



Friendship Lodge No. 210

Trestleboard

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

OCTOBER – 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 <i>FRIENDSHIP Stated Meeting Dinner 6:30 PM</i>	2	3
4	5 <i>Stated Meetings Golden Rule 479 San Jose 10 Los Altos 712 Dinner 6:30 PM</i>	6 <i>Stated Meetings Mt View DeAnza 194 Palo Alto 346 Dinner 6:30 PM</i>	7 <i>Stated Meeting Willow Glen Fraternity 399 Dinner 6:30 PM</i>	8 <i>FRIENDSHIP 1st Degree Ritual Practice 7:00 PM</i>	9 <i>Grand Lodge Annual Communication 1:00 PM</i>	10 <i>Grand Lodge Annual Communication 8:30 AM</i>
11 <i>Grand Lodge Annual Communication 9:00 AM</i>	12	13	14	15 <i>FRIENDSHIP 1st Degree for Aldwin Avila 7:00 PM</i>	16 <i>Chandler Tripp Pumpkin Patch Event 10:00 AM</i>	17
18	19 <i>SCVMOA Meeting Los Altos Lodge No. 712, Los Altos 6:30 PM Officers Mandatory</i>	20	21	22 <i>FRIENDSHIP Officer Qualification Ritual Practice 7:00 PM</i>	23	24
25 <i>SCVMOA Grand Masters' Reception at SJ Scottish Rite 11:00 AM</i>	26	27	28	29 <i>FRIENDSHIP Officer Qualification Proficiencies 7:00 PM</i>	30	31

From the East



Fraternal Greetings from the East!

Andrew Litfin, Master

From the West



Fraternal Greetings from the West!

Sean Michael O'Hara, Senior Warden

From the South



Fraternal Greetings from the South!

Making time for family, friends and meaningful moments. October is a month to slow down and enjoy the little things of what no longer serves you, like leaves falling from trees. It is the start of ending the year with intention rather than rushing through it.

As the year draws to a close, we warmly invite our brethren, friends, and families to gather in fellowship and celebrate the shared values of Masonry. Join us for our monthly stated meetings as we come together in friendship, community, and meaningful connection.

We are pleased to share the menu we will be serving roasted pork, red cabbage salad, German potato salad, apple strudel, and pretzel bread.

For reservation please contact Worshipful Litfin Helmuth at 408-421-9381 or helmuth.litfin@gmail.com.

Jake Todino, Junior Warden

Training Camp



Last month, Friendship Lodge hosted the Officers Association Meeting (OAM) and School of Instruction (SOI) The SOI covered at 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 Los Altos Lodge No. 712 on Monday, October 19 at the Los Altos 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 Candidate education and proficiency, Officer elections, and reception of the flag. 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.

Due to uncertain communication problems, the Master has assigned a new investigation committee for Aldwin Avila. We have their reports and ballot on him at the October Stated Meeting night. If elected, we plan to confer his 1st Degree on October 15th.

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 rehearsing your spoken parts before you arrive.

The **Constitutional Observance & Celebration** event, sponsored by Zorah Grotto and Golden Rule Lodge No. 479 on September 19 came off well. Wor. Brandon Dueñas of Golden Rule Lodge No. 479 served a diverse salad bar, spaghetti with homemade sauce, garlic bread, and dessert.

Wor. Bud Ramsey of Mount Moriah Lodge No. 292 led the knowledge competitions and history portions. His daughter, history instructor and former department head at Mission College, could not attend in person but she provided an informative and insightful recorded video presentation.

Attendance was, well, modest. Three members of Friendship Lodge were present. For many years, every California lodge was required to hold a Constitutional Observance event in September, per CMC §6070. That section and requirement have been eliminated. Maybe they should reinstate it.

At this writing, we are looking forward to the **Friendship Lodge Past Masters 3rd Degree** for Bro. Brylle Llaguno on September 24.

Wor. Gilbert Cruz deserves our thanks for assembling the cast. It was a big job because only seven Friendship Past Masters were available to participate. This year, we have support from five Past Masters of other lodges to complete our team. We are grateful for their help.

Although it is nobody's fault, we observe a long, slow decline in member participation. There are many valid reasons for the decline. The challenge is to carry on essential activities like conferring degrees and lodge business when fewer Brothers are available to participate. Friendship is not the only lodge struggling with this situation. And we have no plans to give up. Still, it requires extra time and effort for those who accept assignments and stay involved.

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

The Chaplain's Corner



Norman Vincent Peale: A Freemason

While some sectors in our world today and even in the past centuries have made up their mind immersed with a negative thought pattern about Freemasonry, there is one lingering subject matter that can put an end to their pessimism of us as Freemasons...

One dynamic and will always be a part of our American history was a church-ordained pastor, author of the international bestselling book, *The Power of Positive Thinking*, plus 21 additional titles.

He served as an informal advisor to President Richard Nixon and influenced many other presidents of both parties. President Ronald Reagan awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom (the highest civilian honor in the United States) on March 26, 1984, for originating a "philosophy of happiness" and for "helping millions find new meaning in their lives".

