

Our Thanksgiving FEAST was a HUUUGE Success!





Ladies Night

Look inside for the Blue Slipper Club Solvang Weekend Getaway!





The Orange County Scottish Rite Congratulates MW and III. **Arthur Salazar, 33°**

Grand Master of Masons in California

The Valley proudly extends its heartfelt congratulations to MW and Illustrious Arthur Salazar, 33°, on his election and installation as Grand Master of Masons in California.

A dedicated and long-time member of our Valley, Brother Salazar embodies Masonic leadership of the highest caliber. We are deeply honored to see our Valley once again represented in the Grand East and to celebrate the achievements of one of our own.

Brother Salazar is a 33° Inspector General Honorary in the San Francisco Scottish Rite Valley and the Orange County Scottish Rite Valley. His service to the craft includes roles as Treasurer and Wise Master of the Chapter of Rose Croix in Orange County. He has also led the Orange County Scottish Rite Foundation as President and contributed as Treasurer and Audit Committee Chair for the California Scottish Rite Foundation.

Beyond his Masonic accomplishments, Brother Salazar is a proud husband and father. His wife of 24 years, Dr. Laura Camacho Salazar, is a physician specializing in internal medicine. They have raised three remarkable daughters: Ixchel, a medical student at the Mayo Clinic; Sofia, a nursing student and Shrine Hospital volunteer in Honolulu; and Amira, a future genetic engineer studying at UCLA. The Salazars reside in Aliso Viejo, Orange County, continuing to exemplify the values of family, service, and leadership.

Please join us in celebrating MW and III. Arthur Salazar, 33°, as he embarks on this esteemed journey in Masonic leadership.





12th Moon Cycle: Gratitude, Ego Death, & the Brazen Serpent

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



"Gives Praise" from an Indigenous, Celtic, and Norse Shamanic Perspective

During the 12th Moon Cycle in December, shamanic traditions encourage a focus on gratitude through the teachings of "Gives Praise." This Clan Mother emphasizes recognizing the healing power in each life experience, teaching us to appreciate challenges as opportunities for growth. By embracing life's difficulties, we learn to develop inner strength and adopt an outlook of gratitude, even in moments that test us.

These lessons also highlight the importance of modesty and reciprocity in our interactions with others. Through giving and receiving, we contribute to the cycle of harmony, acknowledging the simple joys of Earth, like sunlight, rain, and breath. The 12th Moon prompts us to celebrate these often-overlooked blessings and express gratitude for fundamental truths that enrich our existence.

"Gives Praise" also serves as a cautionary tale about the pitfalls of materialism, status, and superficial wisdom. It reminds us that filling one's life with possessions or hollow knowledge cannot replace genuine happiness or a sense of wholeness. This shamanic teaching encourages profound introspection, urging individuals to turn away from external validation and focus on internal fulfillment.

The journey toward true gratitude involves a "Journey without Goal": a metaphorical "death" to the ego, a concept resonant across multiple spiritual traditions. In Christianity, for example, "dying to the self" means letting go of personal desires to live in alignment with God's will, embodying a life guided by a higher purpose. Tantric Buddhism similarly promotes "ego death" as a path to enlightenment, where the self is understood as an illusion that must be transcended to achieve liberation. Even Jungian psychology refers to "psychic



"Ego Death" Honoring Indigenous, Celtic, and Norse spiritual traditions.

death," which Carl Jung described as a fundamental transformation of the psyche involving dissolution of the ego, leading to a more integrated and authentic self.

Eastern philosophies like Taoism encourage embracing simplicity, humility, and non-interference ("Wu-Wei"), cultivating gratitude naturally by acknowledging life's interconnectedness. True gratitude and love, they suggest, emerge when one removes personal ego, allowing others to follow their paths unimpeded. This selflessness, far from being passive (or "too nice"), embodies a profound appreciation for each person's journey, fostering a harmonious existence anchored in compassion and understanding.

In Norse and Celtic traditions, gratitude and reverence for Truth are celebrated. Norse shamanism, represented by Odin's quest for wisdom, underscores the value of truth-seeking and knowledge. Odin is renowned for his relentless quest for wisdom, even sacrificing himself on the World Tree, Yggdrasil, to gain the knowledge of the runes.

Celtic shamanism, closely connected to nature, expresses gratitude through poetry and song, honoring the wisdom revealed in the natural world. These traditions exemplify a respect for the interconnectedness of life and the divine source of all knowledge.



