

December 2020

**438 Skyline Vista Drive
Front Royal, VA 22630**

www.Unity146.org

Unity Lodge No. 146

Chartered March 1870

Trestleboard



*Behold how good and pleasant it is for Brethren to dwell together in Unity!
- Psalms 133.1 -*

UPCOMING DATES

12/02 – Unity 146 Stated Commu-
nication @ 730p. **NO MEAL WILL BE
SERVED**

12/03 – Thermal Shelter Dinner
provided/served by Unity 146 @ 7p.

12/09 and 12/16– Blue Lodge
Ritual Practice @ 630p

12/26 – Unity Lodge Breakfast @
8a – **CANCELED**

12/01 – Luray Commandery #19 –
@ 730p

12/04 – Order of the Eastern Star
#6 @ 7p

12/18 – RAC Hiram #45 @ 730p

12/08 & 12/22 – Shenandoah
Valley DeMolay @ 630p – **TBD**

12/26 – Sojourners Meeting @ 8a
– **TBD**

TRAVELING MAN

No Official Visits

IS FATHER CHRISTMAS A FREEMASON?

Davis Downie
St. Trinians Lodge No. 2050,
Isle of Man

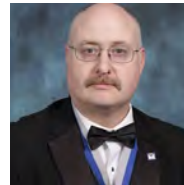
I have a very serious question
to put to you all.

I would like to raise it with you
and then do some detective
work, examining the evidence
that might lead us to answering
it.

It is a most important question
that I am sure you have often
asked yourself, and relates our
Craft to the wider society in
which we live and concerns
several major issues of this
season. This very serious ques-
tion is "Is Father Christmas a
Freemason?"

Let us consider the facts of this
case: Of whom does this remind
you?

A worthy gentleman, who is (we
must admit) getting on a bit in
years and is perhaps a little
overweight, who wears a very
distinctive costume as the
badge of his activities, who
provides the opportunity for



friends and visitors to meet in
fellowship, who is surrounded
by secrecy and mystery, dis-
penses goodwill and the charity
of gifts all over the world
(avoiding ostentatious public
display while doing so) and is
there doing it year after year!
Well, fellow detectives, you
must admit that this description
could fit either Santa or a Free-
mason. But this is merely cir-
cumstantial evidence. We need
some proof!

Let us start with his movements
on the evening in question. All
the reports have him coming
from the North Pole. As the sun
rises in the east to open and
enliven the day, and with him
needing to finish the world be-
fore dawn, then he would have
to begin in the East and move
towards the West. Therefore
Father Christmas must begin
his journey at the north-east
corner of the world. This, of
course, is exactly what we do
with an Entered Apprentice.

Similarly, you would assume he
would finish heading for home,
which would place him in the
north-west corner at the end of
his work, to give his salute to
the world and leave. Convincing
proof, you must agree!

But, think too, he undertakes
this great journey to provide the
gifts but once a year, and I am
sure that any Brother Treasurer
will agree that this is exactly the
frequency with which most
Brethren provide the gift of their
charity to the lodge! And the
secrecy, the mystery? Those of
you who are parents, remem-
ber. What was the worst crime
that an older child could com-
mit at this time of the year? To
tell the younger ones the secret
of Santa, to break the faith that
they should have kept. And I am
sure your punishment of them
pointed out that they were void
of all moral worth and totally
unfit to be received into the
dinner table but be sent to their
room for destroying something
that was so good, so worthwhile
and so innocent.

Continued Next Page....

Hiram Royal Arch Chapter
No. 45



Order of the Eastern Star
No. 6



Unity Lodge No. 146
AF & AM

Shenandoah Valley Chapter
of the DeMolay



Luray Commandery
No. 19



December 2020

**438 Skyline Vista Drive
Front Royal, VA 22630**

www.Unity146.org

Unity Lodge No. 146

Chartered March 1870

Trestleboard



Surely all this evidence shows us beyond doubt that Father Christmas is a Freemason! He practices Brotherly Love and Relief; we are happy to meet him and the Christmas season, and sorry to part.

All the details, his wearing of a uniform, the rituals that happen year in year out, the fact he is a male ... On a more serious note, Brethren, the way the whole Christmas season has developed and is practiced does have many things in common with Freemasonry, and we can learn much about each from the other.

For instance, where did the figure we call Father Christmas come from originally? What is his background? Father Christmas, or Santa Claus, or St Nicholas has elements of pre-Christian myths and legends, which developed through the Middle Ages by being built into the great Christian story of God's wonderful gift to the world.

By the eighteenth and nineteenth century these details were formalized into the character that we still have today: his stylized uniform, his way of working, his ritual activities and sayings. This all sounds very Masonic.

The pre-Christian legends of Solomon's Temple, the pyramids, Pythagoras, and so on were developed through the Middle Ages by the great Christian cathedral builders, then formalized in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries into the uniform, the work, the rituals that we use today.

St Nicholas was actually a 4th century Turkish bishop who had

originally been a rich nobleman. One of the stories about him was that he had helped a poor man who could not afford to pay for weddings for his 3 daughters.

St Nicholas climbed onto the roof and threw a handful of gold coins down the chimney and these coins fell into the girls' stockings that had been hung up by the fire to dry. The girls were then able to marry well and lived happily ever after.

