

Instructions Governing
Masonic Funerals
and
Evening Memorial Services

as prescribed by the
GRAND LODGE, A.F. & A.M.
of VIRGINIA



2002

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Instructions Governing Masonic Funerals and Evening Memorial Services

A Lodge in the unavoidable absence of its Worshipful Master and Wardens, may be opened by a Past Master or Past Warden of the Lodge, or in their absence, by any Past Master or Past Warden affiliated with any Lodge in Virginia, A.F. & A.M., for the purpose of burying a deceased Brother or holding an Evening Memorial Service. The same permission also applies to the convening of a Lodge of Sorrow previously opened by the Master of the Lodge.

It is not proper or regular for the Master of a Lodge or his designee to perform the burial service or either of the Evening Memorial Services without opening a Master Masons' Lodge or convening a Lodge of Sorrow.

Only deceased Master Masons, in good standing, are entitled to a Masonic burial or Evening Memorial Service. Non-affiliation disqualifies a Brother from receiving a Masonic burial or Evening Memorial Service.

Only Master Masons, in good standing, can participate in a Masonic Burial Service or Evening Memorial Service.

FUNERAL SERVICE

(E-1-1994)
(W.H.M.)**The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge**OF ANCIENT, FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF
THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**An Edict**

WHEREAS, Sections 2.13 and 2.14 of the Methodical Digest designates a Masonic funeral service to be a public occasion and allows participants to wear Masonic regalia during this event before the public, and

WHEREAS, Section 2.16 of the Digest requires these ceremonies to conform to those prescribed by the Grand Lodge. The "Manual of Ceremonies," published by the Grand Lodge, prescribes the funeral service ritual, physical arrangements, and certain guidelines and requirements based on law and related decisions of Past Grand Masters, and

WHEREAS, varying practices have been observed regarding the conducting of the service and the use of aprons by those in attendance. Therefore, I, Werner Herman Morlock, Grand Master of Masons in Virginia, in the interest of presenting a dignified appearance that enhances the public image of Freemasonry, and one that is uniformly carried out in this Grand Jurisdiction, do hereby direct that:

1. All officers (whether actual or *pro tem*) participating in a funeral service will wear the jewels and aprons of the offices they represent, and will wear white gloves.
2. All attending Master Masons who assemble in the procession and gather together for the final rites will wear Masonic aprons and, if available, white gloves. This includes those who may be attired in a military, police, or other occupational uniform, or in the recognized uniform of an appendant Masonic organization, excluding headwear.
3. All attenders will wear their aprons on the **OUTSIDE** of the coat; in cold weather for graveside services, outside of the topcoat.
4. These requirements apply to all funeral services, whether at graveside or in a funeral home or church.
5. The Grand Lecturer, Committee on Work, and District Instructors of Work will include these requirements in their instruction and guidance to the Brethren about the conduct of funeral services.
6. Each Worshipful Master is responsible for the enforcement of this Edict at each funeral service conducted by his Lodge.



Werner H. Morlock

Werner Herman Morlock
Grand Master
February 9, 1994

Attest:

John P. Stokes

John P. Stokes
Grand Secretary

A Lodge cannot go out of its jurisdiction and open a Master Masons' Lodge or convene a Lodge of Sorrow in that of another Lodge, even for a funeral. Once opened or convened in its own territorial jurisdiction, if there be no objection by the Lodge in whose jurisdiction the burial is to be or the Evening Memorial Service held, the Lodge so opened or convened, may conduct the Burial Service or conduct the Evening Memorial Service.

It is for the family of a deceased Brother to select pallbearers, any or all of whom may be Masons.

The Masonic Fraternity cannot exclude other Orders from the procession accompanying the remains to the place of burial, or dictate the order of procession, but by reason of her antiquity, tradition and custom, she is entitled to the post of honor in the procession, which is usually in front of the hearse.

A Masonic Lodge must conduct its Burial Service either first of all or last of all, in the opinion of the Master of the Lodge.

When a Lodge receives a request from the Master or Secretary of a Lodge in a sister Grand Jurisdiction to conduct a Courtesy Funeral or hold an Evening Memorial Service for a Brother sojourning in the jurisdiction of the Lodge, the Grand Lodge of Virginia grants permission to conduct such Funeral Rites or Evening Memorial Service ONLY when cleared through the offices of the Grand Secretaries. The Lodge receiving such a request is expected to check the regularity of the requesting Lodge. This may be done by referring to the "List of Regular Lodges," published by the Pantagraph Printing & Stationery Company of Bloomington, Illinois.

If the Lodge receives a request from an individual or the family of a sojourning Mason for Funeral Rites or Evening Memorial Service and the deceased does not have a current dues card which would indicate both his own standing and the

regularity of his Lodge, such request must also be handled through the office of the Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Virginia to be cleared with the Grand Lodge under which his Lodge is holden.

The Master's first duty, on being informed of the death of one of his members, is to call on the family. In making this call, he should do so merely for the purpose of conveying to them the sympathy of his Brethren and to offer to them any assistance his Lodge may provide. As a matter of courtesy and information, the Master should inform the family of the availability of the Masonic Funeral Service, should it be their desire. This is, in no sense, a solicitation on his part to be allowed to conduct the Funeral Rites or Evening Memorial Service. If either is wanted by the family, they will make their wishes known.

The Masonic Funeral Service was originally designed as a "graveside rite." The Grand Lodge, A.F. & A.M., of Virginia, has an approved "Evening Memorial Service," and this or the "amended ritual" of the older Service may be used at the funeral home, Chapel, Church or home of the deceased on the evening before interment. Both Services have been further amended to include occasions when the body or ashes is not present. The word (spirit) will be substituted when there is no body or ashes. The Lodge of Sorrow covers both the "Evening Memorial Service" and the "Masonic Funeral Service," as amended. According the graveside rites the preference due them because of their antiquity, it would probably be better to have an Evening Memorial Service if a proper attendance could not be secured for the graveside service. This is a matter for the Worshipful Master to decide, but it should not be settled without concurrence from the family of the deceased.

