



Friendship Lodge No. 210 Trestleboard

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

DECEMBER – 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
		<i>Stated Meetings Mt View DeAnza 194 Palo Alto 346 Dinner 6:30 PM</i>	<i>Stated Meeting Willow Glen Fraternity 399 Dinner 6:30 PM</i>	<i>FRIENDSHIP Stated Meeting Dinner 6:30 PM Suit or coat and tie</i>		<i>Installation of Officers at 5:00 PM Palo Alto 346</i>
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
<i>Installation of Officers, 11:00 AM South Valley 187</i>	<i>Stated Meetings Golden Rule 479 San Jose 10 Los Altos 712 Dinner 6:30 PM</i>			<i>FRIENDSHIP Installation of Officers at 5:00 PM Catered dinner to follow</i>		<i>Installation of Officers at 4:00 PM San Jose 10 Installation of Officers at 4:00 PM Mt. View DeAnza 194</i>
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
<i>Installation of Officers at 1:30 PM Los Altos 712</i>				<i>FRIENDSHIP Possible degree conferral 7:30 PM</i>		
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
				<i>Christmas Day No lodge meeting</i>		
28	29	30	31	1		
				<i>New Year's Day No lodge meeting</i>		

From the East



Greetings Brethren!

The year 2025 is coming to an end. We worked hard this year and overcome many challenges. Overall, the Lodge is in good shape.

We initiated four Entered Apprentices: Bros. Brylle Llaguno, Freddy Colombo, Louie Mar, and Carlos Bogotá.

We passed one Fellowcraft: Bro. Louie Mar.

And we raised two Master Masons: Bros. Jonathan Clemente and Louie Mar.

We have another Fellowcraft, Bro. Henry Peña, who is diligently preparing to receive his 3rd Degree. He moved to Los Angeles some time ago and plans to be raised in a local lodge. Several Friendship Lodge members plan to be there, too.

We were pleased to reinstate a member, Bro. Adrian Feria, after an absence of eight years.

This year, we gained a member by affiliation, Bro. Jake Todino. And another member via transfer: Bro. Ramón Manlapaz.

And we conferred the Hiram Award upon a very deserving Brother, Robert C. Moore. A lodge can only confer one Hiram Award per year.

Sadly, we had to suspend four Brothers for non-payment of dues. And Bro. Edward Osgood laid down his working tools to be raised in the lodge above.

When you add it all up, we will end 2025 with two more Brothers that we had at the end of 2024.

We have elected a new corps of officers for next year: Bro. Andrew Litfin as Master, Bro. Sean O'Hara as Senior Warden, and our newly affiliated Bro. Jake Todino, as Junior Warden. Wors. Kendall Mills and Daniel Doornbos are staying on as Treasurer and Secretary, respectfully.

If ever there will be a time when you will 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 every Masons (EA, FC, and Master Masons)

- **Care Management**
- **Financial Assistance**
- **Referral Services**
- **Masonic Homes Application**

Our final Stated Meeting of the year will be on December 4, 2025. The dress code is formal business attire. Our traditional dinner is prime rib and costs \$15.00 per person. Please remember to RSVP to our Junior Warden Sean O'Hara.

The Santa Clara Valley Masonic Officers Association is dark in December.

Gilbert Cruz, PM, Master

From the West



Fraternal Greetings from the West!

Andrew Litfin, Senior Warden

From the South



Fraternal Greetings from the South!

Sean Michael O'Hara, Junior Warden

Training Camp



We practice every Thursday, except for Stated Meetings, degree conferrals, OAM/SOIs, and holidays.

This month has one of those Thursdays, Christmas Day, on the 25th. Next month does, too, New Year's Day on the 1st. Stay home with your family and enjoy! We certainly plan to.

As of this writing, we do not have a degree conferral or practice scheduled for the month of December. If:

- **A candidate is ready**
- **The officers are available**
- **It is the will and pleasure of the incoming Master**

We may confer a degree on the 18th. Or wait until January.

There is no Officers Association Meeting (OAM) or School of Instruction (SOI) in the month of December.

At this moment, we do not have a firm date for the OAM-SOI in January. As always, dinner will be served at 6:30 PM and Friendship Lodge covers the cost of our officers' meals.

The SOI begins at 7:30 PM and will cover the Jewel March, Calling Up, Reception of Grand Lodge Officers, Short Form Closing, Stewards' and Deacons' Rod Work.

