



A Night Of Masonic Renewal

An impressive, inspiring, and moving
tribute to Freemasonry

Re-obligation ceremony

The "Tools of our Trade"

Featured speaker Brother _____

An inspiring candle-lighting ceremony

Date _____

Lodge name and No. _____

Address _____

6:15 - Stewards Dinner

7:15 - Open Third Degree

Program outline for: A Night of Masonic Renewal

_____ Lodge No. _____
_____, Iowa _____, 20_____.

Dinner: 6:15 P.M.

Open on the third degree: 7:15 P.M.

Introductory remarks: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity by _____

Re-obligation ceremony

E.A. _____, S.D.	Candidate: _____
F.C. _____, J.W.	Candidate: _____
M.M. _____, S.W.	Candidate: _____

"The Tools of Our Trade"; working tool presentation and elaborations

24 inch gauge: _____, P.M.	Explanation: _____
Common gavel: _____, P.M.	Explanation: _____
Plumb, square, and level: _____, P.M.	Explanation: _____
Trowel: _____, P.M.	Explanation: _____
The Holy Bible: _____, P.M.	Explanation: _____

Featured speaker: _____.

Candle-lighting Ceremony

The Spirit of Freemasonry by _____.

Narrator _____

Closing on the Third Degree

Make all introductions, thank you's, announcements, etc. before opening on the third degree so that the program may progress smoothly without interruption and progress from opening prayer to closing prayer.

Night of Masonic Renewal

Opening prayer: (given during opening on the Third Degree)

Great architect of the universe, as we meet now in this sacred retreat of friendship and virtue we pray your special blessing upon this great brotherhood of man. Let us not forget the duties we have heard so frequently inculcated and forcibly recommended in this lodge. Help us to be diligent, prudent, temperate, and discreet. Let us remember that at this altar and upon your volume of sacred law, we have promised to befriend and relieve every brother who shall need our assistance. Help us to extend our generous principles even further, for every human being has a claim upon our kind offices. Let us spread the light of masonry throughout the world and do our part in the beating of swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks. Amen¹

Introductory Remarks

Liberty, Equality, Fraternity

We have come this evening for a time of Masonic renewal... To revitalize our dedication to the great principles of masonry...to have once more the tenets of our order more firmly impressed upon our minds. To listen, to learn, to remember, and most importantly, to renew our dedication to this age old craft, which has in essence remained unchanged by the ravages of time and the ruthless hand of man for over 250 years.

What has set masonry apart from all other organizations? What has caused it to be actively sought after by good men of all stations and walks of life? Much of masonry's sentiments and appeal can be summed up in the motto of the French freemasons - Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. If this motto sounds quite familiar to you, well it should, for besides being the motto of the masons of France, it served as the rallying cry of the French revolution and continues today as the national motto of France. Perhaps a brief examination of these three words will offer some insight for this evening.

Liberty: a word that stirs the souls of all mankind...the deepest desire of all humanity...to be free to think, act, and believe as our own minds and consciences dictate, being ever mindful of the liberty of others. The Masonic institution is one which still steadfastly holds to this belief in freedom. We are bound by our customs to be true to our government and just to our country. We are believers in the public schools, seeing them as the cradle of America's precious freedoms.

We espouse equality, temperance, and justice...our hearts ever committed to liberty. Our very structure, as a philosophical body is based on liberty. While our methods of instruction are those of symbolism and allegory, there is no definitive, dogmatic statement, telling us what we must believe, interpreting and limiting the interpretation of these symbols. We are free to draw our own conclusions. Masonic ethics are sometimes viewed as a series of questions with no answers, moral suggestions with no boundaries. We are taught to be tolerant, but how tolerant is not clear. We are exhorted to be prudent, but when does prudence give way to the strength of our own convictions. Freedom of interpretation is a great Masonic characteristic setting our Fraternity apart from all other institutions. Liberty, in freemasonry, of course has its boundaries, boundaries laid down by our obligations and the ancient landmarks of the order.

