



George Washington's Lodge
Fredericksburg
Lodge No. 4

April 2026

Trestle Board

W.:M.: Seth Roderick
Magnanimity - Fidelity - Honor

First Recorded Meeting - September 1, 1752

Scottish Charter - July 21, 1758

Virginia Charter - January 30, 1787

Ill. Bro. George Washington

Initiated November 4, 1752

Passed March 3, 1753

Raised August 4, 1753

803 Princess Anne Street
Fredericksburg, Virginia 22401

April 2026 Events

			1 Called Communication: FC Degree 7:00 PM	2	3	4 Pancake Breakfast 8 - 10 AM
5	6	7	8 Practice & Cleanup Night 7:00 PM	9 Intro to the "Lodge at Fredericksburgh" Lecture 7:00 PM	10 Dinner 6:30 PM Stated Communication 7:30 PM	11 Elizabeth Spooner Cenotaph Ceremony @ Cemetery 10 AM
12	13 Fraternal Visit to Hay Market Lodge No. 313 6:00 PM	14	15 Called Communication: EA Degree 7:00 PM	16	17	18 Porch Cleanup 9 AM - 12 PM
19	20	21 Fraternal Visit to Independent Orange Lodge No. 138 6:30 PM	22 Practice or Called Communication 7:00 PM	23 Col. Fielding Lewis Lecture 7:00 PM	24	25
26	27	28 District 8 Ritual School 7:00 PM	29 Practice or Called Communication 7:00 PM	30		

Masonic Anniversaries

Bro. Thomas M. Schuler, Jr.	71 yrs.	Bro. George E. Brookman	18
M.W. George H. Chapin	57	Bro. William Morris, Jr.	16
Bro. Lester E. Wood	51	Bro. Scot A. Cooler	15
Bro. Joseph L. Ilk	48	Bro. Ross D. Upchurch	15
Bro. George R. Walker	43	Bro. Antonio Cox-Gutierrez	12
R.W. Richard D. Dey, Sr.	36	Bro. Robert L. Waslov	8
Wor. Steven M. Gallahan	35	Bro. Thomas W. Baker	3
Wor. Sheridan G. Harrod	29	Bro. William M. Bowser	3
Bro. Ralph N. Terry	28	Bro. Robert G. McGee	3
Bro. Peyton F. Carter III	25	Bro. Barry L. Surles	3
Bro. Marcus E. Simes, Jr.	24	Bro. James A. Wachter	3
M.W. Ali Bongo-Ondimba	22	Bro. David Benjamin Smith	2

Master's Message

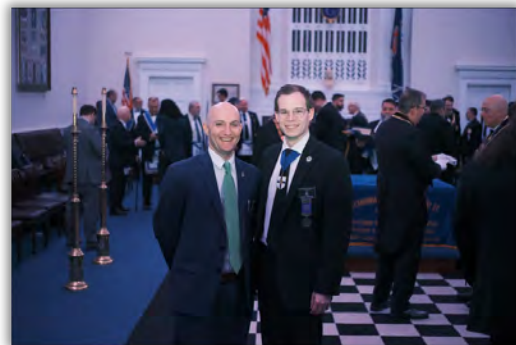
*State of the Lodge,
March 2026*

Seth Roderick, WM

March has been a month of travel, labor, and advancement. In its several parts, it has shown Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4 active in visitation, attentive to degree work, and mindful of its duty to preserve what has been entrusted to us.

Early in the month, the Lodge recorded Fraternal Visits to Kilwinning Cross and Alexandria. On Monday, March 9, Brethren of Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4 traveled to Bowling Green for the Stated Communication of Kilwinning Crosse Lodge No. 2-237, held in connection with the Official Visit of the District Deputy Grand Master. Such visits are always of value. They strengthen the old ties between Lodges, remind us that Masonry is larger than our own walls, and give fresh occasion for that fellowship which is best maintained by practice. Thank you to the Worshipful Master, Officers and Brethren for their hospitality, fine meal and great fraternity.

The following week afforded another honor of a more solemn and memorable kind. On Thursday, March 12, Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4 joined in the observances at Mount Vernon and Alexandria held in honor of our Brother George Washington. The wreath laying at his tomb, shared by the Grand Lodges of the original Thirteen Colonies, was a fitting tribute to one whose name will always command both Masonic affection and public reverence. The day continued in fellowship, with tours and hospitality, and concluded with a Fraternal Visit at the Grand Master's Official Visit to the Stated Communication of Alexandria-Washington Lodge No. 22. We extend our appreciation to the Worshipful Master, Officers and Brethren there for their courtesies and warm welcome. It was a huge undertaking for AW22 to host this day and they did it in exceptional form. Lessons learned!



credit: Bro. Joshua Longoria

Within the Lodge itself, March also marked continued progress in the serious business of forming Masons. On Wednesday, March 18, the Lodge held a Called Communication for the conferral of the Entered Apprentice Degree. On Wednesday, March 25, we assembled again for a Called Communication and the conferral of the Fellowcraft Degree. These evenings deserve notice not only for the degrees themselves, but for the preparation, attention, and faithfulness required of all who take part in them. Such work reflects credit upon the degree teams, the coaches, and the candidates alike.

A considerable portion of the month was likewise given to the necessary work of restoring order to our archives. In concert with the Secretary of the Lodge, a major sorting day was undertaken, during which some eight hours were spent reviewing, sorting, and organizing materials. Additional sorting days have followed. Taken together, the work performed through February and into March represents a substantial investment of time and care. This labor is quiet in its nature, but important in its consequence. A Lodge such as ours is the steward of more than its present business. It is also the keeper of its memory, its records, and the inheritance it must hand forward in better order than it received them.

These several efforts, though different in kind, all belong to the same duty. We have traveled in friendship, honored the memory of Brother Washington, advanced candidates in the degrees, and applied ourselves to the preservation of our Lodge history. I am grateful to the Brethren who have given their time and strength to these labors, and I trust that the work of March will bear good fruit in the months ahead.

Sincerely and Fraternaly,
Seth Roderick, WM





Secretary's Corner

My Brethren,

Just a gentle reminder to pay your dues if you haven't already done so and a hearty thanks if you have. Dues are due the first of the year and the Lodge depends upon your continued financial support to keep operating. We have a lot going on, as you can see from the upcoming events listed on our calendar.

