

Information for our Brethren

What are we doing?

The Minneapolis Valley is participating in a City of Minneapolis Open house event on Saturday and Sunday, May 13 and 14 from 10AM until 5PM. Many businesses, churches, city / government buildings and private buildings will be open for tours during the event.

The event is called **Doors Open Minneapolis** and is intended to showcase historic buildings and businesses that make Minneapolis great. Because of its historic architecture, its listing on the National Register of Historic Places and because it has been our home in Minneapolis for 108 years, our Scottish Rite Masonic Center has been selected as one of the venues for the Doors Open Minneapolis event.

Visitors will be permitted to tour the open areas of our building on self guided tours. The visitors will be given a simple map of the building, highlighting interesting areas and things to see. We will not be conducting guided tours.

Brethren of the Valley – our volunteers – will be stationed throughout the building to assist visitors and elaborate upon the history and significance of our building and on Scottish Rite Freemasonry. We will also have Brethren located in specific areas to keep visitors in the open areas only and out of the closed areas. There is a list later on in this guide that summarizes the open and closed areas of the building.

What are our goals? Why is the Scottish Rite participating in the Doors Open event?

- To be a good neighbor in our community
- To present a positive image of our Scottish Rite and of Masonry
- To tell the story of the impact of Scottish Rite Masonry – and Masonry in general – in Minneapolis
- To share the history of our building, particularly the architectural history.

How should you be prepared?

- We will not be wearing our Scottish Rite Caps during the open house.
- Please dress in a professional, but comfortable manner. A jacket or sport coat or suit **is not required**.
- The Valley will provide you with two lanyards (one purple and one gold) with a name tag identifying you as a host for the Doors Open event. Please wear the lanyards and the name tags so that visitors can seek you out when they need assistance or have questions.
- If you have volunteered to help at the start of the event, please arrive by 9:00AM so that we can get everyone prepared. We will open the doors for visitors at 10am and close at 5PM each day.
- If you have a 2015 Scottish Rite Centennial Medallion, please bring it. Your medallion is your visible and tangible connection to the celebration of our 100 years on Dupont Avenue and will be an impressive show and tell item for our visitors.

Event Organization

One of the most important parts of this event is that all the promotion and advertising is being done by the event organizers with the City of Minneapolis – and not us. The organizers will also provide volunteers who will take up stations either outside our doors (or inside our doors if the weather is inclement) to help invite visitors into the building. Once in the building, visitors should be encouraged to explore the open areas and discover – as we have – how magnificent our building is.

One of our important tasks will be to count every person that enters the building visit the elevator lobby. We have hand held clickers (counters) and will ask that one of our volunteers be always at the entrance counting everyone who enters the building – even if they leave and then re-enter.

Self-Guided Tours

We will not be conducting guided tours of the building. Instead, visitors will be invited to tour the building on their own and enjoy the areas and features of interest.

Frequently Asked Questions

We anticipate that visitors will have many, many questions about our building and its history. And they will have many questions about our history in the building. Feel free to talk with any and all visitors. To help you, we've anticipated a few of the more frequently asked questions.

Q. Can I take pictures today?

A. Absolutely. Please feel free to take pictures anywhere in the open areas of our building.

Q. Is there a guest book for the open house?

A. We have set up a guest book on the main level adjacent to our coat room. Please feel free to let us know who you are, why you wanted to visit today and what you thought about your visit to the Scottish Rite Masonic Center.

Q. Why are some parts of the building closed to the self guided tours? Can I see the third floor or the balcony? What's up there?

A. We have closed some parts of the building so that all visitors may safely tour our building. The maintenance office and boiler room will be closed with no access for visitors. There will be no access to the third floor wardrobe area, the 3rd floor elevator lobby or the stairs alongside the stage. No visitors are permitted in either of the bell towers (Hennepin side or the Dupont side). No access to the Red Room or Auditorium balconies will be permitted. If you wish to explain that there are ghosts who occupy the third floor, you're on your own.

Q. My (Male Relative – Father, grandfather, uncle, etc.) was a Mason – or I think he was a Mason. Did he belong to the Scottish Rite?

A. Because we are short of volunteers for the Doors Open event, if a visitor wants to inquire about a male relative who may have been a Mason or a Scottish Rite Member, we will need to collect the visitors contact information and get back to them at a later date. If you encounter someone who is enquiring about a relative's membership in the Rite, please escort them to the small dining room and introduce them to the membership team. This warm hand off is very important in helping the family feel welcomed. With help from the membership team, the visitor can fill out a contact form and hopefully provide some needed information about their relative. The Scottish Rite will follow up at a later date.

