

What is the York Rite?



The York Rite is one of the appendant bodies of Freemasonry in which a Master Mason may proceed to supplement and amplify the Blue Lodge degrees, affording historical background on the work and meaning of Freemasonry. The York Rite takes its name from the old English city of York.

The York Rite confers degrees beyond the Blue Lodge's three degrees. In the York Rite, A Master Mason may become a member of three bodies that consists of nine additional degrees/orders. In addition to the Blue Lodge, the bodies of the York Rite and the degree/orders that they confer are:



Chapter of Royal Arch Mason – The Degrees are: Mark Master, Past Master, Most Excellent Master, and Royal Arch Mason;



Council of Cryptic Masons – The Degrees are: Royal Master, Select Master, and Super Excellent Master;



Commandery of Knights Templar – The Orders conferred are: Illustrious Order of the Red Cross, Order of Malta and the Order of the Temple.

In none of these is any memorization required to advance from one degree to another. There are many easily learned parts that any interested Mason may acquire and participate in the conferring of the work. In the York Rite, most of the work is by a cast of characters made up to portray more vividly the message and the cast is robed to add to the impressiveness of the lessons.

Indiana is somewhat unique in that in those areas where all three bodies; the Chapter, the Council, and the Commandery are organized, they conduct joint business meetings. Each body has its own core of officers and the opening ritual for each meeting is rotated between the three bodies. Any member of the York Rite who has had a particular degree may participate in portrayal of that degree, and is encouraged to do so. With the need for officers in the three separate, distinct bodies and the Degrees and Orders to confer, the York Rite offers many opportunities for service to the new Companion or Sir Knight, if he so desires.

Most students of Freemasonry agree that the degrees offered in the York Rite of Freemasonry complete the story begun in the Master Mason degree and answer many of the questions in the mind of the newly made Master Mason.

Evansville York Rite Masonry:

The Evansville York Rite consists of Evansville Chapter #12, Simpson Council #23 and LaValette Commandery #15. Stated meetings are held on the third Tuesday of the month on the fourth floor of the Evansville Masonic Temple on 301 Chestnut Street. A meal is usually served at 6:00 PM with the meeting starting at 7:00 PM.

Indiana York Rite Masonry:

The Grand Chapter of Indiana was organized under a dispensation granted by Joseph K. Stapleton, D.G.G.H.P. dated November 18, 1845. The organization was formed on December 18, 1845 by Madison #1, Logan #2, Lafayette #3, and King Solomon #4. William B. Smith was the first Grand High Priest.

On December 20, 1855, representatives from Indiana Council #1, Indianapolis Council #2, and Shelby Council #3 met to form the Grand Council of Cryptic Masons. George W. Porter of Indiana Council #1 was the first Most Illustrious Grand Master.

The Grand Commandery of Indiana was formed and organized on May 16, 1854 by the following Commanderies: Raper #1, Greensburg #2, Lafayette #3, and Ft. Wayne #4. Henry C. Lawrence was the First Grand Commander.

American York Rite:

The York Rite as we know it is really the American Rite; American in the arrangement of symbolic, capitular, cryptic, and chivalric degrees into one system. While many of the degrees were born and nurtured in England, in America they attained their highest development and regular arrangement. Our York Rite history coincides with that of the American Republic. The York Rite is American in that its bodies are to be found in every state and American in that its highest offices are open to any man of character and ability. Its ideals, philosophy, and government as well as the teaching of true patriotism and love of country have made the York Rite a permanent American institution.

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