



The Perfect Elu

Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, S. J.
Valley of Cumberland Orient of Maryland



Newsletter
Volume 45
Number 1

Spring 2026

Burns Night Kicks Off Annual RiteCare Campaign



The Cumberland Knights of St. Andrew and the Cumberland Scottish Rite Foundation hosted another successful Robert Burns Night campaign to support local RiteCare programs in 2026. Thanks to the generous support of local businesses and individual sponsors, the 20th Annual event raised \$18,000 for the Valley's RiteCare clinic partner, The Children's League, during the festive celebration of Scotland's Bard. The Cumberland Scottish Rite Foundation presented an additional check to the Children's League for \$750 that was raised as part of the Valley's 2025 Fall Bird Hunt. Plans are already underway for the 21st Annual Robert Burns Night to be held on Saturday, February 6, 2027. Tickets and sponsorship information will be available at cumberlandscttishrite.org this September.

Pictured L to R above: 2025 KSA Venerable Master Bro. Brett T.J. Bean, 32°; KSA Advisor Hon. Dwight C. Metcalf, 32° KCCH; Ill. Frederick A. Spicer, 33°, Children's League Executive Director Cathy Growden; Valley of Cumberland Secretary-Registrar Ill. Robin L. Summerfield, 33°; Cumberland Scottish Rite Foundation Vice President Bro. Richard E. Haines, 32°; and Valley of Cumberland Personal Representative Ill. Jamey S. Hill, 33°

Piping of the Haggis

Officers of the Cumberland Knights of St. Andrew and guests celebrate the Piping of the Haggis during the 20th Annual Robert Burns Night. Pictured on stage L to R: Junior Warden Bro. Timothy E. Friend, 32°; Marshall Bro. Stephen J. Gray, 32°; Sword Bearer Hon. Mark E. Lathrop, 32° KCCH; Senior Warden Bro. Christopher D. Ackerman, 32°; Chef John McConnell; and Pipe Major Andrew Donlon.



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Want to receive the Perfect Elu and other updates in your inbox?? Sign up at www.cumberlandscttishrite.org

Cumberland Scottish Rite meetings are held on the 1st and 3rd Mondays at 7:30 pm. It's YOUR Scottish Rite and we would like to see you there and fellowship with YOUR Brothers,they would like to see you



Keep up with the
Scottish Rite on
Facebook

@cumberlandscttishrite

@scottishritefreemasonry

Valley of Cumberland Calendar of Events

Complete Calendar for 2026 at cumberlandscottishrite.org/calendar-2

MARCH 2026

Monday, March 16	Regular SR Stated Meeting: Consistory	7:30 PM
Saturday, March 21	SR 187th Conferral and Reunion	Registration 7:30 AM
	Lodge of Perfection Opens	8:30 AM
	Confer 4, 9, 10, 14, 18, 30 & 32 Degrees (One Day Class)	
Saturday, March 28	Spring Bird Hunt, Addison, PA	All Day
Monday, March 30	Knights of St. Andrew-Initiation of New Members	7:30 PM

APRIL 2026

Monday, April 6	Regular SR Stated Meeting: Lodge of Perfection	7:30 PM
Thursday, April 9- Saturday, April 11	Rite Works Leadership Conference, Charlotte, NC	
Monday, April 20	Kirkin' of the Tartan-Emmanuel Episcopal Church	10:00 AM
Monday, April 20	Regular SR Stated Meeting: Chapter of the Rose Croix	7:30 PM
Sunday, April 26	Ceremony of Lights & Spring Capping	2:00 PM

MAY 2026

Monday, May 4	Regular SR Stated Meeting: Lodge of Perfection	7:30 PM
Monday, May 18	Regular SR Stated Meeting: Council of Kadosh	7:30 PM

JUNE 2026

Monday, June 1	Masonic Strawberry Night-Masonic Temple	6:30 PM
Saturday, June 6	Garrett County Celtic Festival	TBA
Saturday, June 19	Children's League Golf Tournament	All Day
Sunday, June 21	St. John the Baptist Day-Christ Lutheran Church	10:00 AM

JULY 2026

Saturday, July 11	Family Corn Roast - Summerfield Lane	1:00 PM - 6:00 PM
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Spring Masonic Bird Hunt to Support Rite Care

Saturday, March 28, 2026
On Point Outfitters, Addison, PA



Limited Space Available!
\$185 per Shooter (\$75 Deposit)
⇒ A Guide and Dog for Each Group of 5
⇒ Exciting prizes!