Q. I'm interesting in joining the Scottish Rite (or Masonry)? Who should I talk to?

A. We have a couple of Scottish Rite members located in the lower level small dining room area that will assist those interested in finding out more about Freemasonry. If you encounter someone who is potentially interested in joining, please escort them to the small dining room and introduce them to the membership team. This warm hand off is very important in helping a man feel welcomed as a potential member of the Fraternity. With help from the membership team, the visitor can fill out a contact form and someone from a Blue Lodge near his home will reach out to him.

Q. How long has the Scottish Rite been in this building?

A. The magnificent building has the home for the Minneapolis Scottish Rite since 1915. The Fowler Methodist Church originally built and occupied the building from 1890 until 1915. The Minneapolis Scottish Rite purchased the building when the Fowler Church merged with the Hennepin United Methodist Church. The Scottish Rite took possession of the building and establish its new home here on January 1, 1915. The

previous home for the Scottish Rite in Minneapolis was the Masonic Building that is still located at 6th and Hennepin in Downtown Minneapolis. That building is now the home of the Hennepin Center for the Arts.

Q. Which doors are open and accessible for visitors?

A. All visitors should use the main elevator entrance and lobby that faces our parking lot and the Lowry restaurant. All other doors and exits for our building must remain locked but not blocked for emergency egress from the building. Signage will be posted on the outside of each door directing visitors to the elevator entrance. Signage will be posted on the inside of all doors (except the elevator entrance) noting that the doors are for emergency exits only.

Q. Is the parking lot open and available for use by our visitors?

A. Yes, our parking lot is open and available for all visitors both days of the 2023 Doors Open Minneapolis event.

Q. How big is the Scottish Rite in Minnesota?

A. There are five cities in Minnesota that have a Scottish Rite: Minneapolis, St. Paul, Duluth, Rochester and Hibbing. There are approximately 2300 Scottish Rite Masons in Minnesota. The Minneapolis Scottish Rite is home to approximately 1200 members – representing just over 50% of the total in Minnesota. There are Scottish Rite Lodges in 319 cities across the United States with a total membership of just under 245,000.

Q. Besides the Scottish Rite and other Masonic Bodies, are there any other groups that regularly use the Scottish Rite Masonic Center?

A. We provide office, storage and other space needs for three non-profit organizations in our building:

- RiteCare of Minneapolis and St. Paul
- The Scottish Rite Building and Museum Foundation
- The Minneapolis Metropolitan Boys Choir

RiteCare of Minneapolis and St. Paul is a 501(c) (3) non-profit that provides grants to families with children in need of speech and language therapy. RiteCare is the principle philanthropy of the Scottish Rite with RiteCare facilities in over 160 cities across the United States. The Scottish Rite Building and Museum foundation is another 501(c) (3) that works to help preserve our historic building and its significant collection of Masonic books, literature and artifacts. Both RiteCare and the Building and Museum Foundation are headquartered in our building. The Scottish Rite Masonic Center also provides office, storage and rehearsal space for the Minneapolis Metropolitan Boys Choir. The Boys Choir is a 501(c) (3) non-profit and is an incredible organization. They took root at our facility many years ago when one of our members was a passionate supporter of the choir and the positive impact it has on the lives of the boys.

Q. Do you rent the building for weddings or events?

A. We have made many improvements in our historic building over the years, many of which are visible and some are less visible to our members and guests. While we are exploring the possibility of renting our building in the future, we still lack many important infrastructure improvements (for example air conditioning) and staff with expertise in event facilities management to make our building welcoming, convenient and cost effective to renters.

Q. What do I do if I find a visitor in one of the closed parts of the building?

A. Please politely let them know that they are in an area of the building that is not open for the Doors Open event. And escort them out of the closed area. A listing of the closed areas of the building is provided later on in this information package.

Highlights of Our Historic Building

The Building

Our historic Scottish Rite Masonic Center was built in several phases over many years, first as a church and then as the home for the Minneapolis Scottish Rite. Construction of the original Fowler Methodist Church was initiated on this site in Minneapolis in 1890.

