



George Washington's Lodge
Fredericksburg
— Lodge No. 4 —

October 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

October 2026 Events

Wednesday, October 28

7:00pm: Info Session - George Washington National Masonic Memorial Executive Director, M.W. Matthew Szramoski, and Memorial staff, will present a proposal for long term loan of the GW Masonic Obligation Bible to the GWNMM. Baker Room.

				1	2	3
4	5	6	7 Move Up Practice 7:00 PM	8	9 Dinner 6:30 PM Stated Communication 7:30 PM	10 Freedom Forge Foundation 12 - 5 PM
11	12	13	14 Practice or Called Communication 7:00 PM	15	16	17
18	19	20	21 GMOV Practice with R.W. Delaney 7:00 PM	22	23	24
25	26	27 District 8 Ritual School 7:00 PM	28 GWMNM Bible Info Session 7:00 PM	29	30	31

Masonic Anniversaries

Wor. Edward L. Donalson	57 yrs.	Bro. Richard D. Dey, Jr.	20
Bro. Samuel G. Row	53	Bro. Christopher B. Ognek	16
Bro. Jerry E. Austin	49	Bro. Michael D. Ognek	16
Bro. Bobby J. Barnes	48	Bro. Matthew P. Mason	15
Bro. Don J. Rhynalds	45	Bro. Stevie L. Ikner	12
Wor. Guy Masquefa	44	Wor. Shawn D. Bryar	10
Bro. John G. Lee	43	Bro. Frederick C. Edwards	10
Bro. Robert S. Belman	43	Bro. Edmund C. Witalec	10
Wor. Graham Raven	42	Bro. Frederick Michael Callies	9
Rt. Wor. Joel D. Ratliff, Sr.	41	Bro. Jacob M. Bryar	6
Bro. John F. Oliver	36	Bro. Taylor S. DeHart	6
Wor. Christopher S. Tripp	28	Bro. Luther E. Deyo	6
Bro. Marshall C. Campbell	25	Bro. Matthew D. Gish	6
Bro. Walter S. Davis	25	Bro. Shane R. Page	6
Bro. John C. W. Vincent	25	Bro. Charles L. Sheppard III	6
Bro. Robert F. Bowman	25	Bro. David W. Ellis	5
Bro. Justin S. Woodside	24	Wor. Seth R. Roderick	4
Bro. Kevin A. Valentine	21	Bro. Ronald O. White	1

Master's Message

*State of the Lodge,
September 2026*

Seth Roderick, WM

September 1st marked 274 years since the earliest surviving recorded meeting of the Lodge at Fredericksburgh in 1752. This fact remains consequential as it reminds us of duty and stewardship. The very fact that we still exist today, as vibrant a Lodge as ever, is owing to the receiving, caring for, and passing forward every noble feature of this particular fraternity, by each Brother.

