

# Friendship Lodge No. 84

Lodge Building Dedication

and

Cornerstone Ceremony

May 22, 2021

## Greeting

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. My name is Benjamin Zamostny, and I am the Worshipful Master of Friendship Lodge No. 84 and, on behalf of my Brethren, I would like to welcome you to today's Lodge Dedication and Cornerstone Laying Ceremony. Before we begin, as no man should engage in any great and important undertaking without invoking the blessing of Deity, I would like to introduce to you Bro. Scott Paddack, Chaplain of Friendship Lodge No. 84, who will lead us in prayer.  
(Rap x3)

*Prayer led by Bro. Scott Paddack*

## Introduction

(Rap x1) Thank you, Bro. Paddack. I would now like to take a few moments and thank our distinguished guests for attending this ceremony today.

- Ms, Emily Keller, Mayor of Hagerstown
- From the Grand Lodge of Maryland
  - Bro. Marvin L. Mills, Grand Master
  - Bro. Frederick A Spicer, Deputy Grand Master
  - All of the Officers of The Grand Lodge of Maryland
  - Bro. Thomas Johann, Grand Inspector of Friendship Lodge No. 84
  - Mr. Dirk DeVault, Architect of the Renovation
  - Mr. Jeff Tedrick, President of Bowman Construction

- Most importantly, my Brethren, our wives and children who have, and continue to support us in our Masonic journeys.

Before we begin today's ceremony, I would like to introduce Ms. Keller who has a few words for the Lodge.

## **History of the Lodge**

Today, we will be dedicating this building and laying the cornerstone as the new home for Friendship Lodge No. 84. However, before we do that, I feel that I should tell you a bit of history of Friendship Lodge and how we have come to the position that we are today and what we are hoping to accomplishing in the future.

194 years ago, a number of Brethren living in Williamsport, who were members of Mt. Moriah Lodge No. 33 in Hagerstown (then called Elizabethtown) or Ureka Lodge No. 69 in Boonsboro (then called Boonsboro), found that the roads, being muddy and, sometimes, almost impassable, especially during the winter months, were too difficult to travel to attend lodge at either location, decided to petition Mt. Moriah Lodge to form their own new lodge which was to be called Friendship Lodge. On this day in 1827, the Grand Lodge of Maryland formally recognized this request and Friendship Lodge was born.

For many years, Friendship Lodge met in various locations until it decided to erect its own building. On April 21, 1898, the cornerstone of this new building, located at 54 S. Potomac St. was laid. Within less than one year, on March 8, 1899, the building was dedicated. This was the home for Friendship Lodge until 2016. During these 117 years, 54 S. Potomac St. was home to many Masonic organizations including Friendship Lodge No. 84, Hagerstown Lodge No. 217, the Order of the

Eastern Star Chapters Queen Ester No. 3 and Hagerstown 89, the Tall Cedars of Lebanon, Job's Daughters, The Order of DeMolay, and to appendant bodies belonging to the York Rite.

It housed special memories for many other organizations too! The Antietam Exchange Club held Christmas Parties where they passed out Christmas presents to underprivileged children, members of the Department of Defense used the ballroom for parties, fundraisers to help raise awareness for local shelters, the Western Maryland Library used it for training purposes, and the number of wedding parties and receptions are too many to count, including my own!

We also held spaghetti feeds which brought many members of the community together. There were crab feeds and the like. The building was the drop off place for those members of the community which decided to donate food to the local shelters during Christmas time. It was used yearly as the staging area for graduation ceremonies for Washington County High Schools. When the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts was being renovated, it was used as the lunch room for the students. It was such an important part of community life, not just Masonic life, that when I tell people that I am a member of Friendship Lodge No. 84, they often have a memory of the building that they share with me.

However, over the years, the building became too much for Friendship Lodge to maintain. The building was over 117 years old. It had knob and tube wiring throughout the building...it had horsehair plaster for all of the walls. The bathrooms in the building weren't accessible enough to meet the needs of some of our brethren and family members. It was a glorious building at the height of its use but, over the years, started to lose some of its luster. Every day, year by year, it lost a bit more of its former glory. With losing just a bit of its luster every day, you don't really notice it.

Much like looking in the mirror every day and seeing one small gray hair on your face and then the next day seeing another and then another and then one day you look back at pictures of you at a much younger age and realize just how the years seemed to have gone by so fast and it's hard to believe what is looking back at you in the mirror.

With this reflection staring back at us, Friendship decided it was time to let go of the building which we could no longer take care of and pass it on to someone who we knew had the resources to restore it to its former glory. That is where Mr. Tedrick and Bowman Construction come into the story of our former building. Bowman Development purchased 54 S. Potomac St. from the Friendship and have begun to renovate the building.

One afternoon in April, Mr. Tedrick gave the members of Friendship Lodge a tour of the building even though it is still not finished yet. It was during this tour that we saw the care and dedication that Mr. Tedrick put into honoring the legacy of pride and community into 54 S. Potomac St. that we knew the building was in the right hands. Although it made my heart sink being back in the building that held so many memories for so many people, I couldn't think of anyone else that I would rather have taking care of it.

