



Friendship Lodge No. 210

Trestleboard

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

SEPTEMBER – 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 <i>Stated Meetings Mt View DeAnza 194 Palo Alto 346 Dinner 6:30 PM</i>	2 <i>Stated Meeting Willow Glen Fraternity 399 Dinner 6:30 PM</i>	3 <i>FRIENDSHIP Stated Meeting Dinner 6:30 PM</i>	4	5
6	7 <i>Stated Meetings Golden Rule 479 San Jose 10 Los Altos 712 Dinner 6:30 PM</i>	8	9	10 <i>FRIENDSHIP 1st Degree for Aldwin Avila (if elected on 9/03) 7:00 PM</i>	11	12
13	14	15	16	17 <i>FRIENDSHIP Practice for 3rd Degree 7:00 PM</i>	18	19 <i>Constitutional Observance & Celebration SJMC, 6:30 PM</i>
20	21	22	23	24 <i>FRIENDSHIP Past Masters 3rd Degree Conferral for Brylle Llaguno 7:00 PM</i>	25	26
27	28 <i>SCVMOA 6:30 PM Golden Rule Lodge No. 479, SJMC Officers Mandatory</i>	29	30			

From the East



Fraternal Greetings from the East!

Andrew Litfin, Master

From the South



Fraternal Greetings from the South!

Jake Todino, Junior Warden

From the West



Fraternal Greetings from the West!

Sean Michael O'Hara, Senior Warden

Constitutional Observance & Celebration



Join Golden Rule Lodge No. 479 and Zorah Grotto for an evening of fellowship, a catered dinner, and an insightful keynote address celebrating our nation's founding principles.

At the San Jose Masonic Center

Saturday, September 19.

Dinner is served at 6:30 PM

\$25.00 per person, reservation required.

Reserve at <https://www.grl479.org/>

Activity & Program 7:30 to 9:00 PM

All lodges, ladies, and guests are welcome!

Dress: Smart casual

Training Camp



Last month, Friendship Lodge hosted the Officers Association Meeting (OAM) and School of Instruction (SOI). The SOI covered balloting and objections. We received many compliments on our exemplification from the attendees. It was a good idea to dedicate a practice night in July to balloting. A big thank you to the officers who participated. Especially two whom we recruited at the last minute to fill unexpected vacancies on our ritual team!

This month's OAM/SOI is hosted by Golden Rule Lodge No. 479 on Monday, September 28 at the San Jose Masonic Center. Dinner is served at 6:30 PM. Friendship Lodge covers the cost of our officers' meals.

The SOI begins at 7:30 PM and will cover legislation for the upcoming Grand Lodge Annual Communication and conducting the Masonic Funeral Service. You can download information on these topics from iMember.

All Officers are expected to attend all SOIs. If you cannot make it for any reason, please contact our Inspector, Worshipful Dinesh Chhabra. And let WM Andrew Litfin know, so we don't send somebody out to find you.

Currently, we await the investigating committee's report on a new applicant, Mr. Aldwin Avila. If the Master receives it by Stated Meeting night, we can elect him to membership and confer his 1st Degree on September 10.

On the 17th, we have an all-hands 3rd Degree practice at 7:00 PM. We are preparing for Bro. Llaguno's conferral on the following Thursday.

We plan to confer Bro. Brylle Llaguno's 3rd Degree on September 24, with a team of Past Masters. Wor.

Gilbert Cruz is now recruiting Past Masters for the degree team. When he contacts you, please say "yes" and take a part, if you can. We hope he doesn't have to bring in most of the PMs from other lodges.

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

And if you cannot attend a practice, please inform your Officer Coaches, so we don't wait around for you to arrive.

Practices start at 7:00 PM and go to 9:00 PM. Please respect everybody's time by arriving on time. And come prepared to work by knowing which degree we are learning and what your part is.

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

The Chaplain's Corner



The Holy Bible and Freemasonry

Contrary to popular lambasting of Freemasonry by many sectors of our society, the Masonic organization always considers the Holy Bible as the moral compass and spiritual light every Freemason. Generally, it is termed as the "Volume of the Sacred Law".

