



Orange County Scottish Rite

ORIENT OF CALIFORNIA, SOUTHERN JURISDICTION

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January 2025

Santa Brings Festive Joy to Our Scottish Rite Children!



Ladies Night

Look inside for our NEW events for a NEW year!

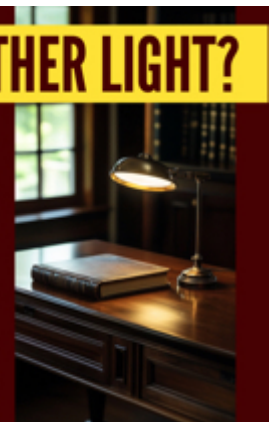
LOOKING FOR FURTHER LIGHT?

THE SCOTTISH RITE IS FOR YOU!

If you are a Master Mason and would like to learn more about Freemasonry, then consider the "College of Freemasonry" - The Orange County Scottish Rite! Come by our Stated Meeting night and enjoy a meal, meet local Brothers you already know, to start a personal journey to further light in Masonry.

<https://bit.ly/ApplicationForDegrees>

Orange Masonic Center
71 Plaza Square, Orange, CA 92866
Phone (714) 543-7277
gensec@ocscottishrite.org







13th Moon Cycle: “Becomes Their Vision” & the Holy Doctrine

Hon. James McCallion, 32° KCCH
Venerable Master, Director of Education



Becomes Their Vision

During the 13th Moon Cycle in January 2025, we conclude with the teachings of Clan Mother “Becomes Their Vision,” the guardian of transformation. As a symbol of change, she offers sacred guidance to help us navigate life's lessons and cycles of growth, leading us toward spiritual evolution. Her teachings illuminate the importance of remaining true to our chosen path, avoiding the illusions that could obscure our dreams and purpose. This process of change transforms us from a finite sense of self to become a boundless expression of the infinite love and creativity of the Great Mystery. Becomes Their Vision reminds us of the profound interconnectedness of all existence, teaching that the worlds within and beyond us reflect one another, echoing the eternal truth: As above, so below, as within, so without (Sicut in caelo et in terra). According to Shaman Sams, “the ultimate transforming vision is the decision to simply BE.”



Jewel of the 32nd
Degree, Master of
the Royal Secret

Inherent in the 32nd degree, Master of the Royal Secret is a profound wisdom similar to that of becoming one's vision;

“A candle has no reflection, light has no shadow, god is light, in him, there is no darkness. God is in us. Do not defile his temple. We are god’s reflection – each of us.”

What does this mean? God is the flame. We are not the flame, but we are the light and heat cast off of the flame.



In the Elder Futhark, the rune “Ansuz” represents wisdom, harmony, & order. It is the spoken word of Odin, his breath, and communication. One could connect Ansuz with Fiat Lux and the Judeo-Christian Creation story. “We are sons and daughters of the Creator... what shall we create?”

At the beginning of this series, I introduced the Lunar calendar, a system rooted in the moon’s cycles around the Earth. In a single year, the moon completes 13 revolutions, creating 13 lunar months of 28 days each. This ancient calendar, sustained for millennia, carries its mythos etched into the shell of the turtle.

I also highlighted the Shamanic Wheel of Truth with its twelve spokes, and how, when aligned with the ancient teachings of the Kiowa, it offers a framework to explore the symbolic messages each moon holds for us on our Red Road. How each of these lessons explore the nature of truth as it pertains to our physical involvement in the terrestrial, manifesting our spiritual potential or “orendas” in order to become the living vessels of Love that the Great Mystery intended.

We explored “Tiyoweh,” or meditation and forms of ritual and ceremony exclusive to indigenous and Norse shamanic traditions, and we forged connections of those ancient practices with philosophical schools of thought such as Taoism & Buddhism, and those espoused by Scottish Rite Freemasonry.

As each month revealed a particular truth, we were tasked with unveiling how those truths were to be found within us.

What I did not anticipate, however, was how deeply the pursuit of Truth would affect me. The further I ventured into its understanding, the more I felt a profound sense of loss. The harsh reality is that much of the living world does not live for, with, or in Truth. The path of Truth is an inward journey, meant for personal transformation. Its reward lies not in external validation, but in the internal shift it creates the ability to see the world through the Creator’s eyes and to marvel at the infinite beauty of His love.

