

Mid-Year Message to Victoria District

Brethren,

We have reached the mid-point of the Masonic Year, and as I wrote my Mid-Year Report to the Grand Master, I had the opportunity to reflect. In other years, the Holiday Season would have been a parade of activity, celebration, and visitation in both my personal and Masonic life. For me, the season begins with the Feast of St. Nicholas with a chocolate letter, a nice hearty meal and opening a gift with my family, and which proceeds with much hustle and bustle for a month. In other years there would have been banquets, visitation, seasonal gatherings, perhaps a trip to the City to see the Christmas windows of well-known retailers while trying to find that meaningful gift for those on my list. In some years, a trip to Hamilton for the wonderful Christmas Pageants at the Scottish Rite with their exhilarating music, and of course a Shriners' Christmas Cake.

But this year, like last year, will be very different. St. Nicholas Night brought me to one of the two lodges I was able to attend this year due to lockdown, to present Service Pins to two Brethren whom I greatly admire, no banquet or pomp, but a simple, tightknit, heartfelt recognition. Replacing the bustle of Christmas Shopping, I carefully attended two Masonic Services, and brought a small gift selected to a grieving family of a third Brother to perhaps bring a little light and caring in a darkened time. Instead of scouring the aisles for treats and rich foods, this year that list was delivered (and not as plentiful), and I instead took time yesterday gathering and delivering clothing and placing a donation on a Go-Fund-Me page for necessities for a family my daughter-in-law knows well, who had to flee for their lives when their home was consumed by a chimney fire earlier in the week. Some might think incorrectly that this isn't shaping up to be a very good Holiday Season.

On the contrary, COVID cannot stop us from making a positive difference in the lives of others. We can be beacon of support both to those we know and to those we don't who are suffering. We can pay homage to those who have earned our respect. And we can help sustain those without fault who need our help, within the span of our means. That was the simple message, from a simple family, and a child in a manger on a cold night in a dreary time. This is already a good Christmas, and the best will come.

Whatever the traditions may be in your home, may they be safe, healthy, and joyful. It has been a privilege to represent the Grand Master, and I look forward with prudence and optimism towards 2022.

Merry Christmas.

Sincerely,

R.W. Bro. Gerald D. Van Houdt,
DDGM - Victoria District



Ontario Masons

"Children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."

~ Martin Luther King ~