

RITUAL  
OF LOCAL LODGES



BENEVOLENT and PROTECTIVE  
ORDER OF ELKS



# RITUAL OF LOCAL LODGES

Under the Jurisdiction  
of the  
Grand Lodge  
of the  
**BENEVOLENT AND PROTECTIVE  
ORDER OF ELKS**  
of the United States of America

Property of the  
GRAND LODGE

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TWO THOUSAND AND TWELVE

**Code 511500**

Revised November 2012

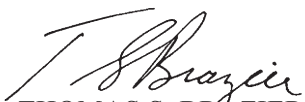


# CERTIFICATION

THIS RITUAL, adopted in substantial part by the Grand Lodge of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America at the Grand Lodge Session in 1930, and subsequently amended in part by the Grand Lodge Sessions in 1946, 1952, 1956, 1963, 1969, 1978, 1990, 1995 and 2012, is to be in effect in present form from and after November 1, 2012.

Gender and instructional procedures were revised by the Grand Lodge Ritualistic Committee in 2001, 2003, 2004, and 2005.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have hereunto set our hands and caused the seal of the Grand Lodge to be affixed November 1, 2012.

  
THOMAS S. BRAZIER  
Grand Exalted Ruler

Attest:



  
BRYAN R. KLATT  
Grand Secretary

## NOTE

Extract from the Constitution, Article I, Section 1:  
“This Constitution, the Statutes enacted by the Grand Lodge not in conflict therewith, and the RITUAL, SHALL BE THE SUPREME LAW OF THE ORDER.”

November 2012

These Rituals adopted by the Grand Lodge supersede previous Rituals for Opening and Closing a Local Lodge Session, the Initiation of Candidates, the Institution of a Local Lodge, the Installation of Officers of a Local Lodge, and the Announcement of the Death of a Member.

Gender and instructional procedures were revised by the Grand Lodge Ritualistic Committee in 2001, 2003, 2004, and 2005.

F. LOUIS SULSBERGER, PGER, *Chairman*  
*Advisory Ritual Subcommittee*

# **GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS**

## **WORDS**

The masculine words appearing herein shall include the feminine gender as circumstances require.

## **RITUALS AND REGALIA**

All District Deputies and Exalted Rulers shall enforce a strict adherence to the Ritual, and shall be held responsible for any irregularities which may occur in their respective jurisdictions. They shall not permit the use of any charge, lecture, form, ceremony, form of initiation or regalia other than those prescribed in the Ritual.

The complete Rituals are the property of the Grand Lodge and must be properly cared for and preserved by the Local Lodges. The Secretary of each Local Lodge shall be the custodian of all Rituals issued to his/her Lodge.

Such jewels for Officers, as are specified by the Grand Lodge, shall be worn by them during Lodge Sessions.

## **QUESTION BOOK**

Each Lodge may purchase, from the Grand Lodge, an official question book containing questions to be answered by Candidates for Membership. The Secretary, when the question book is used, must see that each Candidate answers the questions in this book and signs his/her name thereto as a part of his/her qualification for Initiation. However, the question book may be dispensed with provided the Candidate's application, which contains the same questions and answers, is kept as a permanent record in the archives of the Local Lodge.

## ESQUIRE

It shall be the duty of the Esquire, prior to the opening of the Lodge, to see that the Altar cover is placed on the Altar, and also, when necessary, a suitable base to receive the Emblem; that the Officers' Jewels are placed at their respective stations; that a gavel is at the station of the Exalted Ruler and of the Esteemed Leading Knight; that the Flag (*on a staff in a standard*) is placed at the station of the Esteemed Leading Knight on his/her right; the Bible at the station of the Esteemed Loyal Knight; the Emblem at the station of the Esteemed Lecturing Knight; the Star in position over the Altar; the ode cards distributed about the room; and the Flag stand in position at the right of the Altar toward the station of the Esteemed Loyal Knight.

The Esquire must examine the cards of all visiting Members present prior to the opening of the Lodge and fully satisfy himself/herself that they are entitled to admission, so as to be in position to introduce them to the Lodge at the proper time.

After the Lodge has been opened, when a visiting Member is announced, it shall be the duty of the Esquire, under direction of the Exalted Ruler, to secure from the Inner Guard the card of the Member. He/she shall then retire to the anteroom and examine the visiting Member. "Such further examination as may be required, etc.," as used in the Ritual, means that the Esquire may, if in doubt, interrogate the visiting Member in a general way, as, for example: "What, if anything, was presented to you at the station of the Exalted Ruler?"



The Esquire, after the Lodge has been opened, shall, under direction of the Exalted Ruler, present all visiting Members before the Altar, and about two paces distant therefrom. He/she shall introduce them by name and Lodge. On being introduced, each visiting Member shall take one step forward and give the hailing sign. On being recognized by the Exalted Ruler, he/she shall resume his/her former position.

The Esquire shall, at all times while on duty in the Lodge room, carry the baton in the hollow of his/her left arm, except when it may be impracticable so to do, in which event he/she should place the baton on or near the Altar, where it can be picked up conveniently as his/her duty permits or requires.

He/she shall answer the roll call of Officers; assist the four principal Officers in conducting the business of the Lodge in such manner that said Officers need not leave their stations; attend to the preparation and introduction of Candidates; have charge of all floor work of the Lodge; and on public occasions shall act as Marshal.

When directed by the Exalted Ruler to organize the Lodge, it shall be the duty of the Esquire to see that the doors are closed and that the Officers are at their respective stations.

When conducting a Candidate about the Lodge room, the Esquire and his/her assistants shall walk to the left of the Candidate.

After the Lodge has been closed, the Esquire shall collect the Officers' Jewels and the ode cards and deliver them, together with the Bible, the Emblem, the Altar cover and the Flag, into the custody of the Tiler.

## TILER

It shall be the duty of the Tiler to have charge of all property of the Lodge placed in his/her care. He/she shall have all necessary paraphernalia in readiness for use and in proper condition, and after the Lodge is closed he/she shall take proper care of same.

After the Inner Guard has, under the direction of the Exalted Ruler, notified all Elks who are in the anteroom to come within the Lodge, the inner door must be closed. It shall be the duty of the Tiler to prevent late arrivals from approaching the inner door until he/she has been notified that the Lodge is regularly opened; and he/she must observe the same rule during the reading of the minutes and balloting for a Candidate, and at all times during Initiation except as he/she may be advised by the Inner Guard. After the Lodge is opened, he/she shall permit no Member to approach the inner door without exhibiting a membership card, showing him/her to be in good standing.

It shall be the duty of the Tiler to see that each visiting Member signs his/her name in the Visitors' Register, which book shall be in the custody of the Tiler; he/she shall carefully compare the signature of each visiting Member with the signature on his/her visiting card. If a visiting Member presents himself/herself while the Lodge is in session, the Tiler shall, after satisfying himself/herself that the signature is genuine, pass the visiting card of the Member to the Inner Guard, who shall inform the Exalted Ruler, and deliver the visiting card to the Esquire as he/she approaches the door to conduct the visiting Member to the Altar.

### INNER GUARD

It shall be the duty of the Inner Guard to guard carefully, at all times, the inner door of the Lodge; to permit no Member to enter until he/she has given the alarm correctly, except upon direction of the Exalted Ruler; to permit no Member to retire from the Lodge room until he/she has received permission from the Exalted Ruler; to admit no Member during Initiation, except when the same can be done without in any way interfering with the work, and of this the Esteemed Leading Knight shall be the judge.

### ARRANGEMENT OF ALTAR

The Esquire, upon receiving the Flag upon its staff from the Esteemed Leading Knight, shall proceed in an orderly manner to a position one pace in front of the center of the Altar, and then, after the tribute, place the Flag in the Flag stand in the position of honor to the right of the Altar, as he/she faces the Exalted Ruler. (*NOTE: The eagle on top of the staff shall face directly forward when posted at the station of the Esteemed Leading Knight and while being carried to the Altar. When posted at the Altar, it shall face directly forward, in the direction of the Esteemed Leading Knight's station.*) The Bible shall be opened and placed upon the Altar, and the Emblem shall be placed upon the Altar in back of the Bible as viewed by the Candidate as he/she stands before the Altar; the Emblem shall face the station of the Esteemed Leading Knight (*if necessary, a suitable base may be placed beneath the Emblem*). The Star shall be suspended over the Altar at the proper height to give the best effect and so as not to interfere with the view of a Member at the Altar when saluting the

Exalted Ruler. About eight or nine feet above the floor will be found to give the best effect, but this must depend somewhat on the arrangement of the Lodge room. The switch controlling the Star should be conveniently located so that the Exalted Ruler, or some designated Officer, can control it as indicated in the Ritual.

### BALLOTING

[If there is only one Candidate and one ballot box, then the Exalted Ruler, Secretary and Esteemed Leading Knight will use the singular. On balloting night, the Esquire shall have the ballot boxes previously prepared on a stand for that purpose. Under the order of business "Balloting on Candidates" the following procedure will be observed.]

***Exalted Ruler:*** Lodge Secretary, are there any Candidates for balloting?

***Secretary:*** Exalted Ruler, the following Candidates await balloting.

[Secretary reads the applications and designates as to the initiation, reinstatement or affiliation into the Lodge.]

***Exalted Ruler:*** Lodge Esquire, you will prepare the ballot boxes.

[The Esquire shall proceed to place the ballot boxes, with the names of the Candidates for balloting attached thereon, between the station of the Esteemed Leading Knight and the Altar in the direction of the Esteemed Lecturing Knight's station as shown in the diagram on page 19. During the balloting, the Esquire shall take his/her position about two paces to the right of the ballot boxes, facing the Exalted Ruler. When the Esquire is in proper position, the Exalted Ruler shall say:]

***Exalted Ruler:*** Esteemed Leading Knight, you will assist me in inspecting the ballot boxes.

[Then the Esteemed Leading Knight and the Exalted Ruler shall proceed to inspect the ballot boxes and then cast their ballots. After returning to their respective stations, the Exalted Ruler shall say:]

***Exalted Ruler:*** The Members will form a line to the right of the Esquire and cast your ballots. I remind you that a white ball shall be considered an affirmative vote and a black cube shall be considered a negative vote. The election of Candidates to membership, reinstatement, or affiliation requires an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the votes cast.

[When the balloting is completed, the Esquire shall say:]

***Esquire:*** Exalted Ruler, all the Members who desire have cast their ballots.

***Exalted Ruler:*** Lodge Esquire, you will close the ballot boxes.

***Exalted Ruler:*** Esteemed Leading Knight, you will assist me in examining the ballot boxes.

[The Exalted Ruler and the Esteemed Leading Knight shall proceed to examine the ballot boxes. After returning to their respective stations, the Exalted Ruler shall say:]

***Exalted Ruler:*** Esteemed Leading Knight, what is the result of the ballot?

***Esteemed Leading Knight:*** The Candidates have been elected or rejected.

[If more than one ballot box is used and a rejection occurs in one of the ballot boxes the Esteemed Leading Knight shall say:]

***Esteemed Leading Knight:*** Exalted Ruler, I find the ballots favorable in all the ballot boxes with the exception of Number \_\_\_\_\_.

[The Esteemed Leading Knight will resume his/her seat.]

[If more than one Candidate is being balloted upon in an unfavorable ballot, the Exalted Ruler shall direct the Esquire to prepare separate ballot boxes for the Candidates in that ballot and call for a new ballot on those Candidates.]

[If the Candidates are elected, the Exalted Ruler shall say:]

***Exalted Ruler:*** You have elected (*stating the names of the elected Candidates*) to become a Member of this Lodge by Initiation or upon an application of reinstatement or affiliation.

[If the Candidates are rejected, the Exalted Ruler shall say:]

***Exalted Ruler:*** You have rejected the application of (*stating the names of the rejected Candidates*) for membership in this Lodge.

[In either case, after the Exalted Ruler has announced the results of the ballot, he/she shall say:]

***Exalted Ruler:*** Do any of the Members wish to examine the ballots?

[After the ballots have been examined or if no Member desires to examine the ballots, the Exalted Ruler shall say:]

***Exalted Ruler:*** Lodge Esquire, break the ballots.

[Thereupon, the Esquire shall proceed to break the ballots and return the ballot boxes to the custody of the Tiler and then he/she shall remove the stands. Then he/she shall return to his/her station and resume his/her seat.]

For the purpose of voting upon an applicant or applicants, a white ball shall be considered an affirmative vote; a black cube shall be considered a negative vote.

Each ballot box must contain white balls and black cubes substantially equal in number. The Exalted Ruler and Esquire shall see that this provision is enforced.

The Lodge may elect to place the names of all applicants upon one or more ballot boxes rather than a separate ballot box for each applicant. The boxes shall be suitably placed so that the Members may pass from one ballot box to the next, in rotation, in depositing their ballots. If the number of white balls are at least equal to two-thirds ( $2/3$ ) of the votes cast, all applicants named thereon shall be declared elected; but if the number of white balls are less than two-thirds ( $2/3$ ) of the votes cast, then all applicants named thereon shall be balloted upon separately.

### **SPECIAL DIRECTIONS**

It is the imperative duty of the Exalted Ruler to enforce the rule which prohibits smoking during Initiation, and it is his/her duty to maintain absolute quiet and order at all times, more especially during the conferring of the Obligation and the delivery of the lectures and instructions.

When the Exalted Ruler sounds the gavel, preparatory to opening the Lodge, the Officers shall immediately take their stations and the Members their seats.

All Officers and Members, on entering or retiring from a Lodge, must give the hailing sign before the Altar, and they may retire only upon being recognized by the Exalted Ruler.

The expression “Before the Altar” or “In front of the Altar” means a position at the Altar between it and the station of the Esteemed Leading Knight, facing the station of the Exalted Ruler. “Right of Altar” means right of the Altar when facing the station of the Exalted Ruler.

Upon entering the Lodge, Members shall proceed to the Altar in the most direct manner possible. Officers and Members shall not cross the floor after the Lodge has been opened, without permission of the Exalted Ruler, and in no case shall they pass between the Altar and the station of the Exalted Ruler, except as Ritual requires during Initiation, or when so ordered by the Exalted Ruler.

The Esteemed Loyal Knight and the Esteemed Lecturing Knight must strictly enforce the requirements of the Ritual in reference to the examination of the membership cards, and must, upon failure of a Member to exhibit his/her membership card showing that his/her dues have been paid up-to-date, immediately inform the Exalted Ruler.