All Officers are expected to attend all SOIs. If you cannot make it for any reason, please inform our Inspector and the Master, so we don't send somebody out to find you.

Helmuth Litfin, PM and Daniel Doornbos, PM;
Officers Coaches

The Reverend's Corner



Greetings Brethren, (Comfort-Joy-Prosperity)

We have come to the end of 2025, and a lot has happened this year, but we have survived. So, let's close the year by showing comfort to one another, being joyful, and looking forward to a prosperous New Year.

When there are all the parties and activities going on around us, we may attend but may also feel alone. Maybe it is because we are missing a loved one or some other emotional pain, but we know we find solace in the love of God. We can turn inward, open our hearts to divine love, and feel cherished and supported. We are comforted, we are strong. and we are resilient.

With this in mind, we can get together with friends and family and be joyful. The meaning of Christmas is a feeling we should carry all year long, not just in December. Although Christmas is primarily a Christian holiday, we all celebrate in our own way. Because we give and receive with love in our hearts.

We want to share the spirit of the season, join in the joy of giving, and share our abundance. When we look at all the good around us, we begin to see the love of God. See people exchanging cheerful greetings and smiles and even being patient when out shopping. We don't have to find the perfect gift, we don't have to spend a lot of money. What we need to do is hold our loved ones a little tighter, share stories of the past, show our love. Because this is what Christmas is all about. God loves us all year long not just at Christmas, but always.

We can be prosperous by sharing ourselves and our time as gifts of generosity. It is when we can receive joyfully, knowing that doing so gives joy to those giving to us. We can affirm: I Am Infinitely Blessed.

Pam has a book, the author is Santa Claus (aka Saint Nicholas). She read a passage from the book where

Santa talks about seeing an emptiness in the human heart, a longing for something more and something deeper. Santa says it is a need for Christmas and the need for the Christmas spirit. Santa says if we were to go to our child heart, we would find those deep good feelings. Our child heart is the source of the good choices we made, and we can be joyful and hopeful. As we look at this, is this not what God wants for us all? So, let the Christmas spirit rise in each of us and take it with us into the New Year.

AFFIRMATION:

I find comfort and peace in the love of God. I give and receive with a glad heart.

FROM SACRED WRITINGS:

James 1:17 – Every act of generous giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

God bless and Merry Christmas,
Reverend Gene

The Secretary's Table



By now, you should have received your 2026 dues notice from Grand Lodge. If you find any mistakes, please let me know.

Dues for 2026 will be \$120.50, a four dollar increase from last year. Of that amount, \$72.50 is the per capita we pay to the Grand Lodge. The per capita amount rises a little just about every year. The base dues amount that Friendship Lodge keeps remains the same.

You can pay dues online at any time through your iMember account. Note that iMember uses your credit card and charges a processing fee. The iMember dues payment system came online on November 4.

I started receiving dues checks at the end of October. If you prefer to pay by check, 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

Please do *not* send or take your dues check to the San Jose Masonic Center, because I don't live or work there. And the center's mailbox is not secure.

Please do *not* hand your dues check to somebody else, expecting him or her to give the check to me. Checks get lost that way.

When you pay online, your dues are processed automatically. If you choose to pay by check, I need to have your check in hand so I can process your dues and generate a new dues card.

Daniel Doornbos, PM, Secretary



December Birthdays

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

December Events

December 4 — Stated Meeting

Traditional prime rib dinner, \$15.00 person. Dress: Coat and tie. Seasonal colors and accessories are welcome.

December 11 — Installation of Officers

San Jose Masonic Center. The ceremony begins at 5:00 PM. A catered dinner follows, at no charge.

Officers' dress: Tuxedos. Everybody else's dress: Business suit or sports coat and tie.

Friends and family are always welcome guests at our lodge's installation.

December 18 — Degree Conferral?

This date could be a degree conferral, depending on candidate and officer availability, and the incoming Master's decision.

If we have a degree, the lodge will open at 7:30 PM.

December 25 — Christmas Day

No Lodge meeting.

January 1 — New Year's Day

No Lodge meeting.

