Friendship Lodge No. 210

Trestleboard

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

DECEMBER – 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 *Stated Meetings* *Mt View DeAnza 194* *Palo Alto 346* *Dinner 6:30 PM*	**2** *Stated Meeting* *Willow Glen* *Fraternity 399* *Dinner 6:30 PM*	**3** *FRIENDSHIP* *Stated Meeting* *Dinner 6:30 PM*	**4**	**5** *Mt View DeAnza 194* *Installation Noon* *(closed)* *Palo Alto 346* *Installation 5:00 PM*
6 *South Valley 187* *Installation* *10:00 AM*	**7** *Stated Meetings* *Golden Rule 479* *San Jose 10* *Los Altos 712* *Dinner 6:30 PM*	**8** *Bodhi Day*	**9**	**10** *FRIENDSHIP* *Installation of* *Officers 6:00 PM*	**11**	**12** *San Jose 10* *Installation at SJSR* *4:30 PM*
13 *Los Altos 712* *Installation 2:00 PM*	**14**	**15**	**16**	**17** *FRIENDSHIP* *No meeting*	**18** *Hanukkah Begins* *(at sunset)*	**19**
20	**21**	**22** *Yule / Winter* *Solstice*	**23**	**24** *FRIENDSHIP* *No meeting*	**25** *Christmas*	**26** *Hanukkah ends* *(at sunset)* *Zarathosht Diso*
27	**28**	**29**	**30**	**31** *FRIENDSHIP* *No meeting*	*Happy New Year!*	

From the East



Fraternal Greetings from the East!

Andrew Litfin, Master

From the West



Fraternal Greetings from the West!

2026 was a strong year for Friendship Lodge No. 210.

We raised a new Master Mason Bro. Brylle Llaguno, who gave a virtually perfect Entered Apprentice proficiency in February, received his Fellowcraft degree on March 26 and his Master Mason degree on September 24, when our Past Masters conferred the Third Degree with the help of Past Masters and Masters from seven sister lodges; and we welcomed a new Entered Apprentice: Bro. Aldwin Avila, who received his First Degree on October 15.

The year opened with the unanimous approval of the 2026 budget at the January stated meeting, and the lodge kept its ritual sharp all year with Thursday practices and the district's Schools of Instruction — including a well-received turn hosting the August Officers Association Meeting on balloting and objections.

Our officers carried the lodge's name beyond our own walls as well: Senior Warden Sean O'Hara served as Master of Ceremonies at the Grand Master's Reception in October, and the 345th District welcomed a new Inspector, Wor. Chris Mays.

Beyond the lodge room, we kept up the traditions that make Friendship what it is: the annual Crab Feed in February, the Family Picnic at Vasona Park in June—still our best-attended event of the year—and our annual scholarships for members' children and grandchildren, presented at the August stated meeting.

We stood by Foothill School, formerly Chandler-Tripp, helping at its Spring Carnival refreshment table and providing 90 miniature pumpkins for its October Pumpkin Patch, and we took part in the statewide Masons4Mitts campaign for children's summer programs.

Bro. Don Gunaratne was honored with the Sciots 2026 Cornerstone Award, Master Andrew Litfin married his fiancée Lauren on November 8, and we marked the end of an era as Rev. Gene Meyer closed out nine years of contributing his Reverend's Corner column, with Pastor Ed Advincula the effort forward as the renamed Chaplain's Corner.

As the year closes, we look ahead to our Installation of Officers on Thursday, December 10 at the San Jose Masonic Center, and to another year of good work together. I am excited to be installed that evening, and I am honored to lead Friendship Lodge as Worshipful Master in the coming year.

Sean Michael O'Hara, Senior Warden

From the South



Fraternal Greetings from the South!

As December marks the final month of the year, it naturally invites us to reflect on the memories we have made, the lessons we have learned, and the journeys that lie ahead.

