

# The TROWEL

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SERVING WINSTON-SALEM AND OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 1854

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Brotherly Love • Relief • Truth

"The important thing is not to stop questioning."

— ALBERT EINSTEIN

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FROM THE

# EAST

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THE WORK BEGINS WITHIN

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WORSHIPFUL MASTER RICK LASHLEY

*On ritual, service, the working tools, and the inward labor of the Craft*



## A CRAFT MUST BE PRACTICED

When I look out from the East, I am proud to see Brothers preparing for the progressive line and coming to practice - some of them twice each week. Freemasonry is called a Craft for a reason: it must be practiced.

My dream is to reach the point where we can call for any portion of a degree and put it into motion. That proficiency is not about displaying ourselves. It is one of the Lodge's sacred duties to the candidate.

Every candidate deserves a beautiful, meaningful, moving, spiritual experience - work presented with intention and capable of changing the trajectory of a life. The words matter, and so do the movements, timing, confidence, and care with which they are delivered. Everything should protect the candidate's experience.

That same commitment belongs in the progressive line. I want to be the hand that pulls a Brother up, gives him an opportunity, and helps him become the best version of his Masonic self.

A Brother who is eligible to attend a degree should be invited into the work and given something real to learn. The future of our ritual is built each time a Brother is welcomed into the labor.

## THE MEASURE OF A DAY

The twenty-four-inch gauge is the working tool I return to most often. When I received the Entered Apprentice Degree, I was working six full days a week and sometimes seven. There was no resemblance of that gauge in my life.

It made me ask where I was making time for my wife and family. Where was the time to be the man I wanted to be before them? Where was the time for me?

I began working deliberately for a period and then stopping. I might read, talk with my wife, or spend time with my family. When I returned to the work, I was more effective - not less. Rest was not the enemy of industry; it made my labor more purposeful.

I sometimes resented people at work because I felt they were taking too much of my time. The gauge turned that resentment inward: I had allowed my time to become unbounded and needed to govern it myself.

That was the lesson: the gauge must be applied, not merely memorized. My coaching connected the words to life by asking what troubled me and whether I had practiced the working tool since our last conversation.

## THE BOUNDARY AND THE CENTER

The compasses gave me a second lesson. At work, people bring their problems to me because they know what they tell me will stop with me. I can listen and then help them see where a boundary is needed. Sometimes the answer is not simply, 'No.' It is, 'I cannot do that right now, but here is another possibility.'

That is not withdrawal. It is knowing the circle within which you can act honestly and usefully. Without boundaries, people burn out; with them, they can remain present.

Brother Larry Toth, who was my coach, once pointed to the point within the circle and told me, 'That is you.' That stayed with me. The point is not an abstraction. It is the Mason who must remain centered and do the work.

Another image stayed with me: the yin and yang understood in motion. From the center, it is not merely black and white; the movement reveals the gray between them. Move toward the edge and one side can fill your whole field of vision. For me, that is another lesson in remaining centered.

Freemasonry is a journey inward. The visible work - ritual, service, and fellowship - must arise from a centered place. We locate what is unfinished or out of balance within ourselves, and we return to that labor for the rest of our lives.

## FROM THE EAST

## *The Work Begins Within - continued*



### A LIGHT IN THE WINDOW

Our September emphasis is community outreach, visibility, and service, alongside the ritual work already demanding our attention. We are fortunate to be a busy Lodge. The more engaged, practicing Master Masons we have, the more those three things can grow.

The five-year vision is not about pumping up membership numbers or merely filling seats. It is about continuity beyond any one Master's year and about helping men become genuinely engaged participants in the Craft.

Our public presence should be persistent and consistent. We should not camouflage ourselves. A man may drive past the square and compasses, become curious, and look us up on the phone in his hand. There should be a beacon waiting for him - a light in the window.

The knock may be a telephone call, a visit to the website, or a man walking into the Masonic Center as I once did. However he arrives, we should meet his interest with understanding, seriousness, and passion, because what we do is serious.