Carpool from Little Sandy's at Keyser's Ridge at 8:00 am
Breakfast on your own
Contact Rob Elliott for Details at 724-984-1484



RSVP at cumberlandscottishrite.org

“Our Home, Our Legacy”

BY: ILL. JAMEY S. HILL, 33, PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE TO THE SGIG OF MARYLAND



As you may know, the Cumberland Masonic Temple, Inc. is now an IRS 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable organization. That means donations made to the Temple are tax-deductible. As a recognized public charity, we’re also eligible to pursue public and private grants to support historic restoration, education, and cultural programming.

We’ve already begun to see the benefits. During Heritage Days, we secured city and state grants that helped us bring in the world champion MacMillan United Pipe Band to fill our streets with bagpipe music—honoring the Scottish and Irish ancestors who settled this gateway to the West, once proudly known as the Queen City – while raising funds to support the restoration and maintenance of the Masonic Temple.

So what do we have to offer?

It has always been a point of pride that the Cumberland Scottish Rite and our members give generously to the broader community. At our 2026 Burns Supper alone, we presented \$18,750 to our managing partner, The Children’s League, in support of local RiteCare Speech and Language Disorders Clinics. Year after year, our members have stepped forward with meaningful support for children and families in need.

Other examples abound. The Jane and Leonard Schwab Scottish Rite Foundation Scholarship at Allegany College of Maryland continues to assist deserving students. The Danny and Dottie Thomas Welcome Center at the College stands as a lasting tribute to honored members of our Scottish Rite family.

At Frostburg State University, the Lewis J. Ort Library honors the contributions of our departed Scottish Rite Brother and Past Potentate of Ali Ghan Shrine, preserving his legacy of service and leadership. On the same campus, the Pealer Recital Hall bears the name of Brother Woody Pealer and his wife, Jenny, recognizing their significant generosity to the university and numerous other local organizations.

Yet for many years, gifts to the Temple itself were not tax-deductible. As a result, the Temple was often absent from charitable giving plans—even among our own members, who quite understandably directed substantial donations to other worthy causes.

We can be proud of all that has been given to museums, schools, hospitals, and foundations. But the time has come to direct some of that same charitable spirit toward preserving our own home—the Cumberland Masonic Temple. After all, we cannot host philanthropic events or raise funds for others if we do not have a sound and welcoming place to gather. Fraternal organizations have long played a vital role in American civic life, and the Masonic orders stand chief among them. Not so many years ago, signs listing meeting nights for civic clubs and fraternities were fixtures at the edge of nearly every town. As Robert D. Putnam observed in *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, participation in clubs declined sharply in the late twentieth century. Membership grew smaller; overhead did not.

Therein lies the rub: fewer members, higher costs.

When developing a plan for the Centennial Campaign, the Temple’s Board of Directors sought guidance from David Jones of Allegany College. He reminded us that the success of any endowment effort begins with those who care most. When stakeholders make personally meaningful gifts at the outset, they demonstrate confidence in the mission and inspire others to follow.

We have not been idle. This year alone, we installed 48 inches of insulation in the attic to reduce heating costs. Renovations to the Welcome Center entrance are underway, and a new deck on the south side will enhance the building’s rental potential. In recent years, we repointed and sealed the entire front stone façade and installed a new elevator. These are not small undertakings—they are investments in our future.

And yes, we are optimistic. Freemasonry is changing from the ground up. Brothers are stepping forward, taking initiative, and working to leave a legacy for those who will follow. The Lodge offers more than fellowship; it offers a bond of Brotherhood stronger than most friendships.

Our Board is committed to securing a stable and vibrant future. Many say we have one of the most beautiful buildings in Cumberland—perhaps even in the Masonic State of Maryland. The Temple Centennial Campaign has raised more than \$25,000 to date, and we invite you to help us build on that momentum.

If you are able to participate, please consider returning the donation form on Page 7 of this newsletter with your tax-deductible gift payable to Cumberland Masonic Temple or simply scan the QR code on the form to make a donation with your credit card.

Help us help ourselves—so we may continue helping others.