Following is a suggested “Notice of Funeral Communication” which is applicable for use in connection with a graveside or Evening Memorial Service:

For Convening a Lodge of Sorrow

“Virginia Lodge No. 1015, A.F. & A.M., will convene its Lodge of Sorrow at _____ (Specify Place) to pay the last tribute of respect to our late Brother _____ (Show First, Middle and Last Name) at _____ (Time) o’clock on _____ (Date) 20__.”

If a Lodge of Sorrow has not been opened, it is suggested that regular means of notifying membership be used, or modify the above to suit the occasion.

The Holy Bible, Square, and Compasses are indispensable and must be displayed whenever either of the Funeral Services is conducted. Rods, Staffs, and Tiler’s Sword ARE NOT TO BE USED OR DISPLAYED at any public Funeral Service. If Divine Services ONLY are to be conducted in either the Church, Chapel, funeral home, or home of the deceased, with the Masonic Funeral Service to follow at the grave site, the Holy Bible, Square, and Compasses will not be taken into these facilities. Masonic Aprons, Jewels, and white gloves may be worn with the approval of the Minister or Pastor.

The Bible Bearer WILL NOT participate in Grand Honors. All other Masons will participate in Grand Honors.

The Worshipful Master or his designee conducting a Masonic Funeral Service, either graveside or Evening

Memorial Service will NOT wear a hat. The hat is not to be worn in public at any time during these services.

The Brother conducting the Service will wear the Jewel of the Worshipful Master unless he is the District Deputy Grand Master or a Grand Lodge Officer, who will wear the Jewel of his respective office.

Members of the Masonic Fraternity should remain standing during either of the two Evening Memorial Services. This is an inherent part of the Masonic Services and should be observed. When space limitations make this impractical, the Marshal shall direct all but the officers to a designated area where they will be seated together. The Brethren will stand for Grand Honors, the Prayer, and Benediction.

If the casket is Flag draped, the funeral director should be requested to fold it back so that the Apron, Glove, and Sprig of Acacia is not placed on the Flag.

The Senior Deacon will carry the White Leather Apron, Glove, Sprig of Evergreen, and sand and hand them to the person conducting the service at the appropriate time.

Do not use sand or earth at time of committal at the Evening Memorial Service. Use the words: “Unto his Maker we resign the body (spirit) of our deceased Friend and Brother, there to remain until the General Resurrection, etc.”

There should be ONE committal of the body. If the Minister commits the body, the Brother conducting the Masonic Funeral Service will OMIT the words “Earth to Earth, Dust to Dust, Ashes to Ashes” and the strewing of sand or earth.

Earth or sand is to be used during committal at graveside rites—DO NOT use flower petals.

Do not use a trowel to spread earth or sand on the casket at the graveside service—secure a container of earth or sand from

the funeral director if the Lodge does not possess one of its own.

At the Graveside Service, the White Leather Apron is to be placed directly on the head of the casket by the one conducting the service. It is suggested that two small pieces of double-backed tape be placed on the back of the Apron to prevent wind from blowing it from the casket.

At either Evening Memorial Service, the White Leather Apron is to be placed on the edge of the casket, nearest the person conducting the service.

At either Evening Memorial Service, when the body or ashes is not present, a table shall be placed near the person conducting the service. A flower, vase, or picture of the deceased shall be placed on the table prior to the service. The White Leather Apron will be placed on the table by the person conducting the service.

At both the Graveside Service and either of the Evening Memorial Services, the White Glove and the Evergreen are to be placed on the Apron.

The Brethren do not deposit or drop a Sprig of Evergreen in the grave or on the casket.

The Tiler will stand to the right and back of the Wardens at either the Graveside or Evening Memorial Service WITHOUT his sword and does participate in giving the "Grand Honors."

The oldest member (**if practical**) of the Lodge, carrying the Holy Bible, Square and Compasses, standing at the foot of the casket or table and in front of the Senior Warden, (at either the Graveside or Evening Memorial Service), will hold the Holy Bible, Square and Compasses at all times and will not participate in giving the "Grand Honors."

GRAVESIDE SERVICES

THE MASONIC FUNERAL SERVICE

If Lodge of Sorrow Has Not Been Opened

The Brethren being assembled at the Lodge room, the presiding Officer opens a Master Masons' Lodge in Due and Ancient Form and having stated the purpose of the meeting, gives the Brethren strict charge upon their deportment during the procession and ceremonies. The Lodge will then proceed, in a body (if possible) to the funeral home, Chapel, Church, home of the deceased Brother or place of interment—See diagram under “Order of Procession.”

If Lodge of Sorrow Has Been Opened

The Brethren having assembled at the funeral home, Chapel, Church, home of the deceased Brother or place of interment, the Marshal, under the direction of the Worshipful Master, will assemble the Brethren and make available to them the necessary gloves, aprons, etc. When the Brethren are properly clothed, the Worshipful Master shall say: “I now declare this Lodge of Sorrow at Labor.” The Marshal will then instruct the Brethren in forming a procession—See diagram under “Order of Procession.”

At the funeral home, Chapel, Church or home of the deceased Brother, provided the body is not already reposing therein, the procession will halt, open to right and left and standing at a comfortable distance apart, shall face inward and uncover while the body is borne by the pallbearers. The

procession then follows the casket in inverse order and leave in the same form as entering at the conclusion of the Service.

The same “Order of Procession” is to be followed if the body has been previously taken to the Chapel, Church or home of the deceased, or if there is no body or remains.

At the cemetery, the Marshal instructs the Brethren to form lines beginning at the hearse—See diagram under “Order of Procession”— Pallbearers and casket to pass through lines. Procession of Lodge Officers and Brethren follow casket to grave site, with the Worshipful Master flanked by the Senior and Junior Deacons leading the Procession. The Senior Deacon to be on the right of the Worshipful Master.

At the grave site, if necessary, the Worshipful Master or his designee, shall begin the service by requesting the Brethren to assemble around the grave. The Worshipful Master or his designee, flanked by the Senior and Junior Deacons, together with the Chaplain, will stand at the head of the grave.