Our last stated meeting of the year is a special occasion—a time to look back with gratitude, fellowship, exchange thoughts and reflections, and look forward with hope and renewed purpose.

Most importantly, it is an opportunity to welcome and embrace our incoming Masonic officers for 2027, extending our support, brotherhood, and best wishes as they prepare to lead us into another year of service.

Please join us for our monthly Stated Meeting Dinner, where we gather not only to break bread but also to celebrate the abundance of friendship, share meaningful ideas, exchange thoughts, and strengthen the bonds of brotherly love.

Let us come together in the true spirit of Masonic fellowship, enjoying good food, great conversations, and the company of our beloved brethren.

For it is in these moments of togetherness that our brotherhood grows stronger and our Masonic bonds become ever more meaningful.

Good Food, Great Fellowship, and Everlasting Brotherly Love!

Menu: Prime rib, mashed potatoes, and green beans. Note that the December stated meeting dinner costs $15.00 per person.

Please call us to confirm your attendance to our monthly stated dinner with Helmuth Litfin, PM at (408) 421- 9381.

Jake Todino, Junior Warden

Training Camp



Wor. Helmuth and I have worked together as officer coaches for several years now. We often see things and set priorities somewhat differently. That could result in ongoing conflict. But with us, our distinctive viewpoints complement each other.

As the lodge officers already know, Wor. Helmuth is stepping down from officer coaching, at least for a while. As Lodge, I will not be able to also serve as officers coach without Helmuth's assistance.

The responsibility for appointing officer coaches belongs to the District Inspector. Our new Inspector, Wor. Chris Mays will likely announce the new officer coach at the Installation of Officers on December 10.

The upcoming month being December, there will be no Officers Association Meeting (OAM) and School of Instruction (SOI) until January.

For 2027, we plan to continue holding a ritual practice every Thursday, except for Stated Meetings, degree conferrals, OAM/SOIs, and holidays. And we would like to keep the same hours: Start at 7:00 PM and go to 9:00 PM.

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

The Chaplain's Corner



The Holy Bible is Perpetually part of Freemasonry

While some sectors of our society still have that false impression about Freemasonry as a religion, we always sound the alarm that we are not. Freemasonry is "A Fraternity, a Brotherhood of Man Under the Fatherhood of God Almighty".

The Holy Bible will forever be of service to our fraternal organization spiritually as a pillar of strength, understanding, love, compassion, benevolence, and humility.

Depending on the lodges in every nation or the respective faith of the masons in general, what counts the most is our recognition that, without God, the Architect of the Universe, our lives would have been shattered since time immemorial.

The universal saying that "No man is an island" genuinely appertains and is deeply rooted to what Masonic spiritual living is all about. Being a perfectionist is not and will never be the issue. It is the way we demonstrate in our day-to-day existence, what the sincere Freemason truly is.

It is in the supreme equation which visibly defines that Freemasonry is always dependent upon the Book of the Sacred Law enriching each one of us with spiritual vitality, vigor, and power to move on for the rest in need—a legacy attached to our Freemasonic Values and Principles!

Respectfully,

Pastor Ed Advincula, Chaplain

The Secretary's Table



The year 2026 is quickly ending. We passed through a few challenges and emerged healthy and successful.

Your 2027 dues are $123.50. There was a $3.00 per capita increase over last year.

The Grand Lodge of California has begun sending out dues notices. You will find them in your email inbox and your postal mailbox. Your 2027 payment is due on or by December 31. If you wait until January 1, you are technically in arrears.

We still have a dozen members who have not yet paid for 2026. Yet from Friendship Lodge's standpoint, it is not about the money. Thanks to many generous donors over the years combined with wise money management, Friendship Lodge is in a strong position financially.

Instead, we are concerned about members who might be struggling through health or financial challenges. The Lodge usually can't do much to resolve those challenges, but we can arrange for your dues to be remitted. That means a year or more of dues are forgiven. And the member has one less thing to worry about.