What did I hope to gain on this journey through the 13 moons? Truthfully, I didn’t know. What I discovered was the necessity of stripping away everything—dismantling the ego, letting it die, and becoming... nothing. Nobody. A blank canvas. Simply, I am.

Have you ever imagined starting over completely? To begin again, but with the clarity of foresight and the wisdom of experience—to see the world not as it appears, but as it truly is? Perhaps even to recognize it for what it might be: a *lusus naturae*, an illusion. That is the gift of truth—it dismantles the falsehoods, illuminates what has been hidden, and clears the way forward. Could this be the reckoning of light?

As human beings, we often define ourselves by what binds us: the groups we belong to, the roles we play, the identities we claim. At its core, this need for connection and meaning anchors us to something larger than ourselves. But what happens when those ties are severed? When every identity is stripped away, leaving you untethered, belonging to nothing? What remains when even your lingering attachments feel like echoes from a life you no longer inhabit? The Tao Te Ching reminds us that if we “want the world, we must give the World up.” And in the profound solitude of loss, there is an unexpected beauty: the opportunity to be found.

When we let go of labels and definitions, we open ourselves to infinite potential. The Tao’s second chapter reminds us, “The name that can be named is not the eternal name.” What does that mean? To name yourself is to

limit yourself. Call yourself a painter, and you confine yourself to that role, excluding the possibility of being a parent, sibling, friend, teacher, or anything else.

Yet, as *Becomes Their Vision* teaches, by being nobody and nothing, we also become everybody and everything. To embrace this truth is to understand that we are all the Universe, having a human experiencing. I am you, and you are me. In the words of Ram Dass, “We are all just [souls] walking each other home.” This shift—from self to all—is where meaning resides.

Up until now, I realized I have been living a life that wasn’t truly mine—shaped by illusions and expectations, disconnected from my essence. So, I return to the question: Who am I?

In my Venerable Master’s address at the 2024 Installation of Officers, I reflected on a profound question once posed to Rumi: “Who are you?” His enigmatic reply was, “I don’t know... Planting flowers to which the butterflies come.” This sentiment resonates with the Scottish Rite’s “reveal/re-veil” approach, inviting us to explore identity not as a fixed state but as a dynamic process of becoming.

Like Rumi, we may not always know who we are in a given moment, for we are ever-evolving beings. Yet, we can uncover truths about ourselves by listening to the whispers of our hearts and defining ourselves through the passions that bring us joy and purpose. Though Rumi admitted he didn’t fully grasp his identity, he was certain of his desire—to sow seeds of wisdom and spirituality, nurturing the growth of others. In this, we find inspiration: to embrace the mystery of who we are while planting the seeds that allow beauty, meaning, and connection to flourish.

In the month of January, I charge you with asking yourself the same question... Who are you?

The privilege of serving as Venerable Master for our valley has been a profound honor and a truly humbling experience. It is a distinction I will cherish and hold close to my heart for all the days of my life.

Hágoónee (so be it, until we see each other again),

Hon. James McCallion, 32° KCCH
Venerable Master, Director of Education



Building the Strongest Valley Yet - A Year of Elevated Experiences

Russ Hennings, 32°
Wise Master

It is a tremendous honor to step into the role of Venerable Master of the Orange County Valley on January 19th of this month. I am humbled to follow in the footsteps of James McCallion, whose exceptional leadership over the past year empowered all of us. James kept us focused, united, and always moving forward, while also bringing vibrancy and warmth to our gatherings through meals and fellowship. He reminded us that Masonic work is meaningful, but it’s also meant to be enjoyed together.

This year my focus will be on elevating every aspect of what we do as a Valley: from the way we communicate, to the experiences we provide, to how we connect with our brothers outside these walls. Our Scottish Rite Valley is a beacon of fellowship and learning, and I firmly believe we can become the strongest Valley in California.

The leadership team we have this year is one to be proud of. Alejo Velarde, Barry McKinley, and newly appointed Josh Price bring years of Masonic wisdom and leadership as Past Masters and Inspectors. These men know what it takes to get things done, and they lead with an understanding of both tradition and vision. Their dedication to their respective bodies builds the foundation of our success, and I am grateful to have them by my side.