Salvae Frater,
Jamey S Hill, Personal Representative

“Beyond Opinion: The Masonic Search for What Is Just, Right, and True”

BY: ILL. ROBIN L. SUMMERFIELD, 33°, SECRETARY-REGISTRAR



I recently found myself in a discussion with a Brother concerning the obligations of the 14th Degree, when he posed an interesting question: In the degree we are devoted and consecrated to the service of all that is just, right, and true—but what of those times when we do not agree on what is right? The question led me to consider more deeply not only our shared commitment to these principles, but the practical and moral processes by which we discern them—especially in moments when sincere Masons, bound by the same vows and striving toward the same Light, arrive at differing conclusions.

In the symbolic lodge we were first instructed that the implements of operative masonry are to become, in speculative Masonry, instruments for the construction of the moral edifice. The rough ashlar is our imperfect nature; the working tools are disciplines of self-government; the Temple is the character we are charged to erect. As Fellowcrafts we were taught to apply the **Level**, the **Plumb**, and the **Square**—emblems of justice, rectitude, and truth. In the **14th Degree of the Scottish Rite**, we bind ourselves solemnly to do, sustain, and approve, in public and in private, only that which is just, right, and true—though it be unpopular, or even perilous.

These are lofty commitments. Yet a searching question remains: how do we measure what is “just, right, and true”? Symbols inspire; they do not, by themselves, adjudicate. Even among brethren—bound by common obligations and animated by mutual respect—differences of judgment arise. If we are to be faithful to our vows, we must possess not only ideals, but disciplined methods of discernment.

The first caution is against confusing moral measurement with personal inclination or prevailing opinion. Passion is a poor plumb; public sentiment an unreliable level. In *Morals and Dogma*, Albert Pike warns that public opinion is rarely right for long, and that truths are often persecuted as heresies while errors masquerade as revelations. He reminds us further that perfect truth is unattainable in this life, yet the pursuit of it is our unrelenting duty. Masonry, he teaches, is a continual struggle toward the Light. Thus humility becomes an essential instrument in our moral toolbox: the recognition that we may be mistaken, and the refusal to cease seeking greater clarity.

If neither passion nor popularity suffices, where then shall we turn? From our earliest reception into Masonry we were directed to the Volume of the Sacred Law as the rule and guide of our faith. In many lodges that is the Holy Bible; in others, the sacred writings revered by the candidate. The lesson is not sectarian but methodological: moral truth requires reference to enduring principles, not transient impulses. The world’s great faith traditions—whether encountered in the Gospels, the Torah, the Qur’an, the Bhagavad Gita, or other revered texts—have wrestled across centuries with justice, duty, mercy, and truth. They provide a treasury of tested moral reflection.

Likewise, the lectures and writings of Freemasonry itself form a corpus of ethical instruction. They exhort us to relief, truthfulness, fidelity, temperance, and fortitude. They demand that we circumscribe our desires, subdue our passions, and act upon the square. When properly studied—not superficially recited but inwardly digested—they cultivate habits of discernment. They teach us to ask: Does this action respect the inherent dignity of others? Does it accord with the obligations I have assumed? Would I defend it as just, not only for myself, but if applied universally?

Here are a few practical tools for daily discernment:

Textual Study – Regular engagement with sacred and moral writings that challenge and refine our assumptions.

Rational Deliberation – Careful reasoning, attentive to consequences and consistent principles, rather than reactive impulse.

Fraternal Counsel – Respectful dialogue within the lodge, where disagreement can sharpen understanding without severing brotherhood.

Examination of Motive – Honest inquiry into whether we are animated by pride, resentment, or self-interest rather than justice.

Constancy of Character – The resolve to maintain integrity in private as well as public conduct.

Even with such tools, unanimity will not always follow. The Level teaches equality, not uniformity. The Plumb demands uprightness, not infallibility. The Square measures right action, but our hands may yet tremble as we hold it. Disagreement among Masons, when conducted with charity and intellectual honesty, is not a failure of the Craft; it is evidence that we take our obligations seriously.

In an age marked by division and clamor, the lodge offers a rare sanctuary: a place where men of differing creeds, convictions, and conclusions meet upon the Level and part upon the Square. Here we are reminded that the pursuit of what is just, right, and true is not a partisan enterprise but a moral vocation. It requires courage when truth is unpopular, perseverance when clarity is elusive, and humility when certainty tempts us.