When you receive your dues notice via email, you can click on a button which takes you to the iMember website, where you can pay by credit card. Note that iMember 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 your check to somebody so they can give to me. Doing so may cause delay, confusion, and anxiety.

Looking forward to 2027!

Daniel Doornbos, PM, Secretary



December Birthdays

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

December Events

December 3 — Stated Meeting

Our annual prime rib dinner at $15.00 per person.

Dress: Business suit or sports coat and tie. Modest holiday decorations are acceptable.

December 10 — Installation of Officers

The ceremony starts at 6:00 PM. Officers, please arrive dressed in tuxedos with your ladies no later than 5:00 PM for photos.

Food service will be limited to snacks and drinks before and after the ceremony.

The current plan is to hold an Officers and families dinner after the ceremony, at an offsite location.

Friends and family are welcome to attend.

December 17, 24, and 31 — Dark

Unless the need arises, the Lodge will not hold any meetings during the rest of the month.

However, one-on-one ritual practice with a coach will be available by appointment.

January 7 — Stated Meeting

Dinner at $10.00 per person. We usually have Chinese take-out on the menu.

Dress: Business suit or sports coat and tie.

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		
Chris Mays, PM	(Courtney)	669-219-4234
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/

Confessions of a Mason Who Is Still Learning



"The Seven Deadly Sins of Masonic Learning"

Dear Brethren,

I do not claim to have received any special revelation from the Great Architect of the Universe granting me the authority to define the seven deadly sins of Masonic learning. I have enough trouble dealing with my own shortcomings without appointing myself the supreme judge of everyone else's.

I am not even certain there are only seven. There may be twenty, fifty, or many more. These are simply the ones I have come to recognize during my years in Freemasonry. Some I have committed, others I have managed to avoid, and a few, unfortunately, continue to make regular appearances.

I am not writing to expose the imperfections of my Brethren. I am writing to confess my own. After all, examining someone else's rough ashlar is considerably easier than admitting how much work remains to be done on mine.

I. Intellectual Arrogance

There was a time when I believed Freemasonry was virtually the sole guardian of humanity's great initiatic wisdom.

What a remarkable coincidence! Of all the philosophical and spiritual traditions in the world,

the one I happened to belong to possessed nearly all the answers.

That comfortable illusion began to collapse when I discovered Rosicrucianism, the traditional guilds of the Compagnonnage, the Golden Dawn, and other esoteric schools.

Editor's notes:

- Le Compagnonnage (the French word for Companionship) is a traditional system for the transmission of knowledge and vocational training, rooted in communities of Companions (journeymen/craftspeople).

  An aspiring Companion learns a trade through a series of educational practices overseen by the community they wish to join. These diverse practices may encompass formal instruction, educational travel, and initiation rituals. Following this period of Companionship, the aspirant is accepted as a Companion by their guild or association and may, in turn, participate in the training of future aspirants.

- The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn began as an esoteric and occult initiatory society that operated from 1888 until the early 1900s, primarily in the United Kingdom. Started by three high-degree Freemasons, Golden Dawn integrated various concepts from Rosicrucianism, Neoplatonism, Kabbala, Hermeticism, and ceremonial magic into a religious worldview and practice centered on personal spiritual advancement. A modern incarnation of the Order exists today.

Apparently, the universe of knowledge extended somewhat beyond my personal library.

I was reminded of a story about a bank robber who covered his face with lemon juice, convinced it would make him invisible to security cameras. Psychologists David Dunning and Justin Kruger referred to that incident when exploring how people can overestimate their abilities while remaining unaware of their limitations.

I remember laughing at the man's extraordinary confidence.

Then I realized that I, too, had been wearing my own intellectual lemon juice. The difference was that his ignorance had been captured on camera, while mine had been carefully preserved in years of unquestioned certainty.

My real problem was not what I did not know. It was how satisfied I had become with knowing so little.

