



GRAND LODGE FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF WASHINGTON

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February 11, 2021

To all Lodges:

Re: Stated Communications

My Brothers:

We have all struggled with the impact of COVID-19 and the Governor's restrictions on in-person meetings. I am as frustrated with this as I am sure you are as well. I have contemplated how best to get Lodges back in business. Regrettably, the resumption of in-person meetings does not seem possible in the near future as the requirements to conduct in-person meetings keep changing. I believe that all Lodges must be treated equally, and therefore, until ALL Lodges are able to meet in-person, in-person Lodge Communications will continue to be restricted.

After consultation with the Grand Lodge elected Officers and members of the Committee on Jurisprudence, I have determined pursuant to the authority granted to me as Grand Master under Sec. 3.01 K Const. of the Washington Masonic Code, that effective April 1, 2021, all Chartered Lodges under the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Washington will be declared open on the First Degree of Masonry in Ample form for their Stated Communications. Simply put, I will declare all Lodges open negating the necessity of performing the opening and closing ritual.

The Matrix of authorized and unauthorized activities continues to apply.

The following procedures will be followed by each Lodge during a virtual Communication:

1. Stated Communications will be held at the date and time specified in the Lodge By-Laws.
2. All Lodges shall hold their Stated Communications on-line over the virtual platform of their choice. It could be Zoom, Go-To-Meeting, Microsoft Teams, or other suitable virtual platform.
3. Prior to the first Stated Communication, all members of the Lodge, as well as the Deputy of the Grand Master for the Lodge's District, must be notified that the Stated Communication will be held over the virtual platform and include all necessary instructions for joining the meeting and how instructions will be communicated for future Stated Communications. **The notice will be issued at least twenty (20) days prior to the first Stated Communication.**
4. The Lodge shall take steps to assure that only Masons are in attendance.
5. In lieu of the Tyler's register, the Worshipful Master shall take steps to assure that the names of all Brothers in attendance are recorded.
6. Any Lodge whose Executive Committee determines that it is not practical or feasible to hold Stated Communications in the manner authorized shall submit a written request for a waiver to the Grand Master. The request must be submitted no later than March 1, 2021 and shall

demonstrate why it is not in the Lodge's best interest to conduct business in the manner allowed.

Activities that are authorized during a virtual Stated Communication:

1. Reading of the minutes of previous meeting for information only;
2. Reading of communications;
3. Reporting on activities approved by the Executive Committee during the time in-person meetings have been prohibited;
4. Payment of bills;
5. Creation of Lodge committees including, but not limited to interview of members who have not paid dues (Sec. 17.15 B.L.) and audit;
6. Waiver of a Brother's dues and/or assessments;
7. Issuing dimits;
8. Education;
9. Granting charitable relief;
10. Consideration and approval of Lodge By-Law and Standing Rule changes;
11. Reading and approval of the minutes; and
12. Other business that is not specifically disallowed by the Washington Masonic Code or this directive.

Elections and Installations:

Lodges may decide to hold elections and install their officers over virtual platforms. Lodges deciding to do so shall notify their membership at least twenty (20) days prior to the Stated Communication at which elections will be held. Procedures for elections and installations will be issued no later than April 1, 2021.

Activities that are prohibited during a virtual Stated Communication:

1. Balloting on petitions for the Degrees;
2. Balloting on petitions for Affiliation or Plural Membership;
3. Conferring of Degrees;
4. Recitation of the Posting Lecture or other portions of the Standard Work as proof of proficiency at a virtual Stated Communication. If a Lodge allows it, a Committee of Brothers may individually meet with the Candidate, following all governmental pandemic restriction in order to test the Candidate's proficiency and the Lodge may accept the Committee's report at the next Stated Communication; and
5. Any other esoteric work.

Prior Directives:

Because I am opening all Chartered Lodges in the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Washington, the following directives are cancelled effective March 31, 2021:

1. June 13, 2020 Letter cancelling in-person Lodge Meetings;
2. June 18, 2020 Letter Clarifying the June 13, 2020 letter;
3. September 16, 2020 Letter concerning Lodge Elections and Installations;
4. September 16, 2020 Letter concerning Nonpayment of Dues;
5. September 16, 2020 Letter concerning Dimits;
6. October 28, 2020 Letter allowing limited in-person Lodge Communications; and
7. November 16, 2020 Letter postponing in-person Lodge Communications.

This directive will remain in effect until June 13, 2021 or until cancelled whichever occurs first.

Further, this directive shall not be considered as precedent for similar activities after we can resume in-person Lodge Communications.

Remember the Past, Visualize the Future,



Chris J. Coffman
Grand Master
Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Washington



cc: Clinton M. Brown, Jr., Grand Secretary