He has been considered the patron saint of poor children ever since. The legend became very popular in Europe, especially the Netherlands where it was mixed with elements from the pagan Yule or mid-winter festivals. St Nick became Santa Claus, who would arrive on December 6th (St Nicholas' Day) mounted on a white horse and visit children to enquire about their behaviour the previous year.

Good children would be rewarded, and bad ones punished. The night before, children would leave a pair of the shoes or clogs out, filled with hay and carrots for the horse. In the morning these would be found, filled with sweets or small presents.

These traditions were taken to America by Dutch settlers, but it was the famous poem by Professor Clement Clark Moore which begins "'Twas the night before Christmas, and all through the house..." which settled most of the details into the Santa figure we know today.

Many of these details (such as the reindeer, and their names, the flying sledge, coming down the chimney) were first brought together in this poem, but Pro-

fessor Moore took them from old traditions from as far afield as Finland and Siberia and they have stuck and become a single story. You can see how similar this is to the creation of our ritual and ceremonies.

While these also certainly include many elements that are ancient folklore, they were put together quite deliberately by identifiable people, with a specific aim: to create an impression in the minds of the Brethren taking part. Like the Santa legend, the details may be fictional, they may come from many different sources, and they may even be inconsistent with each other. That does not matter.

It is the impression that all of them create as an entirety that is important. Would you deny all the good that the Santa story achieves, all the happiness it creates, just because it is a story? Of course not. And this is the real linking of Father Christmas and Freemasonry.

Why do we have Christmas and why do we have Father Christmas? We celebrate religious beliefs about the birth of goodness, and hope for the future; we reaffirm the belief that people are basically good and can develop into loving, caring, helpful, supporting friends to each other.

We look to a New Year where things can be better. We do this at this season whether we are celebrating the Christian

Nativity, or the Jewish Hannukah with its lights and gifts and story of peace, or the Hindu Diwali with its festival of lights and gifts of sweets and toys, or even if we hold no formal religion except the pleasure of seeing a child's face transfixed with wonder and delight. And why are we Freemasons? Because we believe that there are important things like goodness and hope for the future, and that men can develop into loving, caring, helpful, supporting Brethren to their families and each other.

We not only look to a future where things can be better, but we see it as our role, as Free and Accepted, or Symbolic, Masons, to help to build that future.

So, I feel I can safely say that Father Christmas is a Freemason. Not only does he show so many of the signs and tokens of being one, but he brings us a message that we, as Freemasons, can heed for the whole year.

Peace on earth, good will towards men!

Merry Christmas.



December 2020

**438 Skyline Vista Drive
Front Royal, VA 22630**

www.Unity146.org

Unity Lodge No. 146

Chartered March 1870

Trestleboard



As the seasons begin to change and the weather turns colder, please remember the less fortunate in our community. To this end, Unity Lodge, On Cue and the Virginia Beer Museum will have donation boxes available for coats, sweat clothes and socks. If you find it within your means, please contribute as liberally as you can to this cause.



Mr. Josh Ingram & Bro. Will Bryan



Bro. Scott Truax, Bro. Charles Taggart, Bro. Tom Kivlehan, Bro. Will Bryan & Mr. Josh Ingram

Unity Lodge has also agreed to provide a monthly meal for the Thermal Shelter beginning on November 5th. If you are able to assist in this endeavor, please contact Bro. Will Bryan to sign up. Our next meal will be provided on December 3rd.

<https://royalexaminer.com/masons-step-up-with-other-local-agencies-to-feed-homeless-through-winter-season/>

SO MOTE IT BEEF feed the Warren County Sheriff's Office on Veteran's Day



Brothers from SMIB and Unity Lodge No. 146 gathered in the dark rainy morning of November 11th to provide the men and



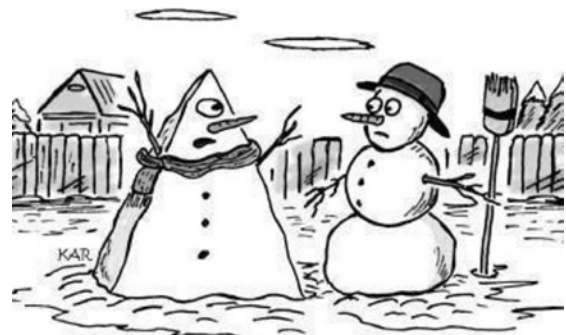
Bro. Tom Kivlehan

women of the Warren County Sheriff's Office with breakfast and lunch.

I would like to thank Brother Will Bryan for his continuous efforts to make Masonry more visible to our community of Warren County and making a right tasty BBQ.

2020 Unity Lodge Officers

Worshipful Master -	Charles William Taggart
Senior Warden -	William Allen Bryan
Junior Warden -	Robert Fred Nickols, Jr.
Treasurer -	Harry Wesley Hammack, Jr.
Secretary -	Kevin Paul Walek
Senior Deacon -	Raymond Christof Nuhra
Junior Deacon -	George Elbie Money
Chaplain -	Luther William Wheat
Marshal -	Junior Franklin Griffith
Tiler -	Edward Neal Powell, Jr.



"I was built by a Freemason!"



**Grand Lodge, A. F. & A. M., of Virginia
Masonic Community Blood Program**

Units Collected % of Membership Strength

40

32%