II. Cognitive Dissonance

In my early years, I imagined Freemasonry as a fraternity of exceptionally virtuous men, almost immune to envy, selfishness, and prejudice.

For reasons I can no longer defend, I seemed to believe that initiation produced an immediate moral transformation.

It was a comforting theory. Reality proved somewhat less cooperative.

Over time, I discovered that Masons remained human beings. More uncomfortably, I recognized some of those same weaknesses in myself.

I have experienced envy, pride, and resentment. My difficulties communicating in English have sometimes left me feeling underestimated. In the past, that frustration made me eager to prove my education and abilities. Today, I try to respond with greater composure, although I am still working on it.

Apparently, my pride has always been a considerably more accomplished debater than my patience.

Later, when I read about Leon Festinger's theory of *cognitive dissonance*, I recognized that familiar discomfort: the tension between what we believe and what experience forces us to confront.

I had mistaken the ideals of Freemasonry for the moral perfection of its members, myself included.

I had overlooked a rather obvious question: if our stones were already perfectly shaped, why would we need the tools to work on them?

III. We've Always Done It This Way

This expression deserves a distinguished place among my favorite intellectual temptations.

It is short, authoritative, and wonderfully convenient. It allows me to end an argument without actually explaining anything.

While studying the Volume of the Sacred Law, I began to appreciate the distinction between that broader Masonic concept and particular references to the Bible. I discovered that legitimate practices differ across Masonic traditions and jurisdictions.

This did not mean that the ritual I knew was wrong. It meant that a legitimate local practice was not necessarily a universal rule.

Once again, I had confused the boundaries of my own experience with the boundaries of Freemasonry itself.

Psychology has a name for a related tendency: *status quo bias*, our preference for what is familiar.

I continue to value tradition deeply. What I am trying to avoid is using tradition as a convenient shelter for intellectual laziness.

After all, saying "We've always done it this way" requires considerably less effort than understanding why.

IV. The Sunk-Cost Fallacy

This confession deserves a little more space because the experience still makes me reflect.

I arrived in California as a Master Mason, having received my degrees in Venezuela under the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite.

Becoming a Master Mason had been anything but a formality.

My training required approximately three years of commitment: weekly lodge attendance, weekly instruction, seventeen to twenty written papers, three degree dissertations, examinations, memorized catechisms, and nearly perfect attendance.

All of this took place alongside my professional and family responsibilities.

There were countless evenings spent studying, researching, and preparing assignments.

Then, because of administrative circumstances involving my Masonic standing and recognition, I was presented with a condition for continuing my Masonic journey under the Grand Lodge of California: I would need to be initiated again.

Start over as an Entered Apprentice? After all that?

My pride, which had apparently received a very thorough Masonic education, suddenly discovered that it still knew remarkably little about humility.

I could have listed my years of service, my studies, and every sacrifice I had made. But one question refused to go away: was I going to let everything I had already invested prevent me from moving forward?

Behavioral economics calls this the sunk cost fallacy: allowing past investments of time, money, or effort to dictate a decision that should be based on what makes sense now.

I realized that I could become a prisoner of my own accomplishments.

So, I agreed. I went through initiation again.

And something remarkable happened. After spending years working toward becoming a Master Mason, one of my most meaningful lessons came from accepting that I had to begin again as an Entered Apprentice.

V. The Prison of My Own Paradigms

At first, Freemasonry meant the three symbolic degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite as I had experienced them.

That was the tradition I knew, the one I had studied, and, without realizing it, the standard by which I judged everything else.

Then I encountered other ritual traditions, including the Memphis-Misraïm and Preston-Webb practices. Later, American Freemasonry introduced me to additional ways of conducting lodge work.

It felt like discovering that the house in which I had lived for years contained many rooms I had never entered.

I had been confidently describing the entire building after exploring only one part of it.

Continued next month

Omar Martínez, Junior Steward