

**GRAND COMMANDERY
KNIGHTS TEMPLAR**



**STATE OF ILLINOIS
HEADQUARTERS OF**

**Don Johnson Cowart
Grand Commander**

**815 Havenshire Rd.
Naperville, IL 60565**

July 26, 2026

GENERAL ORDER No 1 (Cowart)

To the Officers and Members of the Grand and Constituent Commanderies of Knights Templar of the State of Illinois:

ANNUAL CONCLAVE

A Conclave of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the State of Illinois was held in the City of Springfield, Illinois on Thursday, July 16, 2026, A.O. 908.

GRAND OFFICERS INSTALLED

Don J. Cowart	Right Eminent Grand Commander
Christopher J. Whitney	Very Eminent Deputy Grand Commander
Derrick S. Helfer, GWB	Eminent Grand Generalissimo
Reno P. Reguya, GWB	Eminent Grand Captain General
Kevin A. Wheeler	Eminent Grand Senior Warden
Earl F. Wys	Eminent Grand Junior Warden
Peter J. Eisenmenger	Eminent Grand Prelate
John M. Sansone, REPGC	Eminent Grand Treasurer
Mark A. Keagle, KCT, REPGC	Eminent Grand Recorder
Steven B. Hornback	Eminent Grand Standard Bearer
Timothy J. Ward	Eminent Grand Sword Bearer
Jesse D. Kamees	Eminent Grand Warder
Thomas W. Podrovitz	Eminent Grand Sentinel
Joseph L. Pieron	Eminent Grand Color Bearer
Thomas R. Osborne	Eminent Grand Organist

COMMISSIONED AIDE TO THE GRAND COMMANDER

Michael D. Millette, KTCH, EPC

No. 1

COMMITTEE APOINTMENTS

JURISPRUDENCE

John M. Sansone, REPGC, EGT	Chairman	No. 53
Richard T. Carnall, KTCH, REPGC		No. 01
Russell L. Schlosser, REPGC		No. 36
Charles E. Hileman, Jr., KTCH, REPGC		No. 02
Enrique J. Unanue, KCT, REPGC		No. 06

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Michael D. Millette, KTCH, EGSwB	Chairman	No. 01
Jeffrey L. Estes, GWB, EPC		No. 24
David Hutt, GWB, EPC		No. 02

INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

Timothy J. Ward, EGSwB	Chairman	No. 01
Chad R Richards, EPC		No. 09
Gabe Carr, EPC		No. 09
John M. Sansone, REPGC, EGT		Ex-Officio No. 53
Mark. A. Keagle, KCT, REPGC, EGR		Ex-Officio No. 66

ELOISE H. PHILLIPS CHARITY FUND

Derrik S. Helfer, GWB, EGG	Chairman	No. 09
Reno P. Reguya, GWB, EGCG		No. 93
Kebin A. Wheeler, EGSW		No. 64
John M. Sansone, REPGC, EGT	Treasurer	No. 53
Mark A. Keagle, KCT, REPGC, EGR	Recorder	No. 66

KNIGHTS TEMPLAR EYE FOUNDATION

Stephen T. Adamson, KTCH, GWB, EPC	Chairman	No. 04
Frank J. Cominsky, EPC		No. 01
Don J. Cowart, REGC		No. 01

KNIGHTS TEMPLAR EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Mark A. Keagle, KCT, REPGC, EGR	Chairman	No. 66
Douglas W. Niewald, EPC		No. 38
William J. Smith, KCT, REPGC		No. 64
William J. Farris, KCT, REPGC		No. 17
Nyle G. Waters, KTCH, EPC		No. 47

HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE

Peter J. Eisenmenger, EGP	Chairman	No. 16
Gary W. Sheets, KTCH, EPC		No. 77
Gregory J. Knott		No. 16
Todd E. Creason		No. 16
Reno P. Reguya, GWB, EGCG		No. 93

CREDENTIALS

Timothy J. Ward, EPC	Chairman	No. 01
Paul J. Dillow, EPC		No. 24
Verne LaGesse, EPC		No. 47
Joe Smith		No. 03

MEMBERSHIP

Stephen T. Adamson, KTCH, GWB, EPC	Chairman	No. 04
Thomas W. Podrovitz, EGSent		No. 18
Michael D. Millette, KTCH, EPC		No. 01
Jesse D. Kamees, EGW		No. 06
Steve B. Hornback, EGStB		No. 66
Joseph L. Pieron, EGCB		No. 69

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Derrik S. Helfer, GWB, EGG	Chairman	No. 09
Reno P. Reguya, GWB, EGCG		No. 93
Thomas W. Podrovitz, EGSent		No. 18