The Officers will take their Stations, as near as may be practical, with due regard to the family, and the other Brethren will stand, in a body, at the foot of the grave, behind the Wardens.

EVENING MEMORIAL SERVICE

If Lodge of Sorrow Has Not Been Opened

The Brethren having assembled at the Lodge room, the presiding Officer opens a Master Masons’ Lodge in Due and Ancient Form, and having stated the purpose of the meeting, gives the Brethren strict charge upon their deportment during the procession and ceremonies. The Lodge will then proceed, in a body (if possible) to the funeral home, Chapel, Church or

home of the deceased Brother—See diagram under “Order of Procession.”

If Lodge of Sorrow Has Been Opened

The Brethren having assembled at the funeral home, Chapel, Church or home of the deceased Brother, the Marshal, under the direction of the Worshipful Master, will assemble the Brethren and make available to them the necessary gloves, aprons, etc. When the Brethren are properly clothed, the Worshipful Master shall say: “I now declare this Lodge of Sorrow at Labor.”

The Marshal will then instruct the Brethren in forming a procession—See diagram under “Order of Procession”—(space permitting, the procession will enter the place where the Evening Memorial Service is to be held).

The Worshipful Master or his designee, flanked by the Senior and Junior Deacons (the Senior Deacon to be on the right of the Worshipful Master or his designee), together with the Chaplain, will, as nearly as possible, stand at the head of the casket.

At the conclusion of either the Graveside or Evening Memorial Service, the procession returns to the place from whence it set out, and the necessary duties are complied with there.

If Lodge of Sorrow Has Not Been Opened

The Officers and members will return to the Lodge room and when the necessary duties, including the reading and approval

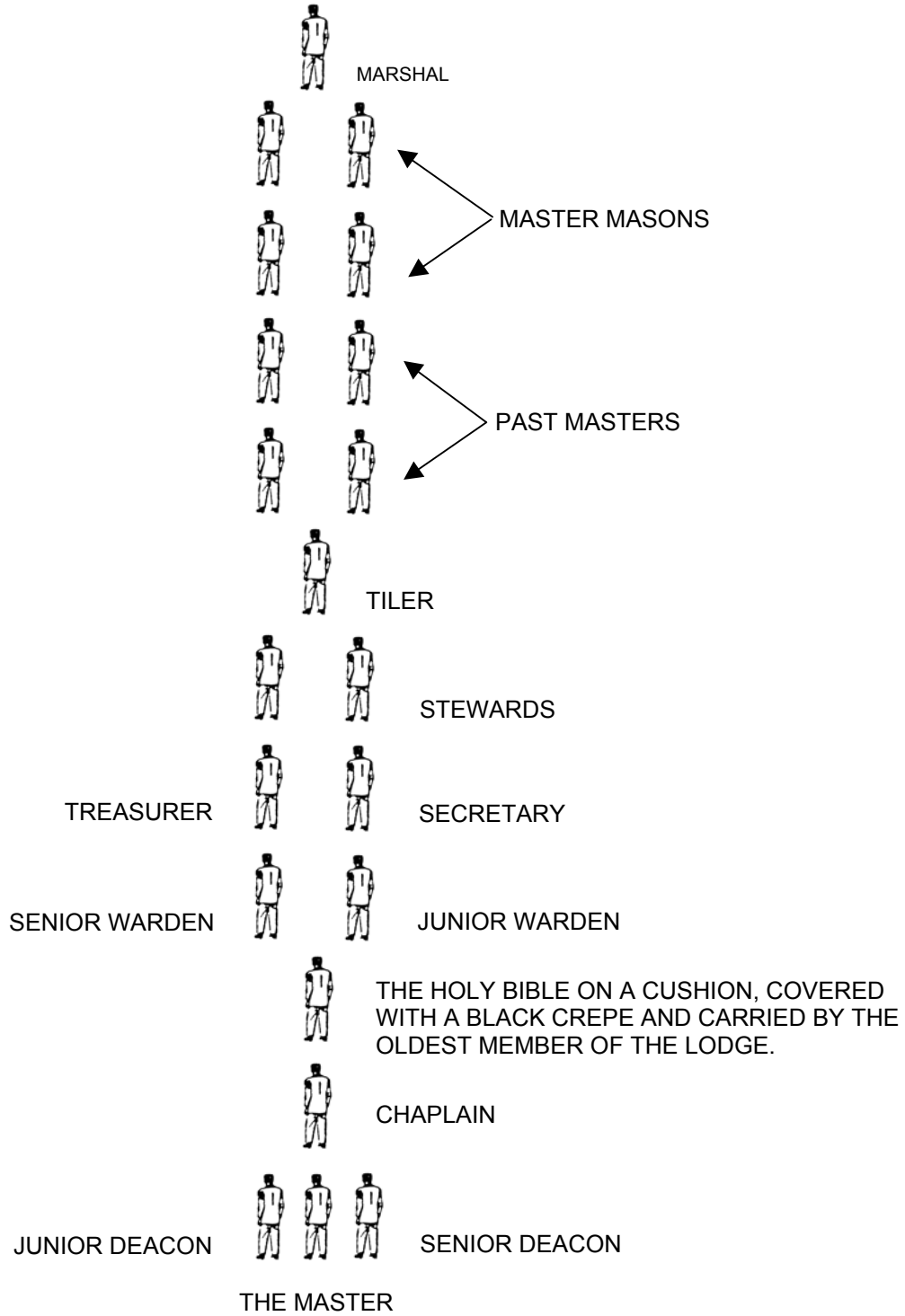
of the minutes, are complied with, the Master Masons' Lodge is closed in Ancient Form and Harmony.

If Lodge of Sorrow Has Been Opened

The Officers and members will reassemble at the funeral home, Chapel, Church, home of the deceased Brother or place of interment and the Worshipful Master shall say: "I now declare this Lodge of Sorrow dispensed with during my will and pleasure."