So, to Mr. Tedrick and to Bowman Development, we thank you for the time, energy, and care you have put into restoring the building. We are honored that you have done such a magnificent job in preserving its heritage, knowing that it has meant so much, not only to us as Masons, but to the generations upon generations of residents of this wonderful city. We pray for blessings as you continue to renovate and restore the building and can't wait to see it at the ribbon cutting ceremony and to see what new memories, for generations and generations to come, will be made at 54 S. Potomac St.

After spending some time in various other locations, while searching for a permanent home, we finally arrived here at 70 E. Washington St. Mr. Dirk DeVault was hired as the architect to design our new home and to ensure that it met the needs of the lodge. Bros. Bob Rauth, Roger Douglas, and Wally Frazee have been instrumental in making those designs become a reality. Lodge members have spent many hours getting the building ready for today. We have two lodge rooms, one banquet hall, and one social room which we call "The Rough Ashlar." Both lodge rooms are complete and the banquet hall is the next on the list for us to renovate so that we can start holding functions such as spaghetti feeds, banquets, parties, and so on.

After today's ceremonies are completed, we will open the building for a while so anyone who wishes to see the renovations that have taken place is welcome to walk through.

With this new building, Friendship Lodge can now focus on the mission of Freemasonry.....that mission which has caused thousands of men in Hagerstown and the surrounding areas, for almost two centuries, to join Freemasonry.....to make good men better..... to help them find their place in this world.....to give back to the community in which they live.....and to be engaged in fraternal relations with men who share similar ideals, goals, and experiences.....to help men come together as equals, to act uprightly, and to live virtuous lives.

If you have never heard what Freemasons do, let me dispel a few myths for you: We are not a secret society. After all, if we were a secret society, would we be holding a public ceremony, being live streamed on Facebook, for the laying of the cornerstone? I'm pretty sure that would blow our cover!

We don't run the government. We don't have the Templar Treasure as you might have thought if you ever saw the movie *National Treasure* with Nicholas Cage. I mean, I drive a Chevy Colorado. It's a nice truck, don't get me wrong.....but I'd be rolling in a Bentley.

Maybe you have seen *The Simpsons* episode when Homer joins the "The Stonecutters," we don't keep the metric system down....we just know that the imperial system is better!

So, now, allow for me to tell you a couple of things that we actually do: we believe in Brotherly Love and that all men are created equal. No matter their country, sect, or opinion, we conciliate true friendship among men who might have otherwise remained at a distance. At any of our lodge meetings, you will see members who were born and raised in Hagerstown, to members from Sierra Leone, to members from India. You will see men gather together under the veil of equality and respect.

We believe in relieving the distressed. This may be through collecting food, donating time to the homeless shelter to serve meals, or organizing blood drives. The Shriners, a part of Masonry, have Children's Hospitals throughout the country. You may have probably seen some of their commercials on TV. Those families who go there do not pay a dime for the services they receive. In fact, they have vans that will drive you to and from your appointment if you need the help knowing that the focus on helping children should be in their recovery, not in trying to balance finances for care. Bro. Roger Douglas, a Past Master of Friendship Lodge has, out of his love for others, has volunteered and made 56 trips, within the past two years, back and forth to Philadelphia helping those families.

The Tall Cedars of Lebanon contribute to Muscular Dystrophy. The Scottish Rite just held a tag sale to raise funds for the Speech and

Language Clinic that they are hoping to get started here in Hagerstown! There are so many philanthropic services that Freemasonry provides that an exhaustive list would not only take up too much time but would be incomplete as many Freemasons contribute to relieving the distressed without every seeking recognition and do so out of the love they have for all of mankind.

We believe in truth and education. You will see that Lodges through the Nation, especially here in Maryland, contribute annually to scholarships to help send students to college. Friendship Lodge has a program with the one of the local schools to donate bicycles to be gifted to one lucky student who has perfect attendance because we know that one of the biggest indicators of student success is getting students inside the building! This is where many of them may be receiving the only food that they may be getting. Schools are a place where they can feel safe and secure from some of the worries that they may have in their home life or in their neighborhood. Schools are where their minds can be set free to grow and flourish while teachers cultivate a love of learning. But we have to get students into the school first!

It is through this Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth, we make good men better. We strive, as Masons, to become better Husbands, Fathers, Sons, and Brothers. We seek to know where we fit into this world and how to make it a better place so that when we are no longer of this earth, we can say that we have made a positive impact in the lives of others. We hope that the people around us are influenced by our actions to become better that they try to improve themselves. And if we can make ourselves better, and then make those around us better, and those people make those around them better, then we will finally live a community, a nation, and a world in which mankind regards each other for the internal and the not the

external qualifications which we possess and which meets upon the level, acts upon the plumb, and parts upon the square.

I am now pleased to introduce to you the Grand Lodge of Maryland who will dedicate the building and lay the cornerstone.