CHARTERS AND DISPENSATION

Reno P. Reguya, GWB, EGCG	Chairman	No. 93
Kevin A. Wheeler, EGSW		No. 64
Earl F. Wys, EGJW		No. 03

RITUAL AND TACTICS

Derrik S. Helfer, GWB, EGG	Chairman	No. 09
Robert H. Wright, EPC		No. 24
Richard T. Carnall, KTCH, REPGC		No. 01
Stephen T. Adamson, KTCH, GWB, EPC		No. 04
Michael D. Millette, KTCH, EPC		No. 01
Mark A. Keagle, KCT, REPGC, EGR		No. 66

WEBMASTER

John M. Sansone, REPGC, EGT	Chairman	No. 53
Timothy J. Ward, EGSwB		No. 01

TRIENNIAL

Christopher J. Whitney, VEDGC	Chairman	No. 09
Mark A. Keagle, KCT, REPGC, EGR		No. 66
Derrik S. Helfer, GWB, EGG		No. 09

PROTOCOL

Mark A. Keagle, KCT, REPGC	Chairman	No. 66
Richard T. Carnall, KTCH, REPGC		No. 01
Jesse L. Johns, KCT, REPGC		No. 66
Russel L. Schlosser, REPGC		No. 36
William J. Farris, KCT, REPGC		No. 17

FISCAL OFFICERS FUND

Christopher J. Whitney, GWB, VEDGC	Chairman	No. 09
Derrik S. Helfer, GWB, EGG		No. 09
Reno P. Reguya, GWB, EGCG		No. 93
John M. Sansone, REPGC, EGT		No. 53

TEMPLAR DEAD

Mark A. Keagle, KCT, REPGC, EGR	Chairman	No. 66
---------------------------------	----------	--------

SESSIONS COMMITTEE

Don J. Cowart, REGC	Chairman	No. 01
Christopher J. Whitney, VEDGC		No. 09
Derrik S. Helfer, EGG		No. 09
Mark A. Keagle, KCT, REPGC, EGR		No. 66

INSPECTIONS

An Officer of the Grand Commandery has been assigned to each Inspection Division to conduct an Annual Inspection of the Commanderies in that Division in accordance with Sections 471 and 472 of the Statutes of the Grand Commandery of Illinois. It is a requirement that a report of Inspection from the Inspecting Officer is received at the Office of the Very Eminent Deputy Grand Commander within three weeks of the Inspection date. The Inspection will consist of an examination of monthly and permanent records of the Recorder and Treasurer, including special funds of the Commandery. All equipment and paraphernalia and their arrangements as used in the Order of the Temple will be inspected.

It is the responsibility of the Eminent Commander to see that the Ritual and Tactics of the Order are performed in an impressive manner. Each Commandery is required to Open and Close in Full Form as specified in the Illinois Tactics, available from The Grand Recorders Office.

Uniform requirements, as covered in the Statutes of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America, Chapter XIX, will be followed.

RECEPTION OF THE GRAND OFFICER

The Outline of Open Inspections as described in the official Asylum Tactics of the Grand Commandery is the only proper ceremony for the Reception of Grand Officers at the annual Commandery Inspection. Full credit will be given to a Commandery that organizes and conducts the Reception without regard to who actually fills the officer stations in the ceremony.

STARTING TIME FOR INSPECTION

Starting time for all Inspections will be **10:00 A.M.** unless otherwise determined by the Inspecting Officer. The Full Form Opening will begin promptly at **1:00 P.M.** followed immediately by the Order of the Temple.

INSPECTION ASSIGNMENTS

The Inspection Assignments for The Templar Year 2025 -2026 are as follows:

	<u>Inspecting Officer</u>	<u>Division Commander</u>
1 st Division	Christopher J. Whitney, VEDGC	Timothy J. Ward, EGSwB
2 nd Division	Derrick S. Helfer, GWB, EGG	Thomas W. Podrovitz, EGSen
3 rd Division	Reno P. Reguya, GWB, EGCG	Jesse D. Kamees, EGW
4 th Division	Kevin A. Wheeler, EGSW	Steve B. Hornback, EGStB
5 th Division	Earl F. Wys, EGJW	Joseph L. Pieron, EGCB

The Division Commander will report to the Inspecting Office as his aide and will assist the Inspecting Officer in the discharge of his duties.