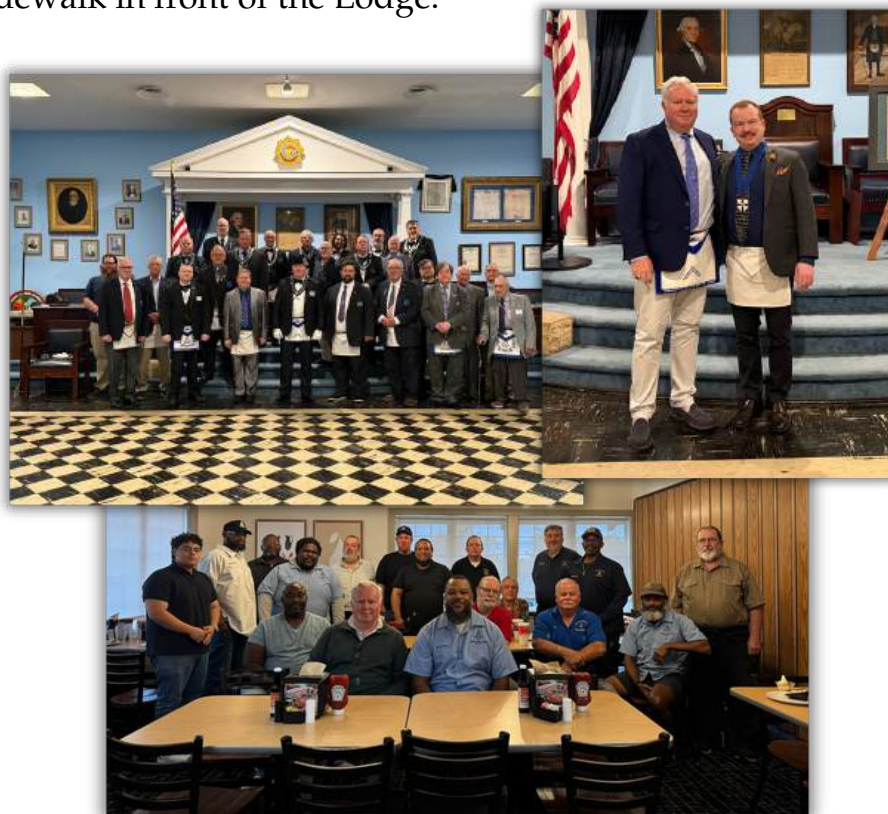
The Lodge held its Stated Communication on September 11, while Wednesday evenings remained devoted to instruction, proficiency, and degree preparation. Members also participated in the District 8 Ritual School. These recurring evenings may receive less attention than our public events, but they remain essential to the strength and continuity of the Lodge. Please come join us on Wednesday evenings. Look for 'This Week and Beyond' emails for weekly information about happenings in the Lodge (sent via Constant Contact).

The month's high-water mark came on September 23, when Bro. John Morris was raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason after demonstrating an impressive proficiency in the Fellowcraft Degree. Bro. George Dunlap presided in the East for the degree. We congratulate Bro. Morris and thank every Brother who contributed to his progress and to the evening's work.

Our doors also remained open to the wider community. The September pancake breakfast brought Brothers, families, and neighbors together. It also provided a bit of nourishment before the Fredericksburg Masonic Museum Association meeting. Later in the month, our historic Lodge building welcomed guests through History Walks programs. These programs allow the public to experience our building and cemetery as part of a walking tour of the city, while learning more about the Lodge's place in the history of Fredericksburg.

September concluded with an especially meaningful expression of fellowship. On September 27, members of Prince Hall Lodge No. 61, F.&A.M., and Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4, A.F.&A.M., gathered at Golden Corral for a 20th-anniversary reunion lunch. The gathering commemorated a similar luncheon held by the two Lodges in 2006 and renewed that relationship through Sunday dinner and conversation. Our theme, "Two Lodges, One Table, Shared Purpose," captured the spirit of the afternoon and our hope for continued fellowship among our Lodges. Worshipful Master Brian West and I vowed to help make this an annual event, not just a 20-year event. At some point maybe we outgrow a restaurant and fill a park pavilion instead.

As we look forward into the Fall and coming Christmas season, mark your calendars for Saturday, December 5th. The Fredericksburg Masonic community, including Lodge No. 4, Prince Hall Lodge No. 61, OES, Grotto, Jobs, Commandery, and other appended bodies will walk, as a Masonic Family, in the annual Christmas Parade downtown. The intent is fraternal and family fun, and to show the community the true scope of Freemasonry in the community. We will walk behind a float being designed by Bro. Brian Hesler and Bro. Dave Pompilio. But we need your help. The float will build faster and look better with all hands helping its construction. Our vibrancy as a Masonic family will show true if we get a good turnout for the parade. Of course, those not able to walk or have small children, can watch from our new porch and sidewalk in front of the Lodge.





