



Most Worshipful Union Grand Lodge
Most Ancient and Honorable Fraternity
Free & Accepted Masons of
Florida, Belize, Central America & Jurisdiction, Inc.
Prince Hall Affiliated
Founded 1870
The Honorable Walter Gulley, Jr.
Most Worshipful Grand Master

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July 1, 2020

Letter #20

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”
Philippians 4:8

The Psalmist declared in 37:25 (KJV): I have been **young**, and [now] am **old**; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. As I pen this correspondence preparing for my exit interview, we are living in some of the most historically challenging times in our nation’s history.

Brothers of the Craft, I hope that this email finds you and your families are doing well. God has allowed each of us to enjoy the goodness of the Lord in the land of the plenty. As we approach the midyear in our Masonic Calendar, I, The Honorable Walter Gulley, Jr., the 18th Most Worshipful Grand Master, am sending this communication to answer some especially important questions/concerns.

We have been looking forward to a very festive and ceremonious 150th Grand Communication. However, as fate would have it, our thought pattern has been interrupted by COVID-19 which has caused over 100,000 citizens to meet with untimely deaths.

Over the past few months, a state of emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic has been declared by the federal government, our state government and virtually every county and municipal government encompassing this great jurisdiction. By Edict #4 dated March 9, 2020, I took the extraordinary step of rescheduling the 150th Grand Communication from April 2020 to August 2020. In addition, I ordered a halt to all in-person activities for male and female houses working under the protection of the MWUGL until further notice. In the meantime, the COVID-19 pandemic continued unabated in its attack on our citizenry and infection numbers have increased rather than decreased.

From the desk of the Most Worshipful Grand Master

I decided by directive dated June 18, 2020 to lift the ban on in-person activities of local masonic houses, subject to the rigorous social distancing, disinfecting procedures, mask requirements and other safety precautions outlined by the CDC and in the letter. Notwithstanding, I have determined that the risks inherent in the large and intimate gathering mandated by the historical traditions of our Annual Communications would be too great to bear. In light of the undeniable fact that we would not be able to effectively social distance at the upcoming Annual Communication and the wearing of masks by all would only be moderately effective in preventing the spread of COVID-19 at such a large gathering, I am hereby directing the cancellation of the in-person Annual Communication. [See Const. Article IX, section 5. **Executive**. This grand Lodge may do whatever is necessary for the well-being and perpetuity of the Ancient Craft Masonry; see also Const. Article XI, Section 36 The Grand Master has the power to ... exercise the **executive** functions of the Grand Lodge when not in session.]

Because it is vital that some of the essential business of the MWUGL continue even in the midst of the COVID-19 challenge, the in-person Annual Session will proceed but I am directing that the only order of business for the 150th Grand Communication will be the consideration of the Secretary's and Treasurer's report and the election of Grand Lodge Officers. The Annual Communication will open on Saturday, August 1, 2020 at 1:00 p.m. at the Grand Lodge, followed by a roll call of lodges with the only voting items being (1) consideration of the Secretary's and Treasurer's reports, (2) the Grand Master's Allocution and (3) the election of Grand Lodge Officers. Other non-voting items for the agenda are under consideration but the goal is to conclude the session no later than 4:30 p.m. I, along with The Grand Lodge cabinet, believe that this process will allow the annual communication to be conducted in relative safety and with minimal time exposure within the group. By starting the session promptly at 1:00 p.m., overnight hotel stays may not be necessary for many attendees.

- Due to COVID -19 stipulations as well as CDC and state/local guidelines, we will have an abbreviated Grand Lodge to take care of the most pertinent matters.
- All activities will take place on Saturday, August 1, 2020.
- The Most Worshipful Union Grand Lodge will be the **only house** that will convene during this session.
- This year's attendance will be comprised of and limited to "**All Registered and Eligible Voting Members Only**" i.e. Worshipful Masters, Past Masters, Junior and Senior Wardens.
- Our newly elected Most Worshipful Grand Master will give guidance about the remaining Grand Sessions of Jerusalem Grand Chapter Order of the Eastern Star and the York Rite Bodies.
- **District Deputy Grand Masters will meet at 11:30 am on Saturday, August 1, 2020.**
- We will start promptly at 1:00 pm on Saturday, August 1, 2020, and it is our sincere desire to complete most of the pertinent matters, so that those members who will be traveling home can reach their respective destinations by nightfall.
- We do plan to celebrate our 150th Year Anniversary, have a Mortgage Burning Program, and recognize members and leaders for their service to our great jurisdiction.
- All events will be held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, located at 225 Coastline Drive; Jacksonville, FL.
- Since we will be having an abbreviated session, everyone will not need all the room nights as previously reserved. For the sake of planning and logistics, the hotel will be

From the desk of the Most Worshipful Grand Master

cancelling all reservations, so they can start anew to better project the room nights for this year's session.

- If you are desirous of driving in early for or staying over after the session, you will need to make **new reservations**. The telephone number for their registration desk is 1-888-978-6498.
- **The Grand Lodge does not have a contract with the hotel;** therefore, if you desire accommodations, you are responsible for securing a room at the rate of \$109; that is offered by the hotel. I apologize in advance for any inconvenience this may cause you.

Our jurisdiction is blessed to have some of the staunchest Masons in the Prince Hall Family. For many, this will be the first session that you will have missed during your Masonic career. I, as the Conservator of Freemasonry of this jurisdiction, one of my foremost concerns is the overall wellbeing of every Brother in this jurisdiction. Each Brother must assess his own situation and do whatever is best for him and his family. Your **attendance** for this session is **not mandatory**. **“By attending Grand Session 2020, you voluntarily assume all risks related to exposure to COVID-19 and agree not to hold the Most Worshipful Union Grand Lodge of Florida liable in any manner”**. We will be most understanding if you will not be in attendance.

I feel that this abbreviated session will afford us the opportunity to reflect on our great history and realize our goals. Further, it will a great time to reach to the future as we transition the leadership of our great jurisdiction. These are some challenging times, but we serve a God who specializes in helping us deal with life's challenges.

Your safety matters to us! The Hyatt Regency, will be taking the following precautionary safety measures to combat the spread of COVID-19: Extra deep cleaning of high traffic areas, protective masks for employees, and social distancing. Further, the hotel will have hand sanitizer stations situated throughout the hotel.

Additionally, as an organization, we will be taking the following precautionary measures: Each attendee will be required to wear a mask during the entire session, to have his temperature taken when entering the meeting, to complete a health questionnaire, and to utilize a hand sanitizer when entering/reentering the Grand Session. We will practice and adhere to social distancing guidelines. More especially, **if you are not feeling well, please stay home!**

I request that each of you implore a spirit of understanding as well as unity during this process. We will continue to do what we consider to be the most safe and productive. We promise to seek our Heavenly Father for long-term guidance in the operation of our historic Most Worshipful Union Grand Lodge. Thanks for your support and may the peace of God dwell within each of us.

Reminder, Grand Master Walter Gulley Jr.'s Testimonial will be rescheduled to the next Annual Grand Communication.

Fraternally,

Walter Gulley, Jr.

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