

Minnesota Table Lodge Program
Festive First Degree Table Lodge

Compiled by:

W.B. Terrence John Becker and W.B. Rual Lee

Edited by W.B. Terrence John Becker

Based on the Work of

R.W.B Duane E. Anderson

Duluth, Minnesota, Sept. 1999

Preliminary Setup Instructions

For ease of doing the work, formally open the Lodge for the purpose of conferring the E.A. Degree at least an hour prior to the opening of the Table Lodge and then called to refreshment. Set up the Lodge using long narrow tables running east to west on the north and south sides of the of the lodge (if space allows, there could be two rows of tables on each side) and one along the east with an opening in the center so the Master can go to the candidate for the prayer and to the altar for the obligation. Position the altar and lesser lights as usual.

If the optional Military Table Lodge Ceremony is included, a small table with white tablecloth and a single chair is placed near the entrance. Placed on the table are an inverted empty glass, a vase with a red ribbon and single rose, a small plate with a single slice of lemon, and some salt.

After the Table Lodge has been set and the brothers assembled, the Lodge is again called to labor. The candidate(s) should be outside the lodge at this time. Bring in the candidate(s) to be seated at a place of honor, near the N.E. corner, but not necessarily at the corner of the table before opening the Table Lodge. The Worshipful Master explains protocol—i.e. hat on/at labor, hat off/at refreshment, etc.

Opening

WM: *(rises and *)* Brethren, it has been the custom among the fraternity of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, at an appropriate time in the activities of the lodge, to adjourn to the banquet room and there open a table lodge for the purpose of celebrating the traditional "Ceremony of the Seven Toasts." In accordance with this ancient custom, my brethren, will you please rise as our Chaplain delivers the invocation. (***)

Chaplain: Let us pray. Most holy and glorious Lord God, we reverentially ask Thy blessing as we gather around this festive table in the spirit of universal friendship and brotherhood. We have assembled here to rededicate ourselves to the principles and ideals of our beloved fraternity. As each of us endeavors to erect our spiritual temple agreeably to Thy laws, may the beauty of Thy Light give us strength to build with wisdom. Amen.

Brethren: So mote it be!

WM: Brethren, please be seated. *(WM remains standing.)* Brothers Senior and Junior Wardens! *(SW and JW rise.)* Be pleased to satisfy yourselves that all participating on the columns of the north and south are entered apprentice Masons.

(They may do so by observation.)

SW: Worshipful Master, all on the column of the north are Masons.

JW: Worshipful Master, all on the column of the south are Masons.

WM: Brothers Senior and Junior Wardens, be pleased to invite our brethren on the columns of the north and south to assist us in opening a table lodge of entered apprentices.

SW: Brethren in the North, assist us in opening a table lodge of entered apprentices.

JW: Brethren in the South, assist us in opening a table lodge of entered apprentices.

WM: Brother Senior Warden, are you a Mason?

SW: All my brethren know me as such.

WM: Why are we met together?

SW: To erect temples to virtue and dig dungeons for vices.

WM: How are the temples erected?

SW: By the blessing of God.

WM: To whom are they dedicated?

SW: To the Holy St. John.

WM: How long must we work?

SW: From midday to midnight.

WM: What is the hour?

SW: Almost midday, or high twelve.

WM: (***) Brothers Senior and Junior Wardens, in consideration of the hour, inform our brethren on the columns of the north and south that a table lodge of entered apprentices is now open, and we are about to begin our works in the usual manner.

SW: Brethren on the column of the north, a table lodge of entered apprentices is now open, and we are about to begin our works in the usual manner.

JW: Brethren on the column of the south, a table lodge of entered apprentices is now open, and we are about to begin our works in the usual manner. *(All remain standing.)*

Optional Ceremony Military Table Lodge

The table is set as described in the set-up instructions. Two Brothers either currently serving or veterans, preferably in Full Dress, go to the small table and deliver the following:

Mil. Bro. 1: As you entered the banquet room this evening, you may have noticed this small table set for one. Allow me to explain. The military is steeped in tradition and symbolism. One of these traditions requires this simple ceremony whenever members of the military formally dine together. This is our way of symbolizing the fact that members of our profession of arms are missing from our midst. They are commonly referred to as POWS/MIAS. We call them brothers. They are unable to be with us, so we remember them.