NOTE: Minutes covering communication held when Lodge of Sorrow has been opened will be read and approved at the following stated communication of the Lodge.

ORDER OF PROCESSION



The Lodge of Sorrow

OPENING AND CLOSING CEREMONIES

The Worshipful Master of any Virginia Lodge may, at the beginning of his term, or at any time during such term of office, open a Lodge of Sorrow, provided a Master Masons' Lodge shall have first been opened in a regular manner. After the first such opening, no further formality need be followed except as is noted herein for subsequent convening of the Lodge of Sorrow specified hereinafter.

OPENING

Worshipful Master:

Brethren, we will now proceed to open a Lodge of Sorrow. (*Three raps.*) Let us pray.

Chaplain:

Grand Architect of the Universe, we of the Masonic Fraternity, having dedicated our lives to the formation of true living stones for Thy Temple, ask Thy blessing on our work that we may be better enabled to serve Thee. May we always work according to Thy grand design. (*Response*) So mote it be.—Amen.

Worshipful Master:

Brother Senior Warden, it is my order that a Lodge of Sorrow be now opened for the purpose of paying the last tribute of respect to those Brethren of this Lodge whom death will take

from us and for honoring members of other Lodges as an act of courtesy when duly requested. This you will communicate to the Junior Warden in the South that the Brethren having due notice thereof may govern themselves accordingly.

Senior Warden:

Brother Junior Warden, it is the order of the Worshipful Master that a Lodge of Sorrow be now opened for the purpose of paying the last tribute of respect to those Brethren of this Lodge whom death will take from us and for honoring those members of other Lodges as an act of courtesy when so requested. This you will report to the Brethren that they having due notice thereof may govern themselves accordingly.

Junior Warden:

Brethren, take due notice thereof and let it be accordingly so done.

Worshipful Master:

Brethren, let us apply the symbolic tools of Masonry to our daily lives that we may be tried and found to be true as living stones and thus render ourselves worthy for that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Accordingly I declare this Lodge of Sorrow open, to remain open until my successor shall have been duly elected; and to be closed as my last order of business as Worshipful Master of this Lodge. (*One rap*) Brother Junior Deacon, inform the Tiler.

Junior Deacon:

Brother Tiler, the Lodge of Sorrow is now open.

CLOSING

The Worshipful Master of any Virginia Lodge shall at the end of the term for which he was elected (the last stated communication of his term) close the Lodge of Sorrow, which has previously been opened during his tenure as Worshipful Master.

Worshipful Master:

Brethren, we will now proceed to close this Lodge of Sorrow. (*Three raps*) Let us pray.

Chaplain:

Great Architect of the Universe, while we mourn the passing of our departed Brethren, let us learn well the lessons of death. Make us aware that time is passing swiftly and this separation from our departed Brethren is of short duration. Let the loss that we have sustained increase our affections for those who are yet spared. (*Response*) So mote it be.—Amen.

Worshipful Master:

Brother Senior Warden, it is my order that the labors of this Lodge of Sorrow be now ended, to be resumed at the will and pleasure of the incoming Master and his Officers. This you will communicate to the Junior Warden in the South that the Brethren having due notice thereof may govern themselves accordingly.

Senior Warden:

Brother Junior Warden, it is the order of the Worshipful Master that the labors of this Lodge of Sorrow be now ended, to be resumed at the will and pleasure of the incoming Master and

his officers. This you will report to the Brethren that they, having due notice thereof, may govern themselves accordingly.

Junior Warden:

Brethren, take due notice thereof and let it be accordingly so done.

Worshipful Master:

Brethren, may we be ever aware of our approaching fate as this alone can bring seemingly major crises into proper prospective, thereby creating that attitude of peace and harmony for which we strive. Accordingly I declare this Lodge of Sorrow closed. (*One rap*) Brother Junior Deacon, inform the Tiler.

Junior Deacon:

Brother Tiler, the Lodge of Sorrow is now closed.

Lodge Memorial Service

(For use in Tiled Lodge only.)

Worshipful Master:

Brethren, from the very beginning of history it has been the custom among men of all races to honor ceremonially the memory of their departed Brethren. Such a custom has its roots in the fundamental nature of our being and the universal institution of the immortality of the soul.

Wherefore, it is fitting that Masons should, from time to time, as occasion might require, meet together in solemn assembly, for the purpose of commemorating their Brethren at rest, and to remind ourselves of the hope beyond the grave, the preparation for which should be our daily concern.

Brother Senior Warden, How stands the hour?

Senior Warden:

Low Twelve! The sun has set over the graves of our beloved Brethren who have laid aside the working tools of life, Worshipful.

Worshipful Master:

Brother Junior Warden, whither shall we look?

Junior Warden:

Toward the East, where the rising sun, the Glory of the Lord reminds us of that which was lost, and is found with God, with Whom do live the spirits of just men made perfect, Worshipful.

Worshipful Master: (rising)

Then, Brethren, (*three raps*) let us invoke the blessing of the Grand Architect of the Universe, as we remember our Brethren at rest from their labors.

Chaplain: (kneeling at altar)

Almighty Father, the source from which we come, the end to which we travel, the light and strength of our pilgrimage, and the repose of the holy and blessed dead, bind us, we pray Thee in comradeship with the heroes and saints of every age. In this hour of solemn remembrance, we think of our Brethren who have faithfully lived and died, especially those who are near to us. Lift us all into light and love, and give us at last our portion with those who have trusted in Thee and have striven to do Thy will.

And to Thy Name, with the Brethren on earth and the Brethren above, we ascribe all honor and glory.—Amen.

Response:

So mote it be. (*one rap*)

Worshipful Master:

Brother Senior Warden, what solemn duty should we now perform.

Senior Warden:

We should recall in loving remembrance the names of all the Brethren who have passed to higher service above, Worshipful.

Worshipful Master:

Brother Secretary, you will advance to the Altar and there read the names of all of the Brethren who, since our last Memorial Service, have finished their earthly pilgrimage and entered into eternal rest. *(three raps)*

The Lodge stands with right hands over the heart while the names are read.