As the church expanded in the mid 1890's additional space was needed to serve the growing congregation. Construction of the main auditorium was begun in 1895 and completed by 1906.

The Minneapolis Scottish Rite purchased the building when the Fowler Church merged with the Hennepin United Methodist Church. The Scottish Rite took possession of the building and establish its new home here on January 1, 1915. The previous home for the Scottish Rite in Minneapolis was the Masonic Building that is still located at 6th and Hennepin in Downtown Minneapolis. That building is now the home of the Hennepin Center for the Arts.

The impressive Romanesque Revival architecture of our Scottish Rite Masonic Center represents the only combined work of 2 major Minnesota architects, Warren H. Hayes (the original sanctuary – now our Red Room) and Harry Wild Jones (the new sanctuary in 1906, now our main auditorium). Our building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976.

In our renovations over the past 20 years, we have attempted to uncover the hidden charm of the building through the application of historic colors and fixtures. At the same time, we have worked diligently to update infrastructure systems where possible – replacing a majority of the 1970's vintage florescent lighting with new energy efficient and attractive LED lighting.

The Tomhave Library.

John Benjamin Tomhave served as the head of Scottish Rite Masonry in Minnesota from June 1957 until his death in July 1971. His title was Sovereign Grand Inspector General for Minnesota. He along with 32 other Scottish Rite leaders from other States and U.S. Territories) comprised the Supreme Council for the Scottish Rite with responsibility for all business and fraternal operations of the Scottish Rite.

John Tomhave's picture is displayed above the fireplace. The other pictures are the presiding officers for the various Masonic groups that now have their home at the Scottish Rite Masonic Center.

Prior to the installation of our elevator in February 2013, this room was a small meeting room and also accommodated a small portion of our library and museum collection. The majority of our library and museum collection is in our main library located on the lower level adjacent the dining room.

Please do not open the display cases or drawers.

The Red Room

The original church sanctuary is now our Scottish Rite Red Room, mostly named because of the vibrant red carpeting. Local Minneosta architect Warren H. Hayes was the architect for the original church. Lofts on either side of the Red Room were originally for congregant overflow and Sunday school classes. The room is now used as a lodge room for various Masonic groups that meet in our building. One of those groups is Minneapolis Lodge #19 which originally met in the Masonic Building at 6th and Hennepin. The unique carpet represents the mosaic tile floor once believed to be a part of the Temple of Solomon.

The Main Auditorium

Our main auditorium was completed by approximately 1906 and used as a sanctuary by the growing Fowler Church until they sold the building to the Scottish Rite in 1915. This impressive room is now used for presentation of Masonic plays or degrees that form the teachings of Scottish Rite Freemasonry. The pipes of the pipe organ on the east balcony are, unfortunately, just a façade. In the 1970's the extensive repair needs of the original pipe organ resulted in its removal and replacement with an electronic organ.

The chandeliers were acquired by the Scottish Rite from the Farmers and Mechanics Bank in downtown Minneapolis. The stained glass windows in the auditorium are all original to the church and many have been restored over the past 12 years. Unfortunately the west (Dupont Avenue) stained glass window is in need of repair and we are researching funding and suitable vendors to perform the repairs.

The stage was original to the church and has been enjoyed by thousands of Scottish Rite Masons since 1915 as an integral part of our degrees. The stage loft has accommodations for 36 drops. In 2016 all the drops were removed and stored while extensive modifications / improvements were made to all the stage rigging. A new digitally controlled lighting system was installed. The improvements to the stage were completed in 2021 and the stage drops were re-installed. We have one of the historic drops displayed but we will not be raising or lowering any other drops during the Doors Open event.

The Rose Window

Perhaps the most iconic element in our historic building is the Rose Window that faces Franklyn Avenue. While the window is rich with Masonic symbolism and images, it actually pre-dates the Scottish Rite ownership of the building.

The window was donated to the Fowler Church by Zion Commandery #2, Knights Templar of Minneapolis and was originally called The Zion Commandery Memorial Window. The founder of the church was Charles Fowler and at the time of the construction of the main auditorium he was also the Bishop for the Methodist Church. Brother Fowler was also a member of the Knights Templar as noted in a scroll dedicating the window:

“TO SIR KNIGHT BISHOP CHAS. FOWLER”.

Zion Commandery No. 2, K.T. formally presented the window to the church in a dedication ceremony on February 16, 1908. The window was restored in 2007 with funds donated by a member of the Scottish Rite.