Secretary's Corner

My Brethren,

Nothing specific this month from my desk, but allow me to put on my other hat as LIW. The Grand Annual Communication will be held November 6-7, 2026, at the Hilton Richmond Hotel and Spa in Short Pump. Especially if you have not attended before, you're encouraged to attend. It's an eye-opening and enjoyable experience and a chance to rub shoulders with good Brethren across the Commonwealth. But I'd draw your attention to the Committee on Work exemplification of the degrees Wednesday night and Thursday, November 4th and 5th. This is a great opportunity to learn the work from some of the finest ritualists in Virginia. Note also that the certificate of qualification needed to be elected Master of a Lodge, widely known as a Warden's certificate, has been extended from 3-5 years. That means that you should start working and preparing to get your certificate as soon as you go into line, certainly by the time you're Sr. Deacon. Again, I'd strongly encourage you also to return your Master Mason's Catechism, which will be a huge help to you in going through the Chairs. Of course, there are other things you need to learn besides ritual, though for most that seems to be the most daunting. We had Subordinate Lodge Officer Training (SLOT) last month and covered a lot of topics concerning Masonic custom, protocols, and decorum. And a successful Master needs to know Masonic law, for which the Correspondence Courses are an excellent resource. These are not just for sitting officers; if you have any thoughts of getting in line in the future, please reach out and we will be glad to assist you in accessing these resources.

To anyone considering Lodge leadership in the future...or that of any other Masonic body...I would encourage you to prepare yourself by asking yourself certain questions: Do I have the time, personally and professionally, to make such a weighty commitment? Do I have the necessary skill set...and if not, what can I do to acquire it? What can I bring to the table to leave the Craft and my Lodge better than I found it? Perhaps most importantly, am I doing it for the right reasons? If you can answer those questions to yourself satisfactorily, you will find no shortage of Brethren who will help you on that exciting journey. And if formal leadership isn't your thing, consider where you can make a contribution. That could helping with the pancake breakfasts, helping with blood drives, being handy with tools, coaching, showing up to parades, funerals, and other events, or just being on the sidelines to welcome our new Brothers as they go through the degrees. Having full ranks to see them get their degrees means more to a new Brother than we tend to realize. Rest assured, there's a place for everyone to get involved.

S&F,
Christopher Tripp, PM
Secretary

November Stated Communication & Grand Master's Visit



Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4
Monday, November 2
6:30 PM Dinner
7:30 PM Tiled Meeting