Worshipful Master:

Brethren, let us bow our heads in silent reverence to the memory of these, our departed Brethren.

(During this period of reading and silent reverence, the lights of the Lodge should be lowered. At the sound of the gavel, the Brethren will be seated and the lights raised to full brilliance again.)

Scripture Reading:

(Suggested passages—Psalm 23 or 121: Ecclesiastes 12:1-7)

Hymn:

O God Our Help in Ages Past

Address:

A Memorial Address may be delivered, if desired.

Worshipful Master:

Brother Chaplain, you will advance to the Altar and there offer up the prayers of Commemoration and Dedication. *(three raps)*

PRAYER OF COMMEMORATION

Chaplain:

Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of them that depart hence in the Lord, and with Whom the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity; we praise and magnify Thy Holy Name for all Thy servants who have finished their course and kept the faith, beseeching Thee that it may please Thee, of Thy gracious goodness, shortly to accomplish the number of Thine elect, and to hasten Thy kingdom, that we, with all those that are departed in the true faith of Thy Holy Name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in Thy eternal and everlasting glory. Hear our prayer, O God, and let our cry come unto Thee.—Amen.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Almighty Father, by Whose grace we have life and in Whose light we see light, mercifully grant that this hour of memory may be a mount of vision, from which new light shall fall upon our fleeting days; that we may think of our lives as sent from Thee, on Thy Errand for service Thou has appointed. Reverently, O God, we give ourselves to Thee in new dedication.

Fill our minds with light and our hearts with love, that we may serve Thee with patient faith and joyous confidence. Build our lives into Thy Temple of spiritual fellowship and keep us as Brethren steadfast in that fellowship.

Make our days bright with Thy presence, rich in the fruits of the spirit and tender in human ministry, that our lives may be fragrant with happiness.

Use as Thou wilt, our hands to do Thy work, our lips to speak Thy truth, our lives to be gospels of Thy love and mercy; and to Thee be honor and glory, thanksgiving and adoration, world without end.— Amen.

BENEDICTION

Chaplain:

The Lord bless us, and keep us. The Lord make his face to shine upon us and be gracious to us. The Lord lift up His countenance upon us, and give us peace, both now and evermore.

The Lodge is then closed in ancient form and harmony.

(The following Optional Memorial Address may be used at the place indicated, if desired.)

OPTIONAL MEMORIAL ADDRESS

“What doth the Lord require of thee, O man, but to do justly and love mercy and walk humbly with thy God. And one of the elders sayeth unto me: Rejoice ye and be exceedingly glad: behold the Lion of the Tribe of Judah hath prevailed to open the book and loosen the seven seals thereof.” These words from the Book of the Law remind us of the two great symbols of

Freemasonry and that for which they stand—the white lamb-skin apron and the sprig of acacia.

The lamb-skin, representing he that takes away the sins of the whole world and gives us that great peace which man cannot understand. The apron, representing the earth crowned by the triangle of the flap representing Deity, symbolizes for us the brotherhood of man under the Fatherhood of God. The sprig of acacia represents that immortal or better part of man which, through the merits of the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, survives the grave. By it we are also reminded of the promise of the resurrection of the body, which will arise and become as incorruptible as our soul. Death is not the end but merely the gateway to another life. It is not a terminal but merely a milestone.

For human existence continues after death, with different conditions. After passing through the gateway of death it enters upon a new and more exalted phase, one devoted to spiritual rather than material growth. It is in the life after passing beyond the grave that the human soul begins the life immortal in eternity.

Man may often ask himself what becomes of the human soul but each of us must remember that this can only be answered by the use of the knowledge that the soul is the gift of God; the spark of the Divine in each of us.

In the persons of these, our Brethren, whom we memorialize here, the dust has returned unto dust and the spirit which is immortal has returned unto God who gave it. Let us not lose sight of the fact that immortality is an individual state and that each of us, created in the image of God, is capable of achieving, with His help the state of being immortal.

ORDER OF PROCESSION THE MASONIC FUNERAL SERVICE (Graveside)

All will wear Masonic Aprons and white gloves.

If a procession is practical continue as below, otherwise see THE GRAVE SITE.

At the cemetery the Marshal instructs the Brethren to form lines beginning at the rear of the Funeral Coach allowing room to remove the casket. Note: Figure 1 presumes a grave site to the right of the funeral coach. The lines would be formed appropriately for a grave site to the left.

(GRAVE SITE)

TL♦	
MM♦	♦MM
MM♦	♦MM
PM♦	♦PM
PM♦	♦PM
JS♦	♦SS
SEC♦	♦TR
JW♦	♦SW
GL♦	♦SD
ML♦	♦WM
CH♦	♦JD

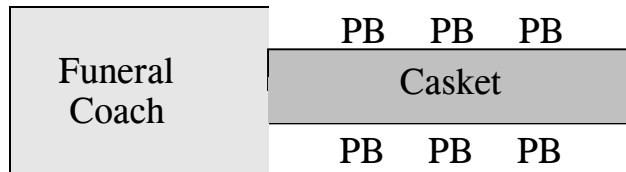


FIGURE 1

As the pallbearers and casket pass through the lines (above) the procession forms (see Figure 2). The procession of Lodge officers and Brethren follow the casket to the grave site.

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FUNERAL SERVICE

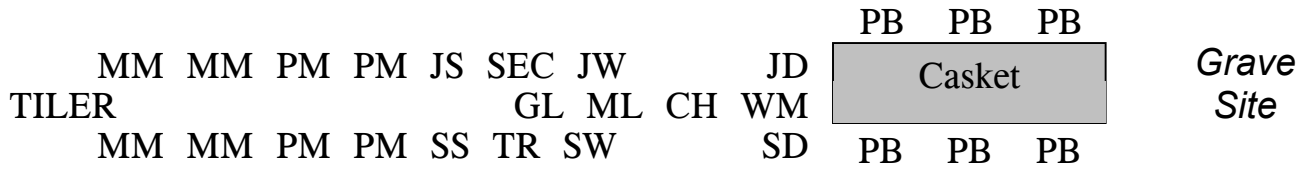


FIGURE 2

AT THE GRAVE SITE

The Brethren and Officers will form at the grave site (see Figure 3) for the service. The Bearer of the Great Lights will not participate in Grand Honors.