*"There should be a light in the window."*

### BROTHERLY LOVE MADE VISIBLE

Winston Lodge is at its best when brotherly love becomes action. The details of a Brother's hardship belong to him. Our part is to notice, to ask, and to act - with a visit, a ride, a meal, a telephone call, or whatever help lies within our power.

Saying, 'Brother, I love you,' is easy. The real expression is, 'What can I do to help you?' Then we step forward because we want to, not because we have to.

### A PLACE IN THE WORK

When a man becomes a Master Mason, the Lodge should not assume that he automatically knows where he belongs. We should stop and ask what has excited him about the journey. What will keep feeding him and helping him grow?

The answer may be ritual, education, charity, fellowship, technology, the kitchen, or a committee no one has imagined. Strong leadership places genuine opportunities before a Brother. I want to be the hand that pulls him up and gives him a real place in the Lodge before he has time to wonder whether he possesses one.

The same curiosity belongs in a call to a Brother who has been away. We should not begin with, 'Why haven't you come?' We should begin with, 'Brother, we miss you. What is happening in your life? Is there something we can do to help?' Compassion opens a door that judgment closes.

### THE WORK MUST OUTLAST A YEAR

One of our greatest needs is bench strength. We lean heavily upon a few experienced Brothers in ritual, lectures, and coaching. We are blessed to have them, but the same shoulders cannot carry the whole weight forever.

I have worked to learn more of the Master Mason Degree so I can remain a resource after I leave the East. Another Brother may learn a charge, a lecture, a presentation, or one part of a degree. Within the length of his cable-tow, each man can step forward and say, 'I will learn that.'

An officer should prepare not only for the chair he occupies, but for the one he may be called to fill next. The candidates moving through the degrees deserve continuity. The work of the Lodge must continue when one Master steps down and another takes his place.



### THREE PEOPLE AT RICK'S TABLE

George Washington, because I would love to hear him speak in his own voice; novelist John Updike, whose work first opened my mind to what writing could do; and my high-school football coach, Sam Story, who helped shape me as a man and taught me to get back up after being knocked down.



### WHY MASONRY MATTERS

I entered Masonry because I wanted to be part of something larger than myself - a group of serious men doing real work and trying to become better. I knew I wanted to improve, but I needed a path. You are shaped by the people with whom you surround yourself.

The Lodge is sacred to me because it is a place where men can be treated with dignity and respect, lift one another up, love one another, and help one another grow. Masonry has given me far more than I expected when I first knocked upon the door.

The East gets hot, but the reward is worth the work. If Winston Lodge ever needed me to sit in the East again, I would. It is a responsibility not entered into lightly, but there is real joy in leading Brothers who are working to improve themselves and one another.

# TRESTLEBOARD & CALENDAR

PLANNING OUR WORK, STRENGTHENING OUR BOND

## OCTOBER 2026

| DATE              | LODGE SCHEDULE       | TIME                     |
|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>FRI</b> OCT 2  | Masonic BBQ          | 11:00 AM - 6:00 PM       |
| <b>SUN</b> OCT 4  | Ritual Practice      | 3:00 PM                  |
| <b>MON</b> OCT 5  | Ritual Practice      | 6:30 PM                  |
| <b>SUN</b> OCT 11 | Ritual Practice      | 3:00 PM                  |
| <b>MON</b> OCT 12 | Stated Communication | Dinner 6:30   Opens 7:30 |
| <b>SUN</b> OCT 18 | Ritual Practice      | 3:00 PM                  |
| <b>MON</b> OCT 19 | Ritual Practice      | 6:30 PM                  |
| <b>SUN</b> OCT 25 | Ritual Practice      | 3:00 PM                  |
| <b>MON</b> OCT 26 | Master Mason Degree  | TIME TBD                 |

ALL LODGE EVENTS: WINSTON-SALEM MASONIC CENTER

## MASONIC BBQ

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2026

11:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Drive-through at the Masonic Center of Winston-Salem

**\$15 per plate**

Free delivery of 10 plates or more. Proceeds support Masonic charity.