Equality: that all men may be accepted by others on the same level. The belief that no man simply by occupation, social, or political rank is better than another. Our equality is based on

the common thread of our Masonic membership. That we have all shared the same experiences, taken the same obligations, have a similar philosophy, and share a common father, the great architect of the universe. Our brother William Jennings Bryan, the eminent jurist, politician, and orator of a hundred years ago, expressed Freemasonry's dedication to equality in these words: "In the lodge room we do not ask a man who his father was, we simply inquire what he is. We do not ask what his father has done: we simply ask if he is ready to do the work that falls to him. We do not ask whether he has received a diploma from some institution of learning; we simply ask him if he has studied the Science of how to live, if he recognizes the ties that bind him to all mankind. We do not ask him how many acres of land he possesses, we ask him whether he is possessed of the spirit of brotherhood."

The distinctions that do exist among us are outgrowths of our experiences as brothers, and though some are elevated for a time, we will all return, again in time to a life lived on the level of equality.

Fraternity: this great word, derived from the Latin "frater" meaning brother is the great cement which binds us together, forming that indissoluble bond of friendship which distinguishes our order. Our hearts go out to each other in times of need, and our spirits exalt in each other's happiness. When true brotherhood is shared, it diminishes our grief and doubles our joy. Free equal brethren have a special tie, more intense than our other friendships, which transcends class, rank, age, and income, bringing us ever closer together.

Liberty, Equality, Fraternity...these characteristics have been the characteristics of freemasonic thought throughout our evolution, and must always remain so to insure the future of our craft.²

Re-Obligation

W.M.: This night of Masonic renewal will begin with a ceremony of re-obligation... A reminder to all of us of the obligated duties we share as masons. Our candidates tonight will be 50 year members, here to rededicate themselves and symbolically all present to the great universal teachings of our Fraternity.

We must always remember that masonry teaches by symbolism and allegory. Very little of our ritual and lectures are meant to be taken literally, especially the penalties of the various degrees. Also in any consideration of our obligations, we must reflect upon the teachings of the degree as a whole, lest the repetition of these solemn engagements become a meaningless succession of words taken out of context.

The basic lesson of the first degree is secrecy or on a higher level, integrity the entire theme of the degree is much the same as the early training that a child receives in his home... To be loyal to the family, to preserve the family secrets, to learn the rudiments of politeness and courtesy, and eventually to realize that he is an integral part of the family. The penalty of this degree symbolically teaches us that if we fail to heed these very basic ideals, we shall in greatest likelihood not be privileged to receive or participate in fraternal communication, and hence, the fellowship of our brethren. (lights go down...spotlight on altar)

Brother Junior Deacon, conduct Brother _____ to his position west of the altar to be re-obligated as an Entered Apprentice (Jr. Deacon conducts the brother to west of the altar, steps, and faces him.)

J. D.: My brother, when you were conducted into the lodge room to be made an Entered Apprentice, you were received...(etc. modifying the ritual to past tense.)

W.M.: the first degree re-obligation will be conferred by our senior deacon, brother (S.D. approaches east of the altar and re-obligates, using the regular ritual as usual, beginning at the master's declaration, the obligation with the brother in due form, sealing the obligation in the usual fashion, and proceeds directly to the explanation of the great and lesser lights.)

S.D.: Worshipful Master, your order has been obeyed.

W.M.: Brother Junior Deacon, conduct our brother to his seat with the craft. (S.D. returns to his place in the lodge, and J.D. returns brother to his seat and stands by.)

The second degree symbolizes growth, the acceptance of responsibility, and the acquiring of useful knowledge. In this obligation is also our first commitment to the principle of active charity and a respect for the observance of law and the beauty of square dealing. Its penalty symbolizes the loss of any feeling for good, and the ability to recognize evil.

W.M.: Brother Junior Deacon, conduct Brother to his position West of the altar to be re-obligated as a Fellow Craft. (J.D. obeys order and receives the second Brother as a Fellow Craft, in a manner similar to the above. W.M.: the second degree re-obligation will be conferred by our Junior Warden, Brother _____ (J.W. same floorwork as above, Master's declaration, obligation, seal and explanation of the great lights.)

