ASHLAR

14TH DISTRICT

✦

February 2026



It's inspection season!

As we begin the new calendar year, the lodges of our district begin their important work of performing their inspections.

Inspections, as you know, are not just fun events intended to show off to the rest of the district--though that's an important function, too! They are critical and required work to demonstrate to the Grand Lodge that a given lodge is able to support its members and bring new men into the fraternity.

It is critical that lodges take their inspections seriously. Because the lodges of our district do so, we can make the ritual performance portion of inspections into an enjoyable evening for attending brethren.

If you have not visited an inspection, the best time to start is *now*. Inspections are the single best way to meet other masons across the district, learn about other lodges, and get more involved with the district.

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IT'S TIME FOR YOUR INSPECTION
RWB Chris Greise

As I was driving home after another lodge practice, I found myself reflecting on comments I've heard suggesting that we should do away with lodge inspections altogether. As lodge officers, we often put tremendous pressure on ourselves to deliver a word-perfect degree so that we "pass" inspection night. In all honesty, I have never felt that our Deputies evaluate inspections with a fine-toothed comb. Yes, the pre-inspection reviews paperwork and the fundamentals of lodge operations, but inspection night itself exists to ensure degrees are performed properly and meaningfully for our candidates.

That focus should not be limited to just one night a year. The work we present on inspection night should reflect the standard we strive for every time we confer a degree. So, what are the real benefits of a lodge inspection?

First, an inspection is an opportunity to showcase your lodge to the district. Every lodge has its own personality, and inspection night allows you to highlight what makes yours special. From sharing a good meal and breaking bread together, to welcoming traveling brothers and fostering fellowship, inspection night creates a sense of warmth and pride. It also provides a chance for service—whether through youth groups, ladies' organizations, or other Masonic bodies that share your building—allowing the entire Masonic family to work together to create something memorable.

Secondly, inspections give your officers a reason to rally the membership around a shared purpose. Often, it's the catalyst that brings brothers back who may not attend regularly, inviting them to contribute to the success of the evening.



IT'S TIME FOR YOUR INSPECTION, cont'd
RWB Chris Greise

As an officer, inspection season also provides a powerful opportunity to inspire newer members to become involved and take ownership of the work. Increasingly, lodges are dividing lectures and degree work so that more brothers participate, strengthening both confidence and engagement.

For the candidate, inspection night can be especially impactful. Being brought to light in a room filled with brothers leaves a lasting impression—far more meaningful than receiving a degree in a sparsely attended lodge. That moment of support and unity speaks volumes about who we are as Masons.

Inspections are not only valuable for the host lodge, but also for the district as a whole. One of the greatest strengths of Masonry is when brothers travel beyond their home lodge. Seeing different styles of work, experiencing the history of other lodge buildings, and building friendships across the district enriches us all. Traveling also gives officers the chance to observe degree work from the sidelines—reinforcing what they've studied and sometimes inspiring improvements within their own lodge.

So, if you feel nervous on inspection night, that's a good thing. It shows you care about the work you are about to present. But we would be failing you if we allowed you to step onto the floor unprepared. Success on inspection night is built long before the gavel falls—through steady preparation, shared responsibility, and avoiding the temptation to "play hero." Spread the work out, involve more brothers, and build a team.

When we do that, inspection night becomes more than a requirement—it becomes an opportunity for your lodge to shine and to lay a stronger foundation for the future.



A GOOD MASON: ORIENTING TOWARD LIGHT

WB Jared Morris| Linden #637

I have been reflecting on an early moment in my Masonic journey when I was placed in the Northeast corner of the lodge. Familiar to all Brothers, I repeatedly return to this moment, when I found myself midway between the North and the East, and ask myself: am I going to focus on positive growth and illumination or am I going to fall back into a place of darkness? A hopeful dawn will inevitably brighten the darkest of times in due course. One quality of a good Mason is optimism.

This push and pull between shadow and light is a constant struggle given everything life throws at a Brother. Many elements that make up those metaphorical dark nights and cloudy days, are aspects of existence that are out of my control. Nevertheless, I, with varying success, strive to have command of my attitude and outlook. As the saying goes, it's better to light a candle than to curse the darkness. To be clear, I'm not suggesting a Pollyanna or "good vibes only" attitude, as this is an unbalanced attitude that can ignore unfortunate events in life and the unwelcome emotions that accompany them.

I am referring to a realistic optimism that acknowledges difficulties, but maintains belief in eventual success which can often be achieved by focusing on solutions and taking action.