## AROUND THE STATE

### MASONIC HOMECOMING AT OXFORD OCTOBER 9-11

The Masonic Home for Children welcomes the public for a weekend of fellowship and family activities. Saturday features the Shrine parade at 10:00 a.m., barbecue, music by The Embers, rides and campus tours.

[MHC-oxford.org](http://MHC-oxford.org)

### KINGS MOUNTAIN BATTLEFIELD EVENT OCTOBER 17

North Carolina Masons gather at Kings Mountain for a statewide observance connected with the 250th anniversary of American independence.

### NATIONAL SOJOURNERS WINSTON-SALEM

A new local chapter is being organized. Veteran Brothers who are interested may contact WB Jay Woods through Grandview.

STATEWIDE NOTICES FROM THE NORTH  
CAROLINA MASON, SUMMER 2026

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THE CHAMBER OF

# REFLECTION

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A PERMANENT SPACE HAS BEEN APPROVED



*A visual concept for the permanent Chamber of Reflection: simple, quiet, and purposeful.*

## WHAT IS A CHAMBER OF REFLECTION?

A Chamber of Reflection is a private room in which a candidate may spend time alone before receiving a degree. Removed temporarily from telephones, conversation, and the ordinary activity of the Lodge, he is invited to quiet his mind and consider the importance of the step he is preparing to take.

The Chamber is not intended to frighten the candidate or create a theatrical display of mystery. Its purpose is inward preparation: to encourage him to consider his life, his responsibilities, his relationship with Deity, and the kind of man he hopes to become.

Under the North Carolina guidelines, entering the Chamber is entirely voluntary. It is used before the candidate's ritualistic preparation and is not part of the Official Standard of the Work. The Chamber must never interfere with or alter the authorized ritual.

Wonderful news has arrived for Winston Lodge No. 167: the Winston-Salem Masonic Temple Board has approved the use of the coatroom as a permanent Chamber of Reflection.

Work will soon begin to clear and prepare the space for the future renovation and permanent installation of the Masonic Center's new Chamber of Reflection. Once completed, the room will no longer need to be assembled before every degree and dismantled afterward. A dedicated space will allow the Lodge to preserve what works, improve the arrangement gradually, and adapt the approved symbols to the particular degree being conferred without rebuilding the entire Chamber each time.

Most importantly, it will give candidates and Brethren a permanent, quiet place set apart for contemplation.

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*A permanent, quiet place  
set apart for contemplation.*

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## AN OLD TRADITION OF SOLITUDE AND DARKNESS

The Chamber's historical roots lie in the longstanding Masonic practice of withdrawing a candidate into darkness and solitude before initiation. The influential English exposure *Jachin and Boaz*, published in 1762, describes a candidate being conducted into a completely dark room and left quietly to his reflections before being prepared.

The more formally arranged Chamber of Reflection - with carefully selected objects intended to encourage contemplation - later became especially associated with French and Scottish Masonic rites.

## THE CHAMBER OF REFLECTION

## GUIDELINES &amp; THE WORK AHEAD



## THE NORTH CAROLINA GUIDELINES

The governing North Carolina authority is Bradshaw Opinion No. 3, issued December 1, 2020, together with the accompanying Grand Lodge Chamber of Reflection Guidelines.

The opinion explains that lodges had been requesting guidance for several years. The Board of Custodians - the Grand Lodge body entrusted with preserving and supervising North Carolina's authorized ritual work - had repeatedly affirmed that a Chamber was an appropriate means of preparing a candidate mentally and spiritually. The 2020 opinion established uniform statewide requirements for its use.

The Chamber should be outside both the Lodge room and the preparation room, as quiet as possible, dark except for one candle, and free from unrelated decoration. A Brother must remain stationed outside to protect the candidate's privacy and assist him if needed. The permitted period of reflection is between 30 and 45 minutes.

## WHAT MAY BE INCLUDED?

Bradshaw Opinion No. 3 confirms which items may be included in a Chamber of Reflection. In addition to those approved items, other symbols may be included when they appear in the Bahnson Manual, provided that they correspond to the degree being conferred.