Brazen Serpent

The philosophy of Freemasonry shares a profound connection with these teachings as it emphasizes moral cultivation, spiritual rebirth, and the pursuit of truth essential to personal transformation. Like the Indigenous Clan Mother "Gives Praise," who advocates gratitude for life's trials and growth through humility, Freemasonry encourages self-refinement through symbolic death and rebirth, shedding the ego to uncover a truer self. Freemasonry's moral instructions and rituals, akin to the symbolic journey of Hiram Abiff, reflect a commitment to inner strength, reciprocity, and gratitude for life's truths, fostering a balanced life aligned with wisdom, compassion, and selflessness—hallmarks of a complete and harmonious existence.

The 25th Degree: Knight of the Brazen Serpent, or Sufi Master. This degree explores the nature of truth and its elusiveness. Its symbolism carries profound biblical connections, rooted in the story of Moses and the Israelites during their journey through the wilderness. This degree draws from the parable in the Book of Numbers (21:6-9) when God sends serpents to punish the Israelites for their lack of faith. To save them, Moses creates a serpent of brass at God's command, which heals anyone who looks at it. The bronze

serpent becomes a symbol of salvation through faith and obedience.

In Deuteronomy 8, we learn that the Israelites wandered the wilderness for forty years to develop humility and obedience, learning to rely on the Lord as the source of all blessings. However, as their hearts became hardened and bitter, many perished from snake bites.

The brass serpent, as described in Numbers 21:4-7, represents more than physical healing. It serves as a reminder of salvation through trust in divine will. To simply contemplate the serpent on the rod was enough to bring healing, emphasizing the power of faith and submission to the Divine Plan. The Brazen Serpent urges us: "Never doubt the divine, the plan, or Deity." Trust in the path laid before you, and remain steadfast in faith, even in the face of trials.

I ask that in the month of December, you meditate on how you can work towards gratitude and ego death, embracing each experience as a lesson and letting go of personal desires that cloud true contentment. Reflect on how shedding attachments and cultivating humility can lead to a deeper sense of interconnectedness and compassion. Let this season be a time to honor the



Moses and the Bronze Serpent

simple, often overlooked blessings around you, fostering a spirit of gratitude that aligns with the wisdom of the ages. May this journey bring you closer to inner harmony and a renewed commitment to living authentically, guided by truth and selflessness, and blessed by the Great Creator above.

Aho,

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

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



Carrying the Light Into the New Year Russ Hennings, 32°

The month of December often brings with it the culmination of the year—a time to celebrate, reflect, and prepare for the future. For many, it's a season filled with family, traditions, and the warmth of giving. It's also a time to take stock of the light we carry, both within ourselves and within our Valley, and consider how we'll continue to let it shine in the year ahead.

One of the most powerful aspects of Freemasonry is the ability to carry its teachings beyond the lodge doors. The lessons we learn in the degrees, the bonds we form with one another, and the values we uphold are not confined to our meetings or rituals. They are lessons we can use every day, whether we're spending time with loved ones, engaging in our communities, or reflecting on personal growth. This is especially true during the holiday season, when the focus on love, charity, and hope aligns so beautifully with our Masonic principles.

For our valley, this has been a year of progress, effort, and shared purpose. We've seen brothers step up to take on new challenges, engage in meaningful work, and make contributions that leave a lasting impact. Whether it's our support of the RiteCare Childhood Language Center, the newfound energy that the Knights of St. Andrew bring us, our degree work, or the many small acts of service that often go unnoticed, each action strengthens the

foundation of our Valley. It's worth pausing to recognize those contributions—both yours and those of your brothers—and appreciate what they've built for the betterment of all.

December also offers a chance to focus on the future. As we prepare for the new year, let's not simply aim to maintain the status quo. Instead, we will challenge ourselves to bring even more light into our work and our interactions. This could mean volunteering to assist with a project, being a mentor to a brother, or attending more meetings and degrees to show your support. Growth doesn't always have to be monumental—it's often found in the consistency of small, meaningful steps forward.

For many, this time of year is also about hope. Whether it's in the candles of a menorah, the lights on a Christmas tree, or the shared celebrations of Kwanzaa, light symbolizes renewal and the promise of brighter days ahead. As we reflect on the lessons of our craft, this symbolism is especially profound. We've always been taught that the light is something to be sought, something to be shared, and something to guide our way. Carrying this light into the new year means not only continuing our work as Masons but also striving to embody those values in every facet of our lives.