When various everyday hurdles arise in life, it is prudent to remember what operative Masons had to overcome to complete a temple or cathedral. If they got bogged down with setbacks and focused on the negatives, they never would have completed their work. When an action of some sort is needed, or a difficult decision is to be made, it is wise to ask: will this choice grow my lodge, my community, my life? Or conversely, will this choice diminish my lodge, my community, and myself? I often reflect on the symbol of the rough ashlar being perfected, chipping away at my moral imperfections.



A GOOD MASON: ORIENTING TOWARD LIGHT, cont'd

WB Jared Morris | Linden #637

In operative Masonry chiseling away at a rough-hewn rock would make the stone smaller, paradoxically, in speculative masonry, working on improving myself using the tenets of Freemasonry, my life continues to become larger with more connectedness, additional gratitude, increasing confidence, greater meaning, and more beauty.

As Brother Henry Ford said "Whether you think you can or think you can't; you are right." Brothers with can-do attitudes, that give their fellow Brothers the benefit of the doubt, do good by their lodges and the fraternity. Optimism, the belief that ultimately good will prevail in the world, achieves goals inside and outside the lodge. I am not always successful at maintaining a positive outlook; however, when I encounter a day where my faith has wavered, I trust the light will return and the sun will rise to illuminate a new day.



A SNOWY EVENING OF EDUCATION
WB Michael Threloff

On a snowy Saturday – December 13, 2025 – the Valley of Columbus Education Committee held its first in-person, Masonic Education event in quite some time. That evening, in blizzard-like conditions, twenty brave souls ventured to Northwest Masonic Temple for an evening of intense education, incredible food, and immense brotherhood!

The Brethren in attendance were first treated to an excellent meal of beef brisket and delicious sides, provided by Lou's Q and Catering. Following the meal, all adjourned to the lodge room for the main event, our extraordinary speaker, Brother Robert H. Johnson, from the Valley of Chicago. Brother Johnson is the long-time host of the Whence Came You? Masonic Podcast. For those who may be unfamiliar, Whence Came You? is one of the premier Masonic education podcasts available, providing quality educational content to the fraternity since 2011.

That evening Brother Johnson brought to the Valley of Columbus his exhilarating presentation on the Tetragrammaton. Any Scottish Rite Mason who has witnessed the 14 th Degree should be familiar with the Tetragrammaton, but Brother Johnson's presentation took us beyond the already deep and wonderful explanation thereof within our degree and explored the topic from multiple angles. While the specifics of his presentation are only for those in attendance that evening, I will say that he took us along a thread of understanding from the sacred and religious to the cutting edge of science and presented us all with another interesting lens through which to explore one of the great esoteric mysteries of our Craft. A lively discussion followed the presentation, sparking many great related conversations that continued into the night.



A SNOWY EVENING OF EDUCATION
WB Michael Threloff

As the event formally adjourned for the evening, several of us traveled up the street to a local establishment to enjoy some fine beverages while we considered further the evening's topic and delved into myriad other topics. All then made the slow, snowy journey home with, if like me, much to contemplate.

If an evening of conviviality, conversation, and contemplation sounds intriguing to you, then keep an eye out in the coming months for the next Valley of Columbus Education Committee event. We'd love to see you there!

THE TRUE MASON IS NOT CREED-BOUND. HE REALIZES WITH THE DIVINE ILLUMINATION OF HIS LODGE THAT AS MASON HIS RELIGION MUST BE UNIVERSAL: CHRIST, BUDDHA OR MOHAMMED, THE NAME MEANS LITTLE, FOR HE RECOGNIZES ONLY THE LIGHT AND NOT THE BEARER.

MANLY P. HALL

14th Masonic District
Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons of Ohio

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WANT TO BE FEATURED?

We'd love to hear your thoughts or help you advertise your event in the Ashlar. It just takes two easy steps:

1. Gather your information
   a. What's happening?
   b. Who is invited?
   c. Where is it?
   d. When is it?
   e. How much does it cost?
2. Send to ashlar@14thmasonicdistrict.org

Submissions must be sent before the 15th of the month before publication (i.e. January 15th for the February Ashlar).