2025 Officers

<u>Officers</u>	<u>Wives/Ladies</u>	
Master		
Gilbert Cruz	(Monette)	408-483-1964
Senior Warden		
Andrew Litfin	(Lauren)	408-832-5846
Junior Warden		
Sean O'Hara	(Savannah)	559-862-9372
Treasurer		
Kendall Mills, PM	(Janet)	408-281-4084
Secretary		
Daniel Doornbos, PM	(Gillian)	408-802-7480
Chaplain		
Daniel Reyes	(Rosa)	408-401-3596
Senior Deacon		
Helmuth Litfin, PM	(Evonne)	408-421-9381
Junior Deacon		
Dan Chaid	(Theresa)	408-393-8905
Marshal		
Ed Advincula		510-921-7136
Senior Steward		
Al Dorji	(Hakimeh)	408-313-4781
Junior Steward		
Jack Caceres	(Sorena)	669-388-1816
Tiler		
Omar Martinez		669-296-7720
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/>

Was Jesus really born on the 25th of December?



For almost 2000 years, the Christian world has celebrated the birth of Jesus Christ on the same date. While December 25th has become synonymous with Christmas, its historical accuracy remains a topic of spirited debate among scholars.

Was Jesus truly born on this date, or does it reflect an inaccurate religious tradition?

What are the historical accounts of Jesus' birth?

And, what theories do scholars propose about the actual birth date?

What do the historical accounts of his birth say?

The historical accounts of Jesus' birth, primarily derived from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke in the New Testament, offer detailed narratives that have been the focus of scholarly attention for centuries.

The Gospel of Luke, for example, mentions that the birth of Jesus occurred during the reign of Herod the Great, who is known to have died in 4 BCE.

This timeline suggests that Jesus' birth must have occurred before this date, potentially aligning with historical records of a census conducted by Quirinius, the Roman governor of Syria.

Luke's narrative also notes that this census was a key reason for Joseph and Mary's journey to Bethlehem, the prophesied birthplace of the Messiah in Jewish tradition.

However, historical records indicate that Quirinius' census took place in 6 CE, leading to debates among scholars about the accuracy and interpretation of these dates.

Similarly, the Gospel of Matthew recounts the story of the Magi, or Wise Men, visiting Jesus after his birth, guided by a star to Bethlehem.

This event is often used in attempts to historically date Jesus' birth, with some scholars speculating that the star was a real astronomical event, like a conjunction of planets or a comet, which could be precisely dated.

Additionally, Matthew's account also situates Jesus' birth in the time of King Herod, further aligning with the timeline suggested by Luke's Gospel.

Despite these accounts, the specific date of December 25th is not mentioned in the Gospels.

As is now clear, the New Testament does not provide a specific date for Jesus' birth, and early

Christians did not initially celebrate it as a significant festival.

Why was December 25th Chosen?

The fixation of December 25th as the Nativity emerged over time, influenced by various cultural, religious, and political factors.

One of the earliest known references to December 25th as the date of Jesus' birth comes from the *Chronography of 354*, an illuminated manuscript compiled in Rome.

This document includes a calendar that lists December 25th as the date of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem.

Prior to this, there is little evidence to suggest that early Christians observed this date as Jesus' birthday.

The choice of December 25th is often linked to the Roman winter solstice festival of Saturnalia, a popular celebration dedicated to Saturn, the god of agriculture, and the *DIES NATALIS SOLIS INVICTI*, the "Birthday of the Unconquered Sun," associated with the cult of the sun god Sol Invictus.

These festivals, characterized by merrymaking and a cessation of work, took place around the time of the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year.

As Christianity began to spread within the Roman Empire, it is believed that church leaders elected to adopt and adapt these well-established winter festivals, transforming them into a celebration of the birth of Christ, the "Sun of Righteousness" as prophesied in Malachi 4:2.

This strategic alignment had dual benefits. It facilitated the Christianization of popular pagan traditions, making the new faith more acceptable to Roman converts.

Additionally, it offered Christians the opportunity to celebrate their faith openly and joyously at a time when many people were already observing festive traditions.

Can historians determine the real date of Jesus' birth?

While the widely recognized date of December 25th has deep roots in Christian tradition, it is

not universally accepted among scholars as the historical date of Jesus' birth.

One line of scholarly inquiry focuses on astronomical events. Some researchers have speculated that the "Star of Bethlehem," described in the Gospel of Matthew as guiding the Magi to Jesus, was a real astronomical occurrence.

Various theories propose that this star could have been a planetary conjunction, a comet, or a supernova.

Astronomical records and calculations have been used to pinpoint specific dates when these events could have been visible, leading to suggestions for Jesus' birth year ranging from 7 BCE to 2 BCE.