His name, in case you skipped the title of this article or never read his famous book, is Norman Vincent Peale.

Norman Vincent Peale was born on May 31, 1898 in Bowersville, Ohio. He was ordained a Methodist Minister in 1922. From 1922 to 1932, Peale belonged to and ministered in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Peale became one of the first American clergymen to preach his sermons over the radio, and eventually, television.

In March 1932, he was asked to be a guest preacher at Marble Collegiate Church in New York City. The church had been without a pastor for two years. He so inspired the church leaders that they offered him the pastor's position, which he accepted in October of that year. This action required Peale to transfer his affiliation to the Reformed Church in America. Peale's congregation eventually grew to thousands. Peale remained at Marble until his retirement from pastoral work in 1984.

Norman Vincent Peale was member of a Midwood Lodge No. 1062 in Brooklyn, New York. He was also a 33rd degree Scottish Rite Mason. He perceived Freemasonry as a form of dedication to God and service to humanity.

For those in a limbo about the existence of Freemasonry and the Masonic Values and Principles we espouse, don't wander too far...

Norman Vincent Peale was a living example of a true and genuine Freemason.

Respectfully,

Pastor Ed Advincula, Chaplain

The Secretary's Table



Two-thirds of 2026 has gone by, yet 13 Friendship Brethren have not paid this year's dues. Two of them have not paid for two years.

We discuss dues in almost every Secretary's monthly column. It's boring and annoying, I know. Member dues for 2026 are \$120.50. And it looks like 2027 dues will remain the same.

If you have dues related questions, contact me at 408-802-7480 or daniel.doornbos@icloud.com.

Daniel Doornbos, PM, Secretary



October Birthdays

- 1 – Bruce Weller, PM
- 4 – Kyle Schmidt, PM
- 13 – Jack Caceres
- 13 – Scott Peterson
- 14 – Ronald Reed, PM
- 21 – Michael Baughn
- 26 – Robert Wilson, PM
- 28 – Kirk Wells, PM
- 30 – Steven Carpenter
- 31 – Jonathan Blank

Venezuela Earthquake Disaster Relief Appeal

On 24 June 2026 two large earthquakes struck northwestern and central Venezuela, both centered in San Felipe, Yaracur. Currently hundreds of thousands are homeless, more than 5,000 were killed at least 16,500 are injured, and tens of thousands remain missing.

As of 17 July, at least five brother Masons with 300 relatives of brothers were also killed. Thousands more have lost their homes, their livelihoods, their worldly possessions. Lastly, the Grand Lodge Temple in Caracas, built in 1873, was severely damaged.

As Brothers of the Craft, let us remember that adversity only strengthens our international bonds.

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September Events

October 1 — Stated Meeting

Dinner is \$10.00 per person. Dress: Business suit or sports coat and tie. The menu consists of roasted pork, red cabbage salad, German potato salad, apple strudel, and pretzel bread.

October 8 — First Degree Practice

Officers in advanced stations with SD Dan Chaid in the East.

Dress: Casual.

October 9 thru 11 — Grand Lodge of CA Annual Communication

The Grand Lodge Annual Communication is held at the California Masonic Memorial Temple, 1111 California Street, San Francisco. All Master Masons may attend. You can register online or at the door.

The Grand Lodge opens at 1:00 PM Friday afternoon. The business session resumes Saturday morning at 8:30 AM. That night is the Grand Banquet. Sunday morning public ceremonies begin at 9:00 AM followed by the installation of the Grand Officers at 11:00 AM. The opening, banquet, and installation are open to the public.

Dress: Business suit.

October 15 — First Degree Conferral

For Mr. Aldwin Avila. We appointed a new investigation team and they made their reports. All that remains is to ballot at the October Stated Meeting.

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

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

October 22 — Officers Practice

The brothers who will serve as Master, Wardens, and Senior Deacon in 2027 must be able to demonstrate proficiency performing their respective parts in the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd degrees and stated meetings. This is the last chance for us to rehearse together as a team.

Dress: Casual.

October 23 — Chandler Tripp Pumpkin Patch

Two years ago, the Chandler-Tripp School moved to a new location at the Foothill High School Annex at 2750 Riverrun Drive in San Jose. They are still the Santa Clara County Office of Education's Early Start Program, which serves severely handicapped children and prepares them to enter the education system.

Friendship Lodge has supported this school for decades, doing maintenance work, child ID, and helping with refreshments. And we make two annual cash donations to the school.

The county eventually took over all facility maintenance, and the child ID program became obsolete. But they still count on us to provide manpower at special events and financial support. And we provide miniature pumpkins for the **Annual Pumpkin Patch** event.

If you are available to help from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM on Friday, October 23, please contact our Secretary and inform him that you're coming.

This is an easy yet effective way for Friendship Lodge to do its share in supporting our public schools.

Dress: Casual. Bring a jacket.

October 25 — Grand Master's Reception

Normally, we hold it on the evening of the first Saturday after the Annual Communication. This year is different.

We will meet at the San Jose Scottish Rite Center on Sunday, October 25 at 11:00 AM. Lunch is served at noon. Palo Alto Lodge No. 346 is hosting.