Welcoming M.W. Matthew Todd Szramoski

Brethren,

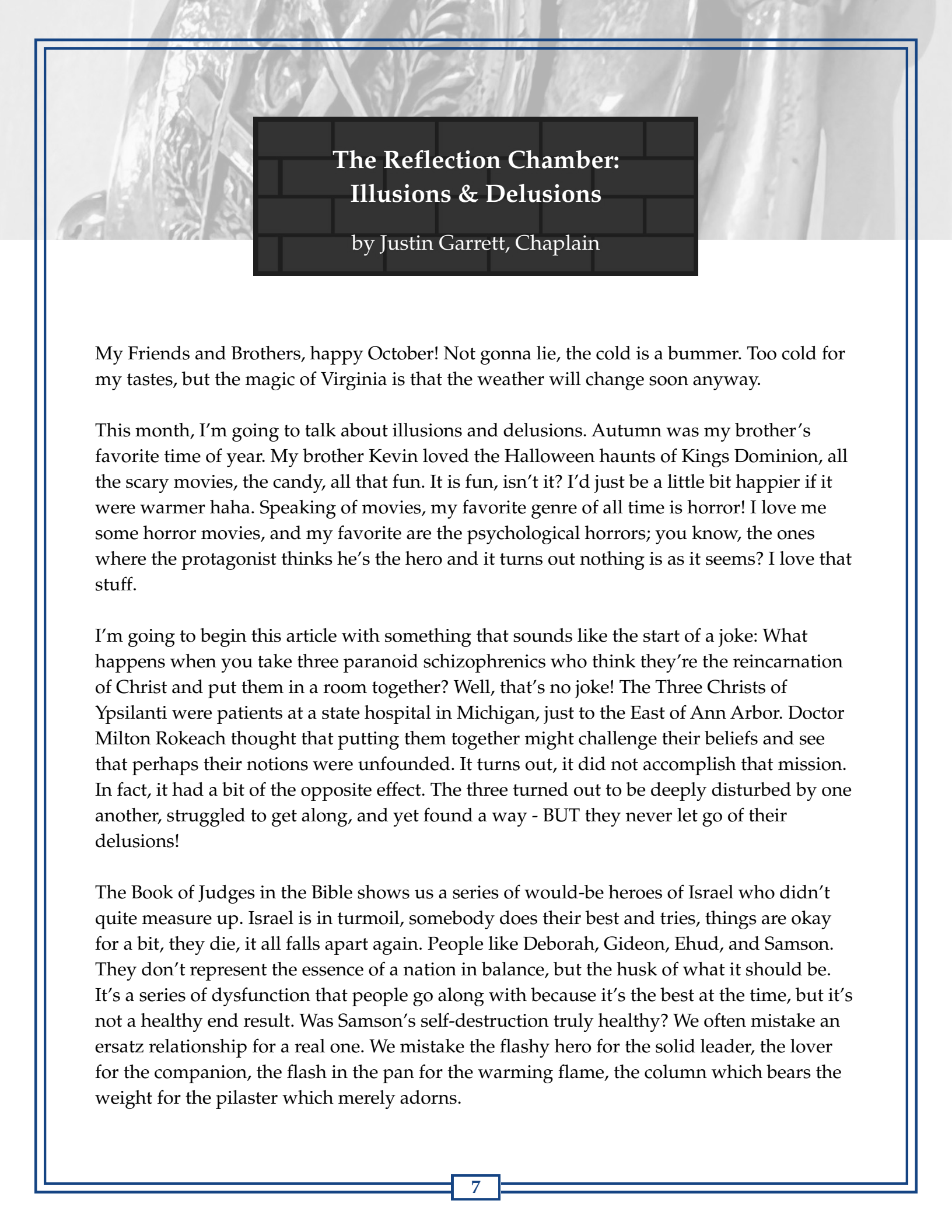
Take due notice: Our November Stated Communication shall take place on **Monday, November 2** to commemorate Ill. Bro. George Washington's Initiation and to welcome the Grand Master of Masons of Virginia. This cherished tradition of brotherhood from across the Commonwealth is well-attended, so we kindly requests RSVPs be sent to Secretary@MasonicLodge4.org with the number of your party.

Dinner 6:30 PM (\$20 donation requested)

Menu: Fried Chicken, Mac & Cheese, and Potatoes

Tiled Meeting 7:30 PM

Welcoming M.W. Matthew Todd Szramoski, 180th Grand Master of Masons in Virginia with the George Washington Masonic Obligation Bible on display



The Reflection Chamber: Illusions & Delusions

by Justin Garrett, Chaplain

My Friends and Brothers, happy October! Not gonna lie, the cold is a bummer. Too cold for my tastes, but the magic of Virginia is that the weather will change soon anyway.

This month, I'm going to talk about illusions and delusions. Autumn was my brother's favorite time of year. My brother Kevin loved the Halloween haunts of Kings Dominion, all the scary movies, the candy, all that fun. It is fun, isn't it? I'd just be a little bit happier if it were warmer haha. Speaking of movies, my favorite genre of all time is horror! I love me some horror movies, and my favorite are the psychological horrors; you know, the ones where the protagonist thinks he's the hero and it turns out nothing is as it seems? I love that stuff.