(Calls rank or name of Military Brother)

Mil. Bro. 2: Sir.

Mil. Bro. 1: Why is this table so small and draped in white?

Mil. Bro. 2: *(points to table)* The table is small, symbolizing the frailty of one alone against his oppressors. The tablecloth is white, symbolizing the purity of his intentions to respond to his country's call to arms.

Mil. Bro. 1: Why is there a rose in a vase?

Mil. Bro. 2: *(points to the vase)* The single rose reminds us of the families and loved ones of our comrades who keep faith awaiting their return. The red ribbon around the vase is reminiscent of the red ribbon worn upon the lapels and breasts of thousands who bear witness to the unyielding determination to demand a proper accounting of the missing.

Mil. Bro. 1: *(picks up lemon)* The slice of lemon on the plate reminds us of their bitter fate. *(points to the salt)* The salt on the plate is symbolic of the tears shed by those who wait. *(points to the glass)* The glass is inverted, for they cannot toast with us tonight. *(points to the chair)* The chair is empty, for they are not here. *(pause)* Let us pause in acknowledgment and remembrance *(bow briefly then brothers return to their places)*.

The Worshipful Master's Charge to the Brethren at the Opening

WM: Brethren, in this solemn hour, I charge each of you to rededicate yourself as a Freemason to the noble and glorious purpose of bringing light to dispel darkness; to the service of Him in whom you put your trust; to the precepts set forth in the great light in Masonry, the rule and guide of our faith. I charge you to keep your apron an emblem of innocence, unspotted by the world; to practice that most excellent gift of charity; to make constant and proper use of the square of virtue, the level of equality, and the plumb of rectitude.

Craftsmen in the quarries, I summon you to greater loyalty to your lodge and your fraternity; to integrity in all you dealings with your fellow men; to study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed. Guard against innovations, my brethren. Preserve the landmarks. Maintain the reputation of our fraternity. Aid and succor the needy. Remember your brother's welfare. Be circumspect always in speech. Assist and support him who is falling. Whisper good counsel in the ear of him who needs encouragement. Let each of us make use of the trowel to spread the cement of brotherhood. Let us labor with the common gavel that these rough ashlar may become perfect ashlar. And finally, my brethren, remembering how once you stood in the northeast corner, a just and upright Mason, I give it you strictly in charge ever to walk and act as such. Amen.

Brethren: So mote it be!

WM: (*)

History and Protocol of the Seven Toasts

Selected brother reviews toasting procedure, demonstrates and practices with the Brethren.

Procedure for “fire” / the good fire” / sharpest of fires (format same – all toasts)

- Cannons charged, properly aligned.
- Worshipful Master announces toast and proposer and gives command “carry arms” (firing cannons picked up with right hand and brought to left breast).
- Proposer speaks
- W.M.: Present arms! (right arm extended straight out with firing cannons)
- Toast (repeat in unison the subject of the toast and drink) cannons fired, then set down on firing line in unison according to the following commands: fire, (take sip), the good fire (take sip) the sharpest of fires (empty cannon) return arms! (set down in unison on table; that is, cannons are returned to firing line).
- W.M.: Brethren, taking your time from me:
Point-left-right (three times with right index finger, or with the cannon for the very brave! If done with cannon, “return arms,” after “point-left-right” before battery.)
- Traditional Masonic battery (three-times-three)
- Vivat-vivat-vivat!
- W.M.: At ease!
- Song or response may follow toast.

First Toast

WM: *(Rises)* Brethren, charge and align your cannons! *(glasses filled and aligned)* Brothers Senior and Junior Wardens! *(Wardens rise)* You will see that all cannons on the columns of the north and south are properly charged and aligned for fire! *(done by inspection)*

SW: All cannons on the column of the north are properly charged and aligned for fire!

JW: All cannons on the column of the south are properly charged and aligned for fire!

WM: And they are charged and aligned for fire in the east! Brethren, kindly be upstanding with me to fire your volley to our Country. Carry arms! *(Firing cannons picked up with right hand and brought to left breast.)*

Brethren, I give you our country, the United States of America. Our wish is for its honor and prosperity in peace, and its continued sovereignty, independence, and freedom. We pledge anew our undivided loyalty. I invite you to deliver your fire as handsomely as possible!