With the winter weather having hopefully finally broken, a lot of us will be traveling. The right to travel and visit other Lodges is one of the great privileges of being a Master Mason. What makes it particularly enjoyable is visiting other jurisdictions and seeing how they do the work a little bit differently, but with the same purpose and dedication. A few tips to make your visit more enjoyable: First, it is recommended that you reach out to the Lodge you plan to visit ahead of time and let them know you're coming. You will want to know logistics like—*Do they have dinner beforehand? Maybe afterwards? Do they have a preferred (or in some cases, required) dress code?* Do they need any additional documentation besides a current dues card? A current dues card is important because it shows that you were in good standing at least on the date you received it. Good standing is something that can cause some confusion. Good standing is defined in Methodical Digest Section 2.138. A Brother is in good standing if he has no Masonic charges pending against him and has no unsatisfied citations for nonpayment of dues. A citation is sent by certified letter after the Grand Lodge has been notified and the Lodge has taken action to cite the Brother for nonpayment. Therefore, a Brother owing dues is still in good standing until cited for nonpayment. Both preferment of charges and citation for nonpayment are several steps into well-defined formal processes that can endanger your membership. It is for this reason that Virginia makes use of the Tiler's Oath—basically putting you on your honor as a Master Mason that you are in good standing—that you have been regularly made a Mason in a recognized Lodge, that you are not currently suspended or expelled, and know of no reason why you should be.

You should also, particularly if you travel outside the Commonwealth, make sure the Lodge you plan to visit is recognized by the Grand Lodge of Virginia. If there's any question we can assist you in that. The old *Book of Lodges* that was published has been replaced by *The Acacia Book* by the developers of the Amity app (itself a useful tool for the traveling Mason) specifically for the Grand Lodge of Virginia. We have a copy and can look up the Lodge you wish to visit. You have a right to examine the Charter of any Lodge you visit, just as they have the right—and even the duty—to examine you. The whole subject of clandestine and irregular Lodges and Grand Lodge recognition is a tricky one...which we may take up another month. And yes, there are such irregular and clandestine Lodges in Virginia and neighboring areas.

The use of dues cards to prove membership is largely an American custom. Other jurisdictions may ask for letters of good standing or other types of documents. Virginia uses what is called a travel certificate, which can be obtained from the Grand Lodge and issued under the Lodge's seal. They should be ordered well in advance. We're here to assist you with that. If you're planning to travel overseas and want to visit a Lodge, we can reach out to the Grand Lodge of Virginia on your behalf. The Grand Lodge can contact its fellow Grand Lodge, verify the Lodge's regularity, and let you know of any documentation they need in addition to your dues card.

If you're not yet a Master Mason and thus don't yet have a dues card, you can still travel to a Lodge which is open on a Degree you've received. If you're not already known to someone there, you should travel with a Master Mason, such as your Coach, who can vouch for you. Lastly, if you haven't been in Lodge for a while, you will want to make sure you're proficient on the various modes of recognition that go with each Degree. By following these tips and planning ahead, your examination will go smoother and your visit more enjoyable.

Christopher S. Tripp, PM
Secretary

Fredericksburg's Revolutionary War
Heroes Lecture Series
Intro to the "Lodge at Fredericksburgh"



Bro. Ethan Burgess
Assistant Secretary, Lodge No. 4
7:00 PM Thursday, April 9
Fredericksburg Masonic Lodge No. 4 | FREE



FREDERICKSBURG
VA250

HISTORIC
Fredericksburg
FOUNDATION, INC.

Fredericksburg's Revolutionary War
Heroes Lecture Series
Col. Fielding Lewis



Barbra Anderson, Board Member
Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, Inc.
7:00 PM Thursday, April 23
Fredericksburg Masonic Lodge No. 4 | FREE



FREDERICKSBURG
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Fredericksburg
FOUNDATION, INC.

[Learn More About the Series](#)

Cenotaph Placement Ceremony



Elizabeth Spooner

— — — — —
circa 1776 - 25 February 1803
— — — — —

Saturday, April 11, 2026

10:00 AM

Fredericksburg Masonic Cemetery

Please join us for the official ceremony
commemorating the placement of
Elizabeth's tombstone.

Who is Elizabeth Spooner?

Elizabeth Spooner was the daughter of Lt. Col. Gustavus Brown Wallace (1751-1802), the wife of merchant and Councilman George W. B. Spooner (1763-1849), and the mother of seven children. Much of Elizabeth's life remains unknown and was largely forgotten until her tombstone was discovered in the 1980s. Broken and abandoned, the tombstone was recovered and donated to the museum by Mr. and Mrs. John H. Prasse.

For many years, under the care of the Fredericksburg Area Museum. Many people worked tirelessly to locate her resting place and learn more about her life. Although her original burial site was never found, through collaborative efforts among the Fredericksburg Area Museum, Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4, and the community, she is now being given a final resting place alongside her father, Lt. Col. Wallace, and near her son, Henry A. A. Spooner.



Yorktown Williamsburg *Blanford Virginia*
Saint James *Norfolk Botetourt*
Fredericksburg



Reunion of the Founding Lodges

Saturday, May 16, 2026

\$55 Tickets, Guests Welcome – 100 Seats Available

March 1 – Registration Opens to Reunion Lodges

April 10 – Registration Opens to Other Lodges

2:00 PM – Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4 Tours

4:00 PM – Fredericksburg Area Museum Tour (Group 1)

4:45 PM – Fredericksburg Area Museum Tour (Group 2)

6:00 PM – Social Hour Begins at Ristorante Renato

7:00 PM – Chicken Parmesan Dinner

7:45 PM – Festive Board, Toasts & Speakers

Hosted by Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4, A.F. & A.M.

Purchase Tickets at
MasonicLodge4.org/Store

Learn More & Get Tickets

Guardians of Memory: Brother David Henderson

Preserving the Legacy of the
Fredericksburg Masonic Cemetery

by Mike Dove, PM

David Henderson (1754-1838) Keeper of the Lodge, Builder of the town

Before his name was fixed upon a corner of the town, before books from London and Philadelphia filled his shelves, before his hand signed the papers that helped shape Fredericksburg's civic life, David Henderson stood in service of something larger than himself.

On the first day of April in 1777, a Scottish-born merchant entered the Virginia State Navy ship *Dragon* under Captain and Masonic bro Eleazer Callender. There, amid the uncertain waters of a young republic, he served first as steward and clerk, and later as a midshipman, a rank by which he was later officially recorded, his duties growing as the war itself demanded more of those who would see it through. He would face the hazards of privateers and patrol the Chesapeake in defense of a cause still unproven.

His service, later recorded as extending for approximately two years from 1777, placed him firmly within the naval efforts of the young Commonwealth of Virginia.



From Matthew Bussell and the American Revolution: Sailor and Soldier by E. Wayne Bussell.

The vessel itself was no distant abstraction, but part of the Fredericksburg world, commissioned for Virginia service and associated with figures such as Fielding Lewis and Captain Eleazer Callender, whose names would remain familiar in the civic and Masonic life of the town. And when that war ended, he did not return to Scotland. He followed its current inland.