The window is beautiful and impressive. It contains a mixture of Christian and Knights Templar, ecclesiastical and ritualistic symbols. In proportion to the size of the wall, the window is immense. In the center is the colorful and familiar stylized cross and crown with the banner, “IN HOC SIGNO VINCES”, the motto of the Knights Templar, translated “by this sign conquer”.

Around this core motif the Rose Window is divided into twelve segments with small squares near the center and circles at the outer edge. In the small squares are a number of interesting symbols. There is an open hand suggesting charity and a willingness to give aid; a leaf symbolizing growth and immortality; an open book speaking of truth, guidance and authority; a star for guidance; a tent which calls followers to “be on the march”; and interestingly one circle carrying the letters “INRI”. The circles inside the outer rim present the prominent features of the window. Depicted here are pictures of Jesus; one of Him as a young man; one shows Him preaching; another presents Him in agony, as in the Garden of Gethsemane; and one is Jesus with the crown of thorns. Other circles give various forms of the cross, one with the motto, “MAGNA EST VERITAS ET PREVALBIT” – “Truth is mighty and will prevail”.

The grand design of the window is completed with smaller symbols, for example: balances – the weighing of good and evil, each person’s life “in the balance”; the communion cup; the ram’s horn; and the grim reaper – reminding us of the flight of time and the inevitability of death.

Main level lounge

This room is one of our more recent renovations and serves as a gathering space for members before, during and after various Masonic events. Before the installation of our elevator and a new lobby in 2013, the Franklin Avenue door was the main door used by members for entering the building. The stained glass window on the north (Franklin Avenue) wall was most likely removed from the south wall in our Red Room many, many years ago and was discovered in storage in early 2016. It was extensively restored 2016 and expanded to fill the space of a very non-descript window that previously occupied that space.

The Scottish Rite constructed this portion of the building immediately after taking up occupancy in 1915. This work was completed by 1920 along with the construction of the dining room, kitchen and office areas in the lower level. This main lounge was last remodeled in 1971 and fortunately, our latest renovation replaced all the florescent lighting with energy efficient LED lighting.

A very small sampling of the costuming used in our Scottish Rite Degrees is on display in the corner near the Franklin Avenue door. The costumes allow our degrees and the characters portrayed in them to come to life in the presentation of the teachings of Scottish Rite Freemasonry. The Scottish Rite uses over 600 costumes and their related theatrical props to, for instance, turn a 30 year old south Minneapolis electrician into a 160 year old man or a 70 year old retired Minneapolis Police Officer into a 27 year old would-be knight. In consideration of the safety of our visitors the Wardrobe area on the third floor is not open today. However, we have some examples of our costumes on display.

Candidates / Education Room

This recently renovated room is used as a class room / education center for candidates of Scottish Rite Masonry and Masonry in general. The conference room in the southwest corner was added in 2017 and dedicated to our Brother Jerry B. Oliver, who served as the head of Scottish Rite Masonry in Minnesota from 2002 until 2017.

This section of the building was constructed in 1948 by the Scottish Rite. The construction included a card room on the lower level which is now our lower level lounge.

The prominent mural, titled *Lux Tenebris* (translated *Light in Darkness*) was created by famed American-Norwegian artist, Theodore (Ted) Sohner. The mural was commissioned in 1954 by the Scottish Rite

Class of that year as a gift to the Scottish Rite. The works of Ted Sohner hang in galleries world-wide and his work is prominently featured at the American-Norwegian Center in Decorah, Iowa. The official portrait of Minnesota governor Edward J. Thye on display at the Minnesota State Capital was also created by Sohner. The scenes in our mural represent the development of humanity's social, cultural, philosophical and theological growth throughout the ages, and epitomize lessons from several of our Scottish Rite degrees. Brother Sohner was a proud member of our Minneapolis Scottish Rite.

Lower Level Lounge

The area serves as a gathering place before and after meetings and social events. In 2015, the Scottish Rite was pleased to serve as polling site for a local Minneapolis elections while the regular polling place – Temple Israel – was undergoing renovation and this room, before it was renovated, was used for voting.

The Library and Museum

The Minneapolis Scottish Rite collection of Masonic texts, periodicals and artifacts is deemed one of the most extensive the United States. A very small sampling of our collection is display in the Tomhave Library on the main level – a room that also serves as the main level elevator lobby. Our collection is not open to the public but is available to Masonic scholars for research and study. Another small sampling of our collection is on display outside the library doors adjacent to our main dining room.

