



Friendship Lodge No. 210 Trestleboard

2500 Masonic Drive – San Jose, CA 95125
Stated Meeting – First Thursday of Every Month

DECEMBER – 2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 <i>Club Amistad Holiday Dinner The Villages 5:00 PM</i>	2 <i>Stated Meetings Golden Rule 479 San Jose 10 Los Altos 712 Dinner 6:30 PM</i>	3 <i>Stated Meetings Mt View DeAnza 194 Palo Alto 346 Dinner 6:30 PM</i>	4 <i>Stated Meeting Willow Glen Fraternity 399 Dinner 6:30 PM</i>	5 <i>FRIENDSHIP Stated Meeting Dinner 6:30 PM Suit or coat and tie</i>	6	7 <i>San Jose 5 Rainbow 10:00 AM</i>
8	9	10 <i>Santa Clara DeMolay 7 PM</i>	11	12 <i>FRIENDSHIP 3rd Degree Conferral 7:00 PM</i>	13 <i>Bethel 129 7:00 PM</i>	14 <i>FRIENDSHIP Wreaths Across America 8:00 AM Casual outdoor apparel</i>
15	16	17	18 <i>Installation of Officers Mission Peak 884 Masonic Home 6:00 PM</i>	19 <i>FRIENDSHIP 2nd Degree Conferral 7:00 PM</i>	20	21 <i>FRIENDSHIP Installation of Officers 4:00 PM Suit or coat and tie</i>
22	23	24 <i>Santa Clara DeMolay 7:00 PM</i>	25 <i>Christmas</i>	26 <i>FRIENDSHIP No meeting</i>	27	28 <i>Bethel 129 Stated Meeting 10:00 AM</i>
29	30	31				

From the East



Greetings Brethren!

I hope everyone did had a good time celebrating Thanksgiving Holiday with you family and loved ones. I can't believe it's now my favorite time of the year. The time to celebrate the most wonderful holiday of the year.

Looking back on how our year started we did have a bit of struggles and at that time I felt that it will be a problematic year. But thanks to the wisdom and guidance of our Officer Coaches, our District Inspector, and my DeMolay Mason brethren withersoever dispersed who gave me advice and encouragement to meet the challenges head on. I want to that every one of them.

We were able to have conferred few new brothers and even had brothers raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason. Just to let everyone know that we are busy investigating Prospects and some brethren who expressed desire to affiliate with our Lodge. As a saying goes, "You win some, you lose some".

I also would like to thank the Officers who gave to the California Masonic Foundation. We met the Grand Lodge's goal of all officers giving and our Lodge was recognized during the 175th Year Annual Communication Grandmaster's Banquet.

I'm really thankful that I can say Friendship 210 had a wonderful and productive 2024. I also would like to inform all our members that we will have a busy year for 2025. I hope that during each degree conferral we would have a lot of members who will support our future members by attending their special day in their journey in Freemasonry.

The Installation of Friendship Lodge 210 Officers for the ensuing year is on December 21, 2024. The Officers are requested to be in the Lodge by 3:00 PM for picture taking. We will have our Social by 4:00 PM followed by the Installation by 5:00 PM followed by Reception after. Please RSVP me if you'll be able to join us.

Our Stated Meeting is on December 5, 2024. Dinner starts at 6:30 PM. Please RSVP Wor. Helmuth Litfin at 408-421-9381 or email at helmuth.litfin@gmail.com.

Attire for this month's Stated Meeting is a business suit or sports coat and tie.

A reminder that Thursday Meet and Greet will be announced as we're in a busy month and few members might be on vacation. I hope the Prospects, Entered Apprentices and Fellowcrafts can attend as it fits in their schedule. We will be starting around 7:00 PM. Prospects attending will be learning more about our organization. The EAs and FCs should attend the fellowship to continue learning their proficiencies with their Candidate Coach. Other brethren Master Masons aside from Officers are invited to join if their schedule permit. It's a pot-luck style please bring some snacks, goodies, or special dishes you want to share.

A reminder for the Officers, the Santa Clara Valley Officers Association Meeting for the month of December is dark. We will resume January 2025.

If there is ever a time when you need any type of healthcare for your family, the Masonic Outreach Services is there to help. Please contact them at 888-466-3642. This is a benefit for all Masons (EA, FC and MM).

Gilbert Cruz, Master

From the Reservations Desk



Greetings!

I will be assisting our new Junior Warden Sean O'Hara with Stated Dinner reservations, as well as handling the money at the door (as in the past). For that matter, you can just contact me directly for the reservations. You can reach me at 408-421-9381 or helmuth.litfin@gmail.com.

Stated Meeting dinners are \$10.00 per person, except for December, when the price is \$15.00. This means that the Stated Dinners for a full year will be \$125.00.