From Williamsburg to Fredericksburg

Long before the Revolution, Henderson had come to Virginia from Kirkcaldy, Fife, entering the world of Scottish merchants in Williamsburg, the colony's capital and a place where commerce, politics, and ideas met.

Williamsburg in those years was not only a seat of government. It was a place where men were formed. Merchants gathered there not merely to trade, but to establish credit, reputation, and trust.

Scottish factors like Henderson were part of a larger Atlantic network, carrying goods, correspondence, and expectations between Britain and Virginia. A young man placed within that system learned more than commerce. He learned accountability.

It was there, just before the storm of independence broke, that Henderson was admitted into the fraternity of Freemasons.

It was a quiet beginning. But it would shape the rest of his life.

For Masonry in that time was not a retreat from the world. It was a way of moving within it. It was a language of trust, of reputation, and of responsibility. Henderson would carry that language with him into war, into business, and into the building of a town.

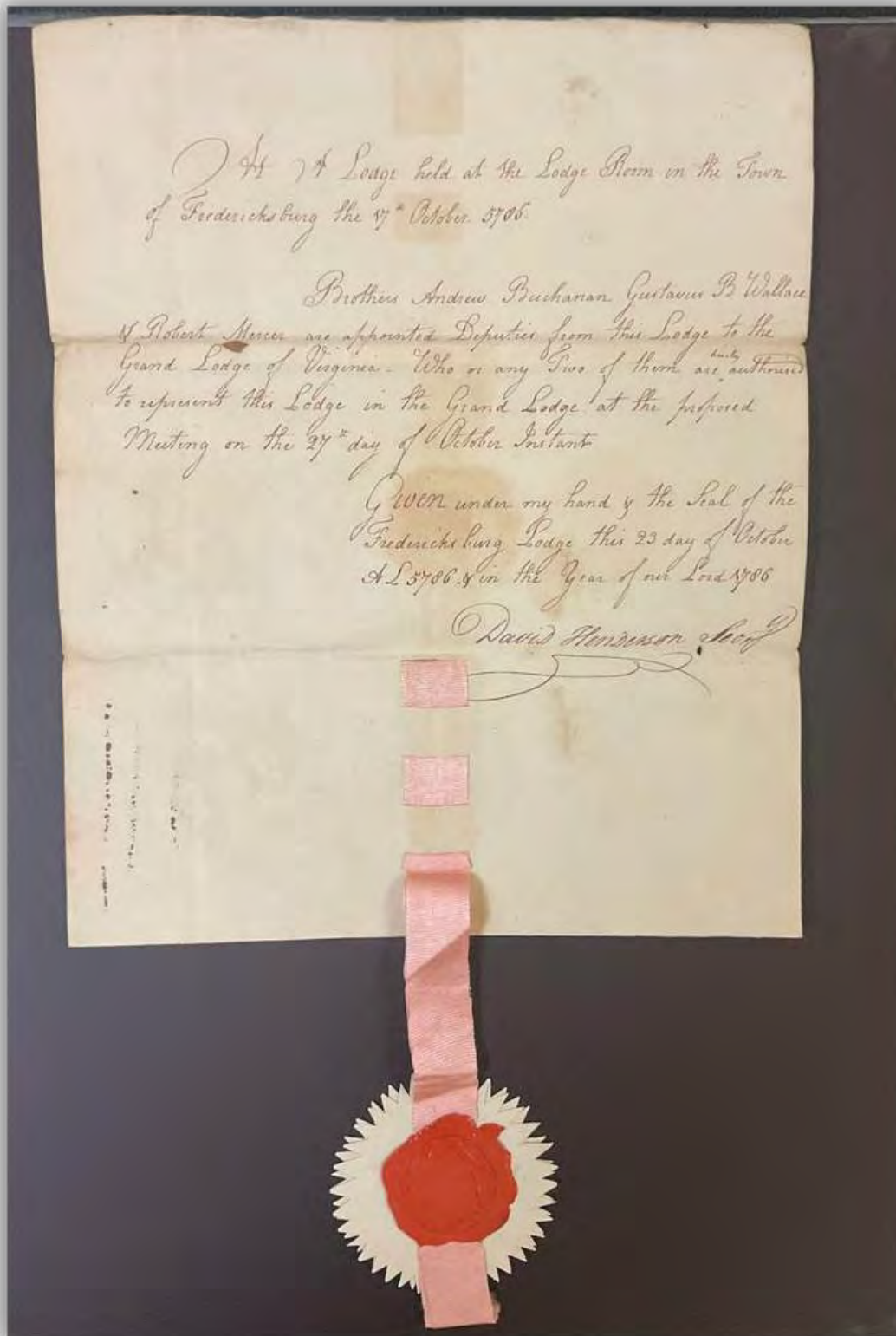
The Lodge and the Ledger

By 1785, only a few years after the close of the Revolution, Henderson was no longer simply a former sailor or an ambitious merchant.

He was Secretary of Fredericksburg Lodge.

We know this not from tradition, but from the Lodge's own hand. Surviving documents bearing his name certify the actions of the Lodge as it sent deputies to the Grand Lodge of Virginia.

In those papers, alongside men such as Gustavus Brown Wallace, Robert Mercer, and Eleazer Callender, Henderson appears not as an observer, but as a steward of the Lodge's memory.



Courtesy of Grand Lodge of Virginia Library, with gratitude to Mrs. Judd.

To serve as Secretary in an eighteenth-century lodge was no small office. He was the keeper of minutes, the recorder of votes, the witness to decisions that bound men to one another. His hand fixed in writing what might otherwise be lost: names, actions, agreements, and obligations. In a time before easy duplication or preservation, the Lodge's memory quite literally depended on the steadiness of one man's pen.

That Henderson held this office tells us something essential about how he was regarded. He was trusted, not only with business, but with continuity.

Henderson's Corner

From that same foundation, Henderson's life in Fredericksburg took form. He established himself as a merchant and bookseller, eventually occupying the prominent building at the corner of Caroline and Amelia Streets, the former apothecary of Hugh Mercer. Over time, the place became known simply as "Henderson's Corner."

But what he sold there tells us more than where he stood.

His shelves held sermons, philosophy, literature, and moral instruction, books arriving from Europe and from the presses of Philadelphia. This was not commerce alone. It was the movement of ideas.

Advertisements from the period reveal a wide assortment, from sermons and devotional works to classical texts, practical manuals, and even military and political writings. These were not luxuries alone.

They were tools.

In a town still defining itself after the Revolution, books served as quiet architects, shaping how people thought about duty, faith, governance, and one another. Henderson stood at that point of exchange, where printed words became lived influence. It is a subtle legacy. But a powerful one.

