Brethren, I firmly believe that the Work is our unifying cornerstone and when each of us puts effort into doing the Work well, everything else – the fellowship, the pride, the purpose, – comes naturally. But what do I mean when I say cornerstone?

According to Wikipedia, The cornerstone is the first stone set in the construction of a masonry foundation, important since all other stones will be set in reference to this stone, thus determining the position of the entire structure. The cornerstone, I am referring to is the crucial piece that gets laid in setting the parameters for a foundation.

The setting of the cornerstone is precise, and all of the subsequent lines and angles of the building are referenced from it. Our Work sets the standard for the bearing of the beams and walls in the construction of the entire Lodge.

So in plain terms, when I say that the Work is the cornerstone of Masonry, I am saying that it forms the beginning of our foundation, unites all of us; and that every Brother has a responsibility to take ownership of doing the Work well; and in making a good impression on yourself, your brethren, and your candidates.

Louis Pasteur said “Chance favors only the prepared mind.” By this he meant that sudden flashes of insight don’t just happen— they are the products of preparation. Preparation, therefore, is the key to success. So how does the Work prepare the mind?

It takes effort to make the Work easier to manage. You need to engage in a form of meditation, clear your mind of other thoughts and focus on what is written. This focus, and the practice of the words, brings a sense of freedom when the concept is finally grasped.

How many of us have struggled with a few words, or a part of the degree? Had to repeat and practice and verbalize, when Eureka!, Suddenly we get the underlying meaning and intent.

The Work prepares us for life as men. It builds a mind well constituted for facing the daily travails of our lives. The concepts prepare us for seeking insight, growing awareness and learning to appreciate the lives around us. To cultivate harmony, practice charity and live peaceful lives.

In the Work we are taught to consider the harmony of the lodge as paramount. Not just getting along with each other, but striving together. The Work when done well brings us all together united in a common focus. It enables a level of trust, alignment and support amongst men that is inspiring to observe, and exhilarating to participate in. This month, due to all the unfortunate circumstances that a Master faces on degree night, one lodge had to call on members from four other lodges to perform a degree, and they did it well.

Watching someone stand up for their first time to deliver a portion of the Work, you can see all the Brethren in attendance lean in. Trying to will success on their Brother, wanting nothing more than to see him deliver without issue. It is their passion for doing the Work, and doing it well, level and square, which prompts those “encouraging” sideline whispers.

**When you put the effort into doing the Work well**, in a timely fashion, in harmony with each other, so that all parts are done equally well, **then we see** **confidence grow**. Then Lodge has time and energy to do more, to meet, discuss, and grow deeper fraternal bonds. Making attendance in Lodge a pleasurable and desirable experience for all of us.

The Work teaches us honour and integrity as individuals. We first hear the words and vow to uphold them. Then agree to take a part in delivering portions of the Work. Then mentor others to help them understand it. The life lessons it offers are vast…Who amongst us did not pause and gulp when facing the tray of benevolence in the North east....and heard…“He has nothing”...then felt the relief of replying in the affirmative to “Would you give if you could?”

Finally the Work unites us all as brothers. We are brought from darkness into the light, from ignorance to awareness, from Mister to Brother, to learn the most important concepts of enlightenment, as we all work together to build our prepared minds. The words of the Work, and their intent, enable each of us to reach a balance of mind, of word, and of deed, as Men, as Masons, and as Brothers.

In closing*,* Mahatma Gandhi *said “A man is but the product of his thoughts. What he thinks, he becomes.”* Make a personal commitment, study the words we are given. To do the Work well, **you** need to put in the effort, and you need to see it done well. I encourage you all to visit, to share and to practice.

The Work is our cornerstone, use it to find your Eureka moments and give your Craft Lodge a firm foundation.