We are again giving members of Friendship Lodge 210 the opportunity to pay for their stated meeting dinners in advance with a **Pre-Paid Dinner Card (PPDC)**, which will essentially be treated as a reloadable debit card, in that if you don't use it for some reason the pre-payment credits will *not* disappear at the end of the year (the pandemic paradigm was "use-it-or-lose-it"), but will

instead roll-over to the next years. The credits will be maintained until the PPDC is depleted, so nothing is forfeited if not used. The cost for a Pre-Paid Dinner Card (PPDC) for any 12-month period is \$125.00 (11 months at \$10.00 plus December at \$15.00).

Several of you still have outstanding credits on your Pre-Paid Dinner Cards from the past, and these are still good. See me at the check-in table to see what your PPDC balance is. Or, better yet, if you have one of the more-recent PPDC with a “QR” code you can scan that to see your PPDC status.

For those members who come to all of our Stated Meetings, this is a great opportunity to pay up front and not worry about bringing cash to each meeting. If you are interested in purchasing a Pre-Paid Dinner Card please bring your \$125.00 cash or check (made out to “Friendship Lodge No. 210”) to the next Stated Meeting dinner. We will accept pre-payments at any time your PPDC needs to be “recharged”. You can also pay for a shorter period instead of the entire year (for example, six months at a time); see me at the Dinners to see what your options are. We do not yet at this time have the facility to take electronic payments (perhaps by later next year).

We will continue to have a **Standing Reservations List**. If your name is on the list, you have a reservation for every Stated Meeting dinner. The names of all lodge officers and PPDC holders are automatically added to the list unless you request otherwise. At your request, we can add your name to the Standing Reservations List without asking you to pay in advance (many long-time members who *always* attend are already on the list).

If your name is on the Standing Reservations List, your reservation is counted towards the quantity of food purchased and prepared. Therefore, if you *cannot* attend a dinner, please let us know as far in advance as possible. If your name is on the list and you miss two or more dinners in a row, we will remove your name from the list and go back to accepting your dinner reservation each month.

See you at the dinners!

Helmuth Litfin, PM, Factotum

What in the world is a *factotum*? It is a person having many diverse activities or responsibilities. The word is a literal translation of the Latin phrase *fac tōtum*: meaning “do (it) all!”. *Fac* is an imperative (giving a command) form of *facere* (pronounced fah CARE ay), “to make, do”, and *tōtum* meaning “the whole, entirety”.

Training Camp



We’re at the end of another year. And it was a challenging one, too. We managed to confer the degrees upon our candidates as soon as they were ready. Unfortunately, our officer corps is not keeping up with our candidates. At the third-degree conferral on November 11, we had to bring in four members of other lodges to fill out the degree cast.

That is the appropriate action when you are short on officers and cast for a degree. But bringing in officers from outside is happening more frequently among most of the lodges in California.

Officer outsourcing is a growing trend. We are pleased that it is not a problem limited to our lodge. Instead, it is a common situation among most lodges. That means bringing about a change will be gradual and it requires flexible thinking on our part.

I remember that in years past, we used to call on the Past Masters to fill in where needed. We still do that. But the number of Past Masters available to help has diminished. Health issues and family activity are the most cited reasons for being unable to help. There is little we can do to change that. Health and family are more important.

It used to be that each year, the officers of the progressive line looked forward to taking a new station. That process is slowing. For next year, both the Master and Senior Warden are staying in their current stations. We will have a Junior Warden after a year with an empty chair.

But among the appointed officers, there is no advancement. Instead, we are swapping brothers in-and-out to keep the positions filled and ritual work accomplished. This is also a common situation among California lodges.

Degree work keeps coming in. That’s a good thing. But we are short on brothers to do the ritual. And there is little assurance that things will get better. So, what do we do?

As I see it, you can keep going, even when the circumstances become a challenge. Or you can give up. The thing is, you are never truly defeated until you give up. So don't.

So let us continue seeking out and accepting candidates and turning them into Masons. It's not easy. But then, things that come easy are rarely of any significant value.

Daniel Doornbos, PM, Officers Coach

The Reverend's Corner



Greetings Brethren, (Christmas)

As we go into this last month of the year, let's pray for all mankind to find peace and joy. We all long for a better, more loving world. We need to keep the Christmas spirit going all year long, not just in December.

Christmas is a Christian based holiday, but it does not mean that we all can't join as friends and family to share love, joy, and peace.

The birth of the Christ child was to bring healing, reconciliation, freedom, and peace. And isn't that what all religious faiths are about, to forget about ourselves and remember the needs of others.

