

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

It is my fervent prayer that you are all well and as safe as circumstances will allow. I wish we could all be together again, but, alas, that is not to be at this time. However, we can all show our support for one another and our communities with calls, notes, and general acts of kindness. I know that each of us, in our own way, has reached out to those around us. As our lessons teach us, "be not weary in well doing", we must continue to do what we can as individuals and as chapters. We have been given guidelines on how to conduct business as chapters through social media. Many chapters have embraced the technology that allows us to meet this way and I encourage those chapters that haven't done so to 'bite the bullet' and do so. If you need assistance to start, contact our Grand Conductress Sabrina Pack, Past Grand Patron Larry Holmes, or Debbie Hoffman for Zoom. Debbie Davis, Grand Secretary, has been using a Google format with much success and the time is limited and free. Getting together this way is not the same as in person, but at least we get to see and hear each other and it gives us some sense of normalcy. Sister Pam and I are trying to attend as many of these meetings as possible and as each chapter comes on board, we plan to be there cheering them on. Of course, we would rather meet in person, and Pam and I would like to resume our official visits, enjoy our rich ritual with its great lessons, but for the time being, it's not to be.

I realize I have been remiss in my correspondence over the last month. The demands of the Holidays and work has been overwhelming and time just got away. (No excuse, just fact.) It is now January 2021 and I look forward with great expectations, the year ahead. I also look back on the year 2020, they say hindsight is 20/20 and I am glad it is behind us!

Looking back, I see a year that started out with great anticipation that soon deteriorated to uncertainty and fear. COVID-19 hit in late February early March and turned the world on its ear. Business shutdown, Local and State governments shut down, everyone ordered to stay home, and mask up, people sick, hospitals full, people agitated, Civil unrest, politics in turmoil, out of control wildfires, you name it. This was pretty dire and not over yet. No one alive today had seen anything like it before.

Amid all the strife and uncertainty, I saw many positive things, we learned that "just because we hadn't done it that way", no longer applied. We learned new ways of doing the things we did before, the sick and dying were cared for, the elderly seen to, the poor and hungry fed. We found ways to reach out to our friends, neighbors, Sisters and Brothers. Whole neighborhoods came together to assist those in need like they hadn't in a long time. Through our calling trees and other means, our chapters reached out to members who have had moved away and basically been forgotten, and others who had for one reason or another, quit coming to chapter. It's always comforting to know you have been remembered. The members who have followed the Elected and Appointed Grand Officers on the website, facebook, or other social media, have gotten to know their Grand Officers better than any time in the past as we invited them into our homes, our minds and our families. I hope that many of those new ways of doing things will continue into the future and that, through perseverance, our chapters will grow and thrive.

I will close with the Master's prayer: May the Blessing of Heaven be on us, may brotherly love prevail, and may every moral and social venture cement us."

"Amen – So may it be"  
Don Sultemeier,  
Worthy Grand Patron