The guidelines recommend a restrained and purposeful arrangement. Approved examples include a chair, table, candle, mirror, the appropriate working tools, a properly arranged lambskin, and the candidate's or Brother's preferred Volume of Sacred Literature.

For the Entered Apprentice Degree, the point within a circle may be included. For the Fellow Craft Degree, corn, wine, and oil may be displayed. For the Master Mason Degree, approved examples include incense - preferably frankincense - an hourglass, a sprig of acacia, and a setting maul. Other symbols found directly within the appropriate degree of the Bahnson Manual, including the scythe where applicable, may also be considered.

This is not an exhaustive shopping list. Grand Lodge recommends a minimalist approach. Nothing should be included merely because it appears old, mysterious, or dramatic. Every object must be authorized, appropriate to the degree, and placed there for a clear contemplative purpose.

## MAKING THE PERMANENT CHAMBER POSSIBLE

The request for a permanent Chamber was presented to the Temple Board by Winston Lodge members Wor. Mark Wilson, Wor. Larry Toth, and Wor. Richard Miller. Brother Chris Elder of Walnut Cove Lodge also offered valuable support and spoke as a representative of the Scottish Rite.

Their combined efforts helped the Temple Board understand both the practical advantages of a permanent room and the deeper Masonic purpose it will serve. Winston Lodge extends its sincere appreciation to each of these Brothers and to the Temple Board for considering and approving the proposal.

Senior Warden Andrew Stuart is leading Winston Lodge's continuing work to develop and furnish the Chamber. Brothers who have ideas for the room - or Masonic objects falling within the permitted categories that they may wish to donate - are encouraged to contact Brother Andrew.

Questions, comments, concerns, suggestions, queries, quandaries, or qualms are equally welcome. Every contribution will be considered in light of the Grand Lodge guidelines and the governing principle that each object must possess a clear and proper purpose.

A well-deserved word of appreciation goes to Senior Warden Andrew Stuart for the hard work, careful thought, and continued attention he has devoted to this endeavor. With the combined efforts of these Brothers, Winston Lodge now has the opportunity to create a permanent Chamber of Reflection worthy of the candidates and Brethren who will enter it.

## SOURCE NOTE

Bradshaw Opinion No. 3, December 1, 2020; Grand Lodge of North Carolina Chamber of Reflection Guidelines and Exhibits A-B; Grand Lodge of North Carolina Reports, 2021, pages 40-41; *Jachin and Boaz*, 1762; and the 1892 North Carolina Lodge Manual compiled by Charles F. Bahnson.



# THE LODGE AT WORK



This is where the magic happens.

Practice makes perfect. Brothers who would like to brush up on their degree work are welcome to join us Sundays at 3:00 p.m. and Mondays at 6:30 p.m., except on the second Monday of the month, when the Lodge holds its Stated Communication.



*Practicing the Red work.*



*Winston Lodge's double Entered Apprentice Degree.*



*Get a grip.*



*No fun allowed!*



*A friendly reminder that you should always knock.*

## A Shared Language

Music, participation, and harmony in Lodge

**M**usic, for me, has always been a way of taking part.

It is not about turning everyone into a performer. It is about personal enjoyment, participation, and learning another language. When a person can read music, a hymnbook is no longer just a page of words and unfamiliar marks. It becomes something he can enter into.

I sometimes wonder why more people don't learn to read music. You don't necessarily need to read music to participate in or enjoy it. Familiar songs can be learned by repetition. Still, when something new is placed before us, musical literacy opens another door. Even when singing takes someone outside his usual comfort zone, I think there is value in giving it a try. Brothers appreciate having participated, and visitors remember that Winston Lodge sang together. In Lodge, the purpose is not perfection. It is the simple act of Brothers taking part together.

I began piano lessons when I was eight years old, inspired by the people I heard playing hymns in church. That interest has stayed with me. I play piano with a jazz band and an orchestra, serve as a substitute church organist, and now take bass-guitar lessons.

After so many years at the keyboard, I still want to learn something new. I have friends who play guitar, and I want to understand enough of their musical language that we can share ideas. I don't think we are ever too old to continue learning.