We also have a remarkable group in the Knights of St. Andrew, led by Matt Schrader. The Knights are poised to become a powerful team within our Valley. They will focus on philanthropy—amplifying the work we do to serve our community—while also strengthening the fraternal bonds among us. The Knights will offer exclusive events and opportunities for fellowship, combining tradition with the camaraderie that makes Masonry special. This group will be instrumental in creating the elevated experience I envision for all members this year.

Creating a meaningful experience for our members is my highest priority. To that end, I want to ensure that our meetings and dinners feel purposeful, rewarding, and enjoyable. You'll see elevated touches throughout the year: high-quality meals shared together, thoughtful events, and consistent, streamlined communication that keeps us informed and engaged.

Freemasonry has always been about connection—connection to each other, to our values, and to our greater purpose. As we move forward, I encourage all of us to strengthen our connection to our Blue Lodges. We must be visible, supportive, and enthusiastic ambassadors of the Scottish Rite. There are Master Masons in our lodges looking for the next step in their Masonic journey, and we can offer them something profound. In the Scottish Rite, we extend the lessons of the Craft, build lifelong friendships, and engage in meaningful work that inspires us to grow.

This year, I ask each of you to take on this simple but powerful task: spread the word. Invite your brothers to join us at our Valley. Encourage them to connect with the broader Masonic community here in Orange County, beyond their own lodge walls. Remind them that the Scottish Rite is a place where they can deepen their understanding of Freemasonry, meet new brothers, and contribute to something larger than themselves.

We are building something extraordinary here—an Orange County Valley where tradition and class meet growth and progress. Each of you plays a role in that vision, and together we will achieve it. I look forward to this year with excitement and gratitude, knowing that the best is yet to come.



Freemasonry and the Scottish Rite: Supporting Our Legacy and Community

Alejo Velarde, 32°
Commander of Kadosh

Freemasonry and the Scottish Rite stand as pillars of tradition, fellowship, and service, grounded in principles that emphasize personal growth, community support, and lifelong learning. Among the many noble endeavors embraced by Scottish Rite Masons, the Children's Language Center holds a special place, embodying the fraternity's commitment to empowering future generations. This vital initiative provides life-changing resources

and therapies for children facing speech and language challenges, allowing them to thrive in school, relationships, and life.

As members, we must continue to champion this incredible cause. Your ongoing support not only sustains the Children's Language Center but also ensures that its transformative work can touch more lives. Together, we can uphold the values of Freemasonry by making a meaningful difference in our communities.

Our recent Christmas party was a tremendous success! The children were overjoyed, and their excitement was contagious as they greeted Santa Claus and received their carefully chosen presents. Events like these remind us of the profound joy we bring to others through fellowship and giving. It's a tradition that reflects the true spirit of the season of compassion, connection, and generosity.

As we begin the new year, let us remember the importance of continuing our traditions and legacy. Whether through supporting the Children's Language Center, participating in events, or strengthening our bonds as Scottish Rite Masons, every effort contributes to the rich fabric of our fraternity. Together, we can carry forward the mission of Freemasonry, enriching lives and communities for generations to come.

Mark your calendars for a significant event in the life of our fraternity. The Scottish Rite Installation of Officers! It will take place on January 19th at 3 PM at the Orange Grove Lodge Masonic Center. This is a wonderful opportunity to support our new officers, celebrate their dedication, and reaffirm our shared commitment to our principles and goals. Don't miss out on being part of this inspiring installation.

As Freemasons, we are called to build, not just within ourselves, but in the world around us. Through your steadfast support, we can continue to advance the mission of the Scottish Rite and make a lasting impact. Here's to a year of growth, fellowship, and service!

Calling All Brothers: Share Your Voice in Your Newsletter!

Brethren, the strength of our fraternity lies in the shared wisdom, insights, and experiences of each Mason. This newsletter is more than just an update; it's a reflection of our collective journey, a tapestry woven with the contributions of brothers from all walks of Masonic life. And now, we're inviting *you* to add your voice.