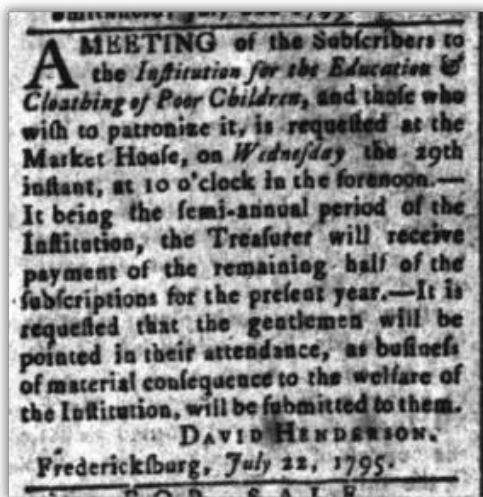
The Charity School

In the mid-1790s, Henderson's role expanded beyond trade. He appears in the public notices of Fredericksburg as a central figure in the establishment of a Charity School for poor children, serving in a leading administrative role, acting as Treasurer of the Society, receiving subscriptions, calling meetings, and helping organize the effort.

The language of the school's founding notices is revealing. It speaks not only of poverty, but of prevention, of rescuing children from "infamy, poverty, and misery," as the founders themselves expressed it, through education.

Post-war career and community involvement

In Fredericksburg, William T. Dix reinvented himself as a businessman and civic-minded citizen. In the 1870s-1890s he worked as a traveling salesman and later as a bookkeeper for local enterprises. These occupations were typical for educated Southern men rebuilding livelihoods after the war and placed Dix in daily contact with merchants, farmers, and professional families throughout the region. His reliability and reputation as a veteran aided him in earning trust in these roles.



Virginia Herald and Fredericksburg Advertiser Volume 8 July 1795

This was not charity in the modern sense of relief alone. It was an attempt to shape the future character of the town itself.

Meetings of the subscribers were held in familiar places such as Mr. Benson's tavern, where citizens gathered to organize and sustain the effort. The institution was not informal.

Subscriptions were organized, payments scheduled, and contributors expected to take an active interest in its welfare.

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That men like Henderson took part in such an effort reflects a shared belief: that the strength of a community lay not merely in its wealth or defenses, but in the formation of its people. And he did not labor alone.

Among those associated with the school were men whose names now form a recognizable pattern: Benjamin Day, merchant, civic leader, and Mason; Dr. George French, physician, eight-term mayor, and others drawn from the same circle of Fredericksburg's leading citizens.

This was no formal Lodge institution. But it did not stand apart from the Lodge either.

Rather, it emerged from the same civic fraternity of men, merchants, physicians, officeholders, and Masons, who believed that a town was not merely to be inhabited, but to be improved.

That improvement began, as they understood it, with education.



A Shared World

In Fredericksburg at the close of the eighteenth century, the boundaries between institutions were not rigid.

The same men might be found in the Lodge room, in the council chamber, in the vestry, or at a public meeting for the relief of the poor.

David Henderson moved through all of these spaces.

So did Benjamin Day.

So did Dr. George French, who in 1806 was appointed to oversee provision for the town's poor, and who now rests beneath the Square and Compasses in the Masonic Cemetery.

Connections between these men appear in small but telling ways. They witnessed one another's legal transactions. They served in overlapping offices. They appear together in records not because they sought to be remembered as a group, but because they were already working together as one.

In a town of modest size, reputation moved quickly, and so did responsibility.

To be known was to be called upon.

And these men were called upon often.

The Final Resting Place

In the end, Henderson came to rest among the very men with whom he had labored, in the old Masonic Burying Ground of Fredericksburg.

The ground was not arranged by accident. It reflects, in quiet order, the relationships of the living world carried into death. Families, colleagues, and associates rest within sight of one another, their proximity suggesting the same ties that once governed their daily lives.

Here lie merchants beside physicians, officers beside craftsmen, men of war beside men of peace. And among them, David Henderson.

Not alone, but as part of a community that chose, in life and in death, to remain connected.

The pattern of his labors

David Henderson did not leave behind a single monument that defines him. Instead, he left something more enduring:

a Lodge whose early records bear his name,
a corner that carried his identity,
a school that reflected his sense of duty,
and a place of rest among his brethren.

He was not merely present in Fredericksburg's history. He helped give it form.

What remains of David Henderson's life is not found in a single office or achievement, but in the pattern of his labors. He served where he was needed. He recorded what mattered. He helped build not only his own livelihood, but the institutions that sustained others.

A reflection by Wor. Dove;

For those of us who labor in the Craft today, his example offers a quiet reminder. Freemasonry is not only preserved in ritual, nor confined to the walls of the Lodge. It lives in the way a man conducts his duties, supports his community, and lends his time and talents to something greater than himself.

Mr. Henderson did not seek distinction. He sought usefulness. And in that, he left us something enduring to follow.

And in doing so, he became, whether he would have called himself so or not, a guardian of its memory. Thank you for your service my Brother!

This concludes the 14th installment of our Guardians of Memory series.

We hope you have found this journey through history both enriching and inspiring. In the enduring pursuit of further light, we warmly encourage all who are so inclined to explore history's timeless lessons and its profound influence on our shared legacy.

Sources

- Revolutionary War Pension File of David Henderson (S.5506), including pension declaration and service summary, Virginia State Navy, Dragon.
- Fold3, Revolutionary War pension and service-related records for David Henderson, including pension summary and certification material noting service aboard the Dragon under Captain Eleazer Callender.
- Library of Virginia, Index of Virginia Printing, entry for David Henderson, bookseller and merchant of Fredericksburg.
- Grand Lodge of Virginia Library, with gratitude to Mrs. Judd, for providing manuscript images of Fredericksburg Lodge documents dated 8 October 1785 and 23 October 1786, signed by David Henderson as Secretary.
- Virginia Herald and Fredericksburg Advertiser (1794–1795), including notices relating to David Henderson's bookselling business and the Charity School for poor children.
- Dora Chinn Jett, *Minor Sketches of Major Folk and Where They Sleep: In the Old Masonic Burying Ground, Fredericksburg, Virginia*.
- S. J. Quinn, Jr., *Fredericksburg, Virginia, 1608–1908: The Story of an Old Town*.
- Library of Virginia cemetery and biographical references, including WPA-era burial and local historical material.
- Local cemetery documentation and commemorative evidence from the Masonic Cemetery of Fredericksburg, including grave markers and family burial tradition.
- Supplementary local and Masonic historical references, including research on Williamsburg Lodge and early Virginia Freemasonry.

