



# The Ashlar



June 2021

**Kempsville Lodge No. 196, A.F.&A.M.**  
**www.kempsvilleglodge.org**

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## St. John the Baptist Day—June 24<sup>th</sup>



“There is in every regular and well governed Lodge, a certain point within a circle, embordered by two parallel perpendicular lines... “

In our American Masonic ritual variations, one of the least understood symbols is this point within a circle, bounded by two parallel lines, with the volume of sacred law at the top. Like everything else within our symbolism, if you poke around into history and the origins of why we do what we do as Masons, much can be discovered in the tiniest of things.

June 24<sup>th</sup>, Freemasons celebrate the Feast of St. John the Baptist. Freemasonry historically acknowledges St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist as its patron saints, reveres their memory, points to their exemplary lives in its ritualistic work, and dedicates its lodges to them.

William Preston's Lectures, which is what our own degree ritual lectures are based upon (by way of Thomas Smith Webb in the U.S.), were the standard in the premiere Grand Lodge of England until the reconciliation between the "Ancient" and "Modern" factions in 1813.

The symbol itself is actually based on an ancient astrological and later alchemical symbol known by many today as a circumpunct. The point in the center originally represented the Earth, which was thought to be the center of the Universe. The Heavens were believed to spin around the Earth, represented by the circle. Over time, the heliocentric theory of the Universe prevailed, and the circumpunct symbol settled into actually being representative of the Sun.

The two parallel lines were eventually added to the astrological version of the Sun symbol, and represented the summer and winter solstices, the longest and shortest days of the year. For thousands of years, these two days six months apart were celebrated as pagan feast days all over the world, and they were especially important to farming societies, because they were the astronomical methods of calculating planting seasons.

In about 300 A.D., the early Catholic Church began to dedicate popular pagan feast days to the saints. June 24<sup>th</sup>, the longest day of the year, was declared St. John the Baptist day, while December 27<sup>th</sup>, the shortest day, was dedicated to St. John the Evangelist. Collectively, Masons refer to them as the Holy Saints John.

Operative Freemasonry was first developed when Roman Catholicism was the prevailing religion throughout the Western world, and these feast days continued under the Church of England. It was common for guilds and other trade groups to adopt one or more patron saints. Some operative masons picked both Saints John, and over the centuries speculative Freemasons commonly celebrate these feast days with banquets. And curiously, even though Freemasonry today is non-denominational and non-sectarian, American Masons have retained these customs of old. Most rituals in America say that Masons come “from a lodge of the Holy Saints John of Jerusalem.”

But what is the practical application of this sort of symbolic dot connecting?

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## From The East



Brethren, during this time of COVID, it has been an ever changing landscape at the Lodge with what is or is not permitted and the associated Grand Lodge guidance. Please check our web site and Facebook page for the latest information.

I am most pleased to announce that most restrictions have been lifted and we are back to work as usual with some minor accommodations. There are still some adjustments to ritual and balloting, but for the most part the ritual you are accustomed to will be presented. This includes degree conferral and ritual proficiency testing.

We are permitted to fully open the Lodge for meals and fellowship. Monthly breakfasts are resuming as well as dinners prior to Stated and don't forget Right Worshipful Tom's cookies and ice cream. Please come out and rejoin your Lodge. Although our personal routines have shifted, it has been a long time coming and we would love to see you back.

All that being said, I ask for your patience as we open things back up and start anew the many traditions that are Kempsville Lodge. Almost a year and a half has past and that which used to be routine is no longer. Some of the Officers have never even been a part of these past traditions. But we endeavor to make you proud of being a member of Kempsville Lodge.

With barely six months remaining in this Masonic year, we will attempt to reactivate as many activities as possible for fellowship, community service, and District Lodge visitations. We are still presenting Kempsville scholarships. More details and pictures of recipients in later Ashlars. Strafford Chase park maintenance is still ongoing. Your Officers are planning our annual Bull Roast. It will be later in the year (September) and we hope to have a banner reunion for this fundraiser. If school activities permit, we are still looking to participate in Kempsville HS football concessions this fall. The holidays will still consist of poinsettia deliveries, Thanksgiving meals for those in need, and coordination with the Salvation Army angel tree program at Christmas.

Thank you for your support and patience over the last year. I look forward to seeing you all in your Lodge.

Brother Mike Denning  
Worshipful Master

## From The West



Masonic Lodges by their nature must be opened and closed with Masonic prayer, which serves as the instrument with which we communicate with our spiritual leader, the Supreme Architect of the Universe. Our rituals remind us that, before any great undertaking, it is imperative that all Masons first invoke the blessing of deity, and that all endeavors in life must conclude with the same in order to warrant harmonious closures. What is less emphasized in Masonic teachings is the importance of prayer between beginnings and ends, and the purposes those prayers serve to fulfill.

Prayer causes the Lodge to remember the many mercies and blessings that have been conferred thereon. This action serves as the Lodge's regular communication with the Supreme Architect, which ensures that (through His presence and protection) our meetings will remain true to our assigned duties- through our fellowship before Him, our passions are collectively subdued.

Prayer also affirms the importance of our sacred tenets of love, relief, and truth. The Supreme Architect is synonymous with most Masons' spiritual idea of God, who (in nearly all monotheistic religions) represents the divine embodiment of love. Regular interactions with Him replenishes our hearts and minds with love for one another, as well as for our fellow man. Through this renewed compassion, we are thereby the better enabled to offer relief to all distressed worthy men and Brothers. The boundless knowledge of the Supreme Architect inhibits any falsehood in our prayers, and fosters truth, the final of our sacred tenets, in all of our vocations, Masonic and otherwise.

Finally, prayer serves as the setting in which we formally request His unwavering protection from all of the evils of the world. In this setting, we frame our request with the understanding that our mortal fates are in accordance with His divine plan. This is evident in the language of our rituals, in which we ask the Supreme Architect for his protection to guarantee our safe return to fellowship in our earthly Lodges, or in the Celestial Lodge above. This is arguably the most crucial



Kempsville enjoyed the fellowship of Past Masters' Night. The ritual was outstanding and we enjoyed roasting our newest Past Master, Worshipful Brother Dave T-Rex.



Congratulations to Brother Pat Blankenship on his first time in the East for a Stated meeting for Junior Wardens Night! Brother Pat put a lot of time and effort into preparing for this important night, and it showed in the great job he did tonight.



A special recognition of Brother Hank Foiles celebrating his 92<sup>nd</sup> birthday prior to the May Stated Communication.



### Lodge Officers

Worshipful Master	Mike Denning	651-0712
Senior Warden	John Settle, III	675-9695
Junior Warden	Pat Blankenship	406-6166
Treasurer	Chris Anders	635-7617
Secretary	Bob Stanek	255-8336
Senior Deacon	Doug Dunn	781-389-6557
Junior Deacon	Michael Turner	581-4239
Senior Steward	Thomas Melling, Sr.	403-8881
Junior Steward	Michael Cooney	375-3238
Chaplain	Keith Ingraham	613-5474
Musician	R. Scott Foxwell	536-1659
Marshal	Dickie Cooper	971-7347
Tiler	Dennis DiMaggio	582-3320
Instructor of Work	Tom McGowan	497-3881
Education Officer	William Rawson	724-4867
MAHOVA Ambassador	Ray Connard	630-5797
Blood Coordinator	Michael Blankenship	438-2862
Youth Advisor	Eddie Foley	581-8144

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