Present arms! With me, my brethren, to Our Country!

Brethren: To Our Country! *(Repeat in unison the subject of the toast, all motions synchronized).*

WM: Fire! *(take sip)*

The good fire! *(take sip)*

The sharpest of fires! *(empty cannon)*

Return arms! *(Set down in unison; that is canons are returned to firing line.)*

Brethren, taking your time from me.

Brethren: *(all recite at a smart pace, and point forward, left, and right with empty cannon in right hand)*

Point! Left! Right!

Point! Left! Right!

Point! Left! Right!

(traditional Masonic battery; 3 times 3)

Vivat! Vivat! Vivat! *(said with great enthusiasm!)*

WM: At ease. *(song or response may follow toast)*

(Senior Warden leads response, being the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.)

W.M.: Be seated brethren.

Have the appetizer course, crackers, cheese, herring, veggies etc. served.

Report on recent works that the lodge has done in the area of charity. If the lodge hasn't done anything in particular, make mention of general Masonic charity, i.e. the Masonic Home, Cancer Research, Scholarships, Shrine Hosp, Scottish Rite Language Disorder Clinic in Duluth, Eye Foundation of York Rite. This dialog should take 5 to 10 minutes and be of interest to all assembled.

Discussion of Masonry

W.M.: *(calls upon brother)* "Brother _____ would you share with us why you decided to become a Mason?"

Brother: "What really influenced me more than anything else was
...

W.M.: Brother _____, I understand your father was a Mason, is that true and how did that influence you to become a Mason?

W.M.: *(to candidate)* Mr._____, What was it that got you to sign the petition?

(Senior Steward asks candidate to rise and both Stewards face him and give the interrogatories. When the candidate answers in the affirmative have him be seated.)

W.M.: *(to candidate)* Mr._____, the purpose of these questions is to again reassure us that your reasons for petitioning the lodge are sound reasons. We do not profess that every Mason joined for all of the right reasons, but we want each candidate to rethink in his mind the real reason he is joining. We are most pleased that you have decided to join this lodge and we will do all that we can to make this evening special and memorable for you as each of us

remembers the night when we took our Entered Apprentice Degree. It is our responsibility to make sure that you understand the degree and with this open format of the Table Lodge, we are making an attempt to do two things: 1) make the degree a bit more interesting and unique and 2) and more importantly, give you the opportunity to join in dialog during parts of the degree to enhance your understanding.

Second Toast

WM: *(rises)* Brethren, kindly be upstanding with Brother *(states name of J. Warden)* to fire your volley to the Founders of Ancient Craft Masonry.

Brethren, charge your cannons. *(glasses filled)*

Brothers Senior and Junior Wardens, *(Wardens rise)* you will see that all cannons on the columns of the north and south are properly charged and aligned for fire! *(done by inspection)*

SW: All cannons on the column of the north are properly charged and aligned for fire!

JW: All cannons on the column of the south are properly charged and aligned for fire!

WM: And they are charged and aligned for fire in the East! Carry, arms! *(firing cannons picked up with right hand and brought to left breast).*

JW: Brethren, I give you the ancient and gentle craft of Freemasonry, and the memory of its founders. The mystic tie unites us in a brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of god. I invite you to deliver your fire as handsomely as possible.

WM: Present, arms! *(right arm extended straight out with firing cannons)*

JW: With me, my brethren, to the Founders of Ancient Craft Masonry!

Brethren: To the Founders of Ancient Craft Masonry!

WM: Fire! *(take sip)*

The good fire! *(take sip)*

The sharpest of fires! *(empty cannon)*

Return arms! *(Set down in unison; that is canons are returned to firing line.)*

Brethren, taking your time from me.

Brethren: *(all recite at a smart pace, and point forward, left, and right with empty cannon in right hand)*

Point! Left! Right!

Point! Left! Right!

Point! Left! Right!

(traditional Masonic battery; 3 times 3)

Vivat! Vivat! Vivat! *(said with great enthusiasm!)*

WM: At ease. Be seated brethren.

The response will be given by Brother_____.