If a Member, who is a Member of the local Lodge, cannot exhibit his/her membership card as required, the Exalted Ruler shall ascertain from the Secretary if such



Member has paid his/her dues for the current period, and if he/she has done so, he/she shall be entitled to remain. If he/she has not paid his/her dues for the current period, he/she shall be given an opportunity to do so, in default of which he/she shall immediately withdraw. A visiting Member who does not exhibit a membership card showing that his/her dues have been paid for the current period shall not be permitted to sit in a Lodge, unless the Secretary of his/her Lodge should be present and vouch for him/her that his/her dues have been paid for the current period.

At the close of the Lodge each Officer shall leave his/her jewel at his/her station.

### MEMBERS RECEIVED ON DIMIT

When a Member has been elected upon a card of dimission, and appears in the Lodge for the first time after such election, he/she shall be received in the following manner:



*Esquire:* Exalted Ruler, I have the honor to introduce to you \_\_\_\_\_, who has been duly elected to membership in this Lodge on a card of dimission.

*Exalted Ruler:* I gladly welcome you to membership in \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge, No. \_\_\_\_\_, and assure you a cordial welcome from your fellow Members. You are already fully aware of the principles underlying the work in which we are engaged, and in this affiliation I trust that your best efforts will be enlisted in support of the Order and in promoting the welfare of this Lodge. You may be seated.



## ELEVEN O'CLOCK TOAST

Whenever the Lodge shall be in session and the hour of eleven shall arrive, all business shall forthwith be suspended and the following ceremony shall be observed:



*Exalted Ruler:* The hour of eleven has arrived.



Without further instruction, the Esquire shall cause all lights to be extinguished except the star and shall cause the gong to be sounded eleven times.]

*Exalted Ruler:* You have heard the tolling of eleven strokes. This is to remind us that with Elks the hour of eleven has a tender significance. Wherever Elks may roam, whatever their lot in life may be, when this hour falls upon the dial of night the great heart of Elkdom swells and throbs. It is the golden hour of recollection, the homecoming of those who wander, the mystic roll call of those who will come no more. Living or dead, Elks are never forgotten, never forsaken. Morning and noon may pass them by, the light of day sink heedlessly in the West, but ere the shadows of midnight shall fall, the chimes of memory will be pealing forth the friendly message: ***“To Our Absent Members.”***

**NOTE:** Instead of making the foregoing response, the Exalted Ruler may call on some Member to respond to the sentiment.

[The Esquire shall cause the lights to be again turned on, and the business of the Lodge shall thereupon be resumed.]

## **ROLL CALL NIGHT**

The last meeting night in October of each year is designated as Roll Call Night. Under "Good of the Order," upon direction of the Exalted Ruler, the Secretary shall call the membership roll and note in his/her minutes the total number in attendance.

The Exalted Ruler, or some Member selected by him/her, shall make a brief address along fraternal lines, setting forth the importance of attending Lodge meetings and asking the Members present to appeal to the absentees to renew and increase their interest in the Lodge.

In Lodges where the membership is so large that the calling of the roll is impracticable, any other plan for determining the number in attendance may be adopted.

## **PAST EXALTED RULERS' NIGHT**

The first meeting night in February of each year is designated as Past Exalted Rulers' Night. Previous to this date the Exalted Ruler shall designate certain Past Exalted Rulers to fill the chair offices and the positions of Esquire and Chaplain.

The Exalted Ruler shall call the Lodge to order, announce the names of the Members chosen to serve as Officers, and then relinquish the gavel to his/her temporary successor who shall preside during the session. A special program in honor of the Past Exalted Rulers may be arranged, of such a dignified nature as the Lodge may deem proper for the occasion.

### **FLAG ESCORT**

In connection with the Altar service the Lodge may, if desired, provide an escort or Honor Guard for the Flag while it is being placed in or removed from its position at the Altar.

This arrangement is not designed to change the regular work of the Esquire, but to make it more impressive.

### **DRILL TEAM**

Any Local Lodge desiring so to do may utilize the services of a drill team in connection with the ceremony of Initiation, the drill team to be composed of any of the Members of the Lodge or of another Lodge.

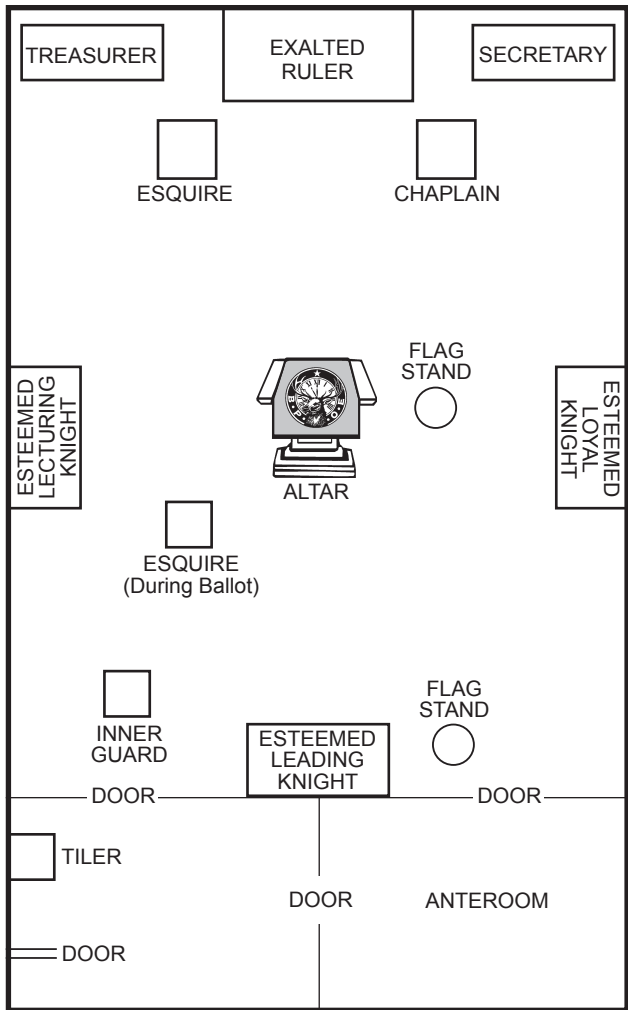
The purpose is to make the ceremony more effective, and to stimulate the work of the regular Officers.

### **FLORAL EMBLEM**

The floral emblem of the Order is the Forget-Me-Not, and the emblematic color is royal purple. The Amaranth, used at funerals, is an imaginary flower which never fades, of a purplish color, such as the cornflower, or other flower of a similar hue. These floral emblems may be either real or artificial, and should be obtained from a local florist or floral supply house, as none are provided for in Grand Lodge supplies.

### **THE FLAG**

The Flag presented to each Candidate in the final charge of the Exalted Ruler shall be a small American Flag of ordinary pocket handkerchief size, and it shall become and be the personal property of the recipient. The Flag shall be purchased from the office of the Grand Secretary.



## ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Opening. (page 22 or 33)
2. Calling Roll of Officers.
3. Reading Minutes of Previous Session.
4. Initiation. (page 35 or 63)
5. Sickness and Distress (always in order).  
(Lodge of Sorrow—page 95)
6. Community Activities.
7. Reports of Committees.
8. Report of Fraternal Committee.
9. Reading Communications.
10. Propositions for Membership.
11. Balloting on Candidates. (see page 10)
12. Unfinished Business.
13. New Business.
14. Good of the Order.
15. Bills against the Lodge.
16. Receipts of the Session.
17. Treasurer's Report.
18. Closing. (page 71 or 75)

**NOTE:** Items No. 4 and Nos. 8 through 17 may be transposed with the consent of the Lodge (Sec. 15.020, Laws of the Order).

## HONORS TO PAST GRAND EXALTED RULERS, GRAND LODGE OFFICERS OR DISTRICT DEPUTY GRAND EXALTED RULERS

When a Past Grand Exalted Ruler, a Grand Lodge Officer or a District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler officially visits a Local Lodge, he/she shall be received in the following manner.

**Exalted Ruler:** Lodge Esquire, you will retire to the anteroom and cause our honored guest to approach the Altar and introduce him/her to the Lodge.

[The Esquire retires.]

**Exalted Ruler:** (★ ★ ★) Raps

[The Esquire escorts the honored guest into the Lodge room about two paces in front center of the Altar. The Esquire shall continue by introducing the honored guest by giving his/her name and the name and number of his/her Lodge. The honored guest, when the number of his/her Lodge is announced, shall take one step forward and give the hailing sign.]

**Exalted Ruler:** [*Answers with a wave of the hand.*]

**Exalted Ruler:** Please extend the Grand Lodge Honors to \_\_\_\_\_.

[The honored guest shall be saluted with the hailing sign given once only by all the Members in unison, including the Exalted Ruler, led by the Esquire.]

**Honored Guest:** [*Answers with a wave of the hand. Then the honored guest shall step back one pace.*]

**Exalted Ruler:** Lodge Esquire, you will now conduct our honored guest to a seat at my right.

**Exalted Ruler:** (★) Rap

[The Esquire shall return to his/her station and be seated.]

## OPENING

[The Exalted Ruler assumes his/her station and by sound of the gavel calls the Lodge to order.]



**Exalted Ruler:** I am about to open \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge No. \_\_\_\_\_, of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. Lodge Inner Guard, [*pauses, Inner Guard rises, takes two paces directly forward from his/her station, continuing to look at the Exalted Ruler and turns toward him/her and then the Exalted Ruler continues:*] inform the Tiler, invite all Elks to come within the Lodge room, and guard well the inner door.

[The Inner Guard shall then proceed in a direct and orderly manner to the door, opens it completely, being certain that the door is completely open and his/her hands are at his/her sides before speaking to the Tiler and complies with the Exalted Ruler's order. He/she then closes the door, returns to his/her station in a direct and orderly manner, remains standing, and says:]

**Inner Guard:** Exalted Ruler, your order has been obeyed.

[After his/her response, the Inner Guard is seated and then the Exalted Ruler continues:]

**Exalted Ruler:** Esteemed Loyal Knight, [*rises, and then the Exalted Ruler continues:*] with the assistance of the Esteemed Lecturing Knight, [*rises, and then the Exalted Ruler continues:*] you will ascertain if all present are qualified to remain.

[These Officers shall meet at the Altar and advance from either side thereof to the station of the Exalted Ruler, to whom they shall exhibit their membership cards. Thereupon they shall proceed to examine the Members on their respective sides of the room, commencing at the right and left of the Exalted Ruler.]



[In lieu of the foregoing, in order to expedite the opening of the Lodge at regular meetings, the Exalted Ruler may, before the opening gavel rap, direct an Officer(s) to examine the Members' membership cards at the door(s) of the Lodge. After the opening gavel rap, at the direction of the Exalted Ruler, the Esteemed Loyal Knight and the Esteemed Lecturing Knight will meet at the Altar and deliver the results of the membership card examination.]

[If any Member be found without a membership card showing that his/her dues are not paid for the current period, the fact shall be reported to the Exalted Ruler. Thereupon the Exalted Ruler shall ascertain from the Secretary whether or not the Member is entitled to remain in the Lodge room and shall direct the examining Officer accordingly. If the Member is not entitled to remain by reason of nonpayment of current dues, he/she shall be given the opportunity to pay the same, in default of which he/she shall immediately withdraw.]

[After completing their duties, the examining Officers shall proceed in an orderly manner to a position one pace in front of the center of the Altar and in unison salute the Exalted Ruler with the hailing sign. The Exalted Ruler answers with the wave of the hand only at the top of the salute.]

***Esteemed Loyal Knight:*** Exalted Ruler, all present, excepting visiting Members, have been examined and are qualified to remain.

[The Esteemed Loyal Knight and the Esteemed Lecturing Knight shall then return to their respective stations and be seated. If there are no visiting Members present, the words "excepting visiting Members" and the following portions relative to visitors may be omitted.]

***Exalted Ruler:*** Visiting Members will please rise. Lodge Esquire, [*rises, and faces Exalted Ruler, and then the Exalted Ruler continues:*] are you satisfied that these visiting Members are qualified to remain?

**Esquire:** I am, Exalted Ruler.

**Exalted Ruler:** Lodge Esquire, you will cause the visiting Members to approach the Altar and introduce them to the Lodge.

[The Esquire assembles the visiting Members across the Lodge room about two paces in front of the Altar. He/she shall introduce each Member separately by giving his/her name, title and the name and number of his/her Lodge. The visiting Member, when the number of their Lodge is announced, shall take one step forward and give the hailing sign. On being recognized by the Exalted Ruler with a wave of the hand only at the top of the salute he/she shall resume his/her former position until all have been introduced and until the Exalted Ruler shall have directed that the visiting Members be seated.]

**Exalted Ruler:** In the name of the Order, and on behalf of this Lodge, I greet you as Members. You may be seated.

[The Esquire shall resume his/her station and remains standing.]

**Exalted Ruler:** Lodge Esquire, [*pauses, the Esquire steps forward one pace, makes a left turn without stopping, then turns his/her head and looks at the Exalted Ruler who continues:*] have you performed your duties?

**Esquire:** I have, Exalted Ruler; a quorum is present, the Officers are at their stations in proper regalia, and the Altar Emblems await your command.

[The Esquire resumes his/her original position and remains standing.]



**Exalted Ruler:** Lodge Inner Guard, [*pauses, the Inner Guard takes two paces directly forward from his/her station, continuing to look at the Exalted Ruler and turns toward him/her and then the Exalted Ruler continues:*] ascertain if this Lodge is properly tiled.

[Inner Guard turns and proceeds in a direct and orderly manner to the door, opens it and nods to the Tiler, closes door and returns to his/her station in a direct and orderly manner, and reports to the Exalted Ruler:]

**Inner Guard:** Exalted Ruler, the Lodge is properly tiled.

**Exalted Ruler:** What is your duty?

**Inner Guard:** To guard well the inner door of the Lodge, to permit none to enter except those duly qualified, and none to retire without your permission.

**Exalted Ruler:** Lodge Esquire, [*pauses, the Esquire steps forward one pace, makes a left turn without stopping, then turns his/her head and looks at the Exalted Ruler who continues:*] what is your duty?

**Esquire:** To receive Candidates, prepare them for Initiation, act as their guide through the ceremony and explain to them the procedures of the Order; to see that the signs are given correctly; examine and introduce visiting Members; make all arrangements for ritualistic work; prepare and carefully guard the ballot; and see that the orders of the Exalted Ruler are properly executed.

[The Esquire resumes his/her original position, remains standing and then the Exalted Ruler continues:]

**Exalted Ruler:** Esteemed Lecturing Knight, [*pauses, Knight steps forward one pace, continuing to look at the Exalted Ruler, then Exalted Ruler continues:*] what is your duty?