Some theories are based on an analysis of the cultural and religious practices of the time.

For example, the shepherds mentioned in the Gospel of Luke who were tending their flocks at night during Jesus' birth suggests a date in spring or early autumn, as these would be more likely times for shepherds to be out in the fields overnight in the region.

Additionally, a few scholars have explored the idea that early Christian writers may have had access to ancient records or traditions about Jesus' birth date that have since been lost to history.

This perspective holds that while December 25th might not align with modern historical and astronomical analysis, it could have been based on now-unknown sources or traditions from the early Christian period.

Beyond its religious significance, the celebration of Jesus' birth on December 25th has had a vast cultural impact.

It has led to the development of rich traditions and customs, varying widely from country to country.

These include special church services, the decoration of homes and public spaces, the exchange of gifts, and various other customs that blend religious observance with cultural festivity.

In many parts of the world, Christmas has become a season of general goodwill and a time

for family gatherings, irrespective of religious affiliation.

In popular culture and public discourse, the debate over Jesus' birth date often intersects with discussions about the commercialization of Christmas and the balance between religious significance and secular celebration.

There is an ongoing conversation about how to maintain the spiritual heart of Christmas amidst the widespread commercial and cultural phenomena that the holiday has become.

This conversation often extends to broader discussions about the role of religious observance in an increasingly secular world.

In essence, the cultural and religious implications of December 25th as the date of Jesus' birth extend far beyond the question of historical accuracy.

It has become a symbol of hope, joy, and renewal, deeply embedded in the cultural and religious fabric of many societies.

This date serves as a powerful reminder of the capacity of religious narratives to shape cultural traditions and unite people across different backgrounds in shared celebration and reflection.

The preceding article was written by *History Skills*.

“History Skills is an educational website that offers a variety of materials and tools for teachers and students when studying History.

“The site provides detailed articles on a variety of historical topics, including ancient, modern, and medieval history. People can download ready-to-use digital learning resources, and access detailed guides on researching, source criticism, quoting, referencing, assessment, and much more.

“History Skills is the ultimate resource for history fanatics. It has become the go-to site for those undertaking historical research and lesson planning.

“The creator of the History Skills website is Michael Cocks, an award-winning senior high school History teacher based in Australia. He

studied a Bachelor of Arts, specializing in Ancient History, and has post-graduate qualifications in Secondary Education. He has over 14 years' high school teaching experience.”

<https://www.historyskills.com/>

Who was Jesus?

If you belong to the Christian faith tradition, you probably learned about a man named Jesus in Sunday School class. There you learned to read the Gospels and New Testament as a believer, assuming the ideas and concepts you learned were divinely sourced and literally true. That is standard manner of teaching in a religious context.

Bible scholars use a different context: *historical critical method*, which investigates the origins of ancient texts that were translated and assembled into the Bible as we know it. This method considers the historical and cultural contexts in which Jesus lived. You may remember back to high school English class, where you had to read a novel and then discuss the author and the world in which he lived. Why? Because knowing that enabled you to understand why the author wrote what he wrote, and what it meant to him.

Virtually all scholars of antiquity accept that Jesus was a historical figure. There are at least 12 independent sources that talk about Jesus, dated to within 100 years of his crucifixion.

Scholars differ about the beliefs and teachings of Jesus as well as the accuracy of the biblical accounts. Only two events are supported by nearly universal scholarly consensus: Jesus was baptized and Jesus was crucified.

To be baptized and crucified, you must be a real person. If Jesus were a mythical figure, his life and teachings would apply only the Christians. But as a real person, his life and teachings could have value to anybody, including the agnostic and atheist.

Jesus the Stonemason

In the original Greek manuscripts of Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3, Joseph's and Jesus's occupation is cited as “tektōn” meaning “builder”. We derive our words “tectonic” and “architect” from tektōn. In 1st century Galilee, where Joseph and Jesus would have labored,

better structures were made of hewn stone. Low-budget houses were made of mud bricks and gathered, uncut stones.

When King James scholars translated the Greek manuscripts into the English, they encountered the word tektōn. In their world, buildings were constructed primarily of wood. So, they translated tektōn as “carpenter”. This is an example of how historical critical method can be a valuable tool.

Did Jesus belong to a Masonic lodge? Operative lodges date back to the 11th century. Speculative lodges date back to the 18th century. Jesus lived in the 1st century. Based on known history, no, Jesus did not belong one.