My own search has led me often to the Christian Gospels, where I find a compelling vision of sacrificial love and moral courage. Many of my brethren draw sustaining light from other sources, and I honor that diversity. What unites us is not uniform theology, but a shared commitment to seek further Light and to conform our conduct to it as best we understand.

To measure what is just, right, and true is to undertake a lifelong labor. The Temple is not completed in a day; the ashlar is not perfected by a single stroke. Yet if we continue to apply the Level of justice, the Plumb of rectitude, and the Square of truth—guided by sacred wisdom, disciplined reason, and fraternal counsel—we may hope to build, within ourselves and in the world around us, a structure worthy of the Great Architect’s design.

May we remain steadfast in that noble pursuit.

Scottish Rite Members Honored as Part of 2nd Annual Star Gala



Mckinley Chapter No. 12, Order of the Eastern Star hosted the 2nd Annual Star Gala at the Cumberland Masonic Temple in February. This event brings together the Masonic organizations based at the Cumberland Temple to celebrate the good work of their fraternity in the community as a joint awards ceremony with each of the lodges and appendant bodies presenting awards to members. In addition to promoting and celebrating collaboration among the Masonic groups at Cumberland, the Star Gala raised \$2,000 to support the Temple's Restoration Campaign.

During the Gala, Personal Representative Ill. Jamey Hill, 33^o presented awards to a few members for their dedicated service to the Rite, their lodges, and the preservation of the historic Cumberland Masonic Temple.



At left: Ill. Mark Weatherholt, 32^o, Venerable Master of the Cumberland Lodge of Perfection, was recognized for his willingness to take on any task at a moment's notice to support the success of the Rite and his lodge. From filling in for absent cast members or officers to planning major events or carrying out projects around the Temple, Mark is always ready to serve.



At right: Hon. Jamie Summerfield, 32^o KCCH was recognized as Unsung Hero for his countless hours behind the scenes in support of the Valley of Cumberland, his Blue lodge, and the Cumberland Temple.

At right: Bro. Mark Pelletier, 32^o received the Rising Star Award in recognition of his active involvement in his Lodge and the Scottish Rite as a new member of the fraternity. Bro. Pelletier was raised to the degree of Master Mason in February 2024. He has shown great passion for the craft in the Scottish Rite as well as in his Blue lodge where he serves as Treasurer. Since joining the Rite in October 2024, he has served as projectionist for the degree conferrals. In addition, he currently serves as Junior Warden of the Chapter of Rose Croix, Senior Deacon of the Knights of St. Andrew, and as the Valley's Assistant Secretary.

At right: Bro. Mark Pelletier, 32^o received the Rising Star Award in recognition of his active involvement in his Lodge and the Scottish Rite as a new member of the fraternity. Bro. Pelletier was raised to the degree of Master Mason in February 2024. He has shown great passion for the craft in the Scottish Rite as well as in his Blue lodge where he serves as Treasurer. Since joining the Rite in October 2024, he has served as projectionist for the degree conferrals. In addition, he currently serves as Junior Warden of the Chapter of Rose Croix, Senior Deacon of the Knights of St. Andrew, and as the Valley's Assistant Secretary.



At left: Valley Secretary-Registrar Ill. Robin Summerfield, 33^o was named 2025 Scottish Rite Freemason of the Year for his dedicated service to the Valley of Cumberland, area blue lodges, and other Masonic organizations.



5th Annual
Debbie Friend
Memorial Golf Scramble

Sponsored by The Cumberland Scottish Rite Foundation

At Oakland Golf Club

**Date, Registration, and
Sponsorship Information
Coming Soon!**

at

cumberlandscttishrite.org

For more info contact
Jason Finch at 301-616-6500 or Brent Lewis at 301-501-3130

Proceeds Support



cumberlandscttishrite.org



Preserving Our Legacy, Building Our Future

Visitors to the Cumberland Masonic Temple in the months ahead will notice both visible enhancements and important upgrades quietly working behind the scenes. With the assistance of a generous loan from the Grand Lodge of Maryland through its Blue Lodge Support Fund, the Temple has undertaken a series of projects designed to strengthen the building’s long-term sustainability, efficiency, and usability.

Among the most significant improvements—though largely unseen—is the installation of insulation in the expansive attic above the Lodge Room. For years, dramatic temperature fluctuations contributed to rising energy costs and ongoing deterioration of plaster and painted surfaces. By stabilizing the climate in this space, the new insulation protects the historic interior while improving overall energy efficiency.