**Esteemed Lecturing Knight:** To exemplify the motto of this station — Brotherly Love.

**Exalted Ruler:** Esteemed Loyal Knight, [*pauses, Knight steps forward one pace, continuing to look at the Exalted Ruler, then Exalted Ruler continues:*] what is your duty?

**Esteemed Loyal Knight:** To see that all Members are rewarded as they shall deserve, thereby exemplifying the motto of this station — Justice.

**Exalted Ruler:** Esteemed Leading Knight, [*pauses, Knight steps forward one pace, then Exalted Ruler continues:*] what is your duty?

**Esteemed Leading Knight:** To assist the Exalted Ruler in conducting the business of the Lodge and to preside during his/her absence; to stand ready to hear the cry of affliction, to aid those in distress, and by precept and example inculcate the motto of this station — Charity.



**Exalted Ruler:** What is the motto of the station of the Exalted Ruler?

**All:** Fidelity.

**Exalted Ruler:** Fidelity is of supreme importance, for only while we remain faithful to our Obligation will we act toward one another with Charity, Justice and Brotherly Love. It is the duty of the Exalted Ruler to preside with impartiality, and it is the duty of the Members, under their Obligation, to assist in upholding and maintaining the honor and dignity of the Order and of this Lodge. Lodge Esquire, arrange the Altar.

**[Honor Guard (optional):** The Esquire proceeds in an orderly manner to a position two paces in front of the center of the Altar and faces the Exalted Ruler. The Esteemed Loyal and Lecturing Knights shall then take positions on both sides of the Esquire. When they have formed a line two paces in front of the Altar, the Esquire steps forward one pace and only the trio salutes the Exalted Ruler with the hailing sign. When answered by the wave of the hand, the Esquire steps back one pace, the trio turns in unison and proceeds in a direct and orderly manner to a position two paces in front of the station of the Esteemed Leading Knight. The Esquire steps forward one pace and continues his/her dialogue with the Esteemed Leading Knight. The return with the Flag to the Altar is the reverse of this procedure, with the Esteemed Loyal and Lecturing Knights returning to stand at their stations immediately following the Pledge of Allegiance. If used at Opening, the same procedure should be repeated at Closing.]

OR

[current Esquire alone instructions...]

[The Esquire proceeds in an orderly manner to a position one pace in front of the center of the Altar and faces the Exalted Ruler. After saluting the Exalted Ruler with the hailing sign and being answered by the wave of the hand, he/she proceeds in a direct and orderly manner to a position one pace in front of the center of the Esteemed Leading Knight's station and says:]

**Esquire:** Esteemed Leading Knight, I come to you for the emblem of your station, the American Flag, that it may be placed in position of honor at the right of the Altar of Elkdom.

**Exalted Ruler:** Please salute our Flag.

[The Members give the civilian salute.]

**Esteemed Leading Knight:** [*hands Flag on staff to Esquire. The Esquire's right hand will be placed on the upper part and the left hand on the lower part of the staff with the Flag positioned in front center of the body. The Flag shall not be furled, folded or grabbed in any way except by the staff. The Eagle on top of the staff shall face directly forward when posted at the station of the Esteemed Leading Knight and while being carried to the Altar. When posted at the Altar, it shall face directly forward in the direction of the Esteemed Leading Knight's station. The Esquire and Leading Knight may take oblique steps to deliver Flag (must step back to normal position). The Esquire then changes the Flag position to his right with the staff across his body. Then the Leading Knight shall give the civilian salute and say:*] Place this Flag lovingly beside the Altar, Lodge Esquire, and may its beauty increase the devotion of the Members to its radiant stripes and celestial stars that insure protection of our land of liberty and testify to its glorious victories. [*The Esquire then returns the Flag to an upright position.*]

[The Esquire, carrying the Flag on its staff, will step back one pace and then proceed in an orderly manner to a position one pace in front of the center of the Altar, faces the Exalted Ruler, then changes the Flag position to his right with the staff across the body and delivers this tribute:]

**Esquire:** This is the Flag of our Country, the emblem of freedom and the symbol of unity. As Americans and patriots we first place it beside our Altar. And as the American Flag typifies the glory of our Nation we have adopted it as emblematic of the cardinal principle of our Order — Charity.

[After delivering this tribute, the Esquire places the Flag in its stand to the right of the Altar with the Eagle on top of the staff facing directly forward in the direction of the Esteemed Leading Knight's station, steps back one pace and salutes the Flag. During this Flag ceremony the Members should be standing at salute and the Organist should be playing our National Anthem.]

[Esquire may take oblique steps in placing the Flag in the stand.]

**Exalted Ruler:** Please recite with me the Pledge of Allegiance.

**All:** I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands; one Nation under God, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all.

[After the Pledge of Allegiance, the Lodge will be at ease. The Organist begins playing softly "Nearer, My God To Thee." The Esquire proceeds to the station of the Esteemed Loyal Knight. Esquire will take 1/2 pace forward to receive the Bible. Upon receiving the Bible, the Esquire will step back 1/2 pace and then proceed in an orderly manner to a position one pace in front of the center of the Altar, holding the unopened Bible reverently and says:]

**Esquire:** This is the Bible, the Book of Law, upon which is founded Justice.

[Esquire will step 1/2 pace forward and 1/2 pace back in placing the Bible.]

[The Esquire then places the Bible upon the Altar and opens it reverently. The Organist begins playing softly “Auld Lang Syne.” The Esquire proceeds to the station of the Esteemed Lecturing Knight. The Esquire steps 1/2 pace forward to receive the Emblem. Upon receiving the Emblem, the Esquire will step back 1/2 pace and then proceed in an orderly manner to a position one pace in front of the center of the Altar, continuing to hold the Emblem and says:]

**Esquire:** These are the Antlers, the Emblem of our Order, significant of the protection afforded through Brotherly Love.

[Esquire will step 1/2 pace forward and 1/2 pace back in placing the Emblem.]

[The Esquire then places the Emblem in back of the Bible as viewed by the Candidate and with the Emblem facing the station of the Esteemed Leading Knight, steps back one pace and says:]

**Esquire:** Exalted Ruler, the Altar has been arranged.

[Then the Esquire returns to his/her station in a direct and orderly manner and remains standing.]

**Exalted Ruler:** Upon these sacred emblems will now be shed the soft and fervent glow of the fixed Star, emblematic of Fidelity.

[Light is turned on the Star.]

**Exalted Ruler:** [optional] Please unite in singing the opening ode.



**OPENING ODE**

[Air, "Auld Lang Syne."]

Great Ruler of the universe  
All-seeing and benign,  
Look down upon and bless our work,  
And be all glory Thine;  
May Charity as taught us here  
Be ever borne in mind,  
The Golden Rule our motto true,  
For days of Auld Lang Syne.

["God Bless America" may be sung as an alternate.]

**Chaplain:** [*advances to a position one pace in front of the center of the Altar*] Let us pray: Our Father Who art in Heaven, direct us in all our deliberations with Thy most gracious favor, and further us with Thy continual help, that in all our works begun, continued and ended in Thee, we may glorify Thy holy name. Enlighten our minds more and more with the principles of our Order — Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity. Let the light of Thy countenance shine upon us even as the light of this Star. Increase in us true benevolence, nourish us with all goodness, keep us faithful to our Obligation, and lead us and all Elks beside the still waters of peace, for Thine is the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

**All:** Amen.

[Chaplain returns to station in a direct and orderly manner. To face Exalted Ruler for salute, Chaplain and Esquire then make 90 degree turn. When Exalted Ruler has completed the wave of the hand, Esquire and Chaplain in unison will return to normal position.]

***Exalted Ruler:*** Please give the sign.

[The Exalted Ruler answers with the wave of the hand only at the top of the salute.]

***Exalted Ruler:*** I now declare \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge, No. \_\_\_\_\_, regularly opened. Lodge Inner Guard, [*pauses, Inner Guard takes two paces directly forward from his/her station, continuing to look at the Exalted Ruler and turns toward him/her and then the Exalted Ruler continues:*] inform the Tiler.



[All Officers will be seated after Exalted Ruler, Esteemed Leading Knight, Esteemed Loyal Knight, and Esteemed Lecturing Knight have stepped back one pace in unison.]

[The Inner Guard now turns and proceeds in a direct and orderly manner to the door, opens it completely, being certain that the door is completely open and his/her hands are at his/her sides before speaking to the Tiler and complies with the Exalted Ruler's order. Then he/she closes the door, returns to his/her station in a direct and orderly manner and is seated.]

## SHORTENED OPENING — LOCAL LODGE

[The shortened form Ritual shall be optional with a By-Law change of the Local Lodge.]

[The Esquire shall examine the members' membership cards at the door(s) of the Lodge.]

[The Altar shall be prearranged by the Esquire as prescribed in the general instructions.]

[The Exalted Ruler assumes his/her station and by sound of the gavel calls the Lodge meeting to order. Thereupon the light is turned on the Star.]



### ONE RAP

***Exalted Ruler:*** The Lodge meeting will come to order.

[If any member does not have a membership card showing that his/her dues are paid for the current year, it shall be reported to the Exalted Ruler. Thereupon the Exalted Ruler shall ascertain from the Secretary whether or not the member is entitled to remain in the Lodge room and shall direct the examining officer accordingly. If the member is not entitled to remain by reason of nonpayment of current dues, he/she shall be given an opportunity to pay the same, in default of which he/she shall immediately withdraw.]

[If there are no visiting members present, the following portions relative to visitors may be omitted.]

***Exalted Ruler:*** Visiting members will please rise. Each member shall introduce himself/herself by giving his/her name and the name and number of his/her Lodge.

***Exalted Ruler:*** In the name of the Order, and on behalf of this Lodge, I greet you as members. You may be seated.



## THREE RAPS

**Exalted Ruler:** The Chaplain will lead us in prayer.

**Chaplain:** [from his/her station without advancing to the altar] Our Father who art in heaven, direct us in all our deliberations with Thy most gracious favor, and further us with Thy continual help, that in all our works begun, continued and ended in Thee, we may glorify Thy holy name. Enlighten our minds more and more with the principles of our Order — Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity. Let the light of Thy countenance shine upon us even as the light of this Star. Increase in us true benevolence, nourish us with all goodness, keep us faithful to our obligation, and lead us and all Elks beside the still waters of peace, for Thine is the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

**All:** Amen.

**Exalted Ruler:** Please salute our Flag and recite with me the Pledge of Allegiance.

[The members give the civilian salute]

**All:** I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands; one nation under God, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all.

[After the Pledge of Allegiance, the members shall lower the civilian salute]

**Exalted Ruler:** I now declare this Lodge meeting regularly opened.



ONE RAP

## INITIATION

[Any Local Lodge desiring so to do may utilize the services of a drill team in connection with the ceremony of Initiation, such team to be composed of Members of the local Lodge or of another Lodge. When the ceremony is performed by the regular Officers of the Lodge, the Exalted Ruler shall preside. If the Exalted Ruler be absent, the Esteemed Leading Knight may preside. As an act of courtesy any one of the following Officers may be invited to preside: any Past Exalted Ruler of the local Lodge, the Exalted Ruler or any Past Exalted Ruler of another Lodge, the District Deputy, the Grand Exalted Ruler, or any other Officer of the Grand Lodge.]

[Prior to the beginning of the ceremony of Initiation, the Secretary shall require each Candidate to sign the Question Book (provided the applications are not kept as a permanent record) and pay the balance of the initiation fee and dues for the current period.]

[Smoking is positively prohibited during Initiation.]

**Exalted Ruler:** Lodge Secretary, [*pauses, Secretary rises and then the Exalted Ruler continues:*] are there any Candidates awaiting Initiation?

**Secretary:** Exalted Ruler, \_\_\_\_\_ (*single name or # \_\_\_\_\_ American citizens*) is in waiting and requests Initiation into this Lodge.

**Exalted Ruler:** Has the Candidate been duly elected to membership in our Order, and has he/she complied with our laws?

**Secretary:** He/she has.

[The Secretary resumes his/her seat.]



[All Officers indicate their attention to the Exalted Ruler.]

**Exalted Ruler:** Lodge Esquire, [*pauses, the Esquire turns his/her head to a normal position, straight ahead, rises, steps forward one pace, makes a left turn without stopping then turns his/her head and looks at the Exalted Ruler who continues:*] you will retire to the anteroom, prepare the Candidate for Initiation and conduct him/her to the door of the Lodge.

[If there should be more than one Candidate, the foregoing and subsequent responses must be made to conform to the plural. The Esquire shall select such assistants as may be necessary.]

[The Esquire turns his/her head to a normal position, straight ahead and then proceeds in an orderly manner to a spot directly in front center of the Altar and approximately one pace away from it. He/she faces the Exalted Ruler and salutes him/her with the hailing sign. The Exalted Ruler answers with the wave of the hand only at the top of the salute. The Esquire then proceeds in a direct and orderly manner to the door. At the conclusion of the Esquire's hailing sign, the Inner Guard looks straight ahead, rises, approaches the door in a direct and orderly manner, and opens it in time for the exit of the Esquire. When the Esquire has passed through the door, the Inner Guard closes the door and returns to his/her station in a direct and orderly manner and is seated.]



**Exalted Ruler:** We are about to perform the solemn ceremony of Initiation; and, as the impressions produced on the mind of the Candidate are likely to be lasting, I earnestly charge you to observe the utmost decorum during its progress. You will refrain from smoking, cease conversation, and so deport yourselves as not to disturb the Officers in charge or distract the attention of the Candidate.

With this reminder of the important work we are about to undertake, I now declare this Lodge ready for Initiation.

Lodge Inner Guard, [*pauses, the Inner Guard takes two paces directly forward from his/her station, continuing to look at the Exalted Ruler and turns toward him/her and then the Exalted Ruler continues:*] inform the Esquire that the Lodge is prepared to receive the Candidate.



[The Inner Guard holds his/her position until all the other Officers are seated in unison. Then the Inner Guard turns and proceeds in a direct and orderly manner to the door, opens it completely, being certain that the door is completely open and his/her hands are at his/her sides, before he/she nods to the Esquire, closes the door, and in the most direct and orderly manner returns to his/her station and resumes his/her seat. After giving the Inner Guard time to be seated, five to ten seconds, the Esquire will give a rap (★) for admission at the door. The Inner Guard rises, then proceeds in a direct and orderly manner to the door, opens it completely, being certain that the door is completely open and his/her hands are at his/her sides before speaking to the Esquire and says:]

***Inner Guard:*** Who seeks admission?

***Esquire:*** The Esquire, with \_\_\_\_\*, who desires to become a Member of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks.