Because of the confined space, our library is not open for visitors today.

Lower Level gathering area (west end of the dining room).

This meeting / gathering area are recently refurbished but was once part of the larger main dining room. It now serves as a small, intimate dining room or meeting area. The area is also the location of offices and storage rooms for several of the other Masonic groups that are tenants in the building. The four handmade oak tables and chairs were a gift to the Scottish Rite from the Scottish Rite Class of 1920, as noted in the commemorative brass plaques at the center of each table.

Also of note in this area is the impressive 45 star United States Flag. The flag belongs to Zuhrah Shrine and is on loan to the Scottish Rite as a gesture of the fraternal bonds, friendship and mutual respect between our two affiliated Masonic bodies.

33rd Conference Degree Room

This room is where we honor those Masons of the Minneapolis Scottish Rite who have been honored by receiving the 33rd Degree from the Supreme Council in Washington, DC. The pictures span only a short history of our time in this building – the pictures on the left side of the west wall begin in 1947 and end with 2021 on the right end of the east wall. This room has not been remodeled or renovated since the mid 1980's and we left it open for the 2023 Doors Open event to illustrate the time span between some of our renovations. There are several notable Minnesotans who have been members of the Scottish Rite and their pictures are proudly displayed in this important room:

- Curt Carlson – Business man and entrepreneur.
- Governor Harold Stassen – Minnesota Governor from 1939 until April 1943 when he resigned as governor to join the US Navy.
- Stuart A. Lindman – Minneapolis Channel 11 news announcer, news director and the first face seen on that station when it debuted in 1953.
- Governor Luther W. Youngdahl – Minnesota Governor from January 1948 until his resignation in September 1951 when he was appointed to the US District Court in WDC by another Mason, President Harry S. Truman.

- Carl Nelson – Along with his wife Leslie, Carl was a major benefactor to the Minneapolis Swedish Institute on Park Avenue in South Minneapolis.
- Larry Bachman – Business man and past leader of Bachman's Floral, Home and Garden enterprise.

The small green emblem in the corner of the pictures represents a Sprig of Acacia, a symbol in Masonry of hope and also of the immortality of the soul. It is used here to signify a Brother Mason who has passed away.

Restrooms

Several restrooms are available throughout the building. Men's and Ladies restrooms are located on both the main level and on the lower level. A unisex handicap accessible restroom is located in the northeast corner of the lower level lounge.

What's open and what's closed for the self guided tours?

The following areas of the building are closed to visitors.

- The entire third floor including our wardrobe area will be closed, with the exception of the Burns Room in the southwest corner of the third floor. Visitors must access the Burns Room only via the Dupont Avenue stairs.
- Third floor elevator lobby is closed and not accessible to visitors.
- The Scottish Rite Office will be closed and locked.
- The York Rite offices and storage areas at the west end of the dining room will be closed and locked. The small dining room area at the west end of the dining room (where the Zuhrah flag is located) will be open for visitors, as will the stairs to the men's room and the Dupont Avenue stairwell.
- The maintenance office will be closed and locked.
- The Dupont stairwell from the office and 33rd Conference room will be open to the Dupont Avenue Door and up to the third floor. The Dupont door will be posted for emergency exit only. The doors to the balconies on the third floor will be closed and posted for no visitor access.
- All the balcony areas for the Red Room and the auditorium will be closed and off limits to all visitors.
- The west bell tower will be completely closed with no access from the lower level or the main level at the rear of the auditorium.
- The auditorium level of the east bell tower will be accessible, but the stairs up to the balcony and the stairs down to the back side of the dining room will be cordoned off. The Franklin Avenue doors at the back of the auditorium will remain locked with emergency exit only signs, but the doors should not be blocked.
- All properties rooms adjacent to the Red Room and adjacent the main auditorium will be closed and locked if possible. Signs will be posted for visitors to keep out.
- The stage will be closed with no entrance from the east or west sides.
- The stage curtains in the auditorium should remain open.
- The entire kitchen area will be closed, including access to the kitchen from the lower level ladies restroom.
- The lower level library will have its doors open and selected items available for examination on a table blocking the entrance door. But visitors will not be permitted to enter the library.
- The storage area in the candidate's room (adjacent the hat lockers) will be closed (and locked if possible).