Before I play a note in Lodge, I hope the music will maintain harmony. The words we sing have to do with brotherhood and how we live our lives. Music can help those ideas stay with us; a melody can carry a thought long after the page has been put away.

One way I would know Winston Lodge is continuing to grow in the right direction would be through the fellowship we share. Membership matters, but so does a good meal, conversation among Brothers, music, and a genuine welcome for a visitor. A Brother is more likely to return - and a visitor may one day want to join - when he is received as someone expected, not merely accommodated. That, to me, is the essence of friendship and fellowship.



### MORGAN L. WILLIAMS

Lodge Musician  
Winston Lodge No. 167

### "Maintain harmony."

An edited reflection from an interview  
with Brother Morgan L. Williams

## MASONIC EDUCATION

# WHEN JUDGMENT IS SURRENDERED

Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Warning About Stupidity

A crowd may contain thousands of intelligent minds and still do very little thinking.

At the turn of 1942-43, German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote a series of reflections called "After Ten Years." He was living under Nazi rule and watching people accommodate themselves to its demands. He would be arrested that April and executed at Flossenbürg concentration camp on April 9, 1945.

One reflection, "On Stupidity," opens with a disturbing claim: stupidity may be a more dangerous enemy of the good than malice. Bonhoeffer did not mean limited intelligence or a lack of education. He called it "not an intellectual defect but a human one." A learned person might succumb to it, while someone with little schooling might retain sound judgment.

Ignorance can often be met with information. Bonhoeffer was describing something harder to reach: the surrender of one's responsibility to think. Under the influence of a powerful leader, movement, institution, or crowd, borrowed phrases begin to feel like one's own conclusions. Welcome evidence receives close attention; inconvenient evidence is waved away. A man may sound certain while scarcely examining what he says.

Bonhoeffer was not writing in the abstract. Hitler and the Nazi leadership acted with deliberate malice. Their power also depended on people willing to repeat, excuse, obey, or look away. Many of those people were capable of thought. They had allowed authority and slogans to do too much of it for them.

That is why the condition troubled him. Wrongdoing can be named and opposed. A person who has surrendered judgment may sincerely help it along without recognizing his part in it.

The danger did not disappear with the Third Reich. We can recognize its shape whenever loyalty to a leader outranks truth, institutions are respected only while they comply, and a familiar slogan settles a question before the evidence has been heard.



Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 1939  
Bundesarchiv, Bild 146-1987-074-16  
CC BY-SA 3.0 DE

The easiest response is to start identifying all the stupid people around us. There is no shortage of candidates. We have all most likely added to the supply ourselves at one moment or another. I am certain that I have. But the more useful question is what happens when we stop examining a claim because it comes from someone we admire, or stay silent because a thoughtful objection would make the room uncomfortable.

That question belongs in a Lodge. We speak of seeking light, and light sometimes shows us that we were mistaken. Brotherly love gives us room to say so, to question one another honestly, and to disagree without treating disagreement as disloyalty.

A healthy Lodge can help a Brother test a claim, ask for its source, and reconsider an opinion without losing face. Masonry's lessons ask more of us than remembering facts or repeating fine words. They ask us to practice judgment with humility and courage.

Bonhoeffer's warning leaves each of us with an uncomfortable possibility: intelligence alone will not protect us. We must remain willing to think for ourselves—and willing to discover when we have not.

**SOURCE NOTE** Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "After Ten Years," especially "On Stupidity," in *Letters and Papers from Prison*, Reader's Edition (Fortress Press, 2015). Biographical details: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

A FIVE-YEAR ROLLING PLAN IN PRACTICE

# LODGE PROGRESS

*Whence came we? What are we here doing? Whither are we going?*

## Whence Came We?

Over the past five years, our members have followed a rolling plan with patience, steady work, and unwavering fortitude. Under the leadership of Worshipful Master Lashley, we have made real progress:

- We no longer worry about filling chairs at Stated meetings.
  - We no longer struggle to hold practices.
  - We no longer struggle with attendance at our fellowship meals.
- Larry Toth serves as our Prospect Manager, helping men who want to know more about the Lodge and supporting candidates through their Degrees and proficiency work.
  - We have an engaged Coaching Committee that stays with candidates and helps them along their Masonic journey.

