



MINNEHAHA LODGE #5

Ancient Free & Accepted Masons
 520 S. 1st Ave
 Sioux Falls, SD 57104
sec@minnehaha5.com
 (605) 351-5756

APRIL 16, 2026

Opened in Due Form	7:00p.m.
Closed in Due Form	8:02p.m.
Attendance	27
Visitors	1

STATED MEETING ~ FELLOWCRAFT			
WM	RYAN HARRISON	SD	CODY CHRISTIANSEN
SW	JAMES BYERS	JD	ANTHONY NEUROTH
JW	ADDISON STUBBE	SS	MITCH MULLEN
TRES	CARLOS COBOS	JS	KURT SWENDSON
SEC	AARON ZAHN	MAR	GREG WESCOTT
CHAP	ANTHONY NEUROTH	TYLER	ERIK REINHOLT

*PRO-TEM

Worshipful Master Ryan Harrison opened a Stated Meeting in the Fellowcraft Degree at 7:00 pm and greeted the Brethren in attendance.

CORRESPONDENCE.

- Earlier this year, Senior Warden Brother James Byers shared with the lodge a powerful example of Masonic charity in action.

While employed in the Harrisburg School District, Brother Byers observed that Counselor Ms. Andrea Junker was quietly buying food out of her own pocket for students who came to school without breakfast or lunch. Because of district constraints, she had to do this work discreetly, simply to ensure that no child went hungry. This experience led Brother Byers to propose a lodge-sponsored “pantry” idea, so Minnehaha No. 5 could help meet those needs.

Midway through the year, Brother Byers accepted a position at Teachwell Academy, which partners with 17 school districts and serves some of the most challenging behavior students. There, he found the need was even greater. Many students arrived in the same clothes they had worn for days; their home lives and basic needs—including food—were clearly unstable.

At Teachwell, Brother Byers met Success Coach Emily Small, who runs a classroom of high-needs behavior students. On weekends, Emily has been using her own resources to buy food and assemble small grocery bags for students to take home on Fridays. For many of these children, those bags are the only guarantee of food over the weekend.

Recognizing how closely this aligned with the lodge’s earlier pantry initiative, Brother Byers approached Emily and explained that he had access to funds sponsored by Minnehaha Lodge No. 5 specifically for this kind of charitable work. When he offered to help cover the cost of food, Emily was moved to tears. With prior approval from school administration already in place, Brother Byers assured her that the lodge would provide a few hundred dollars and asked her to go to Costco to purchase exactly what she knew the students needed most.

As a result, Teachwell Academy has been able to expand and stabilize its weekend food-bag effort. Brother Byers personally witnessed approximately 20 bags of food going out the door with students on a recent Friday. Many of these behavior students—who might otherwise be defiant or withdrawn—responded with genuine gratitude, telling Emily, “Thank you, this really helps.”

Brother Byers reported this back to the lodge as “good wages” for the Craft: even if the lodge accomplished nothing else during Worshipful Master Anderson’s year, ensuring that children did not go hungry on weekends would itself constitute a rich and meaningful Masonic reward.

In gratitude for Minnehaha No. 5’s support, Success Coach Emily Small wrote the following letter to the men of the lodge:



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Letter from Success Coach Emily Small
To the men of Minnehaha Lodge No. 5,

I would like to sincerely thank you all for your generous donation. Your kindness is already making a real difference for our students. Recently, I learned of a student who was struggling with food insecurity. Because of your donation, I was able to provide him with a bag of groceries, which he gratefully accepted. The next day at lunch, he was prepared with food and shared a smile that said more than words ever could. There is a genuine need here, and your generosity is helping us meet it. The plan moving forward is to provide this student with a bag of food every Friday, giving him consistent support through the end of the school year, which concludes on May 21.

Again, I want to thank you for your compassion and for helping care for our students in such a meaningful way.

*Miss Emily
Success Coach, Teachwell Academy*

If the Craft did nothing else this year, the brethren of Minnehaha Lodge No. 5 can take comfort in knowing that hungry children are being fed every weekend because of their charity—a set of “wages” truly worthy of a Mason.

PETITIONS.



CONTINUING BUSINESS



NEW BUSINESS



Brother Byers, Masonic Liason to El Riad Shrine, proposed an idea that the lodge purchase coupon books of circus tickets to give to children wanting to attend the El Riad Shrine Circus. This effort would not be to significantly change the financial impact of the circus but to rather show an effort on Minnehaha Lodge’s part of friendship and brotherly love. We would put a label on the back of each ticket letting the child know who had helped them get to the circus. Through a generous round of individual gifting our lodge was able to fund and give out ten books of tickets! Thank You



Brother Aaron Zahn informed the lodge that the City of Sioux Falls has reinstated the Fourth of July parade and asked who would be in town and willing to participate. The brethren expressed clear interest, with many preferring to volunteer as a water-distribution team rather than march in the parade itself. Aaron proposed that, with the lodge’s permission, he confirm with the city that water distribution is needed, then arrange for a pallet of custom-labeled water bottles from Dakota Splash (approximately \$900, with a 50/50 matching grant request of up to \$500 from South Dakota Masonic Charities). Senior Warden James Byers moved that the lodge support the water-distribution effort, with the total cost covered by the lodge and offset by the matching grant; after discussion, this motion was accepted. Further, the brethren learned that the parade organizers are forming a “250 for 250 Club”—250 founding contributors at \$250 each to secure the parade’s financial future. Brother Jon Woods proposed, and the lodge approved by show of hands, that Minnehaha Lodge No. 5 contribute \$250 to join this founding group. The combined motion—supporting the July 4 water distribution, seeking up to \$500 in matching funds, and contributing \$250 as a founding member of the 250 for 250 Club—



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passed unanimously, and the lodge will now move forward with detailed planning and volunteer coordination for Independence Day.