\*[If more than one Candidate, then the Esquire, Inner Guard and Exalted Ruler shall omit any reference to individual names, and the Esquire shall substitute "(#) American citizens," and when the Inner Guard addresses the Exalted Ruler, he/she will say, "seeks admission with (#) American citizens," and when the Exalted Ruler addresses the Candidates he/she shall say, "American citizens."]

**Inner Guard:** Is he/she properly prepared and vouched for?

**Esquire:** He/she is properly prepared and I, as an Elk, vouch for his/her identity.

**Inner Guard:** I will report to the Exalted Ruler.

[The Inner Guard closes the door, turns in an orderly manner and takes two paces directly forward from the door, turns to face the Exalted Ruler and says:]

**Inner Guard:** Exalted Ruler, [*pauses, the Exalted Ruler rises, continuing to look at the Inner Guard and steps forward one pace to a normal position at the station and then the Inner Guard continues:*] the Esquire seeks admission with \_\_\_\_\_\*, who requests initiation into our Order.

**Exalted Ruler:** If he/she is properly prepared and vouched for, admit him/her.



[Only after the Officers have risen in unison and the Exalted Ruler has stepped back shall the Inner Guard proceed in a direct and orderly manner to the door, opens it completely, being certain that the door is completely open and his/her hands are at his/her sides before speaking to the Esquire and says:]

**Inner Guard:** The Exalted Ruler bids you enter.

[The Inner Guard shall then step out of the path and allow the Esquire to enter the room escorting the Candidate on his/her right. As soon as they have entered the room, the Inner Guard shall close the door, return to his/her station in the most direct and orderly manner, and remain standing. The Esquire conducts the Candidate first past the station of the Loyal Knight and approximately two paces away from it, if feasible, then past the station of the Exalted Ruler approximately four paces away from it, then past the stations



of the Lecturing Knight and the Leading Knight approximately two paces away from them. All Officers, with the exception of the Exalted Ruler, shall deliver their initial charge as the Esquire and Candidate approach their stations, while looking the Candidate in the face. The Chair Officers will deliver the following:]

***Esteemed Loyal Knight:*** Be Just to your fellow man.

***Esteemed Lecturing Knight:*** Ever practice Brotherly Love.

***Esteemed Leading Knight:*** Be Charitable to all mankind.

[The Esquire continues to proceed to place the Candidate in a position in front center of the Altar one pace away, releases the Candidate's arm and says:]

[If there is a larger number of Candidates, they should be arranged in single, or when necessary, double or triple file before the Altar, facing the station of the Exalted Ruler.]

***Esquire:*** Exalted Ruler, I present the Candidate.

[The Esquire then steps back one pace and then the Exalted Ruler now looks at the Candidate, steps forward one pace and addresses him/her.]

***Exalted Ruler:*** \_\_\_\_\_ \* \_\_\_\_\_, you have been duly accepted by the Members of this Lodge as worthy to become united with them in the noble work to which this Order is dedicated. Before proceeding further with your Initiation, it is necessary for you to take the solemn and binding Obligation of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. In this, I assure you, there is nothing which will interfere with your duty to yourself or your family, or conflict with your religious or political opinions. Are you willing to assume such an obligation?

[Candidate replies: I am.]

**Exalted Ruler:** Do you believe in God?

[Candidate replies: I do.]



[The Exalted Ruler and the Chaplain shall then proceed in step, in an orderly manner to their positions approximately three paces away from the Altar. The Exalted Ruler shall be on the right, the Chaplain on the left, equi-distant from the center of the Altar.]

[Exalted Ruler looking straight says:]

**Exalted Ruler:** The Chaplain will lead us in prayer.

[The Chaplain steps forward two paces obliquely to the right, to a point approximately one pace away from the center of the Altar and says:]

[All Officers shall bow their heads in unison, including the Chaplain.]

**Chaplain:** Our Father Who art in Heaven, we have gathered as Thy children, to renew our Obligation of Brotherhood. Prosper us in this labor of love. Bless this Candidate, and grant that he/she may become a true and loyal Member among us, exemplifying the virtues of Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity. In all our endeavors for good, lead us and all Elks into the green pastures of knowledge, and beside the still waters of peace. Amen.

**All:** Amen.

[All the other Officers shall repeat “Amen” in unison. The Chaplain shall not repeat “Amen.”]

[After the prayer, all Officers shall raise their heads in unison and direct their attention to the Chaplain. The Chaplain then steps back two paces obliquely to the left, to his/her former position parallel to the Exalted Ruler.]

**Exalted Ruler:** Lodge Esquire, [*pauses, the Esquire steps forward one pace to a position beside the Candidate. The Exalted Ruler continues when the Esquire is in proper position:*] place the Candidate in position to assume the Obligation, standing erect, his/her left hand over his/her heart, his/her right hand uplifted above the Altar upon which rest the Holy Bible and the Antlers of Protection.

[The Exalted Ruler steps forward two paces obliquely to the left, to a point approximately one pace away from the center of the Altar. While the Exalted Ruler is moving forward, the Esquire moves simultaneously to place the Candidate in position to assume the Obligation. After placing the Candidate in position, the Esquire then moves to a position beside the Candidate and says:]

**Esquire:** Exalted Ruler, the Candidate is in position.

[The Esquire then steps back one pace. The Exalted Ruler continues when the Esquire is in proper position:]

**Exalted Ruler:** [*glances around the room and says:*] Please be attentive while I am administering the Obligation.

[All lights, except the Star, are to be extinguished until after the Eleven O'Clock Toast. The Organist should play softly the strains of some sacred music.]

**Exalted Ruler:** The Candidate will say, "I," pronounce his/her name in full, and repeat after me:

[The Exalted Ruler shall not repeat his/her own name after the word "I." During the Obligation, all Officers shall direct their attention to the Exalted Ruler. The Candidate shall repeat each phrase after the Exalted Ruler.]

***OBLIGATION***

I, \_\_\_\_\_, in the presence of God and this Lodge of Elks, do solemnly promise and swear that I will never reveal any of the confidential matters of this Order which have been, or may hereafter be, committed to my charge and keeping.

I will support the Constitution, and obey the Statutes, rules and regulations of this Order, and the By-Laws of \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge, No. \_\_\_\_\_, and those of any other Lodge of which I may hereafter become a Member.

I will uphold the Constitution and laws of the United States of America.

I will propose no one for membership in this Order whom I do not sincerely believe to be worthy thereof.

I will ballot for a worthy candidate and against an unworthy candidate when proposed by another.

I will not permit any political, sectarian or personal prejudice to influence me in the slightest degree in the exercise of my right of franchise in the Order.

I will obey any lawful summons sent me by any competent authority of the Order.

I will never apply to the courts for redress in any matter concerning the Order, without first appealing to the councils of the Order.

I will never reveal to anyone, not an Elk, the name of a Member asking or receiving aid or relief from the Order.

I will not, directly or indirectly, use my membership in this Order, nor any emblem, insignia or sign thereof, for business or commercial purposes.

I will never introduce into the Order anything of a political or sectarian character, nor in any way by my conduct bring reproach upon it.

I will always protect our Members, their good names and their families; and I will always respect and defend the purity and sanctity of their homes and firesides.

If I break this Obligation, may I wander through the world forsaken; may I be pointed out as a being bereft of decency, unfit to hold communion with true and upright Members. And may God help me, and keep me steadfast in this my solemn and binding Obligation in the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America. Amen.

[All seven Officers say "Amen" in unison.]

**Exalted Ruler:** [*While looking at the Esquire, the Exalted Ruler says:*] At ease.

[While the Exalted Ruler steps straight back one pace, the Esquire moves to place the new Member at ease. The Esquire then moves to a position beside the new Member and together they step back one pace. A Member designated by the Exalted Ruler shall then cause the chimes to strike eleven. After the eleventh stroke, the Esquire then says most impressively:]

**Esquire:** It is the Hour of Recollection.

[The Esquire then steps back one pace and then the Exalted Ruler continues by giving the Eleven O'Clock Toast.]

***Exalted Ruler:*** You have heard the tolling of eleven strokes. This is to impress upon you that with us the hour of eleven has a tender significance. Wherever Elks may roam, whatever their lot in life may be, when this hour falls upon the dial of night, the great heart of Elkdom swells and throbs. It is the golden hour of recollection, the homecoming of those who wander, the mystic roll call of those who will come no more. Living or dead, Elks are never forgotten, never forsaken. Morning and noon may pass them by, the light of day sink heedlessly in the West, but ere the shadows of midnight shall fall, the chimes of memory will be pealing forth the friendly message: ***“To Our Absent Members.”***

[Lights turned on.]

***Exalted Ruler:*** [*glances around the room and says:*] For the instruction of this newly-made Member, extend the right hand in token of the renewal of your Obligation.

[With the exception of the new Member, each Member shall extend his/her right hand upon the completion of the words, “renewal of your Obligation” toward the new Member, look at him/her and then the Exalted Ruler continues:]

This is to teach you that while you remain faithful to your Obligation, these hands and the hands of every Elk on the face of the earth will be stretched forth to you in a spirit of fellowship and to relieve your distress should you be overtaken by adversity and misfortune. On the contrary, should you prove unfaithful, these same hands will be clenched [*each Member clenches his/her right hand — not in a threatening manner*] to drive you from our midst and punish you for your infidelity.

[Upon completion of the words, “for your infidelity” each Member shall unclench his/her right fist while lowering his/her right hand. The Exalted Ruler then steps back one pace obliquely to the right to his/her former position parallel to the Chaplain. The Exalted Ruler and the Chaplain now make a right turn simultaneously and step off together, in step, to resume their stations in the reverse manner as they left them. Then the Exalted Ruler gives one rap of the gavel and while all are being seated, the Exalted Ruler shall lay the gavel on the station, step back one pace and say to the Esquire:]



**Exalted Ruler:** Lodge Esquire, [*pauses, the Esquire steps forward one pace to the side of the new Member and then the Exalted Ruler continues:*] you will now instruct our new Member in the procedures of the Order.

[The Esquire makes an orderly left turn, takes two paces, makes a right turn, proceeds to a position approximately one half the distance and in line between the new Member and his/her station, turns right in an orderly manner to face the new Member, and delivers his/her charge. The Exalted Ruler shall be seated as soon as the Esquire says the words, “The membership card.”]

**Esquire:** The membership card, which will be presented to you by the Secretary, is a means of identification. It shows that you are a Member in good standing in this Lodge. You should carry it with you at all times. You are required to present it in order to gain admission to this Lodge, and without it you cannot gain admission to another Lodge.



The hailing sign is made by bringing the hands in one circular movement to a position over the head, palms to the front. It denotes the spreading antlers of an elk. It should be given only in front of the Altar in the Lodge room, while the Lodge is in session or when ordered by the Exalted Ruler.

[See illustration above. In explanation, suit the action to the words.]

The civilian salute to the Flag is made standing erect with the right hand over the heart.

The voting sign is made by uplifting the right hand, palm to the front.

[In explanation, suit the action to the words. The Esquire demonstrates the civilian salute and the voting sign without lowering the baton.]

The gavel in the hand of the Exalted Ruler is the emblem of authority.

[At a convenient point during the phrase “The gavel in the hand of the Exalted Ruler” the Exalted Ruler rises, steps forward one pace, picks up the gavel, and demonstrates the rap(s) as they are called for by the Esquire. When the raps are completed, the Exalted Ruler lays down the gavel and resumes his/her seat.]



One rap (★) calls the Lodge to order, or seats it when standing; two raps (★★) call up the Officers; three raps (★★★) call up the entire Lodge.

At the opening of the Lodge, when called upon so to do, you will exhibit your membership card to either the Esteemed Loyal Knight or the Esteemed Lecturing Knight.

If you wish to gain admission to this Lodge when it is in session, you will give an alarm at the outer door, which will be opened by the Tiler. To him/her you will exhibit your membership card. If found correct, you will be admitted to the anteroom, and will then advance to the inner door and give a rap for admission.

[During the instructions, the Inner Guard looks straight ahead, rises, approaches the door in the most direct and orderly manner in ample time to be facing the door with the hand in proper position to give the rap upon the completion of the words “and give a rap for admission.” The Inner Guard shall then return to his/her station in the most direct and orderly manner, is seated, and then returns his/her attention to the Esquire.]

The Inner Guard will open the wicket and to him/her you will give, in a whisper, your name and the name and number of your Lodge. The Inner Guard will report to the Exalted Ruler, at whose direction you will be admitted. You will then advance before the Altar, face the Exalted Ruler and salute him/her with the hailing sign. It will be answered by the Exalted Ruler by a wave of the hand.

[The Esquire demonstrates the wave of the hand without lowering the baton and shall suit the action to the words.]

You will then be seated.

You shall not cross the floor after the Lodge has been opened without permission of the Exalted Ruler, and in no case shall you pass between the Altar and the station of the Exalted Ruler except as Ritual requires during the Initiation, or when so ordered by the Exalted Ruler.

Should you wish to retire while the Lodge is in session, you will advance before the Altar and salute the Exalted Ruler with the hailing sign. When answered by him/her, you will be at liberty to retire.

In visiting another Lodge, in addition to exhibiting your membership card, it will be necessary for you to undergo such examination as may be required by the Esquire.

For your further instruction you will pay strict attention to the dialogue between the Exalted Ruler and myself.

[During the instructions, as the Esquire says, “Exalted Ruler,” the Exalted Ruler shall rise. Then upon the completion of the words, “and myself,” simultaneously the Exalted Ruler steps forward one pace to his/her normal position at the station and the Esquire turns in an orderly manner and faces the Exalted Ruler. Then the Exalted Ruler and the Esquire proceed with the dialogue.]

***Exalted Ruler:*** What made you an Elk?

***Esquire:*** My solemn and binding Obligation.

***Exalted Ruler:*** How can you prove yourself an Elk?

***Esquire:*** By exhibiting my membership card.

***Exalted Ruler:*** What are Elks?

***Esquire:*** American citizens who guide their course in life by the cardinal principles of our Order: Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity.

***Exalted Ruler:*** Give the hailing sign.

[The Esquire gives the hailing sign. The Exalted Ruler answers with the wave of the hand only at the top of the salute. The Exalted Ruler shall not resume speaking until the left hand of the Esquire is returned to the position used to carry the baton.]