Being of Christian faith does not deter all from coming together to celebrate. None of us should be alone, just step out and volunteer at a food bank and serve those less fortunate than us.

However we celebrate, let's revel in understanding, this is the fulfillment of the season.

Remember Jesus was born to bring a message of, love God, love self, love others, and do good works.

Let this be a rebirth of our spiritual self. We give thanks to God for the heart-to-heart connection we have as Masons and family and friends.

Maybe we need to think of Christmas as a miracle. The Christmas spirit should be something we carry all year long not just, as I stated before, this month. Some grumble about the commercialized Christmas but think about that. When you give or receive a gift is that not love? We love when we give and in sharing, that is the Christmas spirit in motion.

So, let's take the gloomy, rainy, chilly, days and put the sunshine of God's love in this month. Give from the heart. Share with love. And never forget that God is always with us.

AFFIRMATION:

I prayerfully imagine a peaceful, joyous world.

FROM SACRED WRITINGS:

Philippians 2:2 - Be of the same mind, having same love, being full accord and of one mind.

God bless, Merry Christmas, and Happy Holidays!

Reverend Gene

The Secretary's Table



December 31 is getting closer by the day. If you have not yet paid your 2024 dues, now is the time.

2024 dues were \$113.50. 2025 dues are 118.50. You can write a single check for both.

Make your check out to Friendship Lodge No. 210

You can hand your check to me in person. Or you can mail it to me at:

Daniel Doornbos
2165 Carobwood Lane
San Jose CA 95132-1213

And you can pay dues online through your iMember account.

Daniel Doornbos, PM, Secretary



December Birthdays

2 – Michael Brill	9 – Kendall Mills, PM
4 – Paul Lyew, PM	11 – Hugo González
4 – Adam Stickles	12 – Aaron Taber, PM
5 – David Girton	15 – Gary Cook

December Events

December 1 — Club Amistad Christmas Dinner
5:00 PM at the Villages Golf & Country Club
RSVP to Joe Alarcon by Nov. 27 at 408-613-9150
Each person orders off menu and pays for their own food and drinks.

Dress: Warm dressy holiday

December 5 — Stated Meeting Prime Rib Dinner, cost is \$15.00. Stated Meeting: Making a clean finish of this year and plans for the next.

Dress: Business suit or sports coat and tie.

December 12 — 3rd Degree

For Bro. Jack Caceres. We arrive at 6:30 PM to set up the room and open lodge promptly at 7:00 PM.

Dress for officers is tuxedo. For others, a business suit or sports coat and tie.

December 14 — Wreaths Across America

We meet at the San Jose Masonic Center for breakfast at 8:00 AM. Next, we go to Oak Hill Memorial Park for a ceremony honoring our veterans. Then we place a holiday wreath on each veteran's grave, and speak his/her name, so he/she will never be forgotten.

Dress for light outdoor work. Wear waterproof shoes and bring an umbrella, just in case.

December 18 — Mission Peak Installation

The annual installation of officers at Mission Peak Lodge No. 884. 6:00 PM at the Siminoff Temple, on the campus of the Masonic Home in Union City.

Dress: Business suit or sports coat and tie.

December 19 — 2nd Degree

For Bros. Rolando Liwanag and Jonathan Clemente. We arrive at 6:30 PM to set up the room and open lodge promptly at 7:00 PM.

Dress: Officers in tuxedo. For others, a business suit or sports coat and tie.

December 21 — Annual Installation of Officers

Friendship Lodge's annual installation of officers. Social hour at 4:00 PM, Installation ceremonies at 5:00 PM, followed by a formal dinner at 6:30 PM.

Dress: Officers in tuxedo. For others, a business suit or sports coat and tie.

2024 Officers

<u>Officers</u>	<u>Wives/Ladies</u>	
Master		
Gilbert Cruz	(Monette)	408-483-1964
Senior Warden		
Andrew Litfin		408-832-5846
Junior Warden		
Treasurer		
Kendall Mills, PM	(Janet)	408-281-4084
Secretary		
Daniel Doornbos, PM	(Gillian)	408-802-7480
Chaplain		
Helmuth Litfin, PM	(Evonne)	408-421-9381
Senior Deacon		
Sean O'Hara	(Savannah)	559-862-9372
Junior Deacon		
Mike Smith	(Bonnie)	408-483-8985
Marshal		
Hristo Kolev	(Maria)	925-997-9779
Senior Steward		
Dan Chaid	(Theresa)	408-393-8905
Junior Steward		
Al Dorji	(Hakimeh)	408-313-4781
Tiler		
Tad Espiritu, PM	(Genevieve)	408-930-8303
Organist		
Chito Atienza	(Shirlita)	408-561-5850
Prospect Manager		
Don Gunaratne		518-335-1146
Inspector 345th Masonic District		
Dinesh Chhabra, PM	(Meenu)	908- 247-9288
Officers Coaches		
Daniel Doornbos, PM	(Gillian)	408-802-7480
Helmuth Litfin, PM	(Evonne)	408-421-9381

Facebook: www.facebook.com/FriendshipLodge210

Website: <https://friendship210.org/>

Origins of some familiar Christmas Symbols

Christmas Trees



Evergreen fir trees are universal winter decorations: Pagans displayed the branches as a reminder that spring would come again. Romans placed them around temples to honor Saturn, the god of agriculture.

