônio Aureliano Liberato Fernandes (PM)**, I found myself comparing the teachings adopted by the Fraternity to those from ancient philosophy.

Greek concepts appear to blend together in the symbolism and rituals of modern Freemasonry, most notably the teachings from the Stoic tradition. Stoicism embraces a philosophy of life that emphasizes the importance of virtue, reason, and living in accordance with divine and natural laws.

PASSIONS

The Greek word *pathos* was a wide-ranging term indicating an infliction one suffers, or "passions" in some cases. Freemasons use the word **passions** to discuss common emotions such as anger, fear, and "excessive joy" or vices. Passion is a misleading force in the mind that occurs because of a failure to reason correctly.

One of the first lessons we learn in the Craft is to make use of Masonic working tools "for the purpose of divesting our hearts and consciences of all the vices and superfluities of life," constantly self-improving while learning to subdue our passions.

In Christian theology, passions (or vices) are associated with the "Seven Deadly Sins":

- Lust – Wanting what someone else has
- Gluttony – Over-consumption beyond our reasonable needs
- Greed – Selfish desire, especially for wealth, power, and possessions
- Sloth – Desire to do what's easy instead of what's good
- Wrath – Uncontrolled feelings of rage, anger, and hatred

- Envy – Resentfulness of others for their lot in life
- Pride – Self-adulation and over-inflation of ego

In Buddhism, vices are represented by the **three poisons** or the **three unwholesome roots**:

- Moha (delusion, confusion)
- Raga (sensual attachment, greed)
- Dvesha (aversion, hate)

These poisons (or passions) are considered to be afflictions or character flaws innate in any human being, the root of craving or desiring, and thus in part the cause of suffering, pain, and unsatisfactoriness.

A person experiencing such an emotion has incorrectly valued a trivial thing. A fault of judgment, some false notion of good or evil, lies at the root of each passion. To be free of the passions is to have a happiness which is self-contained. Happiness is the experience of positive emotions combined with deeper feelings of meaning and purpose.



VIRTUES

There are four core virtues that Freemasons believe are essential for proper conduct while in Lodge as well as when abroad in the world. These virtues are regarded by many different philosophers to be the basis for living a good and righteous life:

Prudence (Wisdom): The ability to see the world clearly and to understand what is truly important, allowing us to "regulate our lives and actions agreeably to the dictates of reason." Wisdom is the foundation of all the other virtues and leads the Freemason to "transform fear into prudence, pain into transformation, mistakes into initiation, and desire into undertaking." ([Nassim Nicholas Taleb](#))

Justice (Ethics): The ability to act fairly and to treat others with respect. "This virtue is consistent with divine and human laws and the very cement and support of civil society." It's the morality behind how we act, specifically in relation to our community and the people within it. To be steadfast and truthful is the great aim we have in view.

Fortitude (Courage): The ability to face challenges and to do what is right, even when it is difficult. This virtue is essential for living a fulfilling life. Fortitude is not the elimination of fear, desire, or anxiety. It is acting in the right way despite our fears, desires, and anxieties.

Temperance (Self-Control): The ability to control our desires and live in moderation. Temperance is essential for living a harmonious life while freeing our minds "from the allurements of vice." It's our ability to choose long-term well-being over short-term satisfaction.

LET IT GO

The Stoic Freemason believes in the concept of dichotomy of control, which states that there are only two things we can control in life:

Our **thoughts** and our **actions**. Everything else is outside of our control.

The dichotomy of control can help us to focus on the things that are important and to let go of the things that we can't control. It can help us to develop a sense of equanimity, or calmness, in the face of adversity.

"Where will I find good and bad? In me, in my choices." ([Epictetus](#))

MEMENTO MORI

Stoics use this phrase as a reminder of the impermanence of life and the importance of living each day to 100%. As stated by Brother **Joseph Wallach** in his October article, Memento Mori is a reminder of what awaits us at the end of our mortal journey. The phrase is Latin for "remember that you will die."

Several passages in the Old Testament urge a remembrance of death. Masonic tradition reminds us that death is a natural part of life and that it is something that we should all accept. We are inspired to "welcome death, not as a grim tyrant, but as a **kind messenger** sent to translate us from this imperfect to that all-perfect, glorious, and celestial Lodge above..." When we know that our time is limited, we will be more likely to focus on what is truly important.



THREEFOLD MIND

A Stoic Freemason believes that a good character cannot be developed without a proper understanding and implementation of three relevant regimens:

The Discipline of Desire (Plumb) (Beauty)

The discipline of desire tells us what is, and is not, proper to want. This understanding derives from the fact that some things are in our power and others are not.

In Freemasonry, this principle is emblematically represented by the Plum.

