

To: Officers and Members of Lowther Manor Lodge No. 781 F. & A.M.
From: Jeffrey L. Heiss, P.M, W.M.
Subj: Objectives for the Masonic Year 2024

Theme for the year: The best of Brothers, The Best of Friends

Brothers, we, along with Grand Lodge and many other Pennsylvania Masonic Lodges, are facing some significant challenges. It will take some hard work, but I have faith in my brothers, my friends, that we can meet any challenge!

Engagement leads to participation, which in turn leads to membership!

Engagement – Brothers, our 2023 membership stood at about 280 members. While some (about 60) live too far away to attend regularly or at all, we only had 53 members who attended a 2023 meeting at least once through November. We probably know brethren who could attend but don't. We've lost touch with many. How do we fix this?

Visitation – The visitation committee at our Lodge really encompasses the duties of two mandatory committees required by the Grand Lodge and one optional one. The sum of what this committee is charged with is essentially taking care of our members. This requires some two-way communication. Personal contact and at least a phone call or two. And guess what? As an elected or appointed officer, you are on that committee! I've also asked some mature and experienced lodge members to assume leadership roles within the group and take some initiative. To this effect...

- I will personally call every member at least once during the year during their anniversary month.
- I have already worked with brother Tyler Vaughn to keep the attendance records on a spreadsheet accessible to all that need the information. This will allow the committee to follow up on non-attendees and brothers who suddenly stop attending.
- I'll meet with the committee frequently and my expectation is they will meet as a group themselves, like the car show meetings perhaps.
- The committee will make a report at stated meetings at an appropriate time, probably when we typically report deaths.

Some other observations and objectives

- I think some incentive to attend meetings is appropriate, if only recognition of frequent attenders, but perhaps some other things as well.
- I'm going to do some "old school" things. For example, an officer guide and a kick-off meeting in a more relaxed social setting.

- **Our Ladies and Widows** - I'd really like to get our ladies and widows involved and encourage them to participate more actively. I'm hoping to have programs for the ladies' nights with the lady's input as to what they would find enjoyable.
- **Lodge Officers** – Being an officer in the lodge is an honorable and respected position. I'm planning some special get-togethers for the officers. It's also important to make sure they know their positions and responsibilities, hence this guide. I will frequently encourage the members to recognize and encourage the officers. The rewards of being an officer should exceed the cost of the commitment.
- **VISIBILITY** – We face some demographic challenges insofar as we are in the middle of a large but not densely populated area with other lodges on the periphery. We need to have and participate in events that make our presence known. We all need to be a bit more visible as Freemasons in our communities and in our relationships.

And this is just a starting point! We can do this if we all work together.

Yours in the bonds of Masonic brotherhood!

Jeff Heiss, P.M., W.M.