The first time the evergreen was used as a Christmas tree was either in Tallinn, Estonia or Riga, Latvia. In the 16th century, German Christians brought the trees inside their homes as a Christmas symbol of everlasting life.

When news spread that Queen Victoria had her German husband, Prince Albert, set up a Christmas tree in their palace, the practice suddenly became the height of Christmas symbolism in England and America.

Bells



These Christmas ornaments have a history that is both symbolic and practical. Bells in both pagan and Christian traditions supposedly ward off evil spirits. In addition, church bells are rung to signify an important event, such as Jesus's birthday, or even to let churchgoers know it's time for services.

As for jingle bells? They're to warn you a sleigh is coming so you can get out of the way—after all, you can't hear horses' hooves in the snow.

Christmas Colors



Evergreen plants and trees have long represented the promise of the coming spring. The evergreen holly includes red berries with its green leaves, which could be a link between the red and green Christmas colors.

But the real reason red is forever associated with Christmas is due artist Haddon Sundblom, who created our modern interpretation of Santa adorned in a red coat in 20th-century Coca-Cola ads.

Wreaths



Making wreaths is a handy way to use your Christmas tree trimmings, which is probably how the custom developed in 16th-century Germany. But the Christmas symbolism of wreaths goes back to ancient Greece and Rome, when victorious athletes wore leafy branches woven into a crown.

The symbol of a never-ending circle made of evergreens also offered the promise of spring's rebirth to pagans celebrating the winter solstice.

Mistletoe



Mistletoe is a parasitological plant that grows in various host trees. It remains green when the host tree drops its leaves in autumn and may blossom during winter. According to Norse mythology, the gods used mistletoe to resurrect Odin's son Baldur from the dead. Baldur's mother Frigg, the goddess of love, made the plant a symbol of love and vowed to kiss anyone who passed under it. During Christmas celebrations in 18th-century England, men were allowed to kiss any woman standing under mistletoe, and if the ladies refused, that meant bad luck.

Poinsettias



The story of the poinsettia begins in the plant's native Mexico. A 19th-century U.S. ambassador to Mexico, Joel Roberts Poinsett, brought the plants that were later named after him to the States, which is how poinsettias became the official Christmas flower. They are also available in white, pink, marble, pale orange, and blue.

Don't toss your poinsettia plant after the holidays. Repot it outdoors or plant it in the ground.

Candles



Light is an important symbol of the Christmas holiday. In Scandinavia, young girls wear wreaths on their heads lit with candles for St. Lucia Day on Dec. 13. In New Mexico, luminarias, or candles in paper bags, light pathways at Christmas.

A similar Mexican tradition, Las Posadas, has young people carrying candles to symbolically light the way for Mary and Joseph's journey before Jesus's birth. See Luke 2:1-6.

Advent wreaths also use candles to count down the four weeks before Christmas.

Stars



Another symbol of light during the holidays is the Christmas star, which, according to Christianity, guided the three wise men to baby Jesus. See Matthew 2:1-12.

The Star of Bethlehem may have been a real scientific thing: Every few hundred years, Jupiter and Saturn appear as one to the naked eye, a "great conjunction" that last occurred in December 2020. Some scientists theorize a planetary conjunction could have been what the three wise men saw as well.

Eggnog



British aristocrats came up with the creamy concoction as a warm winter drink and added brandy and sherry to keep it from spoiling. The beverage came to the American Colonies in the 1700s. Colonists subbed the pricey liquors for rum. At the time, rum was also called grog, so bartenders named the drink egg-n-grog. Later, it became eggnog, after the wooden *noggin* mugs the drink was served in.

Candy Canes



Legend has it that candy canes were first invented by a choir master to keep choir boys occupied during long Christmas services and were made into the shape of a shepherd's crook to symbolize Jesus as the shepherd of his followers. See John 10:11 and 14. In 1920s America, the treat began being mass produced, and a Christmas symbol was born.

Extracted from *The Fascinating History Behind These 24 Christmas Symbols*, by Tina Donvito and Claire Nowak.

Source: <https://www.rd.com/list/history-of-christmas-traditions/>