Brother: The founders of Ancient Craft Masonry go back many many years. We all have heard that maybe we grew out of the stone masons who built the magnificent cathedrals in Europe, some give us credit as having come from King Solomon's time and yet others attribute our birth out of the Crusades. Which ever you choose to follow, you will definitely find someone else who will agree and others who will disagree. We can trace our path as far back as the Regis Papers of 1616, so we know we are at least that old. What is more important is that our founders have laid the ground work for an order that has withstood the test of time. Freemasonry has had many changes over the years but the basic principles of Brotherhood have not changed. That is why you were asked those questions about your reasons for wanting to join with us. We have all had that exact

same experience, though some of the words may have been different, particularly if you were from another state, or the person delivering them had difficulty with remembering all of the exact words. The main point is that Masonry doesn't judge any of us by our outward stature, or place in society, we are all equal in the lodge. To impress upon you that equality, you will now have to be divested of your outward apparel and clothed in a garment furnished you by the lodge.

But, before you are taken into the preparation room to change clothes, we need to ask you if you have any questions at this point that we may answer for you. If not, we'll clear some of the dishes while you change.

Candidate knocks at door: Degree work is continued in the usual fashion with the work being done inside the horse shoe shape of the table lodge. The candidate is received by the S.D. in the usual manner at the west end of the table directly opposite the Master. Who directs him to the center of the lodge for the purpose of prayer.

After the prayer, the candidate is unblindfolded and invited to enjoy his salad. Give him a shirt to wear while he is eating so he doesn't feel embarrassed eating half naked.

Have the salad course served.

Designate a brother to give the following.

Brother: Mr. _____, you have just experienced a couple of lessons in Masonry. First that what is secret you are expected to keep secret and we'll be sure to inform you before the night is over just what is and what is not secret. Believe me, there are some who believe that everything is secret when in fact we have only a few things considered "secret." The second thing you learned is that the Master taught you your first lesson in Masonry and that is that "no man should undergo any great and important undertaking without first invoking the blessings of Deity." Because Masonry requires only that you have a belief in a Supreme Being, you'll notice that

God is often referred to as the Supreme Architect of the Universe, or the Supreme Grand Master, or the Father of us all. Masonic lodges are neither Christian, Jewish, Moslem or any other particular faith, but we all respect each other's right to worship his God as he wishes. So as not to "step on anyone's toes," the more universal terms for what most of us call God are often, but not always, used. You were asked in whom you placed your trust, because you will be taking an oath on the Bible and without a belief and trust in "God," that oath would be meaningless.

When Brethren are finished with their salad,

Third Toast

WM: Brethren, kindly be upstanding with Brother ____ (*states name of Chaplain*) to fire your volley to the memory of our departed brethren. Brothers Senior and Junior Wardens (*wardens rise*), you will see that all cannons on the columns of the north and south are properly charged and properly aligned for fire. (*done by inspection*)

SW: All cannons on the column of the north are properly charged and aligned for fire!

JW: All cannons on the column of the south are properly charged and aligned for fire!

WM: And they are charged and aligned for fire in the East! Carry, arms! (*firing cannons picked up with right hand and brought to left breast*)

Chaplain: Brethren, I give you the memory of our departed brethren. their labors here on earth have ended, but we shall always cherish the memory of their fidelity, kindness and brotherly love. May their contribution to our brotherhood inspire us to more earnestly dedicate our lives to the service of our fellow men. I invite you to deliver your fire as handsomely as possible.

WM: Present, arms! (*right arm extended straight out with firing cannons*)

Chaplain: With me my brethren, to the Memory of our Departed Brethren!

Brethren: To the Memory of our Departed Brethren! *(repeat in unison the subject of the toast, all motions synchronized)*

WM: Fire! *(take sip)*
The good fire! *(take sip)*
The sharpest of fires! *(empty cannon)*
Return arms! *(Set down in unison; that is canons are returned to firing line.)*
Brethren, taking your time from me.

Brethren: *(all recite at a smart pace, and point forward, left, and right with empty cannon in right hand)*

Point! Left! Right!

Point! Left! Right!

Point! Left! Right!

(traditional Masonic battery; 3 times 3)

Vivat! Vivat! Vivat! *(said with great enthusiasm!)*

WM: At ease, brethren. Be seated.