J.W.: Worshipful Master, your order has been obeyed.

W.M.: Brother Junior Deacon, conduct our brother to his seat with the craft. (J.D. obeys order and stands until J.W. returns to his station, seated in unison.)

W.M.: The third degree forcibly inculcates Masonry's dedication to the belief in the immortality of the soul. In its obligation, all the lessons of the preceding degrees are reiterated and emphasized... integrity, truth, charity, justice, brotherly love. The penalty of the third degree symbolizes the total physical loss and spiritual destruction that lie ahead for those who put no credence in this great gift of god's infinite love and wisdom, the immortality of the soul.

W.M.: Brother Junior Warden, conduct Brother to his position west of the altar to be re-obligated as a Master Mason.

(J.D. obeys order and receives the third brother as a master mason in a manner similar to the above.)

W.M.: the third degree re-obligation will be conferred by our Senior Warden, Brother _____ (S.W. same floorwork as above, Master's declaration, obligation, seal and explanation of the great lights.)

S.W.: Worshipful Master, your order has been obeyed.

W.M.: Brother Junior Deacon, seat our brother with the craft. (done, and J.D. returns to his place as the S.W. returns to his station.) The solemnity and tremendous weight of these obligations, again entered into, should inspire each of us to re-evaluate their great import. As these obligations were renewed in each of us symbolically through the brethren who received them, let us resolve to make them more and more a part of our daily lives. (lights come back up and altar spotlight off)

Working Tools

W.M.: as we progressed through 'the ritualistic ceremonies of our initiation, passing and raising, our particular attention was directed to certain working tools. These tools are not simply the implements of our ancient operative brethren, but are emblems of great moral truths and duties. These tools will again be presented to us, but this evening, each tool will be further explained by one of our officers.

As Entered Apprentices we were presented with the twenty-four inch gauge and common gavel. (Past Master comes forward and takes the tool from the east, proceeds to the altar, gives the monitorial lecture and deposits the tool on the altar. The elaboration on the tool is given by the officers in order of descending rank, beginning with the Junior Deacon.³

W.M.: as fellow crafts, we received the plumb, square, and level. (P.M. approaches east as before, takes tool, presents lecture and deposits tool on alter. Elaboration follows.)

W.M.: as Master Masons, our special attention was directed to the trowel.(P.M. approaches

and presents tool as above. Elaboration follows.)

W.M.: These working tools embody Masonic thoughts of great magnitude and may provide hours of useful study. There remains one tool which is not presented to us as such, but, never the less is possibly the greatest tool we have to aid in the building of our character. I refer of course, to the great light in masonry, the Holy Bible. Our Chaplain, Brother _____ will now further enlighten us as to its importance.

(Use Bible presentations from companion as well as articles from Masonic Edition Bibles.)

Speaker Introduction

W.M.: Masonry, as we know is filled with scholarly writings about its goals, principles, tenets and symbolism. For a man to thoroughly investigate its inner workings is a life-long study. Just as one assumes he has found the answer to his quest for Masonic truth, he is confronted by a wealth of other and new opinions. The more he studies, the more he finds he needs to learn. What is our real history? How do we sort out fact from fantasy? How did we evolve from an operative to a speculative craft? What can masonry do for me? What can its effect be upon the world at large? We are privileged tonight to have with us a brother who can ably address some of the issues facing our craft, and draw together the affairs of this night Brother _____.

Candle Lighting Ceremony

W.M.: We have been exhorted this evening to live our lives according to the many great tenets of our Fraternity: to meet upon the level, to act by the plumb, to govern our lives by a rational use of our time, to be mindful of the boundaries of our duties to God and man, and throughout our lives to spread the cement of brotherly love and sincere affection. These exhortations are the light that masonry has to offer the world. If this light is spread throughout mankind by our daily actions, none will doubt our good intentions.