DIVISIONS

The Divisions for the Templar Year 2025 – 2026 are as follows:

1st Division

Trinity Apollo No. 1, at Naperville
St. Bernard No. 35, at Chicago
Calvary No. 25 at Cary
Bethel No. 36, at Palatine

Mizpah No. 53, at Oak Lawn
Evanston No. 58, at Glenview
St. Elmo No. 64, at Riverside
Silangan No. 93, at Chicago

2nd Division

Joliet No. 4, at Joliet
Galesburg No. 8, at Monmouth
Ottawa No. 10, at Ottawa
Crusader No. 17, at Rockford

Rock Island No. 18, at Milan
Dixon No. 21, at Dixon
Aurora No. 22, at Aurora

3rd Division

Peoria No. 3 at Peoria
Blaney No. 5, at Tremont
Elwood No. 6, at Springfield
DeMolay No. 24, at Bloomington

St. Aldemar No. 47, at Petersburg
Macomb No. 56, at Macomb
Quincy No. 77, at Quincy

4th Division

Baumanoir No. 9 at Decatur
Urbana No. 16, at Champaign
Melita No. 37, at Tuscola
Mt. Olivet No. 38, at Paxton

Constantine No. 51, at Lincoln
Clinton No. 66, at Clinton
Gil W. Barnard No. 74, at Sullivan

5th Division

Tancred No. 2, at Belleville
Gorin No. 14, at Bridgeport
Palestine No. 27, at Paris

St. Omer No. 30, at Hillsboro
Patton No. 69, at Mt. Vernon
Beauseant No. 86, at Murphysboro

PUBLIC ASSEMBLY, VISITS AND ESCORTS

Dispensation is hereby granted to all Commanderies to appear in public, in full Templar uniform and in suitable numbers to present a proper appearance within this jurisdiction, for attendance at Divine Services, Funerals, Escort Duties to other Masonic Bodies, Scottish Rite Reunions, and Public Parades. **In all cases, all Sir Knights must be dressed uniformly. In the case of a parade, each Commandery marching as a separate unit must be dressed uniformly.**

DEMITS AND SUSPENSIONS

DEMITS

All requests for demits are to be reviewed by the Eminent Commander. He should appoint a Committee to make personal contact with the Sir Knight requesting the demit. After being contacted by the Committee, the demit will then be issued providing the Sir Knight is clear on the books of the Commandery. No dues are to be collected after the date of the demit.

SUSPENSIONS

Suspensions of members of a Commandery due to being in arrears for dues and/or other indebtedness are to be made in compliance with Sections 460 and 460B of the Statutes of the Grand Commandery of the State of Illinois. The Commandery has the right to remit the dues of those Sir Knights in arrears when the Sir Knight is judged unable to comply due to illness, infirmity, or financial inability. Those instances of compassion demonstrate pure Templar benevolence. The Eminent Commander will appoint a Committee to make personal contact with the Sir Knight in question to determine how his membership can be continued.

DISPENSATIONS

Dispensations may be issued upon request as authorized by the Statutes of the Grand Commandery of the State of Illinois. The Eminent Commander shall make such request, over his signature and bearing the Seal of the Commandery. All requests shall specify the date of the action and provide all pertinent information necessary for evaluation. The request must be forwarded to the Grand Commander with an appropriate time interval for his review and reply. The actions of the Commandery will be regularly recorded in the minutes of the Commandery.

FIFTY YEAR PRESENTATIONS

Every Knight Templar who has been in good standing for a period of fifty years will be recognized with a fifty-year membership card and pin and shall not be required to pay any further dues to his Commandery. It is the responsibility of the Recorder of each Commandery to notify the Grand Recorder who will forward the card and pin to the Commandery for presentation on or about the anniversary date. It is suggested that the presentation be made at a suitable public or Fraternal function.

KNIGHTS TEMPLAR CROSS OF HONOR

The Knights Templar Cross of Honor for exceptional and meritorious service to the order was established by Section 237(b) of the Grand Encampment Statutes. This award can be awarded to only one Sir Knight in this jurisdiction and previous nominations shall be resubmitted during the current year. All nominations shall be submitted to the Grand Commander no later than April 1, 2027.

G. WILBUR BELL EXCALIBUR AWARD

This award can be awarded to one Sir Knight in this jurisdiction and previous nominations shall be resubmitted during the current year. All nominations shall be submitted to the Grand Commander no later than April 1, 2027.

PAST COMMANDER CROSS & CROWN SERVICE AWARD

This award sets forth leadership criteria for immediate Past Commanders worthy of such recognition. This award was designed mainly to prompt greater overall efficiency in a Commandery's operation. While the newly elected Commander is the only one qualified to apply for and receive the award, he cannot do so alone. The requirements can only be met through the combined efforts of the entire Commandery. It is the Commander, however, who must provide the leadership and incentives which will stimulate and inspire the Commandery to success. The Commander must have served his Commandery on all three Dais Chairs to receive this award.