(song or response follows)

Response: Special Music

Candidate is blindfolded and brought to the south where the J.W. asks if he is worthy, etc. and directs him to the S.W. where same questions are asked and directed to the Master who redirects him to the west where he is taught to approach. Master gives his introductory remarks prior to the obligation and the candidate is obligated and brought to light in the usual manner. The Master gives his talk on the due guard and sign, grip and word. Candidate gives due guard and sign at each of the tables. The candidate is presented with his Apron and returned to West to learn how to wear it and asked to deposit something of a metallic kind.

Lodge at ease while candidate is revested and dishes are cleared for the main course. When the Candidate is ready, he is brought in and directed to Stand in the NE Corner as a Just and Upright Mason. Master instructs him to stand as such and then has him return to the table for dinner.

Fourth Toast

The Fourth Toast is given by the candidate's top line signer or a Grand/Past Grand Officer, and it is to the Newly Admitted Brother and the Grand Master.

WM: Brethren, kindly be upstanding with Brother ____ (*states name of brother [above] or a Grand/Past Grand Officer*) to fire your volley to our Most Worshipful Grand Master and newly admitted brother. Brothers Senior and Junior Wardens (*Wardens rise*), You will see that all cannons on the columns of the north and south are properly charged and properly aligned for fire. (*done by inspection*)

SW: All cannons on the column of the north are properly charged and aligned for fire!

JW: All cannons on the column of the south are properly charged and aligned for fire!

WM: And they are charged and aligned for fire in the East! Carry, arms! (*firing cannons picked up with right hand and brought to left breast*)

Brother: Brethren, I give you the Most Worshipful Grand Master of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Minnesota, symbol of our continuing relationship to an ancient craft and to the Grand Lodge over which he has been called to preside. May he lead and deliberate with wisdom, decide with justice and plan with a vision worthy of the great fraternity he serves. I also give you our brother, newly admitted. I invite you to deliver your fire as handsomely as possible.

WM: Present, arms!

Brother: With me, my brethren, to our Grand Master and Newly Admitted Brother.

Brethren: To our Grand Master and Newly Admitted Brother!

WM: Fire! (*take sip*)
The good fire! (*take sip*)
The sharpest of fires! (*empty cannon*)

Return arms! (*Set down in unison; that is canons are returned to firing line.*)

Brethren, taking your time from me.

Brethren: (*all recite at a smart pace, and point forward, left, and right with empty cannon in right hand*)

Point! Left! Right!

Point! Left! Right!

Point! Left! Right!

(*traditional masonic battery; 3 times 3*)

Vivat! Vivat! Vivat! (*said with great enthusiasm!*)

WM: At ease, brethren. Be seated.

Grand Master's Remarks/Greetings.

Main course is served.

Brother: You may have noticed, Brother ____ (*candidate*) that in the obligation, you again swore not to give any of the secrets and again be assured we'll let you know what those are before the night is over, At one point our obligation contained the phrase about "cutting throat . . ." That was changed because many did not realize that that was a self-inflicting penalty. Listen carefully how it went: "Binding myself under no less penalty than that of having my throat . . ." The penalty was changed to what the fraternity would actually do to you and that is reprimand, suspend or expel.

Brother: The apron you were given is the badge of a Mason, usually worn only within the lodge, but on some special occasions it is worn in public. This is another of the many symbolic lessons in Masonry. You were told of its honor, its purity and that you needed to keep yours pure and clean. This refers to your life and how you live it; you need to always act as not to bring shame to Freemasonry. The due guard was again how your hands were positioned when you took your obligation, and the sign refers to the "ancient symbolic penalty" of the obligation.

(*Ask the candidate if he has any questions at this point.*)

Fifth Toast

The Fifth Toast is given by the oldest Past Master present.