"The Plumb admonishes us, Freemasons, to walk uprightly in our several stations, to hold the scales of justice in equal poise, to observe the just medium between intemperance and pleasure, and to make our passions and prejudices coincide with the line of our duty."

The Discipline of Action (Level) (Strength)

The discipline of action - known also as Brotherly Love, in the sense of concern for others - tells us how to behave in the world with compassion. It is the result of a proper understanding of ethics, the study of how to live our lives, and it draws on the virtue of justice.

By the exercise of this principle, we are taught to regard the whole human species as one family, who were created by the Great Architect of the Universe with a natural instinct to aid, support, and protect each other. By providing goodness to the world through helping people and advancing society, Freemasons can be made truly fulfilled. "Some leaders' strength is inspiring others." ([Ahsoka Tano](#))

In Masonic studies, this principle is illustrated by the Level.

"The Level demonstrates that we are descended from the same stock, that we partake of the same nature, and share the same hope."

Actively caring for the welfare of others is an essential part of living. Connecting and deeply loving our Brethren, friends, kids, spouse, siblings, parents, coworkers, and anyone we meet regularly makes life worth living. Brotherly Love is the spiritual glue that connects everyone.

The Discipline of Assent (Square) (Wisdom)

The discipline of assent - or wisdom through mindfulness - tells us how to react to situations, in the sense of either giving our assent to our initial impressions of a situation or withdrawing it.

This discipline is arrived at via the study of **Logic** – what is and is not reasonable to think – and requires the virtue of practical Wisdom. This is the ability to recognize our own emotions, strengths, weaknesses, values, and goals. This practice might lead to confidence, honesty, and openness to feedback.

Adopting an adaptable mindset (or growth mindset) means cultivating the belief that we can improve intelligence and performance through Masonic principles, but most especially through the philosophical representation of the Square.

"The Square is an emblem of Morality; and it should constantly remind you that not only by precept but by example, we should promote good morals among the Brethren on all occasions."

IN CLOSING

I wanted to share one of my old habits with you. Most of us spend our time frantically moving from task to task. In the chaos of everyday life, we often forget to pause and take a minute to remember where we are, what we are doing, and why we think it matters.

A bedtime reflection is what I often do at the end of the day. I mentally replay my entire day and then ask myself a few questions:

- **"Did I behave according to Masonic principles?"**
- **"Did I treat others in a friendly and considerate manner?"**
- **"Did I fight against any passions?"**
- **"Did I make someone smile?"**

Go ahead. Give it a try.

It's just you and your mind. What could possibly go wrong?

Sources:

- **Monitor & Officers' Manual** by Grand Lodge of California F. & A. M.
- **Installation Ceremony for Constituent Lodges** by Grand Lodge of California F. & A. M.
- **Letters from a Stoic** by Lucius Seneca
- **Meditations** by Marcus Aurelius
- **How to Be a Stoic** by Massimo Pigliucci
- **Radical Acceptance** by Tara Brach, Ph.D.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NOVEMBER

- 01 **Monthly Executive Committee Meeting** (Zoom) Wednesday 06:30 PM
- 02 **Fellowship Dinner** (Banquet Room) Thursday 06:00 PM
- 02 **Monthly Stated Meeting (Annual Election of Officers)** (LR1) Thursday 07:30 PM
- 04 **Annual Ladies' Night** (Ballroom) Saturday 06:00 PM
- 08 **Masonic Funeral Service** (East Lawn Memorial Park) Wednesday 10:00 AM
William Reginald Marrison (PM) (06/05/1923 - 10/23/2023)
- 09 **DARK** Thursday
- 15 **OSI (Officers School of Instruction)** (LR3) Wednesday 07:00 PM
- 16 **DARK** Thursday
- 23 **DARK** Thursday (Thanksgiving Day)
- 30 **Practice for Installation Day** (LR1) Thursday 06:30 PM

DECEMBER

- 05 **Monthly Executive Committee Meeting** (Zoom) Tuesday 06:30 PM
- 07 **Fellowship Dinner** (Banquet Room) Thursday 06:00 PM
- 07 **Monthly Stated Meeting** (LR1) Thursday 07:30 PM
- 14 **DARK** Thursday
- 17 **Annual Installation of Officers** (LR1) Sunday 02:00 PM
- 20 **OSI (Officers School of Instruction)** (LR3) Wednesday 07:00 PM
- 21 **DARK** Thursday
- 28 **DARK** Thursday

Washington Lodge No. 20

Mission Statement

To practice and promote a way of life that binds like-minded men in a worldwide brotherhood that transcends all religious, ethnic, cultural, social and educational differences.

Through Masonic principles and tradition, and by the outward expression of these through its fellowship and compassion, **Washington Lodge No.20 Free & Accepted Masons** provides ways in which to serve God, family, country, neighbors, and self in an environment that contributes to the enrichment and betterment of its members, mankind, and its communities.



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