

OPENING CHAPTER

Ritual: Pages 23-43

Book of Instruction: Pages 13-15; 18-21

General Instructions:

Prior to Entering Chapter Room for the Opening Ceremony

- Prior to the start of the meeting, if the Chapter room has multiple doors, the Warder should check to see that they are all secure. That will leave only the door to the Preparation Room and the Warder's door to the Chapter Room to be checked during the Opening.
- The Conductress should check to see that the Signet is properly lighted if desired, and that a properly prepared Ballot Box is in place if balloting is to occur. She should also check to see that the proper number of small Bibles are on the Altar if an initiation is to take place.
- The Officers should be lined up in correct order at the correct doors.
 - At the Warder's door, should be the Worthy Patron, Associate Patron, Associate Conductress, Organist, Conductress, Secretary, Marshal, Adah, Ruth, Warder, and Worthy Matron. The Sentinel remains at the door after all the other officers have entered the room.
 - At the Preparation Room door should be the Treasurer, Chaplain, Electa, Martha, Esther, and Associate Matron.
- All the Officers should check to see that their badges are properly pinned on their left breast.

Opening Ceremony for the Chapter:

- At the appointed time, the Worthy Patron, Associate Patron, Associate Conductress, and Organist enter the Chapter room and assume their stations. The Associate Patron, Associate Conductress, and Organist take their seats at the same time. The Worthy Patron remains standing to the left of the podium.

- The Worthy Patron gives one rap of the gavel and addresses the Chapter (Ritual, pg 23). He then directs the Associate Conductress to invite the Worthy Matron and other officers to enter the Chapter room. He calls up the members as they enter.
- At the end of the opening march, all Officers should be in order within the Labyrinth (Ritual, pg 24). The Conductresses stand between Adah and Electa's chairs. The Warder, Worthy Matron, Associate Matron, and Esther stand between Ruth's and Martha's chairs. (If officers have marched in, make sure they are properly lined up at the conclusion of the march.)
- The Chapter can design and perform any entrance march of their choice. Whatever the march may be it must end in this open square formation. Every entrance for the opening of a meeting must end in this open square formation. *This formation is symbolic that we have entered to square our lives on the virtues of our Order and are prepared for the active duties of our Chapter.*
- When the music stops, the Worthy Patron directs the Conductress to escort the Worthy Matron to the East. The Conductress steps forward enough to clear Adah's station and marches west to just past Ruth's station observing square corners. As she approaches Ruth's station, the Worthy Matron turns and faces southwest. The Conductress turns north and approaches the Worthy Matron. She nods to the Worthy Matron, but the Worthy Matron **does not return the nod.**
- The Conductress escorts the Worthy Matron to the East along the North marching line observing square corners. Upon reaching the East, **the Worthy Matron nods to the Conductress and the Conductress returns the nod.**
- The Worthy Patron assists the Worthy Matron to the dais and hands her the gavel while the Conductress observes square corners and returns to the front of the South marching line, as she reaches her place **turning inward.**
- When the Worthy Matron instructs the Officers to take their respective stations, she seats the Chapter with one rap of the gavel. The Conductresses slowly lead the Officers out of the Labyrinth, observing square corners. The Associate Matron waits until she can turn right and step in line behind Esther. The Officers drop off as they reach their stations. The Conductresses adjust and slow their pace as they lead the Officers to their chairs. All Officers stand in front of their chairs except the **Star Points, Chaplain and Marshal.** The Conductresses meet behind Esther's station, turn, take a step to the East, observing square corners, turn and return to their stations with square corners.

- **Watching the Worthy Matron, the Officers are then seated together without a rap of the gavel.**
 - The Worthy Matron, Worthy Patron, Associate Matron, Associate Patron, Secretary, Treasurer, Conductress, Associate Conductress, Organist and Warder stand in front of their chairs.
 - The Star Points, Chaplain and Marshal stand to the side of their chairs, Pg 27 of Ritual
- The Worthy Matron stands and directs the Warder to secure the doors. The Warder secures the doors of the Preparation Room and returns to the door to speak to the Sentinel. The Warder observing square corners returns to their station to report to the Worthy Matron.
- After the Warder reports to the Worthy Matron that the doors are secure, the Worthy Matron addresses the membership. She then addresses the Associate Matron and asks her to ascertain if all present are members of the Order.

(Move to Instructions for Proving Chapter)

- After Proving of Chapter is completed, the Worthy Matron raps up the Officers with two raps of the gavel and continues with the Opening of Chapter. (Ritual pgs. 27-41) All Officers turn and face the Worthy Matron when they give their response. **When addressed by the Worthy Matron, the Officer will nod, say “Worthy Matron”, and then respond. Officers do not talk and nod at the same time.**
 - When doing long form, the Officers do not touch their badges when explaining them.
 - A Pro -Tem officer must give the duty and badge of the office for which they are pro-teming. If serving as a Star Point, she must also give the sign.
- When doing short form, the Worthy Matron will ask for just the Star Point’s sign.
- Remember that the Star Point does not give the responsive pass to her own sign, and the Worthy Matron does not respond with any pass to any of the signs.
- Once the Associate Matron completes her answers to the Worthy Matron, the Worthy Matron then addresses the Conductress and begins the Alter Service.

(Move to Altar Service)

- **Following the Altar Service** - After singing the opening ode, the Worthy Matron declares the Chapter open and the Warder informs the Sentinel, Warder responds to Worthy Matron. Organist plays and the Conductress and Chaplain turn outward and retrace their steps to their stations.

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(Move to Flag Salute)