I'm going to begin this article with something that sounds like the start of a joke: What happens when you take three paranoid schizophrenics who think they're the reincarnation of Christ and put them in a room together? Well, that's no joke! The Three Christs of Ypsilanti were patients at a state hospital in Michigan, just to the East of Ann Arbor. Doctor Milton Rokeach thought that putting them together might challenge their beliefs and see that perhaps their notions were unfounded. It turns out, it did not accomplish that mission. In fact, it had a bit of the opposite effect. The three turned out to be deeply disturbed by one another, struggled to get along, and yet found a way - BUT they never let go of their delusions!

The Book of Judges in the Bible shows us a series of would-be heroes of Israel who didn't quite measure up. Israel is in turmoil, somebody does their best and tries, things are okay for a bit, they die, it all falls apart again. People like Deborah, Gideon, Ehud, and Samson. They don't represent the essence of a nation in balance, but the husk of what it should be. It's a series of dysfunction that people go along with because it's the best at the time, but it's not a healthy end result. Was Samson's self-destruction truly healthy? We often mistake an ersatz relationship for a real one. We mistake the flashy hero for the solid leader, the lover for the companion, the flash in the pan for the warming flame, the column which bears the weight for the pilaster which merely adorns.

Have you ever noticed how some people end up in a relationship with someone who is just terrible for them? Cheryl and I were recently discussing a book: *Man and His Symbols*, by Carl Jung. The anima is the unconscious female aspect of the male mind, the animus is the male unconscious of the female mind. Both men and women have two proclivities regarding their respective unconscious minds: they either become possessed of it (whence we derive archetypal figures of Medusa, the modern “Karen,” men like Orpheus or Odysseus when with Circe or Calypso) or they project onto it. Did you really fall in love with that person, or did you fall in love with the idea of that person? Jung points out that we see in others what we see in ourselves. Do we love that other person for who they truly are, or do we just love our own idea of who they should be in our minds?



Just the same, Jung posited that there are archetypes of the human psyche. Since it's Halloween and so many are going to go as him (don't lie, I see you!) men have a strong tendency to ask “What would Batman do in this scenario? What does Batman embody?” They then play that role, that character. The same thing happens not just in Batman, but in everywhere else. “I'm an artist, I'm a soldier, I'm a sage, I'm a student.” Those are parts of you, sure, but they are not you. They are like costumes rather than the true you. Just look at Freemasonry itself and its same tired trope of making good men better. We replace Batman for the Good Man, and then we try to fit into the box of the Good Man, wholly ignoring who we truly are, and in my case, that's Justin. I choose to put on the costume of the Good Man and embody those things, but they are not Justin. We hear that line about “there are two wolves inside you.” The thing is, you have to feed them both! It's the one you embrace and publicly take off the leash which becomes stronger. Those darker proclivities still exist within you, and if you deny them, they'll only grow stronger and eventually come back to bite you. I embrace the Good Man, I still feed the dark side just enough to keep it alive. I don't hide it, bury it, or refuse to acknowledge it. I simply find a healthy way to take it off its leash. This is an important distinction. The Good Man might be a costume, but at the end of the night, you still have to take it off. Then what?

In each of these cases, we see a glimpse, a snapshot of various people who think things are one way, but they're really another. So many people walk around in a hall of mirrors, their minds fully believing that the reflection is the truth and not a distortion. What distortions do you have in your head? What does your mind insist is true despite evidence to the contrary? What are you mistaking essence for husk? What are your true motivations within your deepest recesses?

What if the thing you call yourself is just a construct of who you really are?

Here's an idea. What if Freemasonry is that deep dive? That the symbols we see so often are truly profound on a deep psychological level? So many people are content with the status quo, and their ego demands the protection of their psychological innocence, while denying the truth of what's real. So many people who are afraid or skeptical of Freemasonry are so perhaps because what we so often habitually do is challenge ourselves in thought, word, and deed. For some, that challenge is a threat. They'd rather vandalize buildings to replace the objective truth for their own distortion than see what's really under the floorboards of their own minds, of their own tell-tale hearts. Make no mistake, their physical threats are real, but the threat we pose to them, especially on a psychological level, is mostly imagined.