- WM: Brethren, kindly be upstanding with Brother _____ (*names Past Master*) to fire your volley to our Lodge. Brothers Senior and Junior Wardens (*Wardens rise*). You will see that all cannons on the columns of the north and south are properly charged and properly aligned for fire. (*done by inspection*)
- SW: All cannons on the column of the north are properly charged and aligned for fire!
- JW: All cannons on the column of the south are properly charged and aligned for fire!
- WM: And they are charged and aligned for fire in the east! (*firing cannons picked up with right hand and brought to left breast*)
- PM: Brethren, I give you our precious Lodge, so close to the hearts of its members and to the brotherhood that has existed through the years. It has commanded an interest and loyalty unshaken by adversity and unspoiled by prosperity. May we all ever reflect its integrity and stability of principle in our daily lives. I invite you to deliver your fire as handsomely as possible.
- WM: Present, arms! (*right arm extended straight out with firing cannons*)
- PM: With me, my brethren, to the Lodge!
- Brethren: To Our Lodge! (*repeat in unison the subject of the toast, all motions synchronized*)
- WM: Fire! (*take sip*)
The good fire! (*take sip*)
The sharpest of fires! (*empty cannon*)
Return arms! (*Set down in unison; that is canons are returned to firing line.*)
Brethren, taking your time from me.

Brethren: *(all recite at a smart pace, and point forward, left, and right with empty cannon in right hand)*

Point! Left! Right!

Point! Left! Right!

Point! Left! Right!

(traditional masonic battery; 3 times 3)

Vivat! Vivat! Vivat! *(said with great enthusiasm!)*

WM: At ease, brethren. Be seated.

(song or response may follow toast)

WM: The working tools of an Entered Apprentice will be presented by _____

(Actual 24" gauge and gavel are used and presented by a couple of brothers, who teach their uses.)

The charge is read.

Lodge at ease while dishes are cleared and the dessert course is served.

Two Brothers begin dialog and ease into the first lecture while sitting at their places.

Candidate is reminded that he will learn a part of the lecture and that he'll have a mentor assigned to him to assist him.

Sixth Toast

WM: Brethren, kindly be upstanding with Brother _____ *(states name of Senior Warden)* to fire your volley to our visiting brethren. Brothers Senior and Junior wardens *(wardens rise)*, you will see that all cannons on the columns of the north and south are properly charged and properly aligned for fire. *(done by inspection)*

SW: All cannons on the column of the north are properly charged and aligned for fire!

JW: All cannons on the column of the south are properly charged and aligned for fire!

WM: And they are charged and aligned for fire in the east.
Carry, arms! (*firing cannons picked up with right hand and brought to left breast*)

SW: Brethren, I give you Our Masonic Guests of the evening who will not doubt the cordial hospitality of our welcome. May this occasion persuade them to share our hospitality whenever circumstances permit. I invite you to deliver your fire as handsomely as possible.

WM: Present, arms! (*right arm extended straight out with firing cannons*)

SW: With me, my brethren, to our Visiting Brethren.

Brethren: To Our Visiting Brethren! (*repeat in unison the subject of the toast; all motions synchronized*)

WM: Fire! (*take sip*)

The good fire! (*take sip*)

The sharpest of fires! (*empty cannon*)

Return arms! (*Set down in unison; that is canons are returned to firing line.*)

Brethren, taking your time from me.

Brethren: (*all recite at a smart pace, and point forward, left, and right with empty cannon in right hand*)

Point! Left! Right!

Point! Left! Right!

Point! Left! Right!

(*traditional masonic battery; 3 times 3*)

Vivat! Vivat! Vivat! (*said with great enthusiasm!*)

WM: At ease, brethren. Be seated.

(*song or response may follow toast*)

All the visiting Brothers are asked to stand and are introduced. The candidate is given the questions for the second lecture and as he asks them, different brothers from around the table respond.

The third lecture given using slides or several props to add clarity to the lecture.

Seventh Toast – The Tyler’s Toast

WM: Brethren, kindly be upstanding with Brother ____ (*states name of Tyler*) to fire your volley to All Freemasons Wheresoever Dispersed. (*No responses are permitted after its conclusion; sing the Traditional Ode “Auld Lang Syne”*) Brothers Senior and Junior Wardens! (*Wardens rise*) You will see that all cannons on the columns of the north and south are properly charged and aligned for fire! (*done by inspection*)

SW: All cannons on the column of the north are properly charged and aligned for fire!

JW: All cannons on the column of the south are properly charged and aligned for fire!

WM: And they are charged and aligned for fire in the East. Carry Arms! (*firing cannons picked up with right hand and brought to left breast*)

The Tyler’s Toast

Tyler: Then to fire our final volley tonight, our cannons freely discharge...

Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again.

The Mason’s social brotherhood, around the festive board,
Reveals a truth more precious far than the miser’s hoard.

We freely share the bounteous gifts, that generous hearts contain.

Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again.

We meet as Masons, free and true, and when our work is done,
The merry song and social glass, is not unduly won.

And only at our farewell pledge, is pleasure mixed with pain.

Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again.

Amidst our mirth we drink to all poor masons o’er the earth,
On every shore our flag of love is gloriously unfurled.

We prize each brother, near or far, who bears no moral stain.

Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again.

We Masons prize that noble truth, the Scottish peasant told,
That rank is but a guinea stamp, the man himself the gold.

We meet the rich and poor alike, the equal right maintain.

Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again.

Dear brethren of the mystic tie, the night is waning fast.

Our work is done, our feast is o’er, this toast must be the last.

Good night to all. Once more, good night. Again, that farewell strain.

Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again.

WM: Present, arms! (*right arm extended straight out with firing cannons*)

Tyler: With me, my brethren, to All Freemasons Wherever Dispersed.

Brethren: To All Freemasons Wherever Dispersed. (*repeat in unison the subject of the toast, all motions synchronized*)

WM: Fire! (*take sip*)

The good fire! (*take sip*)

The sharpest of fires! (*empty cannon*)

Return arms! (*Set down in unison; that is cannons are returned to firing line.*)

Brethren, taking your time from me.

Brethren: (*all recite at a smart pace, and point forward, left, and right with empty cannon in right hand*)

Point! Left! Right!

Point! Left! Right!

Point! Left! Right!

(*traditional masonic battery; 3 times 3*)

Vivat! Vivat! Vivat! (*said with great enthusiasm!*)

WM: At ease, brethren. Be seated.

(*no response permitted after its conclusion*)

The Closing

WM: Brethren, our work is now completed. We will close this table lodge in the usual manner. Brother Chaplain, lead us in prayer.

Chaplain: Almighty and Eternal Lord God, we thank Thee for the opportunity that Thou hast granted us to gather around this festive board as Freemasons. And, as we are about to retire, help us to keep our hearts full of love. Help us to forget ourselves and think of others, so that the searchlight of Truth will show to the world that Freemasonry truly is . . . the brotherhood of man, under the Fatherhood of God. Amen.

Brethren: So mote it be!

(Brethren sing the traditional ode. At the beginning of the second verse, brethren cross arms, right over left, and join hands.)

Auld Lang Syne

Should auld acquaintance be forgot
And never brought to mind.

Should auld acquaintance be forgot
And days of auld lang syne.

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne.

We'll take a cup of kindness yet
For auld lang syne.

And here's a hand, my trusty friend, *(all join hands)*
And here's my hand in thine.

We'll take a cup of kindness yet
For auld lang syne.

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne.

We'll take a cup of kindness yet
For auld lang syne.

– *Brother Robert Burns*

The Worshipful Master's Charge to the Brethren at the Closing

WM: Brethren, you are now to quit this sacred retreat of friendship and virtue to mix again with the world. Amidst its concerns and employments, forget not the duties you have heard so frequently inculcated and forcibly recommended in our lodges. Be diligent, prudent, temperate, discreet. Remember that around our altars you have promised to befriend and relieve every worthy brother who shall need your assistance. Remember that you have promised to remind him, in the most tender manner, of his failings, and aid his reformation. These generous principles are to extend further. Every human being has a claim upon your kind offices. Do good unto all. Recommend it more especially to the household of the faithful. Finally, brethren, be ye all of one mind. Live in peace, and may the God of Love and Peace delight to dwell with and bless you.

– *Bro. the Rev. Thaddeus Mason Harris, ca. 1792*
Grand Lodge of Massachusetts

WM: Brothers Senior and Junior Wardens, are all the brethren in order?

SW: All on the column of the north are in order.

JW: All on the column of the south are in order.

WM: What is the hour?

SW: Midnight, or low twelve, Worshipful Master.

WM: In consideration of the hour, inform all brethren on the columns of the north and south that this table lodge is closed.

SW: Brethren on the column of the north, this table lodge is closed.

JW: Brethren on the column of the south, this table lodge is closed.

WM: Brethren, go in peace.