There is an old maxim which states: "one candle may give equal light to another without losing any of its own brilliance." the truth of this statement is obvious -- one candle easily lights another candle and is not diminished. The second in turn may light a third and the process may continue forever. In Masonry our great and learned Masonic scholars have lighted candles to dispel the darkness for over 250 years. Some of the flames that they kindled through their writings, ritual, lectures, and symbolic interpretations have been rekindled for us tonight. *** (raise the craft and lower lights.)

(W.M.: (comes from the east and lights his candle from the lesser lights) As I light this candle and pass its flame to our wardens, consider how this philosophical light has continued to spread throughout our Masonic history. (wardens come from their stations, and receive the light from the master and return to west end and pass the flame down the rows on either side.)

In the dim flickering of these candles we sense a very special presence among us; a presence not of the flesh, but of the spirit. And it speaks to us saying:⁴

The Spirit of Freemasonry⁵ (may be read by W.M. or another brother)

"... I am the Spirit of Freemasonry, born in the dim and distant past when Man groped about for single companionship, nurtured by leaders of foresight and ambition who possessed an inward vision of a great brotherhood, matured during the golden age of discovery and invention, obscured for a time by the stress of world conflict, but eventually destined to emerge into full splendor in a period when race, religion, creed, and politics shall prove no bar to friendship. In my true form I have never condemned, never prejudged, never persecuted. Upon my hands are no stains of blood, no dishonor or treason. I have been friend to the oppressed and downtrodden. I have ministered unto the sick and suffering. My protecting hands have been

extended to the helpless widow and the destitute orphan. In war I have ministered to the wounded, in peace I have provided homes for the homeless and relief for the stricken. I have suffered calamity and persecution, I have been condemned by those who have misunderstood me, but have so borne myself as to preserve my dignity and honor. I have molded the lives of many men. As long as suffering, distress, persecution and injustice remain upon this earth, I shall be needed. I am the spirit of Freemasonry."

W.M.: Let the light that spread forth in this room tonight, symbolize Freemasonry's light spreading throughout the world, making universal its ideals, its admonitions, and its teachings, so that men everywhere will be ready to go on foot and out of their way for other men, so that men everywhere will be ready to extend a hand to assist and support the faltering ones, so that men everywhere will be ready to whisper in the ears of other men the words of love and appreciation. Then indeed will swords be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks. Then indeed will a great temple of humanity be raised and dedicated to the Grand Master of all our existence. So mote it be.

W.M.: Brother Chaplain

Chaplain: As we extinguish these candles tonight, let their symbolic light fill our hearts, inspiring our minds to nobler thoughts, and our hands to greater deeds; make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love.

Where there is injury, pardon,
Where there is doubt, faith
Where there is despair, hope,
Where there is darkness, light,
And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood, as to understand; to be loved, as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal light. Amen.⁶

So mote it be.

W.M.: * (seats the craft, bring lights up and put candles out)

This ceremony was composed in 1985 by Ronald D. Lindhart when he was Worshipful Master of Acanthus Lodge No. 632 at Des Moines, Ia

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- 1 Prayer adapted from "Charge at Closing" from the appendix of *Arimnos Ceiphr* by W. W. Daggett, Oshkosh Wi. -- published 1912. The last sentence of the prayer was included to tie it into the candle-lighting.
 - 2 The quotation from William Jennings Bryan was taken from the M.S.A. Short Talk Bulletin-49-24 "What is Masonry"
 - 3 Material for the working tool elaborations is taken from M.S.A. short talk bulletins as follows:
24 inch gauge - No. 9-33
Common gavel – No. 4-28 uses ashlar as examples
Plumb, Square, and Level - No. 12-43; 4-24; 6-24
Trowel – No. 10-60
Also Mackey's Encyclopedia, Iowa Monitor, Companion to the Monitor and other sources.
 - 4 The "candle lighting ceremony" is in part from the M.S.A. Short Talk Bulletin No. 4-61 "Lighting Candles" by Elbert Bede, Editor Emeritus of the "Oregon Freemason."
 - 5 "Spirit of Freemasonry" by Ray V. Denslow is taken from Allen Robert's book Key to Freemasonry's Growth
 - 6 Prayer of St. Francis, modified to plural