Dress: Business suit or sports coat and tie. Your lady is welcome to attend.

October 29 — Officers Proficiency

The brothers who will serve as Master, Wardens, and Senior Deacon in 2027 demonstrate their proficiency performing their respective parts before the Inspector. The incoming Master and Wardens must successfully pass to qualify for election at the November Stated Meeting, one week later.

Dress: Casual.

2026 Officers

<u>Officers</u>	<u>Wives/Ladies</u>	
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: “How?”



In my previous article, I tried to answer a question that has followed me since childhood: Why? Why did I seek Freemasonry? Why did I stay? Why am I still a Mason?

This time, I want to ask a different and perhaps more practical question: How do we study Freemasonry?

I know Brothers who genuinely want to learn. They buy books, collect Masonic dictionaries, read papers, and search for authors who can help them understand the Craft. I did the same for years. There is nothing wrong with that. But today, I believe books should not be the beginning.

For me, the starting point is questioning.

Freemasonry is not a truth already revealed to us, but a truth waiting to be discovered. And no one can reveal it for you if you have not first learned how to ask questions.

There is something important to clarify here. Studying Freemasonry is not the same as conducting a purely academic or scientific study. We certainly draw from history, philosophy, and research. But the Masonic method also works through symbols, allegories, and working tools whose meaning each initiate must gradually discover for himself.

In *Morals and Dogma*, Albert Pike suggests that our ceremonies are not simply lessons to be read and

memorized, but problems placed before the initiate for investigation.

The first time I encountered that idea, it made me uncomfortable. A problem is not solved simply by reading about it. It must be worked.

So where do we begin? I think like a workman.

If I want to understand the common gavel, I do not begin by opening a Masonic dictionary. I find a gavel.

Some time ago, I asked a Brother to let me hold his Masonic dictionary, one of the really heavy ones. It weighed more than I expected. I remember thinking that for someone accustomed to working with such a tool, its weight must eventually feel natural. For me, it did not.

That experience taught me more than I expected. I had approached the tool with my head full of symbolism without even knowing what it felt like to hold it in my hands.

That is the order that has worked for me.

Albert G. Mackey takes a similar approach when discussing the working tools of an Entered Apprentice: he begins with their operative purpose before moving toward their speculative meaning. The twenty-four-inch gauge measures; the common gavel applies force. First, I try to understand what the workman does with the tool. Only then do I ask what the Mason should do with it.

Before I think like a philosopher, I think like a workman. The books come afterward.

Then I turn to the ritual, Masonic dictionaries and encyclopedias, other authors, papers written by Brothers, and historical sources. But I no longer approach them expecting someone else to tell me what to think. I come with my own questions, and I use the work of others to challenge, correct, compare, and expand my understanding.

Because interpretation does not mean invention.

The common gavel may lead me to different reflections at different moments in my life, but it remains a tool for applying force. I can ask myself where that force should be applied, how much is necessary, when I should use it, or when I should restrain it. What I cannot do is decide that the gavel measures time. We have another tool for that.

Interpretation can be open, but it cannot be arbitrary.

And there is still one more step. Perhaps the most difficult one.

After observing, questioning, researching, and interpreting, I have to turn the symbol back toward myself.

Then I ask three simple questions that are not always easy to answer honestly:

How have I applied it?
How am I applying it?
How should I apply it?
Past, present, and future.

I can quote three authors on the rough ashlar, know several interpretations of it, and write an excellent Masonic paper about it. But if I never identify the rough edges of my own stone that still need work, perhaps I have learned a great deal about Freemasonry while doing very little work on myself.

That is why, when a Brother asks me how to begin studying Freemasonry, my first recommendation is not a book.

I tell him to observe. To touch. To question. To think like the workman who once used those tools in an actual craft.

The books will come afterward. And after the books, inevitably, he will have to look back at himself.

Because in the end, perhaps the most important question we can ask when standing before a symbol is not simply: What does it mean?

But another, far more uncomfortable question: What am I doing with it?

Omar Martínez, Junior Steward

Venezuela Earthquake Disaster Relief Appeal

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Let us also use this moment to reflect on the fragility of life and the importance of being prepared, not just physically, but also in terms of the support systems we offer to one another.

Jose Gregorio Sardelli Bravo, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the Republic of Venezuela, has requested the Masonic Service Association of North America (MSANA) to issue this Disaster Relief Appeal. The MSANA Board of Commissioners has endorsed this request.



If you choose to give to this appeal, please forward any donations you feel appropriate to help our devastated Brothers and their families in this stricken and jurisdiction to MSANA.

Please make checks payable to MSA Disaster Relief Appeal and mail to:

Masonic Service Association
813 1st Avenue SE, Suite 357
Cedar Rapids, IA 52402-5001

When remitting by check, please clearly mark that you wish the funds to go to the Venezuela Earthquake Relief Appeal.

Online Donations:

<https://msana.com/current-appeals/>

Trivia question:

Did you know that two of our current Friendship Lodge officers hail from Venezuela?