

Grand Commanders Report

Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Florida

Grand Commander's Annual Report 2021-2022

Sir Knight Adam M. Bryan

Right Eminent Grand Commander

To the Officers, Members and Guests of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Florida:

Fraternal Greetings and Welcome once again to Lake Mary, Florida and to the 128th annual Grand Conclave of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Florida. I give a special welcome to our visiting dignitaries, especially Sir Knight Robert Waldron, Right Eminent Department Commander for the Southeast, and Sir Knight David Goodwin, Most Eminent Past Grand Master and representative for Sir Knight David Kussman, Most Eminent Grand Master of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar, USA.

In May, 2021, at the 127th Grand Conclave, after election and installation to this office, I set out on the journey before me. I started off as many have before me with many plans and ideas in mind. Even after spending several years planning for what will or may be ahead, it is still a humbling experience once you are installed and plans begin to be implemented. One of the plans that I made for this year was to personally visit every Constituent Commandery within the Grand Commandery of Florida. I am happy and proud to say that I have accomplished this goal. This is not meant as a pat on my own back but to make a personal connection to the Sir Knights of Florida, as well as to see them work in their own Commanderies. In previous years, we have held either Regional or District Meetings, which while accomplishing the work set out for those meetings, seemed to be mostly business, too impersonal, and usually attended by those required to attend with a few others here and there. I felt that there was a disconnect between the Constituent Commanderies and the Grand Line Officers. We are here to serve the Grand Commandery and we can not do that if we don't know what the Commanderies need.

STATE OF THE ORDER

After the events of the previous year, with the pandemic, many Commanderies were left shaken. Many have lost members due to illness. Many members were still taking heavy precautions to prevent the spread. While this was good for the general health of many, it also had the unfortunate side effect of slowing the progress of the Commanderies and hindering growth. Attendance numbers were down and many Commanderies early on were limited to business only meetings. As the year progressed though, Commanders began reaching out to their membership inspiring them to attend if health permitted. The Commanders also started working together more and asking for help with the work instead of trying to take care of everything on their own. They found that by working together things were a little easier.

Many of the Districts held combined Festivals, making it easier to build a cast as it allowed for a larger pool of cast members. It also allowed for more candidates to receive the Orders in a centralized area, thus making travel requirements to multiple locations for both cast and candidates decrease. The Tactics of opening and closing a Conclave have also started to be practiced with a renewed fervor as the Commanderies are starting the process of rebuilding and renewing their membership now that they are less limited by the heavy restriction of the previous year and interest is returning with great enthusiasm. Many of the Commanderies are doing very well with the work. There are still a few Commanderies that need improvement. Don't be afraid to ask for help. Sometimes all that is needed is a little motivation to kick start progress. There are many Sir Knights that are willing to travel and assist that are only a phone call or email away that don't know help is needed unless they are made aware of it.

This year has been a very interesting one. I made it a point to focus as much attention on the Constituent Commanderies as I could with work and personal life permitting. I made Official Visitations to the Commanderies, asked questions on what the Sir Knights needed from the Grand Commandery Officers and their Grand Commandery. I received good input and questions in return. I made sure to attend many of the Christmas Observances and Installations as I was able as these are very important to the Commanderies. Christmas, Easter and Ascension Day Observances are important celebrations of our faith that should be organized and carried out by every Commandery, whether individually or jointly. I felt it was also important that I attend as many Installations of Officers as possible or to have another Grand Line Officer present at the Installation because the new Eminent Commanders and Commanderies need to know that they have our support and we are here for them and what they need.

I was only able to attend a few functions outside of state, but they were interesting and informative. I represented the Grand Commandery of Florida at the 68th Triennial Conclave of the Grand Encampment, the Southeastern Department Conference in Mobile, AL, as well as the Grand Conclave of the Grand Commandery of Alabama. I was invited by the Grand Commander of Georgia to attend the inspections of three of their southern Commanderies which was a great experience, and at the time of the writing of this report, I am looking forward to attending the Grand Conclave of the Grand Commandery of Georgia. I also attended the Special Conclave of the Grand Encampment in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Though it was unfortunate that the Special Conclave was needed, it was important that matters were handled with due process and the issues were resolved quickly and correctly according to the Constitution and Statutes of the Grand Encampment and the decisions of the voting delegates present.

ACTIONS AS GRAND COMMANDER

During the 2021-2022 Templar year, the following actions were taken by me on behalf of the Grand Commandery of Florida.