Amid all this, it's important to acknowledge the importance of fellowship. December gives us opportunities to come together, to enjoy one another's company, and to remember why we do what we do. Whether it's in a stated meeting, an event, or a simple phone call to a brother, these moments of connection remind us that Freemasonry is about more than individual growth—it's about building a shared experience and supporting one another along the way.

As the calendar turns, reflect on what Freemasonry has meant to you this year. Think about the lessons that have stayed with you, the relationships you've deepened, and the ways you've made an impact. And as you look forward, consider how you can continue to be a source of light—within our Valley, your family, and your community.

Wishing you and your families a joyful holiday season and a new year filled with growth, happiness, and purpose.



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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.



Holiday Joy Alejo Velarde, 32° Commander of Kadosh

As the year 2024 draws to a close and the holiday season is upon us, I find myself reflecting on the incredible growth and achievements of the Orange County Scottish Rite over the past year. It has been a remarkable journey, with a significant increase in members and an inspiring momentum that continues to drive us forward in a very positive way. The holidays—Christmas, Chanukah and the values of Freemasonry—remind us of the importance of community, gratitude, and giving back. These values are deeply embedded in everything we do at the Orange County Scottish Rite, and they guide us as we work to make a meaningful impact in the lives of others.

As we conclude the year, I invite everyone to join us for the Children Language Center Christmas Party on December 9, 2024, taking place at Orange Grove Lodge #293. This festive event is an opportunity to meet our dedicated CLC members and learn about their life-changing work in supporting children with language disabilities. Santa Clause himself will be joining us to spread joy and distribute gifts to the children who receive services at the CLC, making it a magical evening for all. Together, let us celebrate the season, the spirit of giving, and the remarkable strides we have made this year. Here's to a holiday season filled with joy, unity, and a renewed commitment to making a difference!

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



Celebrating Brotherhood and Looking Ahead

Barry McKinley, 32° Master of Kadosh

Dear Brothers of the Orange County Scottish Rite,

As we approach the end of another fruitful year, I would like to take a moment to once again congratulate our newest Masters of the Royal Secret. The recent cap and ring ceremony was a proud occasion, and it was heartwarming to see so many brothers in attendance to support and celebrate this important milestone. Your presence made the event all the more special, showcasing the unity and dedication that define our valley. I would also like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who joined us for our Thanksgiving-style dinner. Sharing a meal together, seated family-style, reminded us all of the importance of fellowship and the bonds we share. The warmth and camaraderie of that evening are what make our gatherings truly memorable, and I am thankful for each of you who contributed to that atmosphere.

Looking ahead, we are excited about our upcoming holiday party at the next stated meeting. This gathering will be especially meaningful as we welcome the families of the RiteCare Childhood Language Center and the dedicated staff who work tirelessly to support it. It promises to be a festive evening filled with joy, laughter, and the spirit of the season, and I encourage all of you to attend and help make it a wonderful experience for everyone involved. As we reflect on the past year and the shared memories we've created, let us carry forward the spirit of fraternity, kindness, and community into the new year. Thank you for your continued participation and dedication to the Orange County Scottish Rite.



Christmas Dinner

Honey herb chicken, tenderloin beef with special mashed potatoes and green beans



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.



From the General Secretary Jamie Hopkins, 32° KCCH General Secretary

Seasons Greetings to all Brothers and your families. Our November Stated Meeting was brief and followed by an exceptional, feast with turkey and all for Thanksgiving. This event was attended by 46 members and guests. On Monday December 9th, we will be holding our annual Childhood Language Center Holiday Party. The meeting begins at 6:30 pm followed by dinner and our special event. The children receiving therapy at our CLC will be receiving presents and a likely visit from Santa Claus. This one of our finest events of the year.

2024 has been a year of positive changes for our Valley. First, we moved our meeting location to Orange Grove Lodge which has worked out wonderfully. We have a considerable number of Brothers coming from the South OC area and they find our new location a shorter drive. Also. we closed our physical office in Santa Ana and changed to a virtual office with the Secretary able to work from anywhere. And finally, our meetings are shorter which allows for more time for fellowship at dinner. Attendance at our meetings is up.

As always, if you have any questions about your membership status, don't hesitate to contact the Secretary at the email below. We wish a happy and joyous Holiday to every Brother and his family!

Fraternally, Jamie Hopkins, 32nd KCCH General Secretary gensec@ocscottishrite.org



California Scottish Rite Foundation

The Orange County Valley of the Scottish Rite supports the California Scottish Rite Foundation, which is committed to transforming the lives of children across the state through its vital speech-language and literacy programs. By offering individualized RiteCare Childhood Language Programs, the Foundation empowers children to build essential communication skills, enhancing their self-confidence and independence. These best-in-class services are crafted to meet the unique needs of developing children and their families, providing a pathway to academic success without any financial burden to the families involved.

