

301 N. Lavaca
Moulton, TX 77975-4515



Phone: (512)581-8006
Email: innaoseinn@hotmail.com

Linda Rose Winn-Christenson
Worthy Grand Matron
2019-2021

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To: All Texas Order of the Eastern Star Chapters

Re: Elections, Installations, Serving of Food, Social Functions & workshops

Sisters and Brothers

I have received several direct inquires as to what is allowed and what is not regarding the above topics. The following are my instructions regarding these events/issues. Please contact your Deputy Grand Matron if you require additional information.

Elections: Are to be held as stated in the Constitution at a stated meeting in April. If a Chapter can not hold a regular meeting due to lack of a quorum I can give them a Special Dispensation for a late election, however the chapter will need to request the Dispensation from the Grand Secretary and send in the appropriate fee.

Installations: I do realize the Covid-19 virus has not been totally contained or eradicated, therefore the numbers may be extremely high in one area of the state, with members being concerned for their health and safety, and not in another area. A Chapter should first determine if there are city or county government restrictions on the number of persons allowed at a gathering and then contact the Lodge to regarding any restrictions the Lodge or Grand Lodge has regarding numbers, food being served etc. I understand the Most Worshipful Grand Master and the Grand Lodge of TX trustees are now leaving it up to the individual Lodges discretion as to the use of facemasks. I personally feel it is in my and my family's best interest to continue to wear one, that is my choice and not what everyone chooses or must do. Please be respectful of each individual's choices as to their health and safety.

As to format I would prefer that chapters try to return to a somewhat normal ritualistic Installation. If health and safety are a concern to the members of a Chapter they may use the modified version of installation. At the very minimum the officers must assume their stations, repeat the installation obligation, the WM & WP will be given their charge at the altar, and the Installing Marshal proclaiming the Installation from her or his station or at the altar as per the Ritual.

If performing a regular installation, the Installing Marshal may invite the officers to follow her/him to the altar, the badges could be placed on the west side of the altar so each officer could pick-up their badge, there is no need for members to have actual physical contact if they do not wish to do so.

Serving of food: Please, check with local regulations and the Master of the Lodge. I prefer any food be prepared by a licensed food handler or at the very least be served by someone in mask and gloves, not a self-serve buffet.

Social Functions/Teas: A Chapter shall follow all local and state rules and regulations as well as Lodge rules concerning the handling and serving of food. Please be aware appearance can be negative or positive to our Order. Neighbors or others in a community may not understand if a large group arrives with food and no safety precautions are followed. I too miss having a social time at meetings and events however, I consider the health and safety of members and the reputation of the Order a priority. We can have a social time with no food, or we could all bring our own sandwich or snack, the chapter could possibly provide bottled water or drinks. I do hope things are starting to return to a new normal and chapters are once again holding meetings and visiting.

Workshops: I know the pandemic and or weather has prevented some Deputy Grand Matrons from holding a workshop. If your section has not held a workshop by now I suggest the Worthy Matron or Chapter Secretary contact the DGM in your section to let her know your members are interested in having one held in your section. Please then offer her whatever assistance she may require for holding a workshop and be prepared to attend and participate.

The current Deputy and District Deputy Grand Matrons have been faced with the hardship of serving two years, facing a pandemic which has prevented meetings, cost members lives and even civil unrest in a few areas, yet they have prevailed and served admirably. I love each of my Deputies and could not have asked for more dedicated Sisters to have served with me. I will forever be grateful for their love of the Order and service to our Grand Chapter.

There are an additional 140 days until the installation of a New Worthy Grand Matron and her officers, yes my family and I are counting the days. Until the Installation of new officers at Grand Chapter on August 14th, 2021 the current Grand Officers and Deputies will continue to serve and perform the duties of the office they have held since August 2019. Please be respectful of them and the office they hold and be grateful for their service to you the members. The Worthy Grand Patron and I have been honored to serve the membership, of what I BELIEVE is the best Grand Jurisdiction of the Order of the Eastern Star in the world, the past twenty months. We have made mistakes, as have most who have served in these offices. We have sought prayerful guidance from the Lord, taken the health and safety of all members into consideration and tried to follow His teachings as I believe future leaders of the Order will also. I look forward to the future of the Grand Chapter of Texas, a return to normalcy and the many exciting plans the Lord and future leaders have for the of the Order of the Eastern Star in Texas.

Hugs and prayers,

Linda R. Winn-Christenson

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Worthy Grand Matron

2019-2021  *Believe-Understand-Give-Serve*