Directives:

I issued three Directives. Directive no.1 was to address a requirement change to the Beauceant Award due to changes in visitations for the year. Directive no.2 was to allow Knight Templar Aprons according to Grand Encampment Regulations. Directive no.3 was to address the passing of Right Eminent Leonard Whitehead, Past Grand Commander of Florida, 1992.

Executive Orders:

I issued one Executive Order. Executive Order no.1 extended the deadline of Per Capita dues to the Grand Commandery.

Dispensations:

I received fifteen Dispensations. Thirteen were approved, and two were denied. The following dispensations were approved:

04/23/21- St. Elmo Commandery No. 42: Public event participation

05/10/21- Melita Commandery No. 35: Public event participation

06/21/21- St. Elmo Commandery No. 42: Public event participation

06/23/21- Lakeland Commandery No. 21: Emergency Election to fill vacancies

10/11/21- St. Elmo Commandery No. 42: Public event participation

11/01/21- Melita Commandery No. 35: Public event participation

11/03/21- Springtime Commandery No. 40: New date for November and December meetings due to holidays

11/09/21- Palatka Commandery No. 5: Relocation of Installation Ceremony to St. Augustine Commandery No. 10

11/20/21- Sunshine Commandery No. 20: Location and time change for Stated Conclave for December.

11/22/21- Damascus Commandery No. 2: Christmas Observance at public venue

12/09/21- Olivet Commandery No. 4: Special Election for Treasurer

12/28/21- St. Augustine Commandery No. 10: Relocation of Installation Ceremony to Palatka Commandery No. 5

01/13/22- Tallahassee Commandery No. 12: Special election for Recorder

01/24/22- Springtime Commandery No. 40: Special election of Officers due to death of Commander

The following Dispensations were Denied:

07/08/21- Plant City Commandery No. 6: Request to move to new permanent meeting location denied as this action would require Bylaw Change.

08/20/21- Bartow Commandery No. 15: Request to go dark for meeting due to Covid precautions denied as no dispensation needed for lack of quorum.

Bylaw Amendments:

I approved five Bylaw Amendments throughout the year.

06/07/21 - Bartow Commandery No. 15 - Dues increase

06/10/21 - Crusader Commandery No. 44 - Change of date and time of Conclave

09/07/21 - Triangle Commandery No. 38 - Dues increase

09/07/21 - Bradford Commandery No. 43 - Change of date and time of Conclave

01/23/22 - Olivet Commandery No. 4 - Updates to reflect changes in Quorum, Election and Installation, Committees, Fees and Dues, Funds, and Annual Returns

Warrants:

As Grand Commander, I approved and signed eleven Warrants for the Grand Recorder totaling \$55,584.25, and denied one warrant for \$283.34

Awards:

Knight Templar Cross of Honor

Paul James Mast

Meritorious Service Ribbon

Wendell E. Tomimbang

Todd M. Connor

Michael Leebove

Charles R. Jordan

Raymond S. Brownlee

Noble C. Wyninegar

Thomas E. Metcalfe, Jr.

Randell Brocius

Appointment of Grand Representatives:

I appointed the following Sir Knights as Grand Representatives to the following Grand Jurisdictions:

California	Charles Jordan
Missouri	Rusty Ludlam
Massachusetts/Rhode Island	Todd Connor

Visitations:

05/20/21 - Grand Court of FL Order of Amaranth 72nd Annual Session, Tampa, FL
05/30/21 - 05/31/21- Grand Lodge of Florida 192nd Grand Communication, Orlando, FL
06/04/21 - Jacksonville Scottish Rite, Jacksonville, FL
06/08/21 - Lake City Commandery No. 39 - Official Visitation, Lake City, FL
06/10/21 - Crusader Commandery No. 44 - Official Visitation, Fernandina Beach, FL
06/11/21 - 06/12/21 - Southeastern Department Conference, Mobile, AL
06/14/21 - Archer Lodge No. 197, Archer, FL
06/26/21 - Florida Rainbow Girls 75th Grand Assembly, Palm Harbor, FL
07/09/21 - Grand Masters Official Visitation District 7, Fort White, FL
07/10/21 - Grand Masters Official Visitation District 10, High Springs, FL
07/12/21 - Coeur De Lion Commandery No. 1 - Official Visitation, Pensacola, FL
07/18/21 - Florida DeMolay 88th Annual State Conclave, Daytona Beach, FL
07/22/21 - Oriental Commandery No. 9 - Official Visitation, Ormond Beach, FL
07/24/21 - Mobile Commandery No. 2, Mobile, AL - York Rite Festival
07/27/21 - St. Lucie Commandery No. 17 - Official Visitation, Ft. Pierce, FL
08/03/21 - Pilgrim Commandery No. 7 - Official Visitation, Gainesville, FL
08/14/21 - 08/18/21 - 68th Triennial Conclave Grand Encampment, Minneapolis, MN
08/26/21 - Tallahassee Commandery No. 12 - Official Visitation, Tallahassee, FL
09/13/21 - Archer Lodge No. 197, Archer, FL
09/15/21 - St Elmo Commandery No. 42 - Official Visitation, Ft. Walton Beach, FL
09/18/21 - Jacksonville Scottish Rite Reunion, Jacksonville, FL
09/24/21 - Tampa-Ivanhoe Commandery No. 8 - Official Visitation, Tampa, FL
09/27/21 - St. John's Commandery No. 29 - Official Visitation, Panama City, FL
10/02/21 - District 1 & 6 Festival, Stuart, FL
10/07/21 - Chipola Commandery No. 22 - Official Visitation, Marianna, FL

10/13/21 - Damascus Commandery No. 2 - Official Visitation, Jacksonville, FL
10/16/21 - Door to Virtue No. 87 KYCH, Jacksonville, FL
10/23/21 - Grand Commandery of Georgia Commandery, Invitation to Inspections of Waycross, Brunswick and Savannah Commanderies
10/26/21 - St. Augustine Commandery No. 10 - Official Visitation, St. Augustine, FL
10/27/21 - Springtime Commandery No. 40 - Official Visitation, Tarpon Springs, FL
10/28/21 - Palatka Commandery No. 5 - Official Visitation, Palatka, FL
11/02/21 - Pilgrim Commandery No. 7, Gainesville, FL
11/05/21 - William A. Bessant III Council 363 AMD - Annual Assembly, Gainesville, FL
11/06/21 - Gateway Council No. 51 Knight Masons, Jacksonville, FL
11/09/21 - Lake City Council No. 35, Lake City, FL
11/10/21 - Bartow Commandery No. 15 - Official Visitation, Avon Park, FL
11/16/21 - Gainesville Council No. 27, Gainesville, FL
11/17/21 - Springtime Commandery No. 40, Tarpon Springs, FL
11/18/21 - Olivet Commandery No. 4 - Official Visitation, Orlando, FL
11/19/21 - Sunshine Commandery No. 20 - Official Visitation, St. Petersburg, FL
11/20/21 - Northeast York Rite College No. 114, Jacksonville, FL
12/08/21 - Crestview Commandery No. 25 - Official Visitation, Crestview, FL
12/12/21 - Pilgrim Commandery No. 7 - Christmas Observance, Gainesville, FL
12/13/21 - Archer Lodge No. 197, Archer, FL
12/14/21 - Lake City Commandery No. 39, Lake City, FL
12/17/21 - Sunshine Commandery No. 20 - District 3 Christmas Observance
12/19/21 - Damascus Commandery No. 2 - Christmas Observance
12/28/21 - Lakeland/Winterhaven Commandery No. 21 - Official Visitation and Christmas Observance, Lakeland, FL
01/03/22 - Palm Beach Commandery No. 18 - Official Visitation/Installation of Officers, West Palm Beach, FL
01/04/22 - Pilgrim Commandery No. 7 - Installation of Officers, Gainesville, FL
01/08/22 - Archer Lodge No. 197 - Installation of Officers, Archer, FL
01/24/22 - Plant City Commandery No. 6 - Official Visitation and Installation of Officers, Plant City, FL
01/25/22 - Palatka Commandery No. 5 - Installation of Officers, Palatka, FL
01/25/22 - St. Augustine Commandery No. 10 - Installation of Officers, Palatka, FL
01/27/22 - Olivet Commandery No. 4 - Installation of Officers, Orlando, FL
02/07/22 - Melita Commandery No. 35 - Official Visitation, Ft. Lauderdale, FL
02/10/22 - Bradford Commandery No. 43 - Official Visitation, Middleburg, FL
02/19/22 - Northeast York Rite College No. 114, Gainesville, FL
02/22/22 - Taylor Commandery No. 28 - Official Visitation, Sanford, FL
02/25/22 - 02/26/22 - Grand York Rite of Alabama Grand Session, Birmingham, AL
03/03/22 - Trinity Commandery No. 16 - Official Visitation, Bradenton, FL