Dedicated Speech-Language Pathologists are equipped with the resources needed to create positive, lasting change, thanks to the generous support of donors and granting foundations. The Orange County Valley takes pride in knowing our support plays a crucial role in fulfilling the Foundation's mission. Together, we are building a brighter future—one child at a time. www.casrf.org



Celebrating Brotherhood: October Reunion Success and Future Opportunities

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

I want to take a moment to thank our heads of bodies for putting on a great cap and ring ceremony for our new Scottish Rite Brothers. Everyone did a great job and it is always a wonderful moment to welcome our Brethren with a beautiful ceremony that not only reminds them of what they've learned in the reunion, but also includes their family and loved ones so they too can learn about our symbols and get a peek at what the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite is all about!

Which leads me to my second point... what is the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite all about? Well, it's about Unity, and a Brotherhood that reaches beyond our walls of the Southern Jurisdiction. On September 7, 2022, our own Sovereign Grand Commander III. James Cole, 33°, together with III. Peter Samiec, 33°, Sovereign Grand Commander of the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction, along with both III. Corey Hawkins, 33° Sovereign Grand Commander of the United Supreme Council, SJ and Dr. Melvin Bazemore, 33° Sovereign Grand Commander of the United Supreme Council, NJ gathered at the House of The Temple in Washington, D.C. and signed the Statement of Unity. This statement allows for mutual recognition among all Scottish Rite bodies in the United States and has led to events like the one that took place in Washington, D.C. in early November. This Unity Reunion was



the fist in the District and saw a partnership between the Southern Jurisdiction and the United Supreme Council, SJ. The bodies shared responsibility for exemplifying the degrees in their own form. And it was a wonderful event to attend!

Finding myself as a bit of a stranger in a strange land apart from friends from the House of The Temple. It was a joy to meet Brothers from all over the country and from such varied backgrounds. Questions were plentiful about the differences between the Prince Hall experience, I bonded with Brothers over our differing experiences in the York Rite and Scottish Rite alike. Many of our Prince Hall Brethren were very intrigued by my red hat since many were still unfamiliar with the new-to-them distinction of the KCCH honor. I was curious about their own experiences in the way they perform their degrees. In the end, it was two days of mental note-taking and soaking up the experience of the incredible degree work on the part of our Brothers from the United Supreme Council. I left the event invigorated and excited for what can come in the future for all of us, both in our own Valley and as a united Scottish Rite where we can share our knowledge and best practices in our collective degree work, enhancing the experience for all of our members, new and old alike!



Blue Slipper Club - A Weekend of Laughter and Bonding in Solvang

Erin McKinley

The ladies had a great trip to Solvang on the first weekend of November. Five members of the Blue Slippers Club spent the weekend laughing, drinking and getting to know each other better. Can't wait for next year's trip.



Fun and Festive Learning: Fall Celebrations at CLC!

Trisha Thapar, M.S., CCC-SLP, Clinical Supervisor

Fall festivities are well under way here at CLC! We celebrated the week of Halloween with creative costumes and spooky crafts. Supervisors and graduate students based their costumes around a different fun theme each day of the week including characters from Toy Story and Cars. Families were excited to have their children photographed in their costumes surrounded by our clinic's Halloween decorations. Colorful characters the likes of Taylor Swift, Woody, Michael Myers, and Dracula dropped by our clinic for some speech therapy. Graduate student clinicians used Halloween themed activities such as decorating a witch's hat with sparkly stickers to work on vocabulary, prepositions, and taking turns. We are excited to incorporate Thanksgiving activities and crafts into our speech therapy sessions later this month.





Personal Representative of the SGIG Orient of California

III. Ralph C. Shelton II, 33°

As our year draws to a close, we have many thanks to give. Any attempt to enumerate the entire list of those to be commended would necessarily be incomplete, as it really is the result of every Valley member's contribution.

Our membership has grown. Engagement at meetings has quadrupled. We are operating more efficiently, and the atmosphere of the Valley is positive and empowering. Our language center is thriving. Our Knights of St. Andrew are active. We have increased the number of degrees presented at Reunions. Partners of members are participating and more engaged than ever. Our members are becoming better educated in the philosophy, history and fundamental principles of the Rite than ever before. These are just part of the blessings we have enjoyed over the course of the year.