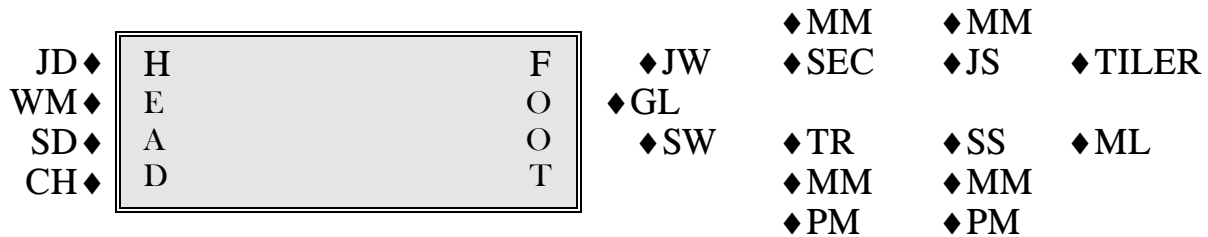


FIGURE 3

At the conclusion of the service all will remain quietly in place until the family members have departed the grave site.

Graveside Funeral Service

Provided a Lodge of Sorrow has not been previously opened, the Brethren having assembled at the Lodge room, the presiding Officer opens a Master Masons' Lodge in Due and Ancient Form and having stated the purpose of the meeting, the following services then begin:

IN LODGE

Master:

What man is he that liveth and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?

Response:

Man walketh in a vain shadow; he heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them.

Master:

When he dieth, he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend after him.

Response:

Naked he came into the world, and naked he must return.

Master:

The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.

The Master then taking the Roll in his hand, says:

Let us live and die like the righteous, that our last end may be like his.

Response:

God is our God forever and ever; he will be our guide unto death.

The Master then has the name, age, and day of death of the deceased recorded upon the Roll, and says:

Master:

Almighty Father! In Thy hands we leave with humble submission the soul of our deceased Brother.

The Brethren answer three times—giving the Grand Honors each time:

ALL:

The will of God is accomplished! So mote it be—Amen.

(The Master then instructs the Secretary to deposit the Roll in the Archives and repeats the following prayer.)

Master:

Most glorious God! Author of all good, and giver of all mercy, pour down Thy blessings upon us, and strengthen our solemn engagements with the ties of sincere affection. May the present instance of mortality remind us of our approaching fate, and draw our attention towards Thee, the only refuge in time of need! That when the awful moment shall arrive that we are about to quit this transitory scene, the enlivening prospects of

Thy mercy may dispel the gloom of death; and after our departure hence in peace, and in Thy favor, may we be received into Thine everlasting kingdom, to enjoy, in union with the souls of our departed friends, the just rewards of a pious and virtuous life.—Amen!

*To avoid all sectarianism on occasions of funerals, Chaplains are required to use the prayers prescribed in the Text Book.—Proceedings 1869, page 41.

AROUND THE BIER

MY BRETHREN AND FRIENDS:

The last offices paid to the dead are useful as lessons to the living; from them we are to derive instruction and to consider every solemnity of this kind as a summons to prepare for our dissolution.

Notwithstanding the warnings of mortality with which we daily meet; notwithstanding Death has established his empire over all the works of Nature, yet, through some unaccountable infatuation, we put from us the thought that we are born to die. We go on from one design to another, add hope to hope, and lay out plans for the employment of many years, forgetting that we may be suddenly alarmed at the approach of Death, when we least expect him, and at an hour which we probably conclude to be the meridian of our existence.

Let the present occasion excite our most serious thoughts, and strengthen our resolutions of amendment. As life is uncertain, and all earthly pursuits are vain, let us no longer postpone consideration of the all-important concerns of eternity,

but, while time and opportunity permit, seek to prepare for our great change.

Let us, while in this state of existence, support with propriety the character of our profession, advert to the nature of our solemn ties and pursue with assiduity the sacred tenets of our order. Above all, let us seek the favor of the Eternal God, whose goodness and power know no bounds, at whose bar of Infinite Justice and Mercy we must all so soon appear.

The following invocations are then made by the Master:

Master:

May we be true and faithful, and may we live in love and die in peace.

Response:

So mote it be.

Master:

May we profess what is good, and always act agreeable to our profession.

Response:

So mote it be.

Master:

May the Lord bless us and prosper us, and may all our good intentions be crowned with success.

Response:

So mote it be.

Master:

Glory be to God in the highest; on earth peace and good will toward men.

Response:

So mote it be, now, from henceforth, and forever—Amen!

The Master, taking an Apron and holding it up with both hands, says:

Master:

This Lamb-Skin or White Leather Apron is an emblem of Innocence, and the time-honored badge of a Free and Accepted Mason—more ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle; more honorable than the Star and Garter, when worthily worn. This emblem I now deposit (in the grave) (with the body) (with the spirit) of our deceased Brother. By it we are reminded that through the universal dominion of death our Brother has finished his earthly labor, and that his account now rests with his God.

The Master then takes a white Glove, and, holding it up to public view, says:

This Glove is an emblem of Innocence and a token of Friendship, and though Death has severed and destroyed our social connection with our Brother, let us remember that it has not impaired or weakened our obligations to the living.

The Master presenting a Sprig of Evergreen, says:

The Evergreen is an emblem of Masonic faith in the immortality of the soul, or that better part of man which neither cross, accident, pain, sickness nor death itself can destroy, but shall continue to bloom with an eternal verdure through an ever-beginning to a never-ending eternity.

GRAND HONORS

ALL:

“His Spirit to God—His memory in our hearts—His body to the earth.” *(three times)*

The Master then continues the Ceremony as follows:

Master:

In conformity to an ancient and honored custom of Free and Accepted Masons, we have assembled here to offer to the memory of our deceased Brother the last tribute of our affections, thereby demonstrating the sincerity of our past esteem, and our steadfast attachment to the principles of our Order.