***Exalted Ruler:*** What does this sign denote?

***Esquire:*** The spreading Antlers of Protection.

***Exalted Ruler:*** Why were you asked if you believed in God?

***Esquire:*** Because had I not so believed, I would not have been permitted to take the Obligation.

***Exalted Ruler:*** What is the motto of our Order?

***Esquire:*** The faults of our Members we write upon the sand, their virtues upon the tablets of love and memory.

***Exalted Ruler:*** What is the foundation and groundwork of our Order?

***Esquire:*** To do unto others as we would they should do unto us.

[After completion of the dialogue, then the Exalted Ruler steps back one pace and the Esquire then turns and proceeds in an orderly manner to a position by the side of the new Member and then the Exalted Ruler says:]

***Exalted Ruler:*** Lodge Esquire, you will now conduct our new Member to the station of the Esteemed Lecturing Knight for further instruction.

[During the following procedure, instrumental music may be rendered. The Esquire and the new Member, in unison, turn to the right and then proceed around the room, passing the station of the Loyal Knight, then the Exalted Ruler, and on to the station of the Lecturing Knight, turning with the new Member directly in front center of the station and approximately two paces away from it. The Esquire releases the arm of the new Member and addresses the Lecturing Knight.]

**Esquire:** Esteemed Lecturing Knight, [*pauses, the Exalted Ruler sits down and the Lecturing Knight rises, this action shall be in unison. The Esquire continues:*] by direction of the Exalted Ruler, I present this new Member for further instruction.

[The Esquire steps back one pace. The Esteemed Lecturing Knight now looks at the new Member, steps forward one pace and says:]

**Esteemed Lecturing Knight:** I welcome you to this station which is dedicated to Brotherly Love. Upon our Altar it is symbolized by the Antlers of Protection.

The animal from which our Order derives its name is noted for gentleness and timidity. It is strong of limb, fleet of foot, quick and keen of perception. So should we be: quick to hear the cry of distress, timorous of doing wrong and fleet of foot to relieve the unfortunate, thus conforming to the Golden Rule which should govern all mankind.

In this rule, which is the foundation and groundwork of our Order, Brotherly Love finds its perfect expression; and it is best exemplified by practicing the teachings of our motto — “The faults of our Members we write upon the sand, their virtues upon the tablets of love and memory.”

It softens the stern realities of life and manifests itself in good fellowship, in sympathy, and in kindness of thought, word and deed. It has smiles and laughter for us in seasons of joy, and it sits with us in the shadow and weeps in the hour of bereavement. It teaches us to scatter flowers along life's pathway and to speak words of kindness to the living as well as to cherish the memory of the dead.

As we therefore have opportunity, let us do good unto others, for we pass this way but once. We cannot retrace our steps nor call back the days that are gone; but the passing moment is ours long enough to grasp the hand in friendship, to lighten each other's burdens, to bring rest to the weary, and to comfort those who mourn — this is Brotherly Love.

[At the completion of the charge, the Lecturing Knight steps back one pace continuing to look at the new Member. Then he/she looks at the Esquire and says:]

***Esteemed Lecturing Knight:*** Lodge Esquire, [*pauses, the Esquire steps forward one pace to the side of the new Member and the Lecturing Knight continues:*] you will now conduct our new Member to the station of the Esteemed Loyal Knight for further instruction.

[During the following procedure, instrumental music may be rendered. The Esquire and the new Member, in unison, turn to the left and then proceed around the room, passing the station of the Leading Knight, and on to the station of the Loyal Knight, turning with the new Member directly in front center of the station, and approximately two paces away from it. The Esquire releases the arm of the new Member and addresses the Loyal Knight:]

**Esquire:** Esteemed Loyal Knight, [*pauses, the Lecturing Knight sits down and the Loyal Knight rises both in unison. Then the Esquire continues:*] by direction of the Esteemed Lecturing Knight, I present this new Member for further instruction.

[The Esquire steps back one pace. The Loyal Knight now looks at the new Member, steps forward one pace and says:]

**Esteemed Loyal Knight:** Upon the Altar before which you have just assumed the solemn Obligation of our Order, there lies the open Bible. It is the emblem of this station, whose motto is Justice.

You have sworn to support the Constitution and comply with the Laws of this Order and the By-Laws of this Lodge. Justice requires that your observance of that Obligation should be full and complete, for the first lesson it teaches is that of duty and obedience to constituted authority.

When you have signed our roster and received your membership card the Secretary will present you with a copy of the Constitution and Statutes of this Order and the By-Laws of this Lodge.

I charge you to familiarize yourself with their every provision; for, while Justice is not vindictive, it is exacting; and no violation of your Obligation, no failure to perform your fraternal duty, can be permitted to pass this station unnoticed.

But the Order of Elks not only exacts from you the strict performance of the duties of membership; it likewise bestows upon you cherished rights and privileges which its whole power and authority will ensure and protect. Should you feel at any time that these rights have been invaded, the courts of the Order are open to you. The decision of its highest tribunal should be accepted as final.

[At the completion of the charge, the Loyal Knight steps back one pace continuing to look at the new Member. Then he/she looks at the Esquire and says:]

***Esteemed Loyal Knight:*** Lodge Esquire, [*pauses, the Esquire steps forward one pace to the side of the new Member and the Loyal Knight continues:*] you will now conduct our new Member to the station of the Esteemed Leading Knight for further instruction.

[During the following procedure, instrumental music may be rendered. The Esquire and the new Member, in unison, turn to the left and then proceed around the room, passing the station of the Exalted Ruler, then the Lecturing Knight, and on to the station of the Leading Knight, turning with the new Member directly in front center of the station, and approximately two paces away from it. The Esquire releases the arm of the new Member and addresses the Leading Knight:]

***Esquire:*** Esteemed Leading Knight, [*pauses, the Loyal Knight sits down and the Leading Knight rises both in unison. Then the Esquire continues:*] by direction of the Esteemed Loyal Knight, I present this new Member for further instruction.

[The Esquire steps back one pace. The Leading Knight now looks at the new Member, steps forward one pace and says:]

***Esteemed Leading Knight:*** The emblem of this station is the Flag of our Country; and its motto is Charity, the cornerstone of every Elk structure, the highest virtue of every Elk creed.

The daily gifts we bestow increase our own riches. The help we extend to those in need is added to our own strength. The witchery of wealth is not in having, but in sharing. The real benefactors of mankind count their store in what is given, not in what is saved.

But, as Elks, we teach not alone the charity of alms, but the higher and nobler charity of thought, word and deed. Our whole influence in life is determined by the good deeds we do rather than by the emotions we feel. The kindest feeling may vanish, the best resolve may be forgotten; but the influence of a good deed, honestly and promptly performed, will continue forever.

There's a legend that in olden times a feast was laid on high Olympus for all the gods, and thither each did bear the goddess of his highest choice, until the throng had filled the mountain top.

Wealth and Riches came resplendent in their robes of gold, and Greed and Avarice their companions were. Peace came, and all did wonder that she leant upon the arm of War. Justice and Mercy entered, and between them proudly walked the god of Right. Faith came with Doubt, and Hope entered by the side of Fear.

Thus, each in turn, until at last, uninvited and unattended, came sweet Charity, in flowing robes of purest white, and in her arms she bore a wilderness of flowers, dear tokens of remembrance for them all.

Then Wealth and Riches drew their gorgeous robes aside, while Greed and Avarice protested loudly that one so poorly dressed should royal feast attend.

Charity gave them answer soft and mild: "Have I in truth no welcome here, and is there none in all this company who will my companion be? Behold, I bring you sweetest flowers in offering and beg that you accept them from my hand. Royal robes would not befit me well, for what grace I have is not in figure nor in form. True, I come in simple raiment, unannounced, yet Misery and Want await me at the door. I speak to you of their distress, and argue for their cause."



Whereupon the gods with one acclaim did vote her purest, truest, noblest of all the Graces, ladened her with royal gifts, proffered her a crown and begged that she would sit upon the throne.

But she made them answer, that she sought her throne not among the gods, but in the hearts of mankind; and, commending kindly deeds unto them all, went again upon her way.

This legend teaches us that Charity is the greatest of all the virtues; and that it should ever rule us in our hearts and in our lives, leading us to speak no unkind word, to harbor no evil thought, to bear no malice, to support no wrong; but to nurture, love and protect; to condone, forgive and forget.

[At the completion of the charge, the Leading Knight steps back one pace continuing to look at the new Member. Then he/she looks at the Esquire and says:]

***Esteemed Leading Knight:*** Lodge Esquire, [*pauses, the Esquire steps forward one pace to the side of the new Member and the Leading Knight continues:*] you will now conduct our new Member to the station of the Exalted Ruler for final instruction.

[During the following procedure, instrumental music may be rendered. The Esquire and the new Member, in unison, turn to the left and then proceed around the room, passing the station of the Loyal Knight, and on to the station of the Exalted Ruler, turning with the new Member directly in front center of the station, and approximately four paces away from it. The Esquire releases the arm of the new Member and addresses the Exalted Ruler:]

**Esquire:** Exalted Ruler, [*pauses, the Leading Knight sits down and the Exalted Ruler rises both in unison. Then the Esquire continues:*] by direction of the Esteemed Leading Knight, I present this new Member for final instruction.

[The Esquire steps back one pace. The Exalted Ruler now looks at the new Member, steps forward one pace and says:]

**Exalted Ruler:** I welcome you to this station for final instruction. You may well be proud that the Members of this Lodge have deemed you worthy of their confidence. I trust that you may continue to merit their approval, and become a true and faithful Member among us. To accomplish this, you must at all times have in mind the solemn and binding Obligation which you have so recently assumed, and I charge you that your highest duty as an Elk is to keep it inviolate. Conscience will not permit you to expunge a paragraph, eliminate a sentence, or evade a responsibility; nor can you lay it aside when you leave the Lodge room, for it must henceforth be your constant guide and faithful monitor.

The cardinal principles of our Order are Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity. Each has been adopted as the motto of a station in the Lodge, Fidelity being the motto of this, the principal station. It is symbolized by the Star which shines above our Altar.

Fidelity implies strict adherence to our Obligation and faithfulness in the discharge of our duty as members of society.

As time runs on, in sun and shade, may you bear with you ever in life's changing course the sense of obligation and of wrong, and in your heart the rapture of a high resolve.

Life's story has been often told, yet all must solve anew its problems for themselves.

Our time upon the stage of action is but brief, yet in the drama each must play a part. The character is left for each to choose; a villain if we will, or person of honor, holding high above all things — high as Hope's great throbbing star above the darkness of the dead — respect for virtue, and love of family and home and friend.

'Mid swiftly changing scenes that mark the action of the play, we by each other oft may be aided in our part, or from each other catch inspiration for a high resolve; and to this end exists the Brotherhood of Elks.

The Order of Elks is distinctively American. Linking the destiny of our Order with the destiny of our country we have made its Flag the symbol of the crowning virtue.

[At a convenient point during the phrase "Linking the destiny of our Order with the destiny of our country we have made its Flag the symbol of the crowning virtue," the Leading Knight rises, steps forward one pace, picks up the gavel, gives three (★★★) raps of the gavel upon the completion of the words, "the symbol of the crowning virtue" and then lays down the gavel.]



[All Officers rise and turn toward the Exalted Ruler, the Esquire slight body turn, Inner Guard body and feet turns to face the Exalted Ruler, Loyal and Lecturing Knights 1/2 turn, Chaplain 90 degree turn, and after all Members have risen, the Exalted Ruler then looks at the Flag spread on his/her station, with the field of stars to the right-hand side as viewed by him/her, then he/she reverently grasps the two top corners, and then looks at the Members and says:]

***Exalted Ruler:*** Please salute our Flag.

[The Exalted Ruler then looks at the Flag and then raises it chest high. As the Flag is raised by the Exalted Ruler, all Members shall give the civilian salute to the Flag. The Exalted Ruler now continues with the tribute to the Flag. The Organist plays softly “The Star Spangled Banner.”]

As this emblem is first in our hearts as loyal Americans, so is it close to our Altar as loyal Elks. The gentle breezes with lingering caress kiss the folds of no flag which can compare with it in beauty. There is no such red in budding rose, in falling leaf or sparkling wine; no such white in April blossom, in crescent moon or mountain snow; no such blue in woman’s eye, in ocean’s depth or heaven’s dome; and no such pageantry of clustering stars and streaming light in all the spectrum of the sea and sky.

[Upon the completion of the words, “sea and sky,” the Exalted Ruler shall proceed in an orderly manner to a position on the floor in front of, and one pace away from the new Member. The Exalted Ruler then continues:]

In the name of this great Brotherhood, and on behalf of this Lodge, I present you with this, our Flag.

[The Organist plays softly the concluding chords of “The Star Spangled Banner.” As the Exalted Ruler says the words, “I present you with this, our Flag,” he/she steps a half pace forward and gently hands the Flag to the new Member. Upon the completion of the words, “our Flag” all Members shall lower their hands to their sides and simultaneously, the Exalted Ruler shall step back one half pace. If there are a number of new Members, the Exalted Ruler shall present the Flag to each of the new Members with the assistance of the Esquire. After all Flags have been presented, the Exalted Ruler continues:]

Preserve it as a memento of this occasion, and may it ever stimulate you to the performance of your full duty in the preservation and defense of all it represents.

[Upon the completion of the Exalted Ruler's charge, the new Member shall fold the Flag and hold it in his/her right hand as the Exalted Ruler makes an orderly return to his/her station and as he/she turns into his/her station, all Officers shall return to their normal position and then the Exalted Ruler continues:]

Finally, strive diligently that the name of Elk as borne by you may be worthy of an American citizen — one who loves his/her fellow man.

**Exalted Ruler:** How do Elks receive their new Members?

[With the exception of the Exalted Ruler, all the Members shall give the hailing sign and simultaneously say:]

**All:** Under the spreading Antlers of Protection.

[The Exalted Ruler answers with the wave of the hand only at the top of the salute.]

**Exalted Ruler:** By virtue of the authority in me vested, I now declare you to be a Member of \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge, No. \_\_\_\_\_, of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America, and after signing the Constitution and By-Laws, entitled to all its rights and privileges. You may be seated.



[It is the duty of the Secretary to see that each new Member signs the Constitution and By-Laws after Initiation and within the Lodge room, during which instrumental music may be rendered.]

[The presentation of Thanatopsis is optional, but if used shall be recited by the Exalted Ruler or by some Member whom he/she shall designate immediately following the Initiation. The new Member should be seated. Each Lodge may work out its own plan of presentation, so long as it is in keeping with the solemnity of the poem and the dignity and impressiveness of the initiatory work.]

