



BUILDING MASONRY

COUNCIL OAK LODGE NO.745 FEBRUARY 2026

19780 BRICK ROAD, SOUTH BEND, INDIANA 46619 PH.574.272.4073

... AND GIVE THEM GOOD AND WHOLESOME INSTRUCTION...

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP AVAILABLE

BROTHERS, THE RASLTON-TAYLOR \$500.00 SCHOLARSHIP FROM COUNCIL OAK LODGE 745 IS AVAILABLE TO ANY MALE OR FEMALE COLLEGE BOUND STUDENT. APPLICANTS DO NOT HAVE TO BE RELATIVES OF MASONIC MEMBERS. BROTHERS IF YOU KNOW OF ANY YOUNG MAN OR LADY IN NEED OF A SCHOLARSHIP PLEASE CONTACT WB TOM DOLLY TDOLLY2@YAHOO.COM FOR AN APPLICATION. APPLICATION DEADLINE IS APRIL 1ST.

BROTHERS SEEKING TO MAKE TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TO THE RALSTON-TAYLOR SCHOLARSHIP FUND MAY DO SO BY CONTACTING WB TOM DOLLY TDOLLY2@YAHOO.COM PLEASE GET YOUR DONATION IN BY 12-31-25. THE RALSTON-TAYLOR SCHOLARSHIP IS A 501-C-3 CHARITY. DONATIONS WILL HELP INCREASE SCHOLARSHIP AMOUNTS.

CALENDAR February 2026

February 2nd - STATED MEETING AND DINNER. DINNER AT 6:30 PM. LODGE OPENS AT 7:30 PM. SPECIAL ELECTION!

3rd - Elkhart York Rite. Stated Meeting. 7:00 PM. At Kane Lodge Hall, Elkhart.

5th - Mishawaka No. 83, R.A.M. Stated Meeting. Dinner at 6:00 PM. Chapter convenes at 7:00 PM. At the Mishawaka No. 130 Lodge Hall.

9th - FC Degree Practice. At the Lodge Hall. 6:30 PM

11th - Plymouth Chapter, RAM. Dinner at 6:45 PM. Chapter convenes at 7:30 PM. At Plymouth.

12th - Valley of South Bend, AASR. 7:00 PM. At the Scottish Rite Cathedral in South Bend.

16th - Executive Committee Meeting. 6:30PM. At the Lodge Hall.

17th - Zanzibar Grotto. 6:30 PM.

23th - Fellowship at Wings Etc. 6:30 PM

COUNCIL OAK LODGE OFFICERS - 2026

WORSHIPFUL MASTER: Charles Yost; SENIOR WARDEN: Thomas Dolly, PM; JUNIOR WARDEN: Colten Eads; TREASURER: James Gillen, PM; SECRETARY: Anthony Meller, PM, ameller31@yahoo.com; SENIOR DEACON: Austin Raab; JUNIOR DEACON: Kyle Dolby, PM; SENIOR STEWARD: Robert Stevens; JUNIOR STEWARD: James Stevens; CHAPLAIN: Robert Matisits, PM; TYLER: Rodney Strozewski, PM; TYLER EMERITUS: David Vaughn; TRUSTEES: Michael Koziel, PM; Tim Genge, PM; Rodney Strozewski, PM; PROPERTY MANAGER: Rodney Strozewski, PM; TRESTLE BOARD EDITOR: Thomas Dolly, PM, 574.514-9499, tdolly2@yahoo.com

!! STATED MEETING AND DINNER !!

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2ND

DINNER AT 6:30 PM. LODGE OPENS AT 7:30 PM.
GOOD FOOD! ... GOOD EDUCATION! ... OUTSTANDING FELLOWSHIP!!

THE EVERYDAY MASON

By Monty Thurman, PM, Nineveh 317, Senior Steward Bartimaeus UD

We’ve all heard the phrase---“Making Good Men Better.” It’s the well-worn motto of our fraternity, printed on brochures, websites, and programs. But if you’re like me, you’ve paused at some point and asked; How exactly does that happen? Freemasonry offers structure, symbolism, and sublime teachings. But those alone don’t make a man better. They’re tools, not transformations. They require daily use---not occasional remembrance. In our ritual, we charge the candidate to build a “moral and Masonic edifice.” That word edifice suggests something tall, lasting, and intentional. And yet, while we hand each Brother a set of tools and a volume of sacred law, we rarely say what materials he might use in building such a life.