For those who do not understand, or refuse to accept, that Freemasonry is not a religion but a fraternity of men, and that all Masonic lodges are mandated to display the Holy Bible, or in some cases a different Book of Sacred Writings, on the

altar. That Volume defines the very foundational behavior of every Freemason Brother.

Freemasonry has no limit or prerequisite in terms of the religious organization to which a member may belong, the fact remains that anyone knocking on the door of the fraternity must bear witness to his belief in the existence of God. Otherwise, there is no point in discussing with him anything about our Freemasonic values and principles.

Indeed, Freemasonry is not only for those who profess to be Christians. It relates equally well with teachings of other faiths, such as in the Muslim's Qur'ān or in the Jew's Torah. They can be read side by side with the Holy Bible, with respect given to other faiths and traditions a prospective member may follow.

It is a common knowledge that the Roman Catholic Church warns its members not to join the Masonic fraternity. Furthermore, some "Bible-believing" churches have a similar negative idea about how Freemasonry might adversely affect their members. Those attitudes raise doubts about loyalty and refer to the saying "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon". Gospel of Matthew, chapter 6, verse 24.

Unfortunately, this is not what the Freemasonry is all about. Our fraternity is all about caring for the poor, widows, orphans, and fellow Masons and their families in distress. We are not in competition with any individual or organization, inside or outside fraternity. Each Freemason is in competition within himself to be a better man today than he was yesterday.

Is this not what the Holy Bible clearly teaches to all Mankind?

Respectfully,

Pastor Ed Advincula, Chaplain

The Secretary's Table



Two-thirds of 2026 has gone by, yet 14 Friendship Brethren have not paid this year's dues. Two of them have not paid for two years.

Please look in your wallet and check the date on your Friendship Lodge dues card. If your dues card says paid through December 31, 2026, you are current. If it says 2025 or 2024, you are behind.

You have two options:

1. If you can pay your dues, please do so.
2. If you cannot pay your dues, contact the Master, Senior, or Junior Warden and tell them in complete confidence. The Lodge can then remit your dues, so you no longer owe.

Not an option: Ignore your dues. That would leave you subject to suspension, which is "the deprivation of all the rights and privileges of Masonry and prohibits all Masons and Lodges from holding any Masonic Communication with [you]" from California Masonic Code §804.155.

Friendship Lodge is patient with non-payers. But eventually, we must act. The Grand Lodge recently put a new system in place for handling this matter. We are not looking forward to using it.

Dues for 2026 are \$120.50. You can pay dues online at any time through your iMember account. Note that iMember uses your credit card and charges a processing fee.

Or, you can 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 your dues payment to the SJMC. And please do not give it to somebody so they can give to me. Doing so may cause delay, confusion and anxiety.

Daniel Doornbos, PM, Secretary



September Birthdays

- 1 – Ramón Manlapaz
- 1 – Sean O'Hara
- 1 – Gilbert Sanchez
- 2 – Joe Alarcon, PM
- 6 – Rolando Liwang, Jr.
- 7 – Jerry Kennedy, PM
- 10 – Catalino Alfelor, Jr.
- 17 – Jim Kouretas
- 20 – Daniel Doornbos, PM
- 21 – Ronald Gordon
- 23 – Noel Baybayan
- 24 – Helmuth Litfin, PM

September Events

September 3 — Stated Meeting

Dinner is \$10.00 per person. Dress: Casual theme. No shorts, jeans, or sandals, please. The menu was undermined when this document went to press.

September 10 — First Degree Conferral

Pending results of the ballot at the September Stated Meeting, Mr. Aldwin Avila.

Lodge opens at 7:00 PM. Officers in advanced stations. SD Dan Chaid in the East.

If you have questions about the ritual or need to practice, contact either of our officer coaches.

Dress: Tux for officers, coat and tie for sideliners.

September 17 — Third Degree Practice

All officers and degree-team members, please attend. 7:00 to 9:00 PM. Dress: Casual

September 19 — Constitutional Observance & Celebration

Sponsored by Zorah Grotto and Golden Rule Lodge No. 479 at the San Jose Masonic Center.

Dinner 6:30 PM, \$25.00 per person, reservation required. Reserve at <https://www.grl479.org/>

Activity & Program 7:30 to 9:00 PM

Dress: Smart casual (collared shirt and slacks)

September 24 — Third Degree Conferral

Past Masters' 3rd Degree conferral upon Bro. Byrille Llaguno 7:00 to 9:30 PM.