### *THANATOPSIS*

To him who in the love of Nature holds  
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks  
A various language; for his gayer hours  
She has a voice of gladness, and a smile  
And eloquence of beauty, and she glides  
Into his darker musings, with a mild  
And healing sympathy, that steals away  
Their sharpness, ere he is aware. When thoughts  
Of the last bitter hour come like a blight  
Over thy spirit, and sad images  
Of the stern agony, and shroud, and pall,  
And breathless darkness, and the narrow house  
Make thee to shudder, and grow sick at heart —  
Go forth, under the open sky, and list  
To Nature's teachings, while from all around —  
Earth and her waters, and the depths of air, —  
Comes a still voice — Yet a few days, and thee  
The all-beholding sun shall see no more  
In all his course; nor yet in the cold ground,  
Where thy pale form was laid, with many tears,  
Nor in the embrace of ocean, shall exist  
Thy image. Earth, that nourished thee shall claim  
Thy growth, to be resolved to earth again,

And, lost each human trace, surrendering up  
Thine individual being, shalt thou go  
To mix forever with the elements,  
To be a brother to the insensible rock  
And to the sluggish clod, which the rude swain  
Turns with his share, and treads upon. The oak  
Shall send his roots abroad, and pierce thy mould.  
Yet not to thine eternal resting-place  
Shalt thou retire alone, nor couldst thou wish  
Couch more magnificent. Thou shalt lie down  
With patriarchs of the infant world — with kings,  
The powerful of the earth — the wise, the good,  
Fair forms, and hoary seers of ages past,  
All in one mighty sepulchre. The hills,  
Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun, — the vales  
Stretching in pensive quietness between;  
The venerable woods — rivers that move  
In majesty, and the complaining brooks  
That make the meadows green; and, poured round all,  
Old ocean's gray and melancholy waste, —  
Are but the solemn decorations all  
Of the great tomb of man. The golden sun,  
The planets, all the infinite host of heaven,  
Are shining on the sad abodes of death,  
Through the still lapse of ages. All that tread  
The globe are but a handful to the tribes  
That slumber in its bosom. Take the wings  
Of morning, pierce the Barcan wilderness,  
Or lose thyself in the continuous woods  
Where rolls the Oregon, and hears no sound,

Save his own dashings — yet — the dead are there;  
And millions in those solitudes, since first  
The flight of years began, have laid them down  
In their last sleep — the dead reign there alone.  
So shalt thou rest, and what if thou withdraw  
In silence from the living and no friend  
Take note of thy departure? All that breathe  
Will share thy destiny. The gay will laugh  
When thou art gone, the solemn brood of care  
Plod on, and each one as before will chase  
His favorite phantom; yet all these shall leave  
Their mirth and their employments, and shall come  
And make their bed with thee. As the long train  
Of ages glides away, the sons of men,  
The youth in life's green spring and he who goes  
In the full strength of years, matron and maid,  
The speechless babe, and the gray-headed man, —  
Shall one by one be gathered to thy side,  
By those, who in their turn shall follow them.  
So live, that when thy summons comes to join  
The innumerable caravan which moves  
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take  
His chamber in the silent halls of death,  
Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,  
Scourged to his dungeon, but sustained and soothed  
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave,  
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch  
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.



## SHORTENED INITIATION

[Any Local Lodge desiring to do so may utilize the services of a drill team in connection with the ceremony of Initiation, such team to be composed of Members of the Local Lodge or of another Lodge. When the ceremony is performed by the regular Officers of the Lodge, the Exalted Ruler shall preside. If the Exalted Ruler is absent, any one of the following Officers may be invited to preside: any Past Exalted Ruler of the Local Lodge, the Exalted Ruler or any Past Exalted Ruler of another Lodge, the District Deputy, the Grand Exalted Ruler or any other Officer of the Grand Lodge.]

[Prior to the beginning of the ceremony of Initiation, the Secretary shall require each Candidate to sign the Question Book [provided the applications are not kept as a permanent record] and pay the balance of the Initiation fee and dues for the current period.]

[Prior to the beginning of the ceremony of Initiation, the Lodge Esquire shall bring in the Candidate(s) and line them in front of the Altar. All Lodge Officers shall be at their respective stations. In addition, before the Initiation, the candidate(s) shall be instructed to turn and face each speaker.]

[Smoking is positively prohibited during Initiation.]



### THREE RAPS

**Exalted Ruler:** [at his/her station] We are about to perform the solemn ceremony of Initiation. You may be proud that the Members of this Lodge have chosen you to join them in the benevolent and charitable work of this Order. Before proceeding further with this ceremony, it is required that you take the solemn and binding obligation of our Order. In this, I assure you, there is nothing which may interfere with your duty to yourself or your family. Are you willing to assume such an obligation?

**Candidate:** I am.

**Exalted Ruler:** Do you believe in God?

*Candidate:* I do.

*Exalted Ruler:* The Chaplain will lead us in prayer.

*Chaplain:* [at his/her station] Our Father Who art in Heaven, we have gathered as Thy children, to renew our Obligation of Brotherhood. Prosper us in this labor of love. Bless this Candidate, and grant that he/she may become a true and loyal Member among us, exemplifying the virtues of Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity. In all our endeavors for good, lead us and all Elks into the green pastures of knowledge, and beside the still waters of peace. Amen.

*All:* Amen.

[All the other Officers shall repeat "Amen" in unison. The Chaplain shall not repeat "Amen."]

*Exalted Ruler:* [at his/her station] Each Candidate will place his/her left hand over his/her heart and raise his/her right hand, say "I," pronounce his/her name in full, and repeat after me:

### OBLIGATION

I, \_\_\_\_\_, in the presence of God and this Lodge of Elks, do solemnly promise and swear that I will never reveal any of the confidential matters of this Order which have been, or may hereafter be, committed to my charge and keeping.

I will support the Constitution, and obey the Statutes, rules and regulations of this Order, and the By-Laws of \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge, No. \_\_\_\_\_, and those of any other Lodge of which I may hereafter become a Member.

I will uphold the Constitution and laws of the United States of America.

I will propose no one for membership in this Order whom I do not sincerely believe to be worthy thereof.

I will ballot for a worthy candidate and against an unworthy candidate when proposed by another.

I will not permit any political, sectarian or personal prejudice to influence me in the slightest degree in the exercise of my right of franchise in this Order.

I will obey any lawful summons sent me by any competent authority of the Order.

I will never apply to the courts for redress in any matter concerning the Order, without first appealing to the councils of the Order.

I will never reveal to anyone, not an Elk, the name of a Member asking or receiving aid or relief from the Order.

I will not, directly or indirectly, use my membership in this Order, nor any emblem, insignia or sign thereof, for business or commercial purposes.

I will never introduce into the Order anything of a political or sectarian character, nor in any way by my conduct bring reproach upon it.

I will always protect our Members, their good names and their families; and I will always respect and defend the purity and sanctity of their homes and firesides.

If I break this obligation, may I wander through the world forsaken; may I be pointed out as being bereft of decency, unfit to hold communion with true and upright Members. And may God help me, and keep me steadfast in this my solemn and binding obligation in the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America. Amen.

[All seven Officers say "Amen" in unison.]

**Exalted Ruler:** At ease.

[A Member designated by the Exalted Ruler shall then cause the chimes to strike eleven. After the eleventh stroke, the Esquire then says most impressively:]

**Esquire:** [at his/her station] It is the Hour of Recollection.

**Exalted Ruler:** [at his/her station] You have heard the tolling of eleven strokes. This is to impress upon you that with us the hour of eleven has a tender significance. Wherever Elks may roam, whatever their lot in life may be, when this hour falls upon the dial of night, the great heart of Elkdom swells and throbs. It is the golden hour of recollection, the homecoming of those who wander, the mystic roll call of those who will come no more. Living or dead, Elks are never forgotten, never forsaken. Morning and noon may pass them by, the light of day sink heedlessly in the West, but ere the shadows of midnight shall fall, the chimes of memory will be pealing forth the friendly message: "To Our Absent Members."

[All Members say "To Our Absent Members."]



### ONE RAP

[The Lodge Esquire rises and instructs our new Member in the procedures of the Order.]

**Esquire:** [at his/her station] The membership card, which will be presented to you by the Secretary, is a means of identification. It shows that you are a Member in good standing in this Lodge. You should carry it with you at all times. You will be required to present it to gain admission to this or any other Lodge.

The civilian salute to the Flag is made standing erect with the right hand over the heart.

The voting sign is made by uplifting the right hand, palm to the front.

[In explanation, suit the action to the words. The Esquire demonstrates the civilian salute and the voting sign without lowering the baton.]

The gavel in the hand of the Exalted Ruler is the emblem of authority.

One rap (★) calls the Lodge to order, or seats it when standing; two raps (★★) call up the Officers; three raps (★★★) call up the entire Lodge.

[Lodge Esquire is seated.]

[The Esteemed Lecturing Knight rises and gives his/her message.]

***Esteemed Lecturing Knight:*** [at his/her station] This station is dedicated to Brotherly Love which typifies the Golden Rule that governs all mankind. Upon our Altar it is symbolized by the Antlers of Protection.

Brotherly Love is the foundation and ground work of our Order. It is best exemplified by practicing the teachings of our motto: “The faults of our Members we write upon the sand, their virtues upon the tablets of love and memory.”

[The Esteemed Lecturing Knight is seated.]

[The Esteemed Loyal Knight rises and gives his/her message.]

***Esteemed Loyal Knight:*** [at his/her station] Upon the Altar before which you have just assumed the solemn Obligation of our Order, there lies the open Bible. It is the emblem of this station, whose motto is Justice. Even handed Justice is one of the great hallmarks of our Order.

This standard reflects our faithful adherence to one of the great teachings of this emblem — “Do unto others as we would they should do unto us.”

[The Esteemed Loyal Knight is seated.]

[The Esteemed Leading Knight rises and gives his/her message.]

***Esteemed Leading Knight:*** [at his/her station] The emblem of this station is the Flag or our Country; and its motto is Charity, the cornerstone of every Elk structure, the highest virtue of every Elk creed.

The daily gifts we bestow increase our own riches. The help we extend to those in need is added to our own strength. The true value of wealth is not in having, but in sharing. The real benefactor of mankind counts his store in what is given, not in what is saved.

But, as Elks, we teach not alone the charity of giving, but the higher and nobler charity of thought word and deed. Our whole influence in life is determined by the good deeds we do rather than by the emotions we feel. The kindest feeling may vanish, the best resolve may be forgotten; but the influence of a good deed, honestly and properly performed, will continue forever.

[The Esteemed Leading Knight is seated.]

[The Exalted Ruler rises and gives his/her message.]

***Exalted Ruler:*** [at his/her station] You may well be proud that the Members of this Lodge have deemed you worthy of their confidence. I know you will continue to merit their approval, and become a true and faithful Member among us.

The cardinal principles of our Order are Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity. Each has been adopted as a motto of a station in the Lodge, Fidelity being the motto of this, the principal station. It is symbolized by the Star which shines above the Altar.

Fidelity requires strict adherence to our Obligation and faithfulness in the discharge of our duties as members of society. The Order of Elks is distinctively American. Linking the destiny of our Order with the destiny of our country, we have made its Flag the symbol of the crowning virtue.

[At a convenient point during the phrase “Linking the destiny of our Order with the destiny of our country we have made its Flag the symbol of the crowning virtue,” the Leading Knight rises, picks up the gavel, gives three (★★★) raps of the gavel upon the completion of the words, “the symbol of the crowning virtue” and then lays down the gavel.]



### THREE RAPS

[After all Members have risen, the Exalted Ruler then looks at the Flag spread on his/her station, with the field of stars to the right-hand side as viewed by him/her, then he/she reverently grasps the two top corners, raises the Flag and then looks at the members and says:]

***Exalted Ruler:*** [at his/her station] Please salute our Flag. As this emblem is first in our hearts as loyal Americans, so is it close to our Altar as loyal Elks. The gentle breezes with lingering caress kiss the folds of no flag which can compare with it in beauty. There is no such red in budding rose, in falling leaf or sparkling wine; no such white in April blossom, in crescent moon or mountain snow; no such blue in woman’s eye, in ocean’s depth or heaven’s

dome; and no such pageantry of clustering stars and streaming light in all the spectrum of the sea and sky. In the name of this great Brotherhood, and on behalf of this Lodge, I present you with this, our Flag.

[If there are a number of new Members, the Exalted Ruler shall present the Flag to each of the new Members with the assistance of the Esquire. After all Flags have been presented, the Exalted Ruler and the Esquire return to their stations and the Exalted Ruler continues:]

**Exalted Ruler:** [at his/her station] Preserve it as a memento of your full duty in the preservation and defense of all it represents. Finally, strive diligently that the name of Elk as borne by you may be worthy of an American citizen — one who loves his/her fellow man.

**Exalted Ruler:** [at his/her station] By virtue of the authority in me vested, I now declare you to be Member of \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge, No. \_\_\_\_\_, of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America, and after signing the Constitution and By-Laws, entitled to all its rights and privileges. You may be seated.



### ONE RAP

[The Esquire then escorts the new Members to a seat and returns to his/her station and is seated.]

[It is the duty of the Secretary to see that each new member signs the Constitution and By-Laws after Initiation and within the Lodge room.]



## CLOSING

[When all the business of the session is ended the Exalted Ruler shall rap the gavel and say:]



**Exalted Ruler:** Having passed through our regular order of business, and complied with our Laws, I shall now proceed to close the Lodge. Lodge Inner Guard, [*pauses, Inner Guard rises, takes two paces directly forward from his/her station, continuing to look at the Exalted Ruler and turns toward him/her and then the Exalted Ruler continues:*] inform the Tiler.

[The Inner Guard now turns and proceeds in a direct and orderly manner to the door, opens it completely, being certain that the door is completely open and his/her hands are at his/her sides before speaking to the Tiler and complies with the Exalted Ruler's order. Then he/she closes the door, returns to his/her station in a direct and orderly manner and says:]

**Inner Guard:** Exalted Ruler, your order has been obeyed.



**Exalted Ruler:** In closing this Lodge let me admonish you, under the penalty of your Obligation, against revealing to anyone not an Elk in good standing, anything of a confidential nature, which has occurred at this session. May the lessons of the evening increase within each of us Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity.

[Then the Esquire proceeds in an orderly manner to a position one pace in front of the center of the Altar and faces the Exalted Ruler.]

**Exalted Ruler:** Please give the sign.

[The Members, led by the Esquire, give the hailing sign. The Exalted Ruler answers with the wave of the hand only at the top of the salute. The Exalted Ruler shall not resume speaking until the left hand of the Esquire is returned to the position used to carry the baton.]