## What Are We Here Doing?

- By year's end, we expect to record a net membership gain for the first time in many years.
  - Our line chairs are filled by members moving through leadership roles, while our Past Masters remain available to guide and support them.
  - We hold two practices each week. That says a good deal about our members' dedication to the principles of Masonry and to improving our Lodge.
  - We now have a fellowship meal at every Stated Communication and for much of our Degree work. That has taken the steady effort of successive Junior Wardens, Stewards, and other Brothers.
- Men learning about Masonry, petitioners, and candidates are welcomed at our fellowship meals at no charge and invited to appropriate Lodge activities. Several Brothers make a point of keeping in touch and making them feel welcome.
  - We currently have several Entered Apprentices and Fellow Crafts working through coaching, proficiency work, and Degree preparation, along with men who have petitioned or are learning more about membership.
  - During the past year, Winston Lodge has raised four Brothers to the Degree of Master Mason and welcomed two affiliated Master Masons. That progress belongs to the candidates, coaches, officers, and members who kept the work moving.
  - Some of our new line members are going above and beyond by learning additional ritual parts, charges, presentations, and lectures.

### PROGRESS AT A GLANCE

2

PRACTICES  
EACH WEEK

4

MASTER MASONS RAISED  
DURING THE PAST YEAR

2

AFFILIATED  
MASTER MASONS

POSITIVE

MEMBERSHIP REPORT  
EXPECTED BY YEAR'S END

LODGE PROGRESS - SUBMITTED BY LARRY TOTH - OCTOBER 4, 2026

## THE WORK AHEAD

# WHITHER ARE WE GOING?

*Turning present momentum into lasting strength, deeper ritual knowledge, and greater public engagement.*

## Good Men and Good Examples

- We should encourage the interest of good men by living Masonic principles in our everyday conduct.
- Men who ask for more information should be directed to Larry Toth (336-565-6765), the Brother designated to answer membership questions.
- We now have four active Brothers capable of coaching ritual.

## Strengthen the Ritual Team

We should continue encouraging members to learn at least one necessary ritual part so that we can confer all three Degrees with our own team:

- The lectures and charges of all three Degrees
- The dramatic and supporting roles needed to confer them well
- Enough Brothers learning each part to provide continuity
- Once every part is covered, additional Brothers should learn those parts as well. That gives the Lodge depth and dependable support for future Degrees.
- We should continue explaining the principles behind the ritual during practices, not simply memorizing words and movements.

## Reach Beyond the Lodge

We should hold more public-facing activities through which the Lodge can serve the community and put its principles into action:

- Bikes for Books
- Veteran visitation and a National Sojourners educational program
- An open house for the public
- A Rainbow Girls visit for Lodge education
- Inviting visiting Master Masons to return often and, when it is right for them, consider affiliating with Winston Lodge while keeping membership in their home Lodge
- We should share these public activities through The Trowel, Grand View, our Google Business Profile, Facebook, and the Lodge website when it is available. That lets people see how Winston Lodge serves both the Masonic community and the wider community, and gives men who are already curious about Masonry a way to learn more about us.

## MEMORY IN SERVICE OF MEANING

*“Memorization internalizes the words of our Craft. The more you internalize, the larger the body of knowledge your mind has to draw upon during meditative contemplation, which increases the fruits of your studies.”*

# SOMETHING APPROACHES



*Darkness. Mortality. Mystery. Symbolism.*

**AND THE LIGHT BY WHICH A MASON FINDS HIS WAY THROUGH THEM.**

The next issue of The Trowel enters the shadows—  
where ancient symbols, old stories, mortality, and mystery meet  
the Mason's continuing search for light.

**LOOK FOR A SPECIAL HALLOWEEN EDITION  
COMING IN OCTOBER**

**BROTHERLY LOVE • RELIEF • TRUTH**

*The work continues—even in the dark.*