We may not have enough Past Masters to fill all the stations, so all Master Masons are welcome to join our ritual team.

Dress: Tux for officers, coat and tie for sideliners.

September 28 — Officers Association

Golden Rule Lodge No. 479 is hosting. Dinner at 6:30 PM, school of instruction at 7:30 PM covering a Grand Lodge Preview and Masonic Funeral Services.

All officers are expected to attend. Dress: Casual

2026 Officers

Officers

Wives/Ladies

Master

Andrew Litfin (Lauren) 408-832-5846

Senior Warden

Sean O'Hara (Savannah) 559-862-9372

Junior Warden

Jake Todino (Lyn) 831-207-1264

Treasurer

Kendall Mills, PM (Janet) 408-281-4084

Secretary

Daniel Doornbos, PM (Gillian) 408-802-7480

Chaplain

Ed Advincula 510-921-7136

Senior Deacon

Dan Chaid (Theresa) 408-393-8905

Junior Deacon

Al Dorji (Hakimeh) 408-313-4781

Marshal

Gilbert Cruz, PM (Monette) 408-483-1964

Senior Steward

Jack Caceres (Sorena) 669-388-1816

Junior Steward

Omar Martinez 669-296-7720

Tiler

Louie Mar (Ireen) 408-838-3873

Musician

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/>

I Ask: "Why?"



Ever since I was a child, one question has followed me: **Why?**

I was never satisfied with what could be seen on the surface. I was drawn to what people called the occult sciences, to spirituality, symbolism, and ritual. I wanted to understand what lay beneath things, why they were done one way and not another.

Perhaps that same question was what, years later, led me to knock at the doors of Freemasonry.

I was about twenty-four the first time. I asked questions, did some research, and met several Brothers.

But just then, my life changed completely. My girlfriend at the time (now the mother of my son) became pregnant. I was going to be a father for the first time. I moved to another city, in another state, and suddenly my responsibilities were different.

It was not the right time to make a commitment to Freemasonry. There was no rejection or Masonic obstacle. I was the one who decided to put the process on hold.

Several years passed. By then I was settled in San Cristóbal and my life was more stable, but that old question was still there. I knocked again, and this time, I was initiated in Venezuela.

There I found a Masonry deeply committed to study, especially symbolism, philosophy, and esoteric thought. My Masonic formation required

reading, research, and the presentation of papers as part of my advancement. I learned that receiving a degree was not an ending. It came with new responsibilities. In time, I was raised to the degree of Master Mason.

Then life brought me to the United States, and something happened that I had not expected: I had to start over.

Because of recognition issues between Masonic jurisdictions, if I wanted to affiliate regularly in California, I had to go through initiation again. I was already a Master Mason, but I had no difficulty putting on the Apprentice's apron once more. If I truly loved Freemasonry, what did it matter if I had to begin again?

That second journey taught me something the first perhaps could not: **there are many ways of living Freemasonry.**

In Venezuela, great importance was placed on philosophical, symbolic, and esoteric study. In the United States, I encountered a Masonic culture where these areas do not necessarily occupy the same place, nor is every Brother expected to pursue them. Here I have learned to appreciate other dimensions of the Craft: fellowship, service, and the social life of the Lodge. For me, that adjustment was not easy.

I have also met Brothers who come to Freemasonry looking for study, symbolism, and esoteric instruction, and sometimes struggle to find someone who can guide them. Rather than driving me away, that difference gave me another reason to stay and work.

Over time, I came to understand that initiation by itself does not do the work for us. Oswald Wirth explains in *The Book of the Apprentice* that ritual initiation is the beginning of a labor that must afterward be undertaken by the initiate himself. Today, that idea means much more to me than it did when I began.

So what has Freemasonry changed in me?

I cannot say that I have finished working on my rough ashlar, removing all its imperfections. Quite the opposite. But I can recognize some changes. I have learned to resist the impulse to judge too quickly and to try to understand before forming an

opinion. I have learned to leave many things unsaid. Mastering silence is not easy, and I am still working on it. I have also learned to open my mind to new knowledge without believing that an open mind requires me to remain silent when I see something that is wrong.