Another transformative but less visible initiative is the comprehensive renovation planned for the fourth floor. Once used as a locker room in decades past, this area has been reimagined as a fully climate-controlled meeting and rehearsal space. As activity within the Temple continues to grow, lodges, appendant bodies, and youth groups increasingly need functional space for instruction and preparation. The renovation includes new windows for improved security and efficiency, installation of modern electrical and HVAC systems, updated lighting, insulation, drywall, and the refinishing of the original hardwood floors. The result is a practical, attractive space that supports the expanding work of our Masonic family.

During the winter recess, contractors also addressed areas of failing plaster in the ballroom, completing necessary repairs and repainting to preserve the integrity and appearance of this heavily used gathering space.

The most visible enhancements are evident on the building’s exterior. Restoration and repointing of masonry on the front façade and porch have strengthened and refreshed the Temple’s historic presence. In addition, the installation of a modernized foyer at the Cherry Lane entrance will significantly improved accessibility, security, and the overall experience for members and guests attending events. This project was made possible in large part through the generosity of a private donor whose support has left a lasting mark on the building.

Equally important to these improvements is the extraordinary contribution of our volunteers. Many Brethren and friends have given generously of their time and labor—assisting with demolition, hauling debris, preparing surfaces, painting, deep cleaning, and countless other tasks that make professional work possible and stretch every dollar entrusted to the project. Their quiet dedication reflects the very principles our Temple was built to embody: shared labor, stewardship, and pride in our common home. Without their efforts, much of this progress would not have been possible.

The Temple Board of Directors continues to evaluate additional preservation and improvement initiatives to ensure that this historic structure remains a vibrant center of Masonic life for generations to come. Contact Temple Treasurer Robin Summerfield at 301-729-2491 to learn more about giving opportunities through the Temple Centennial Campaign.



**Cumberland Masonic Temple Restoration Fund
Donation & Information Form**

I Would Like To:

Make a Donation Amount: \$ _____

Request Information about giving opportunities as part of the Temple Centennial Campaign

Schedule a Meeting to discuss giving options

Preferred method of contact: Phone Email

Name: _____ Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____ Email: _____

Cellphone: _____

Please return this form to:

The Cumberland Masonic Temple, Inc.
15 Greene Street
Cumberland, MD 21502

**Follow this QR code
to make a donation
today!**



The Cumberland Masonic Temple, Inc. is an IRS 501(c)(3) Public Charity. Donations are tax deductible as permitted by law. FEIN: 83-2031435. Thank you for supporting the preservation and future of the Cumberland Masonic Temple.

**Cumberland Scottish Rite Bodies
15 Greene Street
Cumberland, Maryland 21502**

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Advance Your Masonic Journey with the Scottish Rite

The Valley of Cumberland Scottish Rite will hold its **187th Conferral and Reunion** on **Saturday, March 21, 2026**, at the historic Cumberland Masonic Temple. The day will begin with light refreshments at **7:30 a.m.**, followed by a full and meaningful program of degrees. We look forward to welcoming a new class of Brethren into the Valley and sharing with them the light, fellowship, and purpose that define the Scottish Rite.

The Scottish Rite continues the journey begun in the Symbolic Lodge, expanding upon the moral, philosophical, and spiritual teachings of the Craft. Through its degrees, members are challenged to think deeply about justice, integrity, duty, tolerance, and service to humanity. The Rite is not a departure from Blue Lodge Masonry—it is its enrichment. Here, timeless principles are explored in greater depth and presented through powerful allegory and reflection.

Beyond the degrees, membership in the Valley fosters lasting fraternity. Brothers find opportunities for leadership, charitable engagement, education, and fellowship across generations. The Valley of Cumberland is known for its welcoming spirit and its commitment to strengthening both the individual Mason and the Craft as a whole.

Scottish Rite Petition Now Available Online

Do you know a Master Mason seeking further light in Masonry? Encourage him to consider the Scottish Rite. All Master Masons who have been found proficient in the catechism of the Third Degree are eligible to petition for membership.

Now is an excellent time to take the next step. Join us on March 21 as we continue a tradition nearly two centuries strong—and help us welcome a new class of Scottish Rite Masons into the Valley. Petitions are available in the lobby of the Cumberland Masonic Temple and online at <https://bit.ly/CumberlandSRPetition> or by using the QR code shown here.