Valley members have also mentioned that the food served at our meetings, reunions and Super Breakfasts is better than ever.

All of these result from the effort of the Valley members, and all are owed a hearty thanks. This has been one of the best years for the Valley in recent memory.

As we move forward, and reviewing our financial status, I note that we have had a somewhat "scattershot" approach to financial stability. The Valley should be funded through member dues, and while our dues go a long way, we have had to resort to appeals for individual member support, such as the "Century Club", to make ends meet. This tells me that the dues are less than they should be. In the coming year, we will consider a long term plan to address this, providing for a gradual increase over time, so do be sure to follow this closely in Valley communications.

In this regard, I am struck by the fact that our dues come out to about \$10 per month, a ver modest sum. A member recently commented to me that this small sum is far less than the gym membership he pays for and doesn't use, and he regarded the Valley dues to be an "insignificant amount". As we spoke, we compared other wholly discretionary expense, such as Starbucks coffee, music streaming and the like, that also add value to one's life, and considered the relative impact of a well grounded Masonic education, as offered by the Scottish Rite. The difference was apparent immediately - the Rite offers significantly more value at a significantly lower cost than any of the other expenses we noted. Factor that in when considering dues.

We also discussed the necessity to be considerate in this regard. Some members have little discretionary room in their budget, and others have more. For those who have a legitimate challenge in meeting the dues obligation, relief is available from several resources, in order that every Valley member can benefit from the rich Valley experience without a burdensome impact.

This conversation has been repeated with many members over the past few months, and the result has always been the same, reaching the conclusion that building a strong financial basis will be an important stone in our Valley's future. Of course, if you have not been a part of these conversations, and would like to have a voice, then it's time that you begin attending our meetings, where you will find enriching programs, enjoyable fellowship, and great meals. I look forward to seeing - and hearing from - you in the near future.

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 General, Orient of California



Jack C. Hennings Jr., 32°
Assistant to the Personal
Representative

Orange County Valley Scottish Rite of Freemasonry

Lodge of Perfection	Chapter Rose Croix	Council of Kadosh	Consistory
Venerable Master	Wise Master	Commander	Master of Kadosh
Hon. James McCallion, 32° KCCH	Russ Hennings, 32°	Alejo Velarde, 32°	Barry McKinley, 32°
Senior Warden	Senior Warden	1st Lieutenant Commander	Prior
Larry Griffin, 32°	Diego Verduzco, 32°	Adam Provence, 32°	Hon. David Solivan, 32° KCCH
Junior Warden	Junior Warden	2nd Lieutenant Commander	Preceptor
James Segerstrom, 32°	Erik Harbour, 32°	Paxton Dickerson, 32°	Ross Hernandez, 32° KSA
		Chancellor Brandon Cook, 32°	Chancellor Jonathon Dilley
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Almoner	Almoner	Almoner	Almoner
David Kussman, 33°	David Kussman, 33°	David Kussman, 33°	David Kussman, 33°
Secretary Hon. Jamie Hopkins, 32° KCCH	Secretary Hon. Jamie Hopkins, 32° KCCH	Recorder Hon. Jamie Hopkins, 32° KCCH	Registrar Hon. Jamie Hopkins, 32° KCCH
Treasurer	Treasurer	Treasurer	Treasurer
Bro. David Gilman, 32°	Bro. David Gilman, 32°	Bro. David Gilman, 32°	Bro. David Gilman, 32°
Prelate Hon. James Cervantes, 32° KCCH	Prelate Hon. James Cervantes, 32° KCCH	Prelate Hon. James Cervantes, 32° KCCH	Prelate Hon. James Cervantes, 32° KCCH
Master of Cermonies	Master of Cermonies	Marshall of Ceremonies	Marshall of Ceremonies
David Lockwood, 32°	David Lockwood, 32°	David Lockwood, 32°	David Lockwood, 32°
Expert	Expert	First Deacon	Expert
Justin DaSilva, 32°	Justin DaSilva, 32°	Justin DaSilva, 32°	Justin DaSilva, 32°
Assistant Expert	Assistant Expert	Second Deacon	Assistant Expert
Keith Jones, 32°	Keith Jones, 32°	Keith Jones, 32°	Keith Jones, 32°
Standard Bearer	Bearer of Beauseant	Bearer of White Standard	Bearer of Black Standard
Captain of the Host	Guardian of the Temple	Lieutenant of the Guard	Captains of the Guard
Tiler	Tiler	Sentinel	Tiler