There is another lesson that can only be understood by showing up and working.

As Masons, we speak symbolically of labor and wages. That is why I often say something that may sound contradictory:

“The best Lodge meeting was the one I missed.”

Why? Because perhaps that was the night when the richest wages were paid, and I was not there to receive them. Perhaps a Brother said something I needed to hear. Perhaps a conversation would have changed the way I saw something. Perhaps I missed a lesson that would never be offered in quite the same way again.

That is why I do my best to attend.

I do not want to miss my wages.

But after so many years in Freemasonry, I have come to understand that I cannot spend my entire Masonic life waiting to be paid.

There comes a time when we must begin paying wages ourselves.

When I was an Apprentice, I needed guidance, answers, and Brothers willing to teach. In time, I made myself a simple promise:

To try to become the Master I needed when I was an Apprentice.

That is why, when I meet a Brother who sincerely wants to explore the philosophical, symbolic, or esoteric dimensions of Freemasonry, I try to share what I have learned. Not to impose my views, because every Brother must walk his own path and esoteric study here is not mandatory, but so that a Brother who is searching can find someone willing to walk beside him.

Along the way, I discovered something else. Every time I try to teach someone, I learn again myself. To explain a difficult idea, I have to review it, study it again, organize my thoughts, and find a clear way to communicate it.

In that sense, **the one who teaches learns twice.**

That is why **my attendance at the Lodge is no longer only about improving myself.** The Lodge is a collective labor. There is the Brother who taught me, the Brother who works beside me, and the new workmen who are only beginning to shape their rough ashlar.

I was once one of those workmen waiting to receive his wages. I still want to receive mine because I am still a workman with much to learn. But I also understand that I have a responsibility to help pay wages to the new workmen who enter the Lodge in search of knowledge.

And so I return to the question with which everything began.

Why?

Because I was searching for knowledge.

Why did I stay?

Because I discovered how much I still had to learn.

And why am I still a Mason?

Because I still want to receive my wages, but I have also come to understand that the time has come to help pay the wages of those who are just beginning.

As long as I can continue learning from my Brothers, and as long as I can walk beside a new workman in his search, I will have a reason to return to the Lodge.

Perhaps that is why, after all these years, I still ask myself the same question that first set me on this path: **Why?**

Omar Martínez, Junior Steward

Constitutional Observance Month

September used to be Constitutional Observance Month for every Masonic lodge in California. Each lodge was directed to hold some kind of activity to learn about and honor the Constitution of the United States of America.

Some lodges held their own individual observance. Many lodges joined with others in their region and hosted joint activities. In San Jose, we had a joint activity sponsored by Zorah Grotto.

Then the Covid-19 pandemic struck and we could no longer meet in person. Many organizations were adversely affected and some were still dealing with the aftermath years later.

Thanks to the initiative of the members of Zorah Grotto and Golden Rule Lodge No. 479, the Constitutional Observance in San Jose is back. See page 2 of this Trestleboard for information and registration.

What is the Grotto?

The Mystic Order of Veiled Prophets of the Enchanted Realm (MOVPER) was formed in 1890 by a group of Master Masons belonging to Hamilton Lodge No. 120 in the state of New York. Their goal was to expand Freemasonry's beneficial influence by cultivating a spirit of cheerfulness and good fellowship, beyond what was appropriate in a Blue Lodge setting.

MOVPER founded its Humanitarian Foundation in 1949, supporting cerebral palsy research and providing dental care for children with special needs.

An individual body is called a Grotto. A grotto is a small cave, usually lighted and decorated, used as a spiritual sanctuary.

But Grottos meet in conventional buildings. To join, you must be a Master Mason in good standing.

Their ritual and self-image are drawn from the story of the 8th century Persian military and political leader known as Al-Muqanna, "the veiled". He was a major figure of the *Khorrām-Dīn* religious movement (which blended Zoroastrian and Islamic influences), claimed to be a prophet, and led a rebellion against the Abbasid Caliphate.



The MOVPER logo (above) is based on a traditional image of Al-Muqanna without a veil. According to legend, he wore a veil to conceal his distractively handsome face. You can't really tell that from the logo.

For more information, go to www.scgrotto.org or ask one of the gentlemen wearing a black fez.