UPCOMING EVENTS

FEB
7

SYSK SESSION 2
Sunrise Lodge
8 AM

FEB
26

14th DISTRICT QUARTERLY MEETING
Grove City Lodge
Dinner 6PM | Meeting 7PM | Business Casual

FEB
28

TWO INSPECTIONS!
Magnolia #20 (MM) | Goodale #372 (FC)
MM 9AM | FC 12:45 PM

MAR
14

STATE SECRETARY'S ASSOCIATION MEETING
Aladdin Shrine Center
8 AM

LODGE BREAKFASTS

GROVE CITY
1st Saturdays, 8-10A

GROVEPORT
3rd Saturdays, 7:30-10A

HIRAM
1st Saturdays, 8-10A
(Except July and August)

REYNOLDSBURG
Last Saturdays, 8-10A

WEST GATE
2nd Saturdays, 9A-12P



2026 Inspection Calendar

LODGE NAME	#	INSPECTION DATE	Degree	DDGM	DEO	DO	
Hiram	18	Tuesday, February 10, 2026	EA	KF	JH	KG	
Avery	493	Tuesday, February 17, 2026	EA	KF	MH	JM	
Linden	637	Thursday, February 19, 2026	MM	KF	JH	PM	
New England	4	Monday, February 23, 2026	MM	EL	MH	PM	
Neoacacia	595	Wednesday, February 25, 2026	EA	EL	MH	JR	
Magnolia	20	Saturday, February 28, 2026	MM	CG	MH	JW	**
Goodale	372	Saturday, February 28, 2026	FC	KF	BL	JW	**
Community	684	Monday, March 2, 2026	EA	CG	BL	JW	
Sunrise	783	Tuesday, March 3, 2026	MM	CG	BL	JR	
Canal Winchester	670	Wednesday, March 11, 2026	FC	CG	JH	KG	
Blendon	339	Monday, March 16, 2026	EA	CG	BL	JM	
Sparrow	400	Saturday, March 21, 2026	MM	CG	MH	JM	*
Westgate	623	Monday, March 23, 2026	EA	KF	JH	JW	
Triangle	748	Thursday, March 26, 2026	MM	EL	BL	PM	
York	563	Saturday, March 28, 2026	EA	EL	MH	JM	***
Capital City	656	Saturday, March 28, 2026	FC	KF	BL	KG	***
University	631	Saturday, March 28, 2026	MM	KF	BL	KG	***
Reynoldsburg	340	Tuesday, April 7, 2026	FC	EL	JH	JR	
Groveport-Lockbournce	801	Tuesday, April 14, 2026	FC	EL	JH	JR	
Arts & Sciences	792	Thursday, April 16, 2026	FC	EL	MH	PM	
Grove City	689	Monday, April 20, 2026	FC	CG	JH	PM	

All EA and FC Inspections begin at 7:00pm (dinner 6:15pm) (UNLESS NOTED BELOW)
All MM inspections begin at 5:30pm (dinner at 6:15), second section at 7pm
*Sparrow 400 - breakfast at 8:00 am, degree at 9:00 am
**Two Degrees - MM 900am-1145am, Lunch 1200pm-1245pm, FC 1245pm-230pm
***Three Degrees - FC 9am-1030am, EA 1100am-100pm, Lunch 100pm-145pm, MM 145pm-330pm

Franklin County Memorial Lodge: Wednesday January 7, 2026 7:30 pm - Hiram Lodge 18
District Quarterly Meeting: Thursday February 26, 2026. Location TBA
14th District Reception: Saturday March 14, 2026 - Bridgewater
District Awards meeting: Thursday May 28, 2026 - Location TBA



BRO. BOBBY BURNS PRESENTS HIS ROYAL SCOFIELD SOCIETY MASTERPIECE AT ARTS & SCIENCES LODGE

(L TO R: RWB DAN HRINKO, BRO. JAY CLARK, BRO BOBBY BURNS, WB NICK BOLYARD, RWB KEN COHEN)

THE OHIO MASONIC COMMUNITIES
FOUNDATION

A TOAST TO *YOU*

— annual appreciation dinner —

Join us for our annual appreciation dinner, **A Toast to *You***, as we gather with our friends and supporters who help make The Ohio Masonic Communities a wonderful place to live.

Wednesday, March 11, 2026

6:00 pm – 8:30 pm

6:00 p.m. Hors d'oeuvres | 6:45 p.m. Dinner and Program

The Festival Green Clubhouse at **Springfield Masonic Community**
2655 West National Road, Springfield, OH 45504

Come celebrate the impact of your generosity, savor a complimentary dinner, and enjoy an evening of fellowship and fun.

RSVP online at omcfoundation.org/smc-dinner
or contact Dan Shirk at (937) 926-4305 | dshirk@omcoh.org
Please respond by February 25, 2026.



The *Circle of Roses* program recognizes donor's annual cumulative giving ($100+).

Today. Tomorrow. Together.