To qualify:

1. Hold four meetings with nine members present in uniform.
 - a. Two of the four meetings must be:
 - i. Annual Inspection with installed officers in uniform doing the full form opening, closing and reception of Inspecting Officer.
 - ii. Christmas Libation with members in uniform attending together with family members in the Commandery's asylum.
2. Within 40 miles: create a project that will cloth the naked, feed the hungry, bind up the wounds of the afflicted, or assist widows and orphans. The project should involve Sir Knights and their families.
3. Within 40 miles: make personal contact with all Commandery members and invite them to attend the meetings and dinners.
4. Appoint at least one Commandery Mentor who must attend training at the Schools of Instruction
5. Submit the 2026 annual report to the Grand Recorder on time.
6. At the close of the term, the applicant must submit a second letter to the Inspecting Officer summarizing achievements during his term.
7. A Past Commander Pin and Certificate will be issued to the recipients by the Grand Commandery. The Pin may be displayed only on the Suit Jacket and not worn as part of the uniform.

HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE MINISTER PROPOSALS

The minister's applications must be submitted by September 14, 2026, to the Office of the Grand Recorder. The committee will be selecting the minister prior to November 1, 2026. The goal of the Grand Commandery is to have at least one minister per year participate in this memorable program.

MASONIC YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

From our Masonic youth organizations of today will come our future leaders of tomorrow. Therefore, it is requested that each constituent Commandery lend its support by attending their meetings, both initiatory and stated and by providing them with financial support according to the ability of the Commandery. Our youth groups are more than willing to support our Commanderies in their activities and should be called upon whenever it is appropriate. We should also give them our support by providing escorts or whatever service they may require.

TEMPLAR MEMORIALS

Upon the death of any member of a constituent Commandery in the State of Illinois, the Recorder of the deceased Member's Commandery is requested to send to the Grand Recorder's office a notification regarding the deceased member's name, including his address, his date of birth and any other information pertaining to the Sir Knight. The Recorder must also report the death in his MMS record. The Sir Knights are expected to participate in any Masonic Services if requested by the Family. Remember Knights Templar have a role in the Illinois Masonic funeral service along with a Templar Funeral Service available from the Grand Recorder's Office.

MEMBERSHIP

Every Knight Templar knows that the lifeblood of any organization is membership, and it remains the obligation of every Sir Knight in the State to always promote membership. The Grand Commandery encourages every Knight Templar to go back and work in and support his local Lodge. The Chapters of Royal Arch Masons and Councils of Cryptic Masons also need our assistance. Recognition that the members of the Commandery are supporting the Lodge, Chapter and Council goes a long way in encouraging a Blue Lodge Mason to continue his search for Masonic Light in the YORK RITE OF FREEMASONRY.

DECORUM

Sir Knights who are witnessing and are not performing ritual and tactics during the conferral of the Orders of Templary will refrain from unnecessary conversations and movement about the Asylum. It is disturbing and distracts from the solemnity and dramatic nature of the Templar experience. There are appropriate times during the conferring of the Orders that conversations and movements can be made without distracting from the work being performed.

KYCH JEWEL

The award of the KYCH JEWEL is a York Rite Honor. The only items that may be worn on the Templar Uniform are ones that have been authorized by the Grand Encampment or Grand Commandery uniform code. Therefore, the KYCH Jewel should NEVER be worn with your Commandery Uniform. (Decision. 1955, William C. Gordon)

APPROPRIATE TEMPLAR JEWELS

Templar Jewels are "to be worn from the left shoulder to the left lapel of the standard uniform coat beginning at the left shoulder seam, the Red Cross or Malta Jewel as preferred, honorary jewels ending with the highest jewel of office, present office jewel being designated as highest office. The Malta Jewel must be worn on the uniform coat even if other jewels are not worn." Jewels will be placed in a single straight line even with the breast pocket and WILL NOT exceed the number that can be placed in the specified area of the uniform coat. The Military Service Ribbon is worn above the line of jewels by those qualified to wear it. Only jewels that fit into the area described are to be worn. No jewels other than Grand Encampment authorized jewels and a name badge are worn on the right side of the uniform. Sir Knights wearing jewels in any other manner will be considered out of uniform.

This Order is to be read IN FULL at the first Stated Conclave following receipt and a record of its reading will be made in the minutes of the Stated Conclave.

Don J. Cowart

Don J. Cowart
Grand Commander