



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 Jeffery G. Jones
19th Most Worshipful Grand Master

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8/9/2020

OC#mwgm19jgj2020.2

Re: Jurisdiction Announcements – Official Communication: OC#mwgm19jgj2020.2

Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:13-14

First, I give honor to my Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ and to each of you my brothers and sisters;

This is the day that the Lord has made, let us all rejoice and be glad in it. In spite of these circumstances we are now faced with in this world; I pray that each of you is well, safe, and equally blessed by His Grace and His Mercy.

Both the aforesaid passage and scripture above fill me with a spirit of a new beginning. New beginnings bring forth new opportunities and possibilities. In the spirit of new beginnings, the purpose of this communication is to provide first steps for our Jurisdiction and to identify a few next steps to start us on a focused path which I laid out for you in my first communication entitled, “19th MWGM Acceptance Speech”. Additionally, I will try to answer some of the questions that I know have been asked prior to and since my election to the office of Most Worshipful Grand Master. This communication will be lengthy; however, I encourage you to read it in its entirety.

150th Grand Session

Due to the Corona Virus pandemic and for the safety of our membership, the 150th Grand Communication was deliberately limited in attendance to the voting membership. Such actions were taken to ensure that we were able to successfully social distance within the allotted meeting space while meeting the constitutional requirements to establish a quorum, expedite the business portions of the of the session, and to execute a legal and lawful election. That said, many of our registered non-voting brothers were denied an opportunity to attend this historic session. Taking this into consideration, I have ordered that all registered non-voting members who did not attend the 150th Grand Communication, will receive a credit for registrations. Those funds will be applied towards their 2021 dues during the November Annual return period. Your Zone Secretaries will be providing a list of these brothers to the Grand Treasurer prior to the submission of your Annual Returns. If you have questions, please reach out to your Zone Coordinators for further clarification.

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Subordinate Organization Operational Plan during COVID-19

Meetings: All Organizations within the Jurisdiction are still permitted (but not required) to hold at least one monthly face to face meeting within the Lodge Hall as long as the social distancing protocols are followed as specified in the last communication from the 18th MWGM. Virtual meetings are also still acceptable. All lodges should be holding some form of meeting via audio conference, Audio/Video conference or otherwise. At this point no lodge should be sitting completely idle. Worshipful Masters, please keep your membership engaged. We continue to ask everyone to personally evaluate yourselves before attending any in-person functions. If you fall into any of the high-risk categories (i.e. pre-existing health condition, over 65 years of age, temperature above 100°F, loss of taste or smell, etc.....), please do not attend any in-person activities.

Community Service Activities: In March, the Grand Lodge asked our organizations to refrain from hosting or working on any public community service events. However, in March, far less was known about the spread of the corona virus, and access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE such as mask, gloves, as well as hand sanitizer), was limited. Today, this is not the case. Since we now know how to better protect ourselves, Organizations that have the proper PPE for their members and are able to provide them to their patrons may actively participate in community service activities. As a reminder, in order to participate, organizations must practice social distancing and properly use PPE. District Deputy Grand Masters are to govern this mandate for compliance among all houses within their respective districts.

Degree Work: Until further notice, there should be no degree work conducted within the Jurisdiction. I am sensitive to the fact that many of you in all houses may have candidates in waiting. However, with particular emphasis on our foundational houses, until such time as I am able to review and approve a proper safety protocol system for degree work, we will refrain from placing non-members (candidates) in harm's way by putting them through a ritualistic process of which they have no control. Candidates are not members of our order and therefore have no ties to it. Without those ties, bonds, and love for the order; They could and would in all likelihood hold us accountable if they were to become infected as a result of our rituals. It is nearly impossible to social distance during degree work without significantly modifying our ritualistic process. In as much as it is my goal to grow our membership, please know that I have key individuals working to develop this process so that we may continue to fill our ranks with dedicated and knowledgeable members. Please be patient as we work through this very trying dilemma.

Worshipful Master's Certification: Typically, this month in August we would be planning for our WM Certification training class. We will not be holding a class this year for obvious reasons. Therefore, the WM Certification requirement to seek the office of Worshipful Master will be lifted temporarily in 2020. However, once the class is reinstated, if you do

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not have a valid certification already, guidelines for a reasonable timeline to complete the course will be provided. Additionally, please be advised that we are currently working on a means of making this course available online. We will keep you posted on the progress of this initiative.

Two-Hat Rule In 2015 a two-hat rule was put into place within the jurisdiction across all masonic houses. The rule was enacted to curb the monopoly on leadership held by a select few within the Jurisdiction. The rule was further designed to promote and encourage the emergence of new leaders. That said, due to the significant drop in our membership numbers I am suspending the Two-hat Rule until further notice. While the true intent of the rule is sound, many of our members have been forced into leadership roles (in my opinion) well before their due season. Without intention of shaming anyone, we must make vital adjustments whenever we begin to find our local organizations under the leadership of members with insufficient time in the order to become truly proficient in the craft. While it is no fault of anyone, we need to simply lean on our more seasoned members once again; giving our newer members more time to develop their leadership as well as their knowledge and understanding of the organization. Once we have increased our numbers and have developed more leaders, I reserve the right to once again reinstitute the Two-Hat rule.