What illusions have we bought into? What are we mistaking for truth when it is really a red herring? Perhaps you really are greater than you think you are. Perhaps the world has taught you to hate yourself or deny your talents and gifts. Perhaps you really can do something great that you think is beyond reach. Perhaps it's only beyond reach because you only imagine it to be. Perhaps you've reduced yourself to something lesser in your own mind for one reason or another. Or perhaps your imagination of that greatness is just the opposite. Perhaps you're not above the clouds and beyond the reach of other humans. Perhaps the person you fell in love with was actually just a different version of yourself wearing their skin. Perhaps you've mistaken your various costumes for who you really are. Perhaps you've mistaken the wrapper for the sweet candy it was supposed to hold. Perhaps you're holding off on the deeper aspects of what this fraternity has to offer because you feel you're not ready for it yet. Don't be afraid to challenge yourself. There are scarier things in the depths than just being wrong. Perhaps the scariest thing is finding who you truly are.

From the Brightest Seat in the House,

Justin C. G. Garrett

A black and white photograph showing a close-up of a hand using a trowel to apply mortar to a brick wall. The mortar is being spread between the bricks. The background is a textured wall of bricks and mortar.

Brick and Mortar

by Seth Roderick, WM

This month, as I have watched the new front porch take shape day by day, I have seen operative masons at work and found myself thinking about our speculative Craft.

In operative masonry, mortar binds individual stones into a strong and lasting structure. When correctly mixed and applied, it gives the wall strength and stability. When the mortar is weak or poorly prepared, however, it creates only the appearance of strength. It may hold for a time, but exposure to weather eventually reveals its weakness.

The prophet Ezekiel used this image when condemning false prophets who promised peace where none existed. Their assurances were like walls built with untempered mortar: complete in appearance, but unable to withstand the storm.

Operative masonry teaches the art of building with stone. Speculative Masonry applies those lessons to the building of character and a virtuous life. Just as a wall cannot stand when held together by weak mortar, a man cannot endure the trials of life when his principles are founded on deceit, arrogance, or appearances. Such a life may seem respectable from the outside, but hardship has a way of revealing what lies beneath the surface.

As Masons, we should strive to be tempered in all things. To be tempered is to be measured, balanced, and tested. A tempered man does not build his reputation on falsehood or allow pride to govern his actions. He develops his character with care, understanding that every part must contribute to the strength of the whole.

What, then, should we mix into the mortar of our own lives?

First, knowledge. Because without it we toil in ignorance and risk building upon a poor foundation.

Second, perseverance. Because no worthy structure is completed in a hurry. Lasting work requires consistent and careful effort.

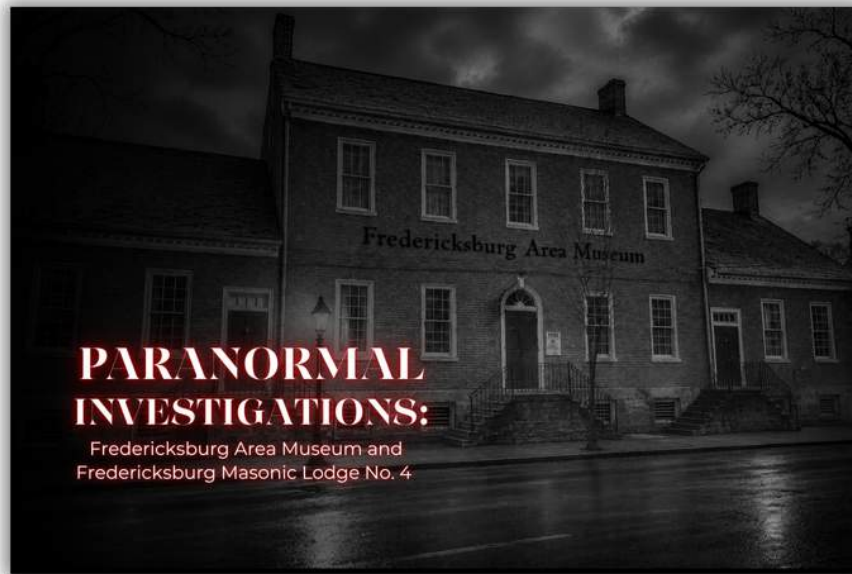
Third, humility. Mortar binds the stones together without calling attention to itself. In the same way, a Mason should seek to strengthen and unite others rather than draw praise to himself.