⚡ Theatrics to start Masonic Education. James Byers lowers the lights to complete **darkness...**

Brothers, education is what I do—it’s my day job—but the place I love education the most is right here in lodge. Tonight I want to take us on a little voyage and talk about what it really means to be “in search of light.” Many of you will remember the words spoken to you before you became a Master Mason: you had “heretofore been a candidate in search of light.” Think back to that moment at the altar. You were once again in darkness, hoodwinked, about to take that last great step you had long desired. Three times you were asked what you most desired, and three times you answered in some form: more light, further light. Then, at last, you were brought to light. You beheld the three lesser lights and then the full illumination of the lodge. You completed the work of the degree. You were, at least formally, a Master Mason. In some jurisdictions, that’s the first moment you’re allowed to wear Masonic jewelry. It can feel like a finish line. But my brothers, that was not the end of your journey. That day was actually the beginning. Freemasonry is a never-ending quest to further ourselves as men and as Masons. That is the commitment we made when we knelt at the altar, upon the Holy Bible, and took our obligations. Maybe you were eighteen when you started. Maybe you were older. Either way, the journey was never meant to stop. Has it stopped for you? It shouldn’t. So here’s the hard question: Do you treat each day—and each lodge night—as part of that quest for more light? Or do you sometimes come through the door mostly wanting a quick meal, a fast business meeting, and a safe drive home? Most of us have had nights like that. We’re tired. It’s been a long day. Life is heavy. But we should be asking ourselves different questions when we enter lodge:

What am I going to learn tonight? Who will I get to talk to? What story or experience might be shared that I need to hear? What new idea or opportunity might a brother propose? What lesson about the square, the compasses, the level, the plum, the ark, or the anchor might deepen my understanding?

Are we coming in hungry for light, or just in a hurry to get it over with? Those two words are not even remotely the same. The journey of a Mason truly ends only when, as has been said, your apron is placed atop the coffin that contains your lifeless remains and you are laid in the silent tomb. Until that day, every hour and every meeting is part of the work. If we waste that time, my question is: why? Is this [the regalia, the titles, the trappings] what makes us a Mason? Or is it, as has been taught, that we were first made Masons in our hearts—when we chose to come through that door, kneel at that altar, and undertake a lifelong journey of self-improvement for the benefit of ourselves, our families, and our communities? Have the literal lights of the lodge blinded us to the inner light we were truly seeking when we answered three times, “more light, more light, further light”? This journey is not about me. It is not about the Worshipful Master. It is not about this apron or even that higher apron some may aspire to wear. Those are outward signs only. What matters is here—the heart, the mind, and the character of the man who calls himself a Mason. Here in lodge is where you are guided to be a better Mason. Here are the brothers who walk with you toward that final day, when they will stand beside your casket and say farewell with Masonic rites. So I say to you: waste not any days, my brothers. Waste not one minute. Seek more light at every meeting, every dinner, every opportunity to serve—whether that means handing out water bottles on a hot summer day or putting a box of Pop-Tarts into a collection for a hungry child’s weekend. Keep questing. Don’t stop. And then, most likely, you will be truly worthy to wear this ring and call yourself a Mason. Worshipful Master, thank you.



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⚡ Junior Warden Addison slowly rose to admit that this entire meeting, he had been wearing the apron of the Chaplain! He vowed to arrive to lodge early in the future so that Jon Woods would not be able to test him again!



⚡ Treasurer Brother Carlos Cobos reported that Minnehaha Lodge No. 5 currently has seven signers on its bank accounts—the Worshipful Master, Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Secretary, Treasurer, and Trustees Brothers Jon Woods, John McGill, and George Hahn—and that lodge funds have grown into the \$60–70,000 range and are expected to increase further. To prevent future disharmony and ensure confidence in how lodge monies are handled, he drafted a Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest / Disclosure Policy, adapted from language used by the Grand Lodges of California and Wisconsin and tailored to Minnehaha No. 5. This policy requires all account signers (and any officer who wishes) to sign a disclosure statement affirming that lodge funds and information will not be used for personal gain, but solely for the good of the lodge. Questions were raised about legal recourse in the event of misuse, and it was noted that Masonic law already provides for Masonic trial as a first line of defense. In addition, the brethren discussed obtaining directors and officers (D&O) insurance / bonding, with Brother George Hahn explaining it as a relatively low annual cost for strong, permanent protection. The Worshipful Master confirmed that adoption and enforcement of the disclosure document falls within the Master’s purview, not requiring a lodge vote, and multiple brethren—including Trustee Brother Woods—praised the document as detailed, well-crafted, and a solid foundation for transparency and harmony as lodge assets continue to grow.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

⚡ Great to see Brother Sam Volmer in lodge. Continued well wishes for your recovery Brother. WB Denny Kaarup has been moved to hospice care at Ava’s House

Jon Woods trying to hide



Respectfully Submitted,


AARON ZAHN – SECRETARY