You don't have to hold a specific title or be part of the line to contribute. Whether you've been contemplating profound Masonic truths, delving into scholarly research, or have news to share with the brethren, this newsletter is your platform. Your unique perspective could inspire, educate, or inform your fellow Masons, enriching the shared knowledge of our craft.

Consider this your open invitation. If you have something to say — a thought-provoking reflection, a historical insight, or updates from your lodge or Masonic community — we want to hear from you. Send your ideas, articles, or musings for consideration. Let's make this newsletter a true conduit for the vibrant ideas and wisdom that define our brotherhood. Send your articles to: editor@ocscottishrite.org

Visit your valley online, and be sure to like and follow us on social media!



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We need your email address so we can electronically send you the Scottish Rite News.

Call the office at (714) 543-7277 and give it to our Secretary or leave a message.



Reflections, Gratitude, and Growth: A Year in the Orange County Scottish Rite

Barry McKinley, 32°
Master of Kadosh

Dear Brothers of the Orange County Scottish Rite,

As we close out this year, I want to take a moment to reflect on the wonderful memories we have created together. The Christmas party was truly a highlight, with the joyous presence of the families from the RiteCare Childhood Language Center joining us as our special guests. Seeing the children light up with excitement, especially during the special visit from Santa, was heartwarming and reminded us of the deeper purpose of our work. Thank you to everyone who helped make the evening so festive and meaningful.

Serving as Master of Kadosh this year has been an incredible honor and privilege. I am deeply grateful for the trust and support you have shown me throughout the year. As I prepare to transition into the role of Commander of Kadosh, I look forward to continuing to serve this valley and contributing to its ongoing growth and success.

I also want to extend my deepest thanks to Venerable Master McCallion for his dedication and leadership this year. His willingness to embrace new ideas and guide our valley through changes has been instrumental in our progress. Together, we have tried new approaches, and I am proud of how we have grown and adapted as a valley.

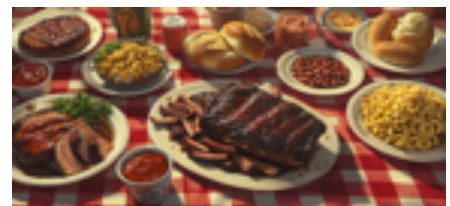
Looking ahead to 2025, I am filled with hope and anticipation. I believe in the strength and resilience of our valley and am confident that, with your continued commitment, we can grow even stronger in the coming year. Let us carry forward the lessons and successes of this year as we work together to uphold the values of our beloved fraternity.

Thank you for making this year so memorable. I wish you all a joyous holiday season and a prosperous new year.



BBQ Feast!!!

No less than THREE meats (ribs, pulled pork, beef brisket), beans, mac, and Hawaiian rolls





A New Year, New Beginnings: January Events for the Valley of Orange County

Jamie Hopkins, 32° KCCH
General Secretary

A Very Happy New Year to all the Brothers of the Valley of Orange County. We have a busy month to start the year. Our first Stated Meeting for 2025 is on January 13th at 6:30 pm at Orange Grove Lodge. With better meals and shorter Stated Meetings, the attendance at our monthly gathering increased significantly in 2024. More spouses are joining us at dinner than in over a decade. The first meeting of the year is a meeting that you want to attend.

Secondly, we are having our annual Installation of Officers on Sunday, January 19th. It will begin at 3 pm at Orange Grove Lodge. This is an impressive ceremony that is open to all family and friends. Make a point of attending and supporting our new Valley officers.

If you have any questions whatsoever about your membership status, please contact the Secretary. Finally, we wish a healthy and prosperous New Year to all Scottish Rite Masons and your families.

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All articles for publication must be submitted prior to the 12th of the month.

The Orange County Scottish Rite Valley

Orange Masonic Center, 71 Plaza Square, Orange, CA 92866 • Phone (714) 543-7277
Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10am-2pm • www.ocscottishrite.org

Stated Meetings on the second Monday of the month, 6:30 pm; dinner follows at 7:15 pm (reservations requested) at the Orange Grove Masonic Center, 71 Plaza Square, Orange, California.



New Year, New Opportunities: Embracing Action and Brotherhood in the Valley of Orange County

Hon. James Olivier, 32° KCCH
 Prelate, Director of The Work

“An idea that is developed and put into action is more important than an idea that exists only as an idea.”
 – Buddha.