That silence is what inspired this reflection. Because for to many Masons, the light they once sought now flickers in the background of a busy life. Not from lack of commitment---but from lack of clarity.

So, here’s a thought: What if we approached the Craft not as a set of obligations, but as a way of life? What if we had a few simple habits---daily actions---that helped us live Masonry outside the Lodge Room?

Below are five foundational stones---or “habit”---that any Brother can begin laying today. They’re not revolutionary, they’re from our first degree. They’re not complicated. But practiced with consistency, they can transform the Craft from something we attend into something we become.

1. Begin and End Your Day With Prayer

The first words spoken to a candidate are: “My friend, no man should ever enter upon any great or important undertaking without first invoking the blessing of deity.” If that holds true for ritual, it certainly holds true for life. So begin the day with prayer. It can be simple: a word of thanks, a request for guidance. At the end of the day, close with reflection and gratitude. Freemasonry doesn’t tell us who to pray to---but it does ask that we pray. That alone makes it worth the habit.

2. Perform One Small Act of Kindness

Our degrees teach that “Charity extends beyond the grave.” But charity isn’t always financial. It can be as small as a kind word, a warm smile, a gesture of patience. It’s a choice we make ---to let Light shine in the moment. These acts ripple outward more than we know. But just as important, they ripple inward. They chip away the rough ashlar. They soften the edges and build empathy. And they slowly form the character of a Mason.

3. Check In With a Brother

Every day reach out to one brother. Send a text. Make a call. Leave a voicemail. Just a simple message that says, “Thinking of you.” It may seem small. But I’ve seen the impact of those words land at just the right time---more than once. This is how we build the cement of Brotherhood. Not with ceremony, but with care.

4. Learn Something New Every Day

Our First Degree says, “At your leisure hours, you may improve in Masonic knowledge.” But that learning doesn’t have to be limited to the craft. So, read a book. Study history. Explore a new topic. Learn a skill. Whatever it is, learning shapes us into better builders, better servants, and better leaders. It sharpens our working tools---not just in the Lodge, but in life.

5. Reflect On Your Day

Of all the habits, this one may be the most transformative. Before the day ends, take inventory. What did you build today? What went well? What needs work? Reflection is how we level the day’s stones. It’s not about guilt. It’s about awareness. The goal isn’t to be perfect---it’s to be honest. Growth doesn’t require flawlessness, just faithfulness.

Putting It All Together

Each of these five habits is powerful on its own. But practiced together, they offer a path---a rhythm---for living as a Mason, every day. They help fulfill three great duties we are charged to observe: to God, our neighbor, and ourselves. So to start simple. Pick one. Practice it. Let it become part of your life. Then add another. And another. Until these daily actions become as natural as donning your apron. This isn’t a challenge about being flawless. It’s about being intentional. The everyday Mason isn’t perfect. He’s present. He’s building. He’s reflecting. He’s growing. He hasn’t abandoned the work---and neither should we. Because in the end, it won’t be the meetings or the motions we remember. It will be the moments we prayed to our creator, the Brothers we reached out to, the choices we made when no one else was watching. That’s where Masonry lives. Every day. *Taken from the INDIANA FREEMASON Magazine Fall Edition*

FROM THE BROTHERHOOD

Broken Column: None.

Bro. Al Stohler is recovering from ankle surgery.

WB Tom Dolly is recovering from hip surgery

Pray for the **Vaughn Brothers** who are experiencing various illnesses and surgeries.

WM Charles Yost’s family is grieving the loss of the family pet.

Brother Robert Stevens Daughter is having shoulder surgery and Mother has cancer

Please be in Prayer for our Country, our Service Men and Women and our 1st Responders!

February Birthdays: 4th Joshua Kiefer, 6th Camile R. Bourlier, 7th Stanley Wolff, 9th Christopher W. Fox, 11th Roger Smith, 18th Christian M. Rackley, 22nd George C. Stump, 22nd Charles W. Yost
Give these Brothers a call and wish them a Happy Birthday or Best Wishes!!

Anniversaries: Howard J. Bellinger 66, George C. Stump 54, Frederick J. Vaughn 53, David P. Sexton 53, William Fox Jr. 43, James A. Arrvia III 28, Jeff VanMele 23, William E. Ralstin 23, Keenan B. Beckwith 16, Carl Sabinas 16, Vincent L. Bumbaca 88.