Fourth, confidence. A builder who does not trust his tools will never raise a wall, and a man who doubts his own worth may never fulfill the duties put in front of him.

Fifth, mercy. Good mortar must possess enough flexibility to withstand movement and pressure. Our dealings with others must likewise balance firmness with compassion.

Finally, magnanimity. A largeness of spirit which binds these virtues together and directs them toward the good of others.

The success of the Lodge is ultimately found in our own brick and mortar, through the lives we touch, the obligations we keep, and the character we display outside the walls of our Temple.



Join the **Fredericksburg Area Museum** and **Fredericksburg Masonic Lodge No. 4** for a guided paranormal investigation of two of Fredericksburg's most historic and intriguing sites.

Facilitated by **Miller Paranormal**, this overnight experience blends local history with hands-on paranormal investigation techniques. Participants will explore the stories, legends, and reported paranormal activity connected to the Fredericksburg Area Museum, Fredericksburg Masonic Lodge No. 4, and the historic Masonic Cemetery while learning how investigators document and interpret unexplained phenomena.

The evening will begin with an introduction to the history of the Masonic Cemetery before participants are assigned to smaller groups. Throughout the night, guests will rotate between investigations at the Fredericksburg Area Museum and Fredericksburg Masonic Lodge No. 4, spending approximately three hours at each location.

Whether you are a seasoned paranormal enthusiast or simply curious about the unexplained, this immersive overnight program offers a unique opportunity to experience Fredericksburg's history after dark.

Program Details

- 8:00 PM Saturday, November 21
- \$25 per person, Limited to 20 participants. Registration is required.
- This is an 18+ program; participants must be 18 years of age or older to attend.
- A signed liability waiver is required for participation at the event. Participants will be walking through historic buildings and outdoor areas in low-light conditions.
- Additional event details, waiver information, and beginner investigation tips will be provided to registered participants prior to the event.

Tickets: <https://secure.qgiv.com/for/fredericksburgareamuseum/event/paranormal-investigations-11212026/>

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

Commemorate 250 years of American independence with this limited edition coin—a meaningful symbol of patriotism, brotherhood, and the enduring principles shared by Freemasonry and the founding of our nation. Collect your serialized one of only 250 coins minted!

Visit the [Lodge 4 Store](http://Lodge4Store) to order now!



Advertise With Lodge No. 4

Reach hundreds of our Trestle Board readers! We accept appropriate advertisements, payable in advance. We reserve the right to refuse any ads that do not meet our standards. Please contact us at Secretary@MasonicLodge4.org for details.

- Quarter-page ads \$150 (12 months)
- Half-page ads \$250 (12 months)
- Full-page ads \$400 (12 months)

*Your
Ad
Here*

2026 Lodge Officers

To reach a lodge officer, please contact Secretary@MasonicLodge4.org
to request their contact information.

Worshipful Master	Seth Roderick
Senior Warden	John Lapke
Junior Warden	Michael Dove, PM
Treasurer	James Snyder, PM
Secretary	Christopher Tripp, PM
Senior Deacon	Joshua Miller
Junior Deacon	George Dunlap
Chaplain	Justin Garrett
Marshal	Kenneth Carey
Tiler	Shelby Chandler, PDDGM
Senior Steward	Michael Scullin
Junior Steward	Brian Hesler
Assistant Treasurer	Thomas Baker
Assistant Secretary	Ethan Burgess

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	M.W. 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