Brethren,

First and foremost, Happy New Year! I pray you find this message in happiness and health, ready to set out and conquer another year with your Brethren. The change of the year always provides us time to reflect on what has come before and what stands before us to do. And in the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, there is always plenty to do for the benefit of your Brethren and the world at large. Now is the time to assess and see where you can be of best use to everyone reliant upon you in your respective lives.

Whether volunteering your time with the Knights of St. Andrew, serving as an Officer, participating in Reunions, or even something as simple as giving to the Childhood Language Center, these are all laudable acts that support the Valley. So, for those who already participate in any of these ways, thank you! For those looking for something to do, just remember, all you have to do is ask... after all, that's how you found yourself becoming a Mason in the first place.

“Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”
 – Jesus Christ, Matthew 25:40.

So let's all set our feet firmly upon the path of those duties we've all sworn to perform and work together to continue the growth and engagement we've seen over the last few years in this little beehive called the Valley of Orange County. I'm excited to work with all of you over the coming year to achieve great things in our ritual work and our meetings. And just remember, regardless of how you choose to serve, it is deeply appreciated by us all.

I pray for health, happiness and all the blessings of the Almighty in your lives as we move into this new year.





Cheers to 2025: Exciting Plans Ahead for the Blue Slipper Club!

Erin McKinley

Happy New Year from the Blue Slipper Club!!! We are excited for 2025. Our anticipated events for this year will include a jewelry presentation, a make-up presentation, "Bring Your Favorite Drink" Night, chocolate tasting, crafts and another weekend getaway sometime during the spring/summer. Any suggestions are welcome and appreciated. We are always looking for new things to do. I would also like to plan a few dinners or Saturday/Sunday activities throughout the year. We will keep everyone updated on what we are up to.

Clinic Highlights: A Season of Progress and Gratitude

Danielle Pulliam, M.S., CCC-SLP, Clinical Supervisor

As we wrapped up another wonderful semester at the clinic, our student clinicians met with parents to review progress reports. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many parents expressing heartfelt gratitude for the care and dedication their children received. One parent was even brought to tears, moved by the progress their child had made. Parents have been involved in sessions learning techniques they can carryover at home. It was such a bittersweet week as we said goodbye and good luck to this semester's group of clinicians. This week, the children also enjoyed festive holiday activities, sparking excitement for the upcoming CLC Christmas party. Moments like these remind us of the impact we can make together. Thank you for helping us bring hope and joy to these families—your support makes all the difference!

Happy Holidays!





Personal Representative of the SGIG Orient of California

III. Ralph C. Shelton II, 33°

I trust that you all enjoyed a holiday season filled with peace and joy, and that your new year is filled with happiness and prosperity.

Our Valley has had a year of growth, with more members, increased engagement and positive evolution. As we move to the new year, we plan more ways to encourage engagement and involvement among our members. Our Valley has become a place of fellowship among the Freemasons of Orange County, as well as a center of learning. We will be continuing to develop our educational effort, and to present enriching programs.

I am particularly excited at the growing engagement among our partners through the Blue Slipper club, and as the year progresses I hope that you avail yourselves of new opportunities - from remote engagement for those unable to attend to our coming transportation program to assist those who cannot drive to meetings, and, of course, our growing degree program. In 2025, we plan to present more degrees than in years past. Join with us as we welcome new members to the Valley at our two Reunion classes in 2025.

Last, I want to congratulate your Valley Heads of Bodies on a job well done in 2024, and welcome our new Heads of Bodies, led by Bro. Russell Hennings, our Venerable Master-elect. I recently met with Russ, and I am confident that the future of Orange County Valley is brighter than ever.

Scottish Rite of Freemasonry Southern Jurisdiction



III. James D. Cole, 33°
Sovereign Grand Commander



III. Frank Loui, 33°
Sovereign Grand Inspector
General, Orient of California



III. Ralph Shelton, 33°
Personal Representative of the
Sovereign Grand Inspector
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Jack C. Hennings Jr., 32°
Assistant to the Personal
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Orange County Valley Scottish Rite of Freemasonry

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