***Exalted Ruler:*** Lodge Esquire, attend the Altar.

[The Esquire proceeds 1/2 pace forward to pick up the Emblem, 1/2 pace back, and delivers it to the Esteemed Lecturing Knight at his/her station, the Organist softly playing the strains of “Auld Lang Syne.”]

***Esquire:*** Esteemed Lecturing Knight, into your charge and keeping is now committed the Emblem of our Order.

[The Esteemed Lecturing Knight steps forward, the Esquire 1/2 pace forward to deliver the Emblem, 1/2 pace back. The Esteemed Lecturing Knight receives the Emblem, holding it during his/her response.]

***Esteemed Lecturing Knight:*** May its spreading antlers ever protect us.

[The Esteemed Lecturing Knight sets the Emblem on the station, then steps back one pace.]

[The Esquire returns to the Altar, steps 1/2 pace forward, closes and picks up the Bible, steps 1/2 pace back, and delivers it to the Esteemed Loyal Knight at his/her station, the Organist softly playing the strains of “Nearer, My God, To Thee.”]

***Esquire:*** Esteemed Loyal Knight, to you is entrusted the Book of Law.

[The Esteemed Loyal Knight takes one step forward, Esquire 1/2 pace forward, 1/2 pace back. The Esteemed Loyal Knight receives the Bible, holding it during his/her response.]

***Esteemed Loyal Knight:*** May we ever be faithful to its precepts.

[The Esteemed Loyal Knight sets the Bible on the station, then takes one step back. The Esquire returns to the Altar and, before taking the Flag from its stand, shall pause for a moment until the Members salute the Flag.]

***Exalted Ruler:*** Please salute our Flag.

[The Esquire shall then take the Flag on its staff and deliver it to the Esteemed Leading Knight at his/her station, the Organist playing softly the strains of the National Anthem. A Flag escort or Honor Guard may accompany the Esquire in returning the Flag. That is optional with the Lodge. The Esquire then changes the Flag position to his right with the staff across his body.]

***Esquire:*** Esteemed Leading Knight, to you is returned, unsullied, the Flag of our Country.

[The Esteemed Leading Knight steps forward one step, receives the Flag on its staff, holding it during his/her response. The Esquire salutes the Flag. Esteemed Leading Knight and Esquire may make oblique steps to exchange the Flag.]

***Esteemed Leading Knight:*** May we ever love and defend it.

[Esteemed Leading Knight places the Flag in stand at his/her right, then steps back one step. The Lodge will then be at ease.]

[The Esquire, remaining at the station of the Esteemed Leading Knight, turns around, takes 1/2 step to left, reports to the Exalted Ruler.]

***Esquire:*** Exalted Ruler, the Emblems have been returned in accordance with your instructions.

**Exalted Ruler:** *[optional]* Please unite in singing “God Bless America.”

**All:** “God Bless America.”

**Exalted Ruler:** The Star of Fidelity continues ever to burn. The Chaplain will lead us in prayer.

**Chaplain:** *[from his/her station without advancing to the Altar]* Our Father, Who art in Heaven, we thank Thee for the fellowship and accomplishments of this hour. As we began our session in acknowledgement of Thee and Thy goodness and mercy, may we close by asking Thy benediction. May the principles of Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity guide us until we meet again. Amen.

**All:** Amen.

**Exalted Ruler:** I now declare \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge No. \_\_\_\_\_, of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, closed.



## SHORTENED CLOSING — LOCAL LODGE

[When all the business of the session is ended, the Exalted Ruler shall sound the gavel and say:]



ONE RAP

**Exalted Ruler:** Having passed through our regular order of business and complied with our Laws, I shall now proceed to close the Lodge meeting.



THREE RAPS

**Exalted Ruler:** The Star of Fidelity continues ever to burn. The Chaplain will lead us in prayer.

**Chaplain:** [from his/her station without advancing to the Altar] Our Father, who art in Heaven, we thank Thee for the fellowship and accomplishments of this hour. As we began our session in acknowledgment of Thee and Thy goodness and mercy, may we close by asking Thy benediction. May the principles of Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity guide us until we meet again. Amen.

**All:** Amen.

**Exalted Ruler:** I now declare this Lodge meeting closed.



ONE RAP

## INSTITUTION OF A LODGE

[The institution of a Lodge may be a public ceremony. The Members of the Lodge to be instituted shall determine those who are to be installed as the Officers of the Lodge, and file such names with the person acting as Grand Secretary prior to the institution of the Lodge.]

[The institutional Officers shall be addressed as Grand Lodge Officers who shall occupy their respective stations at the opening of the ceremony, wearing the jewels of such stations. Also, at the opening of the ceremony the initiatory team shall be seated at the stations.]

[The room shall be set up and arranged with stations and Altar as for a regular Lodge meeting. There should be Officers for the institution and installation, the initiatory Officers, and the Officers of the new Lodge. Therefore, this would require four chairs at each respective station.]

[The Grand Exalted Ruler assumes his/her station and by sound of the gavel calls the institution ceremony to order.]



(One Rap)

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** Members and guests, we have assembled here to forge another link in the great chain of Brotherhood that constitutes the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks — a fraternal organization that exemplifies Charity in its sweetest form, Justice in all its majesty, and Brotherly Love with its gentleness and tenderness for all mankind.

These spiritual attributes are a precious heritage bequeathed to us by a little group of kindly, warm-hearted men, who, many years ago, were concerned about the dark days and hardships that came at times to their companions.

In their desire to be of help to each other, they clasped hands with such true and deep sense of brotherhood, that they created an influence for the happiness of humanity that has increased with the advancing years.

They were inspired Master Builders. They laid the foundation of a beautiful structure. Its radiance guides posterity to ideals of thought and conduct that will never be surpassed.

Today, that structure finds its replica in many of the cities of our land, erected by thousands upon thousands of our Members. These are the HOMES of our Members. Their hearts respond to the same Brotherhood that brought about the handclasp of the Founding Fathers. That was the first link in the great chain of brotherhood that today is our Fraternity.

We have assembled as the successors of those Master Builders, to clasp hands with still another group of kindly, warm-hearted friends. Their hearts are attuned to the noble principles of our Order. They seek to add another link in that great chain of Brotherhood.

That the significance of our cardinal principles may be deeply impressed upon them and remain vividly in their minds, let us erect here the Altar of Elkdom. Before it they will take our Obligation and voice their unfaltering belief in the existence of a divine Creator.

***Grand Exalted Ruler:*** Please stand.

***Grand Exalted Ruler:*** The Grand Chaplain will lead us in prayer.

***Grand Chaplain:*** [*advances to a position one pace in front of the center of the Altar*] Almighty God, we ask Thy presence with us at this hour, and Thy blessing upon this fraternal ceremony. Grant that this Lodge will

prosper and grow to be a useful instrument of service to all Thy children, and be ever guided in the ways of righteousness and peace. We ask this in Thy name. Amen.

*All:* Amen.

***Grand Exalted Ruler:*** Grand Esquire, you will arrange the Altar.

[The Grand Esquire shall then proceed in a direct and orderly manner to the front center of the Grand Esteemed Leading Knight's station and say:]

***Grand Esquire:*** Grand Esteemed Leading Knight, I come to you for the emblem of your station, the American Flag, that it may be placed in position of honor at the right of the Altar of Elkdom.

***Grand Exalted Ruler:*** Please salute our Flag.

***Grand Esteemed Leading Knight:*** [*hands Flag, on its staff, to the Grand Esquire, salutes the Flag, and then says:*] Place this Flag lovingly beside the Altar, Grand Esquire, and may its beauty increase the devotion of the Members of this new Lodge of Elks to its radiant stripes and celestial stars that insure protection of our land of liberty, and testify to its glorious victories.

[The Grand Esquire shall then take the Flag on its staff, step back one pace, and then proceed in a direct and orderly manner to a position one pace in front center of the Altar and say:]



**Grand Esquire:** This is the Flag of our Country, the emblem of freedom and the symbol of unity. As Americans and patriots we place it beside our Altar, and as the American Flag typifies the glory of our Nation, we have adopted it as emblematic of the cardinal principle our Order — Charity.

[After delivering this tribute, the Grand Esquire places the Flag in its stand to the right of the Altar, steps back one pace and salutes the Flag. During this Flag ceremony all should be standing at salute and the Organist should be playing softly our National Anthem.]

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** Please recite with me the Pledge of Allegiance.

**All:** I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands: one Nation under God, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all.

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** At ease and please be seated with the exception of the Grand Lodge Chair Officers and the Grand Esquire.

[The Organist begins playing softly “Nearer, My God, To Thee.” The Grand Esquire will step back one pace, and then proceed in a direct and orderly manner to the front center of the Grand Esteemed Loyal Knight’s station.]

**Grand Esquire:** Grand Esteemed Loyal Knight, I come to you, its custodian, for the Book of Law, that it may be placed upon the Altar and ever teach the Members of this new Lodge the lesson of Justice.

**Grand Esteemed Loyal Knight:** [*places hands upon the Bible*] Place this Bible upon the Altar, Grand Esquire, where it will ever encourage our new Members to provide equal justice to all, and teach them obedience to constituted authority.

[The Organist resumes playing softly “Nearer, My God, To Thee”; upon receiving the Bible, the Grand Esquire will step back one pace and then proceed in a direct and orderly manner to a position one pace in front center of the Altar, and hold the unopened Bible reverently and say:]

**Grand Esquire:** This is the Bible, the Book of Law, upon which is founded Justice.

[The Grand Esquire then places the Bible upon the Altar, opens and positions it, then steps back one pace. The Organist begins playing softly “Auld Lang Syne” while the Grand Esquire proceeds in a direct and orderly manner to the front center of the Grand Esteemed Lecturing Knight’s station.]

**Grand Esquire:** Grand Esteemed Lecturing Knight, from you I seek the Antlers of Protection that were borne by that proud Monarch of the Forest.

**Grand Esteemed Lecturing Knight:** [*places hands upon the Antlers*] Let these Antlers be placed upon the Altar to forever cast their shadow of Brotherly Love over our new Members.

[The Organist resumes playing softly “Auld Lang Syne,” while the Grand Esquire receives the Antlers and steps back one pace, then proceeds in a direct and orderly manner to a position one pace in front center of the Altar holding the Antlers and says:]

**Grand Esquire:** These are the Antlers, the Emblem of our Order, significant of the protection afforded through Brotherly Love.

[The Grand Esquire then places the Antlers in back of the Bible and with the Antlers facing the Grand Esteemed Leading Knight's station. He/she will step back one pace and say:]

**Grand Esquire:** Grand Exalted Ruler, the Altar has been arranged.

[Then the Grand Esquire returns to his/her station in a direct and orderly manner and remains standing.]

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** And now let the light of the Star of Fidelity shine down upon these sacred emblems in proof of our devotion to the principles of Charity, Justice and Brotherly Love.

[Star is lighted.]

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** May the light of that Star never flicker or grow dim, but forever lead the Members of this new Lodge in the ways of Charity, that soothes, heals and blesses; of Justice, that renders to everyone his due; and of Brotherly Love, that enfolds all with the arms of solicitude.

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** Now in the name and by the authority of the Grand Lodge of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America, I do proclaim and declare \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge No. \_\_\_\_, duly instituted. Please be seated.

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** Having completed this portion of the program for the Institution of \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge No. \_\_\_\_\_, we now ask that non-Elks and guests retire to the designated area so that we may proceed with official business, at the conclusion of which you are cordially invited to return to witness the Installation of Officers.

[Non-Elks and guests leave the room.]

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** I now ask that the \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge No. \_\_\_\_\_, initiatory team take their stations for the Initiation of the Candidates for \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge No. \_\_\_\_\_.

[From this point, the Exalted Ruler shall follow the regular ceremony of Initiation as found on page 35 in this booklet. Upon conclusion of the Initiation, the Exalted Ruler shall return the gavel to the Grand Exalted Ruler.]

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** The Grand Lodge Officers will assume their stations. Grand Esquire, [*rises*] you will now escort those who are joining this new Lodge on Dimit before the Altar and introduce them.

[Grand Esquire conducts dimitted Members before the Altar and introduces them by name and original Lodge. Follow procedure on page 15 in this booklet. After the completion of the introductions, the Grand Esquire resumes his/her seat.]

[The Grand Exalted Ruler shall then proceed with the nomination and election of the new Lodge Officers.]

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** Now in the name and by the authority of the Grand Lodge of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America, I do proclaim and declare the Officers of \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge No. \_\_\_\_\_, duly elected.

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** Grand Esquire, *[rises]* you will retire to the anteroom and invite all guests and non-Elk visitors to enter the Lodge room to view the Installation of Officers.

[Viewing guests re-enter and resume their seats.]

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** We shall now proceed with the Installation of Officers for \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge No. \_\_\_\_\_. Grand Esquire *[rises]*, you will proceed to a point near the Esteemed Lecturing Knight's station. As each name is called, the Member named shall take his/her place before the Altar in line with the Grand Esquire.

[From this point, the Grand Exalted Ruler shall follow the regular Installation of Officers, as found in the next section of this booklet; commencing with the Grand Exalted Ruler addressing the Grand Secretary and requesting that he/she call the names of the Officers-elect and designate, and concluding by closing the Installation ceremony.]

[If there is any official Lodge business to transact, the non-Elks and guests shall be requested to leave the room.]

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** Now by the authority of the Grand Lodge of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America in me vested, I do declare \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge No. \_\_\_\_\_, duly Instituted and its Officers regularly installed.

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** This will conclude the ceremonies for the Institution of \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge No. \_\_\_\_\_. Grand Chaplain, you will lead us in prayer. Please rise.

[The prayer given by the Chaplain at the completion of the Lodge Closing Ritual, or other appropriate prayer, may be utilized.]

## INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

[The Installation of Officers may be a public ceremony. There will be no opening and closing of the Lodge.]

[The Exalted Ruler-elect must file with the Secretary of the Lodge, the names of the Members he/she has selected for appointment as Inner Guard, Esquire, Chaplain, and Organist at the opening of the meeting at which the Officers of the Lodge are to be installed, so that the Grand Secretary will have the complete list of names of Officers to announce when requested.]

[The installing Officers shall be addressed as Grand Lodge Officers who shall occupy their respective stations at the opening of the ceremony, wearing the jewels of such stations. At the opening of the ceremony the retiring Exalted Ruler shall be seated at the left of the Grand Exalted Ruler, and the remaining Lodge Officers shall be seated at the left of their respective stations.]

[The room shall be set up and arranged with stations and Altar as for a regular Lodge meeting. The Altar shall be pre-arranged. There should be the Officers for installation and the newly-elected Officers. Therefore, this would require two chairs at each respective station.]

