



Grand Chapter
Order of the Eastern Star of New Jersey

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Dear Sisters and Brothers,

We pray that this letter finds you well and safe during this pandemic and that you are doing everything in your power to ensure not only your wellbeing but that of the ones you love and others by following the recommendations put forth by our state.

As promised in our last communication to you, stating that we would revisit our Order's status in the end of August, beginning of September, the Corporate Board has met and have been following the ongoing recommendations of medical professionals and government authorities. The safety and well-being of our members have been first and foremost in the thoughts and minds of our entire Elected Line. There is no guidebook or established precedence to follow when navigating the complexity of the current situation our Order now faces. We are compelled to implement new ways to meet challenges and procedures as we move forward. The Grand Lodge has provided a list of requirements and restrictions that would have to be met if we were to start meeting again in the Lodge Rooms.

After much discussion and with the membership's welfare in mind, the Corporate Board of Grand Chapter came to the decision that with the current mandate from the state of 25 people or less in indoor gatherings, social distancing, no refreshments and the requirements of Grand Lodge to disinfect the lodge after use, among other things, that it would be too much of a burden to our membership to hold meetings at this time and felt that we should wait it out until some of these restrictions are lifted.

In cleaning and disinfecting, the CDC guidelines are online (see the link below) and is the standard for what Grand Lodge is asking of us. The Lodge is ultimately responsible for the initial cleaning of the building. However, whatever organization uses the Lodge is to clean or wipe down **all**: *handrails, doorknobs, arms of chairs, light switches, seats, backs of chairs, bathrooms, etc.* An assigned member of the Lodge is supposed to be there and document every person in attendance and to see that and ensure that everything is disinfected.

CDC guidelines for cleaning:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

That being said....

The directive sent out on March 13th, 2020, to suspend all Order of the Eastern Star of New Jersey activities in the Grand Jurisdiction of New Jersey, will remain in effect.

Grand Chapter will continue to reevaluate our status on a month to month basis. We hope and pray that we will be able to start meeting again by January, but we will address that as the time comes closer. Chapter Secretaries should note ***“No meeting held due to the current Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic”*** in their minute book for the stated meetings that are not held. Any meetings missed during this period do not need to be made up.

Worthy Matrons should still be sending out bulletins, letters, or newsletters to keep the membership informed of our Order’s status as well as encouraging and uplifting messages. It is very important that we let each member know that we are thinking of them. We suggest that they make a copy of this letter available to each chapter member, either by email or regular mail for those who do not receive email. I am saddened that some chapters are not doing this. Please remember to include the MWGM, MWGP, RWAGM and the new MWGP select, as well as all Elected line officers in these mailings

Chapters are encouraged to find alternative ways to stay connected to their membership and to check on their elderly members frequently. Many have already held Zoom or WebEx social meetings keeping the membership informed and in touch. Some chapters have made a practice of trying to contact all members by phone via a phone chain to check in and make sure members are well. We remind all of you to follow the recommendations to stay safe by practicing good hygiene, social distancing, and self-quarantining.

To help facilitate keeping chapters together during this pandemic we encourage chapters to socially gather on virtual platforms like Zoom, Skype, and Web-ex. For those chapters who are not tech savvy Grand Chapter is willing to host a Chapter Social Gathering for them, so their members can get together and not feel isolated. Contact your WDD for information on how to do this. We strongly encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity.

Instructions regarding Chapter Business in our previous letter are to remain in affect and are to be followed.

No social or fundraising activities are to be held until after the restrictions by Grand Chapter are lifted without the consent of the MWGM. Permission should be requested through the WDD who will contact the MWGM for authorization. We encourage you to find innovative ways of raising funds via online parties, mail, etc. No fundraiser or social activity should be held that would require in person/physical contact with other individuals or the physical delivery of products by members.

We know there will be many questions. We ask that those questions be forwarded to your respective district deputy who will then contact the MWGM directly if further information is required.

It is extremely important that you share this information with the members of your chapter. It is vital that they are kept informed of the determinations made by our Elected Line and the direction our Order is heading in during this disconcerting time.

The Grand Chapter of NJ will continue to monitor the situation and communicate with you as often as necessary when we have further updates and information to provide to you.


We are thankful for the support of the membership during these unprecedented and trying times. We miss seeing you and we look forward to the time when our Chapters can meet again.

Let us continue to do what we do best by showing love and kindness in all that we do. We are all in this together. This is the time we are being tested to live our obligation. Remember to always keep your focus on His Star in the East.

It is our hope that our next communication will be one filled with good news and cause for celebration. In the meantime, we must **ASK** God for guidance and **BELIEVE** that He will send His Blessings for us to **RECEIVE**. Always remember to stay **Loyal to the Royal within you**.

Fraternally,


Norma J. Hines
Most Worthy Grand Matron


Danny L. Cooper
Most Worthy Grand Patron


Daria Hamm
Right Worthy Associate Grand Matron

Attest:

Patti L. Rhinesmith, PGM
Right Worthy Grand Secretary

