



Grand Council of Cryptic Masons
State of New York
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Greetings & Salutations Companions All,

How appropriate it is for me to author my holiday wishes on the first day of Hanukkah. The story that is taught is that the oppressed Maccabees somehow defeated Antiochus' mighty troops and reclaimed the Temple in Jerusalem. To celebrate, they attempted a ritual lighting of a seven-pronged Menorah candle- but they only had enough oil to last one day.

Miraculously, the oil lasted a full eight days, giving the Jews enough time to procure new oil...thus why Hanukkah is also known as the Festival of Lights.

Five days after Hanukkah ends, our Christian companions & families relish in the birth of Jesus Christ. Obvious commercial advertisement is seen by major television networks, homes decorated with lights and trees such as the infamous Rockefeller Center tree lighting ceremony in NYC. Children in anticipation for the arrival of Santa Claus (translated in numerous languages around the world) which many got a sneak peak of him "coming to town" watching the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade also in NYC.

Many of our African American companions celebrate something called Kwanzaa which is observed from December 26 to January 1 culminating in a feast and gift giving ..along with a similar Menorah 7-candle lighting ceremony identified by core principles celebrated on each day of lighting beginning with Umoja (Unity) and ending with Imani (Faith).

I'm happy to be a companion that belongs to a worldwide organization that recognizes and appreciates our companions for there ancestors efforts, trials, tribulations and success. Without our past we could not appreciate what we have in the present to continue to pass onto our future companions. More reason to appreciate my theme for the year:

Embrace the Past Forever
Empower the Present Feverishly
Encourage the Potential Future

On behalf of my wife, Katrina, and my family we all wish you, our Cryptic Masonic family, a Happy Holiday Observance and the best for the incoming 2018 New Year. Please feel free to disseminate this message to our companions and family throughout!

S&F

M.:I.: Curtis Alan Banks
Grand Master 2017-2018
Grand Council of Cryptic Masons in the State of NY