The Reflection Chamber: April Showers & May Flowers

by Justin Garrett, Chaplain

My dear friends and Brothers, happy April! While the weather has warmed up, the rains come and go, the sun shines brighter than it has all year, and flowers bloom, I must admit that April is sadly a time of loss for me.

I lost my dear younger brother, Kevin, in April of 2024 to a fentanyl overdose. He had been strong in his resolve against it for a whole year. He made strides and progress that most people often don't make when they fall into those traps of life. I, myself, have tried to kick nicotine out of my life several times, and each time, within weeks, I'm right back to my habits. How he managed to fight against them for so long is beyond me. Knowing him, he dipped his hand in the cookie jar one last time, and the last time it indeed was. Funny how easy it is to judge someone's ability to resist a temptation to something which we, ourselves, don't have, and yet might stumble upon a temptation seen as a lesser evil.



Now, my dear girlfriend, Cheryl, is moving away to Mississippi. She attended his funeral and gave some profoundly encouraging words, the likes of which resonated with me and let me know that this was all meant to happen exactly as it did.

My dear friends and Brothers, suffering in life is inevitable. We will all undergo pain, peril, danger, heartache, and uncertainty. The rains fall on both the good and bad alike. Siddhartha Gautama Buddha himself said in his first noble truth that all life is suffering. None of us are immune to it. As much as it hurts and tears at the soul, Brother Albert Pike offered a word of encouragement in his tome, *Morals and Dogma*: That, if God were the weaver of the tapestry that is your life, one day you might reflect back and see that the blacks, whites, and grays of that tapestry were necessary in order to create the ultimate mosaic and beautiful story of you.

I reflect back on who I was when I returned to the lodge in 2022. I had experienced a great deal of heartache with previous positions in law enforcement and was working as a contracted security officer in the DC and Northern Virginia area. In six weeks, I read through all the degrees of the Scottish Rite from cover to cover of *Esoterika*, *Morals and Dogma*, and the *Ritual Monitor and Guide*. I was determined to come back and be a force for good within my lodge and community. In April of 2023, I was exalted to the most sublime degree of Royal Arch. In 2024, I became Chaplain, and that April, my brother gave his final nod to this mortal shell and passed on to something greater. That October, I kindled a connection with Cheryl. By that December, I quit my job.

I recently went on a walk with her during these warmer spring days and reflected on how far I've come without even realizing it. My hair isn't the only thing that has grown since I left my old life behind. I've grown as a person, too. I've grown as a mentor, a friend, a Brother. What we do right now prepares us for what's to come. If not for my moral injury in law enforcement, I wouldn't have truly understood what Brother Pike was saying. If I didn't understand Pike, I wouldn't have returned to the lodge the way that I did. If I hadn't returned the way that I did, I would never have become Chaplain. If I hadn't become Chaplain, I wouldn't have had the confidence in myself to stand up for my brother in those final moments before we interred his remains. If I hadn't had that strength, I wouldn't have been as equipped to help others to the same depth I do now. Look at me now, brethren. I've traded in the sword which cuts the flesh for the sword which empowers the spirit. Cheryl watched me grow that whole time and supported me in that endeavor in a multitude of ways. She saw my doubts, my fears, my tears, my sadness, my smile, my highs and lows.



During that same walk, I pulled up a video on YouTube from Jocko Willink, who was a Navy SEAL, and now runs a podcast. We watched his famous video, "Good," and laughed at the jovial comments left on the video. To boil it down, he says that whether a good or bad thing happens, it's always "good." Didn't get that promotion, good! More fuel for your motivation machine. Flat tire on the road, good! You get to remember how to change a tire. In my case, younger brother died, good! He's in a better place and watches over you. Girlfriend moved halfway across the country, good.....wait...hold on!

All this to say, every step of my journey has prepared me for what was to come and who I was going to be next. In a year, I hung up my belt, grew a handlebar mustache, began to live more intentionally and honestly with people, loved deeper than I ever have, taught brethren along the way, and grew immensely in my own right. What greatness have I been prepared for yet, I wonder.

This isn't just an article about how much I love myself, even if it sounds that way. YOU, too, are going through changes, growing in ways that perhaps aren't presently apparent, being prepared for something yet to come, and becoming a greater person. To quote Brother Pike again, people change slowly and by imperceptible degrees. You don't just teleport to the top of the mountain. You don't just magically swallow the elephant whole. It's those tiny steps, those tiny bites, which create the feat of great endeavor. It's more a game of endurance than immediate effort. I encourage you all to reflect! Reflect on those past few weeks, months, years. Who were you then, and who are you now? To go back on last month's edition of the Reflection Chamber, in which I spoke of Noah's Ark, just because you aren't paddling doesn't mean the currents or the winds aren't taking you somewhere.

I recently watched a movie called 28 Years Later, which is a continuation of 28 Days Later and 28 Weeks Later. It's a zombie movie series set in the United Kingdom. In it, a profound moment within the film occurs: an older gentleman tells our young protagonist about the term "Memento Mori," which translates roughly from the Latin as "Remember that you, too, will die." To this, he adds something which flips the term on its head for me. "Memento Amoris," which means "Remember that you, too, will love." I've said once before how I love wordplay, and this was no exception. This April ties in perfectly with my life: One year, I was exalted to a new pinnacle of Masonry. One year, I had to accept the death of my brother. This year, I have to accept that the one woman I ever truly loved with immense devotion is leaving for greener pastures. I have learned the lessons of life, love and death. Once upon a time, as a preschool teacher, they told us that each moment was a teachable moment. As much as I use that in my mentorship, as brethren once under my charge can attest, the same is true for me as well in every moment. Each moment is an opportunity to learn. Each moment is an opportunity to embrace what it presents. Each moment is an opportunity to explore those thoughts and feelings. Each moment is a single step among many toward who you will ultimately become.

So what should my topic be for this month? The hourglass? The Scythe? The Gavel? Perhaps it is the self. Perhaps it is the mirror. Perhaps it is the reflection chamber itself. Not emblems or implements of Masonry which are so readily apparent, but the ones which are there, quietly waiting and inviting you to use them. My Cheryl and my Kevin may be analogous to other people in your life. There is no doubt in my mind that you can you're your own parallels for yourself in my story. May The Supreme Architect of the Universe bless each and every one of us all as we embark on new journeys, finish old ones, or maintain with poise and grace the ones we're currently on. Behold the moment when our April showers bring May flowers.



The Season of the Fellowcraft

by Seth Roderick, WM

Recently, on a college visit with my son, I watched as he and two friends crossed a threshold into the college library. The threshold read, “Forming Good Men and Good Citizens.” It struck me on the ride home thinking about a Trestle Board article and the degree work to come in the Lodge that week- the Fellowcraft. This scene is so Fellowcraft!