03/06/22 - Deputy Grand Commanders' Orientation Meeting, Lake City, FL
03/11/22 - 03/13/22 - Grand Encampment Special Conclave, Fort Wayne, IN
03/22/22 - Fort Myers Commandery No. 32 - Official Visitation, Fort Myers, FL
03/23/22 - Brevard Commandery No. 24 - Official Visitation, Cocoa Beach, FL
03/26/22 - District 7&8 Festival, Palatka, FL
03/28/22 - Miami Commandery No. 13 - Official Visitation, Hialeah, FL
04/02/22 - District 1&6 Festival honoring Companion Richard E. Lynn, MWPGM, Stuart, FL

RECOMMENDATIONS

Throughout the year, as plans are executed and business is transacted, it becomes apparent that there is always room for improvement.

To the Commanderies: In gaining new membership, be sure to reach out to all the Lodges in your Jurisdiction. There is no such thing as a "Tapped out Lodge". If you are assisting your Lodges, you are aware of any new potential that is coming in. Our membership comes solely from the Lodges. I'm unaware of any Lodges that 100% of the members are also York Rite Masons so there are opportunities out there. Let them know that we are here to work with them, not to supplant them. While new membership is important, current membership is equally important. Work on educational programs that will keep them interested and inspired. Reach out to inactive members as well to see what you can do for them and how you can get them to start coming back. Sometimes all it takes is a nudge in the right direction or an invitation to attend.

To the Recorders: Be sure to stay up to date on MMS. If the orders are conferred on new membership, you have 15 days to input them into MMS. This is very important. New members cannot receive their Knight Templar Magazine or get their Grand Encampment dues cards to them until this is done. Per Capita is also calculated on your membership in MMS including Deaths, Demits and Reinstatements. It is very important that these numbers are correct.

To the incoming Grand Commander: It's always a good idea to have the District Instructors work in unison with the Committee on Work to improve the distribution of information to the Commanderies concerning the Tactics. Good work will always improve with good instruction. Another recommendation is to have the Investment Committee stay on top of the changes in our investments. While the investment gains

may be doing okay, it is always good to reevaluate our standings as the market fluctuates.

CONCLUSIONS

To Most Excellent Grand High Priest Robby Robertson, Most Illustrious Grand Master Allen Sorbie, and Most Worshipful Grand Master Jeffery Foster, it has been an honor working alongside you. It has been a very enjoyable year for me as I believe it has been for you as well. A long time back I learned that in any endeavor, you have to have fun doing it or it is just not worth it. You, my Brothers, have made it worth it more than you can know.

To the Grand Line Officers, District Deputies, District Instructors, and Committeemen, I wish to thank you for the job you have done. Your assistance throughout the year is what makes things less difficult for the Presiding Officer.

To the Sir Knights of the great State of Florida, you have made me feel welcome in every Commandery I have sat in Conclave with. Any call made for assistance in any form has been answered. It has truly been an honor to serve with each of you. Continue to keep up the hard work and dedication to the Craft that you have shown this year.

A special thank you to Sir Knights Carl Gilmore, Marvin Gerhard, Bob Burleson, and Paul Friend for all the endless phone calls made, emails sent or text messages sent at all hours of the day or night looking for assistance, advice or just to talk. Also to my almost constant traveling companions Rusty Ludlam and Thomas Metcalfe, for keeping me awake on my travels, keeping things interesting and making sure we all made it home at the end of the day. I know I am missing several others that were instrumental in helping but rest assured that your help was indeed appreciated.

Finally, but most important, to my wife Kieran, and my children Avery and Avonlea. You are my rock. I know that my travels throughout these last few years have been extensive and sometimes stressful. Without your support and understanding, none of this could have been possible. You have been there through the good times and the bad. You have always been there by my side with good advice, asking me if there is anything you can do to help, or helping me plan. You are my foundation and I am eternally grateful to have you in my life, leading me down the right paths or standing with me, to support me, when I err.

Once more, I thank you all for the support, and I look forward to many more years of success and growth within the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Florida.

Courteously,

Adam M. Bryan, KYCH

Right Eminent Grand Commander