

THE TORONTO WEST MASONIC TEMPLE



Masonic groups (known as "lodges") generally meet at a temple specifically built for Masonic purposes. Although many non-Masons assign a religious connotation to the term "temple", the design of the building is actually based on the temple of King Solomon in Jerusalem.

Solomon's temple was considered one of the greatest architectural achievements in early human history, and its grandeur and structure have inspired the design of Masonic lodge rooms. The shape and arrangement of the room roughly corresponds to historical descriptions of the great building.

The Toronto West Masonic Temple began construction in 1909 and required an initial investment of \$40,000 to build. To raise the necessary funds, shares were sold to the lodges that would take residence in the building. Today the temple stands as one of the most impressive in the province of Ontario.



The temple is similar to many others in featuring a preparation room for candidates, a library, and a dining hall in the lower level. And like many other temples, it features prominent Masonic symbols both inside and out. Some of these represent Masonic organizations, while others are used for inspiration or contemplation. In the West, above the Senior Warden's chair (see "The West"), is the seal of the United Grand Lodge of Canada. The slogan "Audi, Vide, Tace" is roughly translated as "I see, I hear, and I am silent".

The current entrance of the building was an addition added several decades following the original construction. This was undertaken to allow for new washrooms to be installed and to permit for a reallocation of space usable for Masonic functions. One curious note regarding construction: all lodge rooms are devoid of windows or have them covered; this ensures that anyone who is not a Mason cannot illicitly learn the activities that take place within a meeting.



Above the building entrance are three stained-glass panels; the square and compasses, the sun, and the crest of the Royal Arch, a related Masonic organization. Higher on the building's front is a stained-glass hexagram, an ancient symbol also seen in the interior of the lodge room.

The interior of the lodge room is also decorated with the portraits of prominent Freemasons, from both the local area and from the province. One stands out in particular: that of WWI general William Mercer, a resident of The Junction after whom General Mercer Lodge No. 548 is named. Lodges are rarely named after non-Masons; this honor was afforded to General Mercer for his prominence in the local community.

WHAT IS FREEMASONRY?

Masonry's Origins

As with anything rooted in antiquity, a definitive answer as to the specific origins of Freemasonry is not possible. Its traditions, however, can be traced directly to the operative Masons who built the stone cathedrals and castles of the Middle Ages, skilled and dedicated men of character and high ideals.



Modern, or speculative, Freemasonry was officially founded in England in June of 1717 when four lodges banded together to form the first Grand Lodge. From Britain it spread over much of the world, today being found in nearly every country on earth.

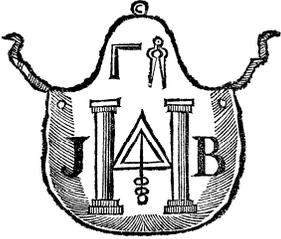
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WHAT IS FREEMASONRY? (CON'T)

Masonry's Philosophy

Through its lessons, charitable work and fellowship amongst its members, Masonry stresses the principles of kindness and consideration at home, honesty in business, courtesy towards others, dependability in one's work, compassion for the less fortunate, and being a good citizen of the world.

Who is Masonry For?



It is the goal of Freemasonry to take good men and make them better by generating fraternal fellowship and building strong moral character in its members. Masonry can set out the advantages of membership; the decision to join, however, must be a personal one, based on an assessment of what it has to offer and its worth to the individual.

Masonry offers the opportunity to make each man better through its teachings, through Masonic associations, and by a philosophy that has served the social needs of men for centuries. It also promotes personal development and providing a sense of accomplishment and fellowship.

Requirements to Join

Membership is for men aged 21 years or older of any race, faith, creed, or economic status who are of good moral character and who believe in the existence of a Supreme Being. Because tradition requires every candidate to come forward free of coercion, Masonry does not solicit for members; an interested man must ask to become a member or for more information. A man who wishes to learn more about the fraternity is encouraged to approach any Mason or contact our Secretary (*see bottom of page*).

Common Misconceptions

Much has been made of the mysteries of Freemasonry over the centuries. Masonry is *not* a secret society: it is a fraternal association of men of good will and high ideals. Masons, however, believe that the benefits of membership must be protected and are careful before admitting anyone into the lodge or discussing certain elements of the fraternity with a stranger.

Masonry is *not* a religion or a substitute for religion; however, every candidate must affirm a belief in a Supreme Being. Masonry recognizes each individual's right to his own beliefs; religion is never discussed within the lodge. Each member is free to pursue his religious convictions in the manner best suited to him.

ABOUT OUR LODGE

Founded on October 23rd, 1925, Prince of Wales Lodge No. 630 brought together a preponderance of physicians, dentists, bankers, locomotive engineers and teachers living in and around the Toronto neighborhood now known as "The Junction".

Throughout the last 85 years our lodge has seen many changes but we remain vibrant, diverse and welcoming. We pride ourselves on a mix of young, enthusiastic newcomers and an established group of Masons with many years of experience and knowledge.

Prince of Wales Lodge meets twice monthly at the Toronto West Masonic Temple, located at 151 Annette Street, Toronto, Ontario. We are always interested in new members; consult our web page, talk to one of our existing members, or email our Secretary for more information.



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