Early Spring finds Fredericksburg No. 4 fortunate with degree work, particularly Fellowcraft work. It’s apropos that warmer temperatures, greening trees, spring onions, and longer days are signs of growth and maturity and wonderment of the blooming world around us. Our senses to the outside world are opened once again after a long hibernation of short days, cold nights, and dormant yards. We are growing with the season and learning with the season and opening our senses with the season. This is the season of the Fellowcraft.



Among the three degrees of Ancient Craft Masonry, the Fellowcraft stands in a place of special importance. It is the degree of intellectual formation. It is the middle chamber of the Masonic journey, the point at which the initiate moves beyond instruction to the discipline of the Lodge and toward the allegories of the Master Mason. It calls a man to think, to study, to distinguish, and to govern himself by the powers of reason joined to moral purpose.

Albert Pike observed that the Fellowcraft degree “is the successor of the Mysteries.” Here he touched upon something of significance. The Fellowcraft degree carries the Mason beyond the first foundations and sets him on the great work of understanding. It concerns itself with order, proportion, knowledge, and the cultivation of the mind. It treats learning as duty.

The Entered Apprentice is first taught the seriousness of obligation, the structure of the Lodge, and the moral boundaries within which a Mason must live. These are Freemasonry’s first principles. They are necessary, and no man can proceed safely without them, but first principles alone do not complete the work. A Mason must also learn how to use the faculties God has given him. He must be taught how to seek knowledge with honesty, how to hear without surrendering judgment, and how to test what he is told against truth, conscience, and reason. This is the proper work of the Fellowcraft.

For these reasons, the Fellowcraft degree deserves more attention than it often receives. Too often it is treated as a path to be crossed as quickly as possible, a necessary time between the newness of initiation and the prestige men commonly attach to the sublime degree of Master Mason. That reasoning diminishes the weight of the degree and deprives the candidate of what it is meant to accomplish. The Fellowcraft is not a delay in the journey to Master Mason or a steppingstone. It is an essential part of the journey itself.

A Lodge that takes the Fellowcraft degree seriously tells its candidates, by its conduct, that Masonry does not consist in collecting degrees. It consists in forming men. The Fellowcraft degree presses upon the Mason the necessity of development of knowledge and judgment. Knowledge alone is not wisdom. Information alone does not make a man free. The age in which we live proves this daily. Men may possess facts and access to information in abundance, we have supercomputers in our hands but remain captive to ignorance, confusion, faction, and noise. The Fellowcraft degree offers a counteractive approach to these things. It teaches that the mind must be disciplined if it is to be useful, and that the search for truth requires patience, humility, and balance.


This is where the degree speaks with strength to man's present condition in the world. A man who has not learned to reason is easily governed by impulse, slogans, fear, and the passions of the crowd. A man who has not learned to distinguish truth from falsehood becomes vulnerable to every form of tyranny, whether political, social, or intellectual. A man who has not trained himself to pursue knowledge with moral seriousness may fall prey to fanaticism, which always offers certainty; wherein wisdom requires understanding. The Fellowcraft degree stands as remedy. It directs the Mason toward liberty of mind and directs him toward truth. It directs him toward knowledge.

The emphasis on continual learning is not incidental to the degree. It is at the center of it. The Fellowcraft is taught that he must pass through noise and impairments and constantly climb. This is not just ceremonial. It is the image of a life ordered toward improvement. A Fellowcraft should become more capable of clear thought, more able to govern his speech, more attentive to the seven liberal arts and sciences, more receptive to truth however humbling, and more authentic in applying what he has learned to his conduct. If he does not grow in these respects, then his passage through the degree has been ceremonial at best.

This is why the degree should be considered a formative season in the life of every Mason. Formation takes time. It asks the candidate to pause long enough to absorb what the degree offers. The Lodge has a duty here; it should not rush a man because he is eager to advance. A well-ordered Lodge must care as much for depth as for progress.

Indeed, the dignity of the Master Mason degree is better preserved when the Fellowcraft degree is properly understood. The lessons of the third degree fall with greater force on the man whose mind has been prepared, whose reason has been exercised, and whose moral imagination has been expanded by study and contemplation. The deeper allegories of Masonry are wasted on men who have been hurried past the discipline that teaches them how to receive those allegories. The Fellowcraft degree provides that preparation.

This is the season of Fellowcraft work in our Lodge, and it gives us cause to reflect on what the degree asks of those who receive it, and of those who confer it. The Fellowcraft degree deserves reverence because it marks the moment when a Mason is called to become a serious student of wisdom and is no longer standing only at the threshold. If the degree is approached in that spirit, it will never be treated as a mere steppingstone.



*“Once a steward,
always a steward.”*

by John Lapke, Senior Warden

There is one quote in Masonry that I hear repeated frequently, and it has made one of the most substantial impacts on me—both personally and in how I perceive the Lodge collectively: “Once a steward, always a steward.” I first heard these words spoken by Worshipful Joe Gilkerson after a stated communication, while I stood elbow-deep in the dish pit cleaning up alongside my fellow stewards. After removing his jacket, rolling up his sleeves, and seeing that there was still work to be done, Worshipful Gilkerson did more than simply speak the words—he lived them.

I later came to understand that this quote has been a driving principle for many leaders over the years, and I truly believe it embodies one of Masonry’s highest ideals: that we all meet on the level. Regardless of the jewel one wears, the background one comes from, or even the car one drives, the image of a man who had just presided over a lodge from its highest chair stepping in to help where assistance was needed will remain with me forever. What stood out most was the absence of hesitation or explanation. He did not ask questions, nor did he give himself an excuse to step aside. By simply joining us, he left no room for anyone else to avoid the work either.

To me, this simple yet powerful act of humility is what elevates good Masonic leaders into great ones. It demonstrates that leadership is not about authority or recognition, but about service and example. Moments like this reinforce my belief in Masonry—not as a collection of titles or offices, but as a brotherhood built on shared labor, mutual respect, and the quiet dignity of serving wherever one is needed. That lesson, more than any lecture or ritual, is one I will carry with me for the rest of my Masonic journey.

Chapter 432

In music, it is said that certain tones, when precisely attuned, bring the mind into harmony rather than agitation. It is said 432hz is such a tone. In like manner, poetry and prose can also be a medium to steady thoughts and temper passions.

The selections presented in Chapter 432 are drawn from the works of Freemasons, writers traditionally associated with the Craft, and authors whose words reflect the moral, symbolic, and philosophical spirit of Masonry. We hope you enjoy these selections and selections in future Trestle Boards.