May we who survive him anticipate our approaching fate, and be more strongly united in the ties of union and friendship, that, during the short space allotted to our present existence, we may wisely and usefully employ our time, and in the reciprocal intercourse of kind and friendly acts promote the welfare and happiness of each other.

The Master then, (strewing earth three times on the Coffin), says:

Unto (the grave) (his maker) we resign the (body) (spirit) of our deceased Friend and Brother—(earth to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes)—there to remain until the General Resurrection, and we pray Almighty God of His infinite goodness to comfort the hearts which have been stricken by this affliction, and to extend His saving mercy to us all, and when the work of life is ended may our hopes ripen into the fruition of everlasting bliss and this we beg for the honor of His Holy Name, to whom be Glory now and forever.

Response:

So mote it be—Amen!

The whole ceremony is then concluded with the following:

PRAYER BY THE CHAPLAIN

Almighty and Eternal God! in whom we live and move and have our being, and before whom all men must appear in the judgment day to give an account of their deeds in life, we who are daily exposed to the flying shafts of Death, and now surround the (grave) (mortal remains) (spirit) of our deceased Brother, most earnestly beseech Thee to grant us Thy divine assistance to redeem our misspent time; and in the discharge of all the duties of this life, to give us Wisdom from on high to direct us, Strength commensurate with our task to support us, and Beauty of holiness to adorn and render all our performances acceptable in Thy sight; and when our work is done, and our bodies mingle with the mother earth, may our souls, disengaged from their cumbrous dust, flourish and bloom in eternal day, and through Thine infinite mercy enjoy rest made perfect, in our home above eternal in the Heavens.

Response:

So mote it be—Amen!

The following Benediction is to be used in connection with the Masonic Funeral Service, after the Prayer by the Chaplain, when a Benediction is not given by the minister who conducts the Divine Services. It is to be given by the Worshipful Master, or his designee, conducting the Service. The Worshipful Master, or his designee, will not alter his position or raise his hand while giving the Benediction.

BENEDICTION

“Into Thy hands and keeping, O Lord, we commit our Brother and ourselves. May we receive light to guide us, courage to support us and love to unite us, now and forevermore. (*Response*) So mote it be.— Amen.”

ORDER OF PROCESSION (Evening Memorial Service)

MARSHAL
MASTER MASONS
PAST MASTERS

TILER
JS & SS
TREASURER & SECRETARY
SW & JW
GREAT LIGHTS

CHAPLAIN
JD-MASTER-SD

All will wear Masonic Aprons and white gloves.

All will pass the casket from head to foot and follow directions of Marshal up to and including the Bearer of the Great Lights.

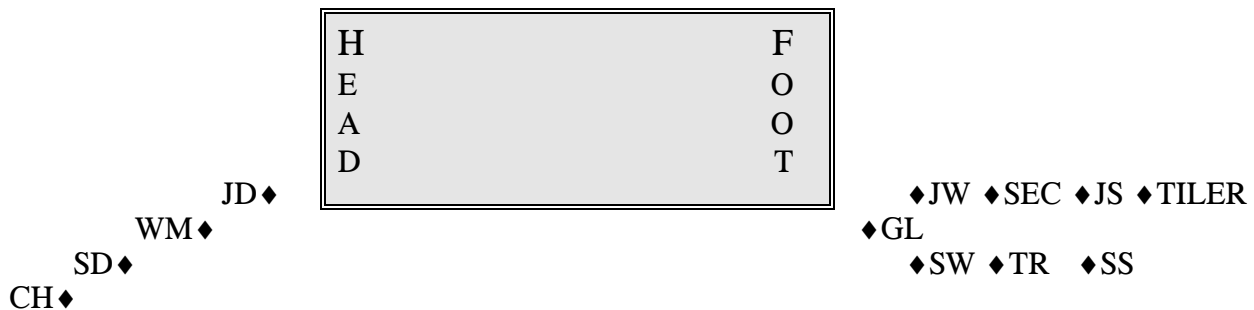
The Tiler, Stewards, Secretary, Treasurer, Wardens and the Bearer of the Great Lights will position themselves at the foot of the casket with the Great Lights in front of the Junior and Senior Wardens.

The Chaplain and the Deacons escorting the Worshipful Master will pass the casket from the foot to the head and position themselves at the head of the casket. The Senior Deacon will be on the right of the Worshipful Master, the Junior Deacon on the left of the Worshipful Master and the Chaplain to the right of the Senior Deacon.

If it will not obstruct the view of anyone we will all remain standing during the entire service. If it would obstruct the view of anyone we will be seated and arise at the direction of the Marshal who will direct us to our seats.

At the conclusion of the service all will remain until the Worshipful Master has spoken to the widow and or family. He will then lead us out in reverse order of the procession.

The Bearer of the Great Lights will not participate in Grand Honors.



ORDER OF PROCESSION (Evening Memorial Service) (Cremation or No Remains)

MARSHAL
MASTER MASONS
PAST MASTERS

TILER
JS & SS
TREASURER & SECRETARY
SW & JW
GREAT LIGHTS

CHAPLAIN
JD-MASTER-SD

In instances of cremation or there are no remains, a table should be provided to receive the Apron, Glove and Evergreen.

All will wear Masonic Aprons and white gloves.

All will pass the table from left to right (as if from head to foot of a casket) and follow directions of the Marshal up to and including the Bearer of the Great Lights.

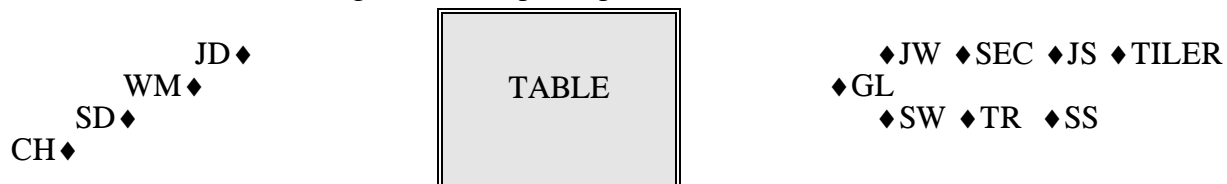
The Tiler, Stewards, Secretary, Treasurer, Wardens and the Bearer of the Great Lights will position themselves at the right of the table (see diagram) with the Great Lights in front of the Junior and Senior Wardens.