Grand Master's 2020 visitations Be advised that all Grand Master's visitations for 2020 are tentatively postponed, and will be held virtually if no change to the spread of the Covid-19 virus occurs in the next several weeks. However, our zone coordinators are actively seeking large spaces within the various zones that could allow for social distancing to occur. If spaces are found, there may still be an opportunity to hold a single day event where I will have an opportunity to address you face to face. We will remain prayerful that our state begins to flatten the COVID curve by the 4th quarter of the year. You will all be kept abreast of these plans as we continue to monitor the situation and pray for the best.

18th MWGM Testimonial In preparation for the 150th Grand communication and the celebration of our 18th MWGM, many of you had already purchased your tickets to what would have been an awesome event in honor of our 18th MWGM The Honorable Walter Gully, Jr. We all know that due to the virus and its impact on the State of Florida, along with the regular Grand Session, the Testimonial Celebration had to be postponed. The testimonial celebration for our 18th MWGM has been rescheduled for the 2021 151st Grand Communication in Jacksonville, Florida. Deputy Grand Master Gus Harris, Jr. has transitioned into the Committee's Chairman position for this event and has extended ticket sales until March 1, 2021. The Previously instituted payment methods for ticket purchases still apply. For those of you who purchased tickets in 2020, your monies are held in an escrow account

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earmarked for the 2021 event. Again, at this time because the event has been postponed and not cancelled, funds are not being returned but held in escrow that we may continue to plan this deserved celebration.

MWUGL Foundation As indicated in my acceptance speech, the MWUGL Foundation in my opinion, is one of the greatest tools at our disposal to uplift our communities. To this end, I am currently restructuring the Foundation and have put in place what I believe to be a strong, smart and innovative team charged with the growth, improved efficiency, and the improvement of the foundation's standing among non-profit organizations across the country. First, I have established for the first time in our organization's history, a board of directors who will have oversight over of the operational staff (officers) of the foundation. During the Grand Session, I Appointed as the Foundation's President and Vice President Brandon Cooper and Jordin Chandler respectively. I am happy to say that in a meeting of the Board members, the appointments of President Cooper and Vice President Chandler were unanimously approved. President Cooper is an Attorney with a wealth of knowledge and experience in the arena of non-profit organization management. Vice President Chandler is a Government Relations Consultant in the Melbourne and Orlando Florida area. I am so excited about what is possible for our foundation with the board approved appointment of these very dynamic individuals. The Board also reappointed Mr. John Grayson to the office of Treasurer for the foundation. Mr. Grayson is a CPA by trade whose fiduciary knowledge and experience speaks for itself. Additionally, the Board further nominated six (6) additional board members to create a very well-rounded list of governors for this great organization. A complete organization structure of the Foundation and Board members is forthcoming.

Reinstatement Fees In the spirit of my membership growth program, I am rolling out a dispensation (reinstatement) plan to reclaim any and all members who have fallen off the square. Please be advised that anyone who has been off the square more than 3 years will be required to complete a background check. Separate fees for background checks will apply.

Reinstatement fees are as follows:

Today – November 15, 2020: **\$175**

November 16, 2020 - December 31, 2020: **\$225**

January 1st 2021: **\$325**

Note: No local fees or assessments may be added to this reinstatement price. A document of all Membership fees will be sent to the brothers under a separate cover.

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Next Steps After finalizing my membership program, I will forward a completed copy within the next 30 days. It will be a structured program that I expect each lodge in the jurisdiction to follow. The program will be very specific in its actions and timelines. I look forward to sharing this program with each Worshipful Master and working with you to put it into action. I firmly believe that a concerted effort by the Blue Lodge to grow its membership not only benefits ancient craft masonry, it benefits every house male and female within the Masonic Jurisdiction. This is win/win for everyone.

Plans for OES & York Rite Bodies I am acutely aware that there is likely an abundance of uncertainty relative to the status of the remaining Masonic houses within the Jurisdiction. I will be meeting with each Department Head (Male & Female) to address some of the same issues outlined above including dues, Grand Session registration, elections etc.). Please be patient and know that more information is forthcoming from your respective department.

Prayers for the Jurisdiction of Alabama Please keep the Honorable Corey D. Hawkins, MWGM Jurisdiction of Alabama, and his family uplifted in prayer. Grand Master Hawkins recently suffered the loss of his father. As well intentioned as our actions may be, I simply ask that you refrain from posting social media displays of affection or concern. Please respect the family during this difficult time of bereavement. Please also pray for each member of the MWPHGL of Alabama Jurisdiction. Inasmuch as Grand Master Hawkins has been a good friend to Florida, let us bind together sending up our most fervent prayers to bring peace to Hawkins family and the Jurisdiction of Alabama.

Finally,

Let us continue to pray for one another as we look to a new beginning.

May God Bless you and keep you is my prayer,

I AM

The Honorable Jeffery G Jones
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GOD SAVE THE CRAFT!

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