[The Grand Exalted Ruler assumes his/her station and by sound of the gavel calls the Installation ceremony to order.]



(One Rap)

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** Members and guests, we are present for the purpose of installing the Officers of \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge, No. \_\_\_\_\_, for the fraternal year \_\_\_\_.

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** Grand Secretary, [*rises*] have the Officers of \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge, No. \_\_\_\_, of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America been duly elected and designated for the coming year?

**Grand Secretary:** They have, Grand Exalted Ruler.

[After his/her response, the Grand Secretary is seated and then the Grand Exalted Ruler continues:]

[For a New Lodge, skip these next 4 paragraphs.]

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** [*addressing the Lodge:*] The duty devolves upon me to lift the burden of office from those who have borne it during the past year, and to transfer to their successors the responsibility incident to the administration of the affairs of this Lodge.

The retiring Officers deserve the gratitude of all the Members for the successful way in which they have handled the proceedings of the Lodge. We hope they will continue to foster by word and deed, an increasing interest and activity in the work in which our Order is engaged.

[*Requests Exalted Ruler to stand and addresses him/her:*] Exalted Ruler \_\_\_\_\_, though you are retiring from this office, the importance of your continued interest in the affairs of your Lodge cannot be too strongly emphasized. The fact that you have held the high office of Exalted Ruler marks you as one of the Lodge's most valuable Members, and your experience and knowledge should always be available.

As long as you remain a Member of the Order, and have fulfilled the requirements for a Grand Lodge Member, your participation in its sessions will be welcomed and appreciated. May your loyalty and enthusiasm never diminish. You may be seated.

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** Grand Esquire, [*rises*] you will proceed to a point near the Esteemed Lecturing Knight's station. As each name is called, the Member named shall take their place before the Altar in line with the Grand Esquire.

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** Grand Secretary, [*rises*] you will call the names of the Officers-elect and designate.

**Grand Secretary:** Grand Exalted Ruler, I have the honor of presenting to you for Installation, \_\_\_\_\_, Exalted Ruler-elect; \_\_\_\_\_, Esteemed Leading Knight; \_\_\_\_\_, Esteemed Loyal Knight; \_\_\_\_\_, Esteemed Lecturing Knight; \_\_\_\_\_, Secretary; \_\_\_\_\_, Treasurer; \_\_\_\_\_, Trustee; and \_\_\_\_\_, Tiler.

I also present to you \_\_\_\_\_, Inner Guard; \_\_\_\_\_, Chaplain; \_\_\_\_\_, Organist; and \_\_\_\_\_, Esquire; who have been chosen by the Exalted Ruler-elect.

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** Do you each accept the office for which you have been chosen?

**All reply:** I do.

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks is dedicated to noble and exalted purposes, but since we cannot foresee the future nor envision our destiny, let us seek the blessing on this occasion of our Heavenly Father. Please stand.



[While the Grand Exalted Ruler and Grand Chaplain proceed to the Altar, the Organist plays softly “Nearer, My God, To Thee.”]

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** The Grand Chaplain will lead us in prayer.

**Grand Chaplain:** We beseech Thee, Almighty God, to bless this ceremony. Grant that the Members who will be entrusted with the affairs of this Lodge may be guided wisely in the discharge of their duties. Impress upon them that no finer contribution can be made by them than true and inspiring service to their Lodge and its Members.

Bless the Members of this Lodge and the charitable work in which they are engaged. Protect them and their families. Bestow Thy gracious favor upon these Officers to the end that all their acts may further the success and prosperity of this Lodge and redound to the honor and strength of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. Amen.

*All:* Amen.

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** Please be seated.

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** You will each place your left hand over your heart, raise your right hand, and repeat after me:

In the presence of God and this Lodge of Elks, I solemnly promise and swear to conform with and maintain the Constitution, Statutes, Rules and Regulations of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, and the By-Laws of \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge, No. \_\_\_\_\_; to practice the virtues of Charity, Justice and Brotherly Love, and with Fidelity to perform the duties of the office for which I have been chosen to the best of my ability.

May God help me and keep me steadfast as an Officer of this Lodge. Amen. At ease.

[The Grand Exalted Ruler and Grand Chaplain return to their stations and the Grand Chaplain resumes his/her seat.]

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** Officers of \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge, No. \_\_\_\_\_, you have been selected by the Members of your Lodge to guide its affairs during the ensuing year. I know you appreciate the importance of the trust that the Members have confided in you. By accepting the offices with which you have been honored, you have assumed a grave responsibility.

\_\_\_\_\_ Lodge, No. \_\_\_\_\_ is one of the fraternal links in the great chain of Brotherhood that constitutes the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, a fraternal organization noted for their patriotism and charity.

As a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, it should be your burning ambition to increase the strength and vitality of your Lodge and to jealously guard its public image and reputation.

It is your duty to promote the programs of the Grand Lodge and to encourage participation by the Members of your Lodge in our charitable works.

You must foster at all times the spirit of utmost loyalty to our Nation's Flag, for the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks has ever been prompt and vigorous in defense of our Country.

There is a time for everything, and while the sociability and friendliness of the Members is to be encouraged, remember always, that the successful Lodge is the one whose Officers are constant exemplars of the cardinal principles of our Order — Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity.

If you are guided by these noble principles, your Lodge will prosper and maintain its position of esteem. The Members will remember your activities with deep gratitude and you will have earned an honored place in the records of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks.

***Grand Exalted Ruler:*** Grand Esquire, you will now conduct the Exalted Ruler to a seat at my right.

[Music — March.]

[The Grand Esquire does so and returns to the Altar beside the Lodge Officers. Music will cease as the Grand Esquire resumes position.]

***Grand Exalted Ruler:*** You will now conduct each Officer to their station to be invested with the jewel of their office.

[The Grand Exalted Ruler resumes his/her seat. As the Grand Esquire arrives at each station and remains until each charge is completed, the Grand Lodge Officer will rise, deliver his/her charge while investing the Officer with his/her jewel, surrender the chair to the installed Officer, and take his/her seat alongside.]

[The Organist will play a short march as the Grand Esquire conducts each Officer to their station, and cease playing as they reach the station.]

***Grand Esteemed Leading Knight:*** Esteemed Leading Knight, it is my privilege to invest you with this jewel of your office, dedicated to Charity. May the influence of this virtue ever govern your activities in this Lodge.

[The Grand Esquire returns to the Altar beside the next Lodge Officer and conducts him/her to his/her station.]

***Grand Esteemed Loyal Knight:*** Esteemed Loyal Knight, the jewel of your office with which I now invest you, denotes that all your decisions will be tempered by Justice for all. See to it that your conduct is always thus controlled.

[The Grand Esquire returns to the Altar beside the next Lodge Officer and conducts him/her to his/her station.]

***Grand Esteemed Lecturing Knight:*** Esteemed Lecturing Knight, I take pleasure in investing you with this jewel of office, emblematic of Brotherly Love. May the gentleness and tenderness of that sentiment ever dominate your associations with your fellow men.

[The Grand Esquire returns to the Altar beside the next Lodge Officer and conducts him/her to his/her station.]

***Grand Secretary:*** Lodge Secretary, while investing you with this jewel of your office, I wish to impress upon you the great degree of care, accuracy and industry with which you must perform your duties. Never neglect or shirk them.

[The Grand Esquire returns to the Altar beside the next Lodge Officer and conducts him/her to his/her station.]

***Grand Treasurer:*** Lodge Treasurer, as I invest you with this jewel of your office, let me emphasize the necessity of caution and care in your handling of the funds of this Lodge. Make sure that its financial structure is always solvent.

[The Grand Esquire returns to the Altar beside the next Lodge Officer and conducts him/her to his/her station.]

**Grand Trustee:** Lodge Trustee, this jewel of office is conferred upon you in expectation that you will use the utmost prudence and good judgement in your attention to the finances and property of this Lodge. Be diligent in performing this responsible trust.

[The Grand Esquire returns to the Altar beside the next Lodge Officer and conducts him/her to his/her station.]

**Grand Tiler:** Lodge Tiler, while investing you with this jewel of your office, you are charged with the special trust of making sure that any visitor seeking admission is a qualified Member in good standing in his/her Lodge, at the same time greeting them cordially, putting them at ease and making them feel entirely welcome.

[The Grand Esquire returns to the Altar beside the next Lodge Officer and conducts him/her to his/her station.]

**Grand Inner Guard:** Lodge Inner Guard, as I invest you with this jewel of your office, you are depended upon to make sure that none but qualified Members of the Order are admitted to the Lodge room. In the performance of your duties, you must be alert and vigilant in preserving the security and sanctity of the Lodge.

[The Grand Esquire returns to the Altar beside the next Lodge Officer and conducts him/her to his/her station.]

**Grand Chaplain:** Lodge Chaplain, as I invest you with this jewel of your office, I pray that the blessing of God, when invoked by you, will be bestowed upon the Members of this Lodge and their charitable work.

[The Grand Esquire returns to the Altar beside the next Lodge Officer and conducts him/her to his/her station.]

**Grand Organist:** Lodge Organist, I am happy to invest you with this jewel of your office. May your music always give delight to our Members.

[The Grand Esquire returns to the Altar beside the next Lodge Officer and conducts him/her to his/her station.]

**Grand Esquire:** Lodge Esquire, you are to hold one of the most active offices in this Lodge.

You must organize each session; examine and introduce visiting Members; supervise the ballot; explain the working details of the Lodge to all Candidates initiated; transmit all official messages and hold yourself in readiness to carry out the orders of the Exalted Ruler.

As I deliver to you this baton of authority and invest you with this jewel of office, I congratulate you for accepting this opportunity for service to your Lodge. Be constantly on guard and vigilant in the performance of your duties.

[The Grand Esquire takes seat beside the Esquire.]

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** Exalted Ruler \_\_\_\_\_, [rises] you have been accorded the highest honor within the power of the membership of this Lodge to bestow upon one of its Members.

This is evidence of their confidence in your qualities of leadership and your faithful adherence to the four great principles of our Order. I am sure their confidence has not been misplaced.

In the year to come, all may not be plain sailing. In guiding the affairs of this Lodge, you must be like the able mariner, who steers his vessel as calmly in storm as in fair weather. If you are governed by the Constitution and Laws of the Order, and the By-Laws of your Lodge, your task will be made much easier.

By one provision of the Constitution you are designated as the representative of your Lodge to the ensuing session of the Grand Lodge — an honor you should highly regard. You must attend that session, participate in its proceedings, guard the interests of your Lodge and aid in promoting the affairs of the Order. This is a duty which I charge you to fulfill.

[Indicates Lodge Charter or Dispensation.]

The Charter granted by the Grand Lodge of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks confers upon \_\_\_\_\_, Lodge, No. \_\_\_\_\_, all the rights and privileges, and imposes upon it the duties and obligations of a Lodge of the Order. You will guard the Charter as the most important possession of your Lodge and you will be vigilant in preserving it for posterity. This you will consider a sacred charge.

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** *[to the assembly:]* Please stand and salute our Flag.

And now regard that Flag that stands majestically beside the Altar while the brilliant light of the Star of Fidelity shines down upon it.

The beauty of its silken folds reminds us always of the proud history of our country.

It nourishes in the hearts of all reverence for what it represents and the memory of those who fought beneath it.

It is your solemn duty never to let our Members forget their obligation of loyalty to that Flag and to those who offered their lives in its defense.

Please recite with me the Pledge of Allegiance.

**All:** I Pledge Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands; one Nation under God, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all.

[The Organist plays and all sing “The Star Spangled Banner.”]

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** At ease and please be seated.

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** Exalted Ruler \_\_\_\_\_, with great satisfaction, I invest you with the jewel of your office [*does so*] for I am confident that under your administration this Lodge will prosper and grow, and that its reputation for works of charity and aid to humanity will be a shining light in this community.

And this is your gavel of authority [*holds gavel up*]. Use it with firmness and decision, and always with consideration of what is best for the interests of your Lodge and the great Order of which this Lodge is a vital part.

May you be guided by wisdom and discretion, and may the influences of Charity, Justice and Brotherly Love prompt you to rule with Fidelity.

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** Now in the name and by the authority of the Grand Lodge of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America, I do proclaim and declare the Officers of \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge, No. \_\_\_\_\_, duly installed.

[Hands gavel to Exalted Ruler and requests remarks. At the conclusion of the Exalted Ruler’s remarks, the Grand Exalted Ruler shall proceed to close the ceremony.]

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** [*Introduces Grand Lodge installing Officers.*]

**Grand Exalted Ruler:** I now declare this ceremony closed.



## ANNOUNCING THE DEATH OF A MEMBER

[The death of a Member shall be announced at the first ensuing session of the Lodge, under the order of business, "Sickness and Distress."]

**Exalted Ruler:** It is my sad duty to announce the death of our Member \_\_\_\_\_ and to have official record thereof made in the proceedings of this session. The Chaplain will lead us in prayer.



[The lights are extinguished; the Lodge rises, and the Chaplain advances to the Altar.]

**Chaplain:** Almighty God, unto Thy love and mercy we commend the soul of our Member. May light perpetual shine upon him/her, until the morning breaks and the shadows flee away. May we realize that we are Thy children, and may we so live that when our day is done, we may face the eternal change that comes to us all in faith and confidence through Thy redeeming grace and power. May the peace of God which passeth all understanding abide with us forevermore. Amen.

[After the prayer, the Exalted Ruler may deliver in his/her own language a eulogy upon the life of the departed or he/she may call upon one or more of the Members present to perform such service.]

**Exalted Ruler:** [at the close of the eulogy] In token of the respect and affection in which the memory of our deceased Member will forever be held among us, let us in silent meditation typify what mere words cannot express.

[The vocalist or the quartette of the Lodge will sing one verse of “The Vacant Chair,” as follows:]

We shall meet, but we shall miss him,  
There will be the vacant chair,  
But though we no more possess him,  
Still our hearts his memory bear.  
But a while ago we gathered,  
Friendship beaming in each eye,  
Now the golden cord is severed,  
He has passed to realms on high.

[At the conclusion of the song the chimes sound eleven strokes, while the Organist plays softly “Auld Lang Syne.”]

**Exalted Ruler:** Lodge Secretary, you will call the name of our departed Member.

[The Secretary calls the name three times. In the event the death of more than one Member is announced, the Secretary calls each name but once.]

— Pause —

**Exalted Ruler:** In vain we call. He/she has passed into the light which is beyond the valley of the shadow of death. The places that have known him/her shall know him/her no more; but his/her virtues are written upon the tablets of love and memory.



[Lights on.]