The Chaplain and the Deacons escorting the Worshipful Master will pass the table from right to left and position themselves to the left of the table (see diagram). The Junior Deacon will be at the left of the Worshipful Master, the Senior Deacon at the right of the Worshipful Master and the Chaplain to the right of the Senior Deacon.

If it will not obstruct the view of anyone, we will all remain standing during the entire service. If it would obstruct the view of anyone we will be seated and arise at the direction of the Marshal.

At the conclusion of the service, all will remain until the Worshipful Master has spoken to the widow and or family. He will then lead us out in reverse order of the procession.

The Bearer of the Great Lights will not participate in Grand Honors.



Evening Memorial Service

To be used at the election of the Master of a Lodge in the Funeral Chapel or home of the deceased at an evening service prior to the interment of the deceased or when there is no body or remains.

Worshipful Master:

Friends and Brethren, we who are Masons have assembled on this occasion to express our respect and esteem for our Brother who has passed beyond our mortal sight and to share with those near and dear to him our belief in the immortality of the soul.

In this time of sorrow, when we all need comfort and consolation, let us turn reverently to God who, in the midst of the trials and tribulations that are a part of life, can alone endue us with that quietness of spirit and that peace of mind and heart which the world can neither give nor take away. Let us pray.

Chaplain:

O God, our Father in Heaven; the giver of life and light and love, our help and solace in times of trial and sorrow. Thou has assured us that when we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, Thou art with us. Thy rod and Thy staff comfort us. Thou art our light and our salvation, our refuge and our strength in time of trouble.

We thank Thee for the life of our Brother. We thank Thee that he was one of our fellowship and that we were privileged to labor with him in the mystic ties of brotherhood. We are grateful to Thee for the memories of him which we shall carry always in our hearts. We thank Thee for all that he has meant to those who

were near and dear to him through the ties of family and friendship.

Above all we are grateful to Thee for teaching us that, while the body is mortal, the soul is immortal. Though the outward form we knew and loved be removed from our sight, we have the assurance that Thou has taken to Thyself his soul, which is the enduring essence of life. This conviction Thou hast implanted in us through Thy Holy Word, which is the Great Light of Masonry.

We earnestly beseech Thee that this short time which we spend together may renew and strengthen our convictions and hope. Let Thy peace abide with us now and lead us ever in the paths of righteousness. In Thy name we make our prayer.—
Amen.

Worshipful Master:

From time immemorial it has been the custom of Masons to assemble with the family and friends of a departed Brother to honor his memory and to voice our sympathy to those whom he loved and who loved him. The message we bring is one of the triumph of life over death, the victory of hope over despair.

Masonry has come down from the distant past. It uses the tools of the builder's trade as emblems and symbols to teach Masons how to build character and moral stature. It teaches service to God, to a Brother, and to all mankind. It seeks constantly to build the temple of the soul and thus fit us for that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Masonry is a fellowship that unites Masons in friendship and good will. It teaches the spiritual values of life that lie beyond the physical senses.

Masonry confronts the fact of death with the greater fact of Faith in the immortality of the soul. Masons believe sincerely

that when life on earth comes to a close, the soul is translated from the imperfections of this mortal sphere to that all-perfect glorious and Celestial Lodge above where God, the Great Architect of the Universe, presides.

With these truths and convictions our Brother was well acquainted, though perfection of character is not of this world, yet we are persuaded that our Brother sought to live by these truths and principles of Masonry; that they sustained and supported him and that by them his life was made richer, fuller and more meaningful.

Secretary:

Here the Secretary of the Lodge should give the Masonic biography of the Brother. When and in what Lodge he was made a Master Mason; what offices, if any, he had held; and special committee services he had rendered and such other items of Masonic interest as might be appropriate.

Worshipful Master:

When our Brother labored with us in Masonic attire he wore a white apron which he was taught is an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Free and Accepted Mason. By it he was constantly reminded of that purity of life and that rectitude of conduct so necessary to his gaining admittance into the Celestial Lodge above. He will now wear that apron forever as the emblem of the virtues it represents.

(The Master holds up the apron by the two upper corners with the flap toward him, and places it over the edge of the casket or on the table.)

The Master then takes a white Glove, and, holding it up to public view, says:

This Glove is an emblem of Innocence and a token of Friendship, and though Death has severed and destroyed our social connection with our Brother, let us remember that it has not impaired or weakened our obligations to the living.

(The Master places glove on the apron.)

The Master presenting a Sprig of Evergreen, says:

The Evergreen is an emblem of our faith in the immortality of the soul. By it we are reminded of the immortal soul of man which survives the grave and which will never, never die. In accordance with our ancient custom, I now deposit this emblem with the (remains) (spirit) of our Brother.

(The Master places Evergreen on the apron.)

And now to those who shared with our Brother the intimate ties of family and friendship, we tender our affectionate sympathy. Our hearts respond to your hearts in your hour of grief. We trust that these affirmations of faith, in which our Brother shared, may speak to you and inspire you to live with hope and courage. May you always remember that the God and Father of us all is a loving God, a compassionate God whose ear is ever open to the cry of the distressed. Let us pray.

Chaplain:

Eternal and Everlasting God, we look to Thee in faith and confidence, knowing that Thy love has power to bring comfort

and consolation, even in times of bereavement, to those near and dear to our Brother. Fill their hearts more and more with the blessed assurance of immortality and of Thy abiding love. Bless them and keep them, O Lord, make Thy face to shine upon them and be gracious unto them. Lift up Thy countenance upon them and give them Thy peace.—Amen.