Sermons We See

by Edgar Albert Guest

I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day;
I'd rather one should walk with me than merely tell the way.
The eye's a better pupil and more willing than the ear,
Fine counsel is confusing, but example's always clear;
And the best of all the preachers are the men who live their creeds,
For to see good put in action is what everybody needs.

I soon can learn to do it if you'll let me see it done;
I can watch your hands in action, but your tongue too fast may run.
And the lecture you deliver may be very wise and true,
But I'd rather get my lessons by observing what you do;
For I might misunderstand you and the high advise you give,
But there's no misunderstanding how you act and how you live.

When I see a deed of kindness, I am eager to be kind.
When a weaker brother stumbles and a strong man stays behind
Just to see if he can help him, then the wish grows strong in me
To become as big and thoughtful as I know that friend to be.
And all travelers can witness that the best of guides today
Is not the one who tells them, but the one who shows the way.

One good man teaches many, men believe what they behold;
One deed of kindness noticed is worth forty that are told.
Who stands with men of honor learns to hold his honor dear,
For right living speaks a language which to every one is clear.
Though an able speaker charms me with his eloquence, I say,
I'd rather see a sermon than to hear one, any day.

Utopia Found?

by Thomas More

There is a place that you can find
Where everyone is always kind,
Where everything is harmony,
Where every man is always free.

No politics are spoken there,
No arguments to rend the air,
Where smiles glow bright on every face,
A joyful and a friendly place.

A place where men can do good deeds
And share their lot with those with needs,
But still have fun in all they do
While being good and firm and true.

A place where God is still revered
And tyranny is never feared,
A place there virtues still are taught,
Where goodness is not sold or bought.

"A Shangri La?" you say to me,
"Why such a place can never be!"
Untrue, my friend, there's one I know,
A place where good men often go.

And not just one, but many more,
Both here at home, on distant shore,
Thousands and thousands, I would guess;
There might be more, but never less.

They've been around hundreds of years,
These places where men need have no fears,
So now you ask, "Where do I go?"
All right, my friend, I'll let you know.

Look for a sign with compasses and square,
Easily found, they're most everywhere,
Just note the number and the street
To know where Masons go to meet.



“People Will Come, Ray”

by Seth Roderick, WM

Many essays and posts have appeared recently, each asking why young men are not joining Freemasonry, or why, having joined, they do not remain active. Their authors often address a new strategy, or propose new forms of appeal, new incentives, new accommodations, and new ways of presenting the Lodge as a thing more familiar to the habits of our present time. These considerations are sincere and thoughtful but in my judgment, answers lies elsewhere.

Young men do not hunger for novelty. They hunger for authenticity. In the relatively few years I’ve been a Master Mason, anecdotal evidence has shown, at least in this Lodge, that the analog nature of Freemasonry is a draw for young men looking for something richer than what is found in our digital world.

That want for authenticity is not always expressed plainly, and often it is not understood even by those who feel it most profoundly. But it can be seen in the dissatisfaction so common in our time. A young man may be surrounded by convenience, diversion, communication, and innumerable choices, and still feel he is destitute in things that really matter. He may have many ways to pass the hours but only a few options to belong to anything worthy of his effort and desire for fidelity. A young man today has every means of distraction available to him, but little cause for discipline. He may be offered countless memberships in groups, clubs, and forums but still lack the essence of true fraternity. I propose that our answer in Freemasonry to what men today are seeking, is not to make the Lodge resemble the quickening world from which he is already grown weary and distracted.

Freemasonry has something better to offer. It offers continuity. It offers seriousness. It offers fellowship that is earned over time, proved in conduct, and strengthened by shared experience. It offers a standard outside the self. It offers a place where a man may contribute to something older than his present circumstances and larger than his immediate appetites. These things possess real value. They do not need to be disguised in softer language or wrapped in the paper of modern fashion. The strongest bonds in a Lodge are the organic bonds.

This is why the Lodge must be careful in what it asks, careful in what it promises, and careful in whom it admits. The Lodge must meet young men where they are but with the clear understanding that together they will grow. Listening to the Entered Apprentice lecture the other night, this becomes plainly evident in the instruction on the Ashlars.

So how do we accomplish this?

We do no man a service by rushing him through the West Gate. We do the candidate no service when we permit him to expect that membership consists primarily in receiving benefits. We do the Lodge no service when we forget that every petitioner changes it. To guard the West Gate is not an act of suspicion. It is an act of stewardship. A Lodge that fails in this duty may find itself full in number but poor in substance.

A petitioner should see simply where the Lodge stands. He should know that he is entering a fraternity with customs, duties, expectations, and standards of conduct. He should know that the Lodge seeks more than just his name on a roll. It seeks his presence, his labor, his fidelity, and his character. He should know that Masonry is not a subscription to experiences. It is not a purchased belonging. It is a discipline of relation, obligation, and personal improvement pursued among his Brothers.

I believe this to be the most honest approach. Men, particularly young men, will embrace an institution they know is authentic, or they will be more willing to learn more about it, and be open to it. What they distrust, often with good reason, are institutions that speak in noble terms and then organize themselves around ease, amusement, and constant accommodation. There is no insult in asking a young man to rise to a standard. There is respect in it. A Lodge should never apologize for being a Lodge or make excuses for its time-honored structure, standards, and of illuminating the mind and spirit with the search for truth and understanding.

Freemasonry has endured because it has measured time carefully. It has not survived by surrendering its character whenever the spirit of the age grew restless. Our own Lodge has survived wars, two directly impacting its very membership and community. It has survived depressions and droughts in membership. It has survived occupation and our Temple was narrowly spared from ruin. It has survived the Industrial Age, the Machine Age, the Nuclear Age, the Information age, and with good fortune, the Internet Age. It has survived because generations of men found within it something sound, something ordered, something elevating, and something true. The Lodge has endured because it carries meaning. The obligations have endured because they bind men to higher conduct. The customs have endured because they teach men that they belong to a chain of inheritance and responsibility.

In arguably one of the greatest books and movies of all time (if you're a baseball fan), the "People will come" speech in *Field of Dreams* has real application here. They will come, though not always for reasons they can fully state. They will come because the noise level in the world has wearied them. They will come because irony has left them cold. They will come because so much around them is thin and impermanent, and they desire something with weight and a firm foundation. They will come because they seek peace and seriousness and honorable fellowship. They will come because somewhere within them there is a longing to stand in the company of men who mean what they say and keep faith with what they have received.

When they come, the Lodge should be ready. It should be itself. It should be living its teachings, guarding its gates, and cultivating a brotherhood worthy of the name. It should not chase men by pretending to be something else. It should stand, labor faithfully, and preserve its integrity.

People will come. The question is whether, when they arrive, they will find authenticity. If they do, many will stay. If they do not, no degree of adaptation will suffice. Because the great American pastime is almost here again, I'll leave you with this to consider in respect to our Lodge and fraternity:

"Ray, people will come, Ray.

They'll come to Iowa for reasons they can't even fathom. They'll turn up your driveway, not knowing for sure why they're doing it. They'll arrive at your door as innocent as children, longing for the past.

'Of course, we won't mind if you look around,' you'll say. 'It's only twenty dollars per person.' They'll pass over the money without even thinking about it. For it is money they have and peace they lack.

And they'll walk out to the bleachers, and sit in shirt-sleeves on a perfect afternoon. They'll find they have reserved seats somewhere along one of the baselines, where they sat when they were children and cheered their heroes. And they'll watch the game, and it'll be as if they'd dipped themselves in magic waters. The memories will be so thick, they'll have to brush them away from their faces.

People will come, Ray.

The one constant through all the years, Ray, has been baseball.

America has rolled by like an army of steamrollers. It's been erased like a blackboard, rebuilt, and erased again. But baseball has marked the time.

This field, this game - it's a part of our past, Ray. It reminds us of all of what once was good, and it could be again.

Ohhhhhhhh, people will come, Ray. People will most definitely come."

Fredericksburg Chapter No. 29 OES - April 2026

by Sister Carrie Morton Combs, Associate Conductress



As we welcome the month of April, Fredericksburg Chapter No 29 OES proudly joins in recognizing the Month of the Military Child. Since the founding of our nation in 1776, children have stood quietly yet courageously on the front lines of sacrifice—supporting parents, siblings, and loved ones who serve. As we approach the celebration of America’s 250 th anniversary, let us pause to honor these resilient young individuals. One simple yet meaningful way to show our support is by wearing a purple ribbon, a symbol of unity and appreciation for military children everywhere.



— April —
**MONTH OF
THE MILITARY
CHILD**
Month

Fredericksburg Chapter No. 29 recently celebrated a remarkable milestone—our 118 th birthday on March 23, 2026. For well over a century, our Chapter has been a cornerstone of fellowship, service, and tradition within the historic Masonic Lodge No. 4. We honor the legacy built before us and look forward to continuing to uphold the guiding principles of Truth, Charity, and Loving Kindness for generations to come.



Masonic Youth Round-Up---Mark your calendars!

Fredericksburg Chapter No. 29 OES is proud to support and promote the future of our Masonic family by inviting the community to a special Youth Round-Up event!

Join us on Saturday, May 9, 2026, from 10:00am to 3:00pm at Fredericksburg Masonic Lodge No. 4. This exciting and informative gathering will introduce families and young people to Masonic youth organizations:

- International Order of the Rainbow Girls
- Job's Daughters International
- DeMolay

Attendees will have the opportunity to learn about the values, leadership skills, friendships, and service opportunities these organizations provide to our youth. Whether you are already part of the Masonic family or simply curious, this is a wonderful chance to explore how these programs help shape tomorrow's leaders. Lunch will be provided, and fellowship will be abundant! We encourage all members to share this event with family, friends, neighbors, and especially any young people who may benefit from these enriching organizations. Let us continue to invest in the next generation with the same dedication and love that defines our Order.



We warmly invite you to join us for our next Chapter meeting on April 12, 2026, at 7:30pm. Please note that this meeting is closed; however, our Masonic Brothers are warmly invited to join us from 6:00pm to 7:15pm prior to the meeting for fellowship, and refreshments.

Fredericksburg Chapter No. 29 OES remains committed to supporting our Masonic Brothers and strengthening the bonds that unite us. Together, we live out the truth that we are indeed "Stronger Together".

To learn more about our OES chapter. Please visit our website www.oesfredericksburg.com or pick up a brochure inside the lodge.

Support the Preservation of Our Historic 1816 Lodge Building

Just one gift can contribute toward another 200 years of Freemasonry in Fredericksburg, and earn you a brick on the Baker Room wall!

Visit BricksRUs.com/DonorSite/FXBG4 to donate.



Visit Our Online Store

New to the shop: Commemorate 250 years of American independence with this beautifully crafted America 250 Masonic Lapel Pin—a meaningful symbol of patriotism, brotherhood, and the enduring principles shared by Freemasonry and the founding of our nation.

Visit the [Lodge 4 Store](#) to order now!



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W.:B.: Patrick McConnell



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Lodge Program Officers

Lodge Blood Drive Coordinator	Jeff Adams
Lodge Instructor of Work	Christopher Tripp, PM
Lodge Education Officer	Bob Melvin
Masonic Home Ambassador	Joseph Ilk
Lodge Catechism Chair	Justin Garrett

Committee Chairs

Funeral Committee	Justin Garrett
Website & Social Media	Ethan Burgess
Buildings & Grounds	Rand Sompayrac
Finance	Robert Brammer, PDDGM
Sick & Widows	Patrick McConnell, PM
Archives	Mike Dove, PM

Trustees

R.W. Dennis Berry, PDDGM - 2026
 Wor. Chris Decker, PM - 2027
 Wor. Dan Goodwin, PM - 2028
 Wor. Chris Tripp, PM - 2029
 Wor. Pat McConnell, PM - 2030

Living Past Masters

Wor. Carter. G. Wells	1963	Wor. Anthony L Rudder	2007
Wor. Rudolph E. Griffith	1974	R.W. Jeffrey D. St. Onge	2009
Wor. Henry W. Baker	1975	Wor. Shelton S. Mackey	2010
Wor. Edward L. Donalson	1983	R.W. Shelby L. Chandler	2011
R.W. Dennis W. Berry	1986	Wor. Christopher J. Decker	2012
Wor. Thomas C Shelton	1988	Wor. Christopher R. Wilson	2013
Wor. William J. White	1989	Wor. Jeffrey L. Mitchell	2014
Wor. Michael J. McCray	1995	Wor. Jeffrey P. VanCuren	2015
Wor. Steven M. Gallahan	1996	Wor. James L. Ragsdale	2016
Wor. Charles B. Pasto	1998	Wor. Michael T. Moses	2017
Wor. J. Travis Walker	2000	Wor. Daniel T. Goodwin	2018
R.W. Daniel W. Thompson	2001	Wor. James M. Snyder	2019
R.W. W. Robert Brammer	2002	Wor. Stanley R. Kennedy	2020
Wor. Sheridan G. Harrod	2003	Wor. Christopher S. Tripp	2021
Wor. Jene G. Parrotte	2004	Wor. Joseph K. Gilkerson	2023
R.W. Steven W. Sanford	2005	Wor. Patrick F. McConnell	2024
Wor. Richard D. Dey	2006	Wor. Michael J. Dove	2025