

About the Order of the Eastern Star

What it is: The Order of the Eastern Star is the largest fraternal organization in the world to which both women and men may belong. Worldwide, there are approximately one million members under the General Grand Chapter.

Eastern Star is a social order comprised of persons with spiritual values, but it is not a religion. Its appeal rests in the true beauty of the refreshing and character-building lessons that are so sincerely portrayed in its ritualistic work. A deep fraternal bond exists between its members. It is the wholesome relationship of sisterly and brotherly love brought about through high principles exemplified in our lives which makes us near and dear to each other.

While this is an Order composed of people of deep spiritual convictions, it is open to all faiths, except no faith. The personal welfare of our members is vital to all of those in the Eastern Star, and it is considered a privilege to help another member whenever we can.

Purposes: The stated purposes of the organization are: Charitable, Educational, Fraternal and Scientific; but there is much more to it than that. Dr. Rob Morris, the Poet Laureate of Masonry, founded the Order using the beautiful and inspiring Biblical examples of heroic conduct and moral values. These portray the noble principles which should adorn the personal lives of Eastern Star members. Eastern Star strives to take good people and through uplifting and elevating associations of love and service, and through precept and example build an Order which is truly dedicated to charity, truth and loving kindness.

Projects: Concrete evidence of the charitable nature of the organization as it affects others is the millions of dollars which have been raised within the membership to support national, jurisdictional, and local charities. Many Grand Jurisdictions have homes for their senior members.

History of the Order of the Eastern Star

The history of the Order of the Eastern Star is divided into three Eras:

1. The First Era extended from 1850 to 1856, under the leadership of Dr. Rob Morris, Poet Laureate of Masonry.
2. The Second Era extended from 1866 to 1876, under the leadership of Robert Macoy of New York.
3. The third Era extends from 1876, when the General Grand Chapter, Order of the Eastern Star, was established to the present time.

Of these eras, the first is perhaps the most important as it prepared the way for the other two.

The real origin of the Order of the Eastern Star, like Masonry, will always be shrouded in mystery. Many researchers believe it had a French origin as early as 1703. By some, this is claimed to be the first inception of "Female Masonry" or "Androgynous Degrees" – (degrees for both men and women).

There appeared at this time to be a demand for "Side Degrees" or Degrees conferred on ladies, and quite a list sprang up – "Heroines of Jericho", "Danger in the Dark", "Tall Cedars of Lebanon", etc. These were extensively used but soon fell into decay for lack of lasting worth.

As to the real origin of the Eastern Star degrees in its initiatory form, there is not the least shadow of doubt that the honor belongs to Dr. Rob Morris and its real origin comes under the First Era.

Dr. Morris had traveled many years. He had written many books on Masonry which are valued references in many Masonic Libraries.

Never quite satisfied that all the good in Masonry should be confined to men, Dr. Morris felt that Masonry should be for the whole family. But by the laws of that Ancient Order women are not eligible for its degrees. Knowing he could not change the Ancient Landmarks of Masonry, Dr. Morris sought some method by which women could share with the Masonic Brother the same inspiration that "prompts man to noble deed." Although he harbored these feelings for years, it wasn't until 1850, while confined to his home after an accident, that Dr. Morris fully developed the Eastern Star Degrees in their present initiatory form.

During this time, he carefully thought out the symbolism and significance of the floor plan and the corps of officers. He conferred the degrees upon his wife and daughters, and some neighbors, presumably having an idea to clothe the ladies with certain words or signs whereby they might make themselves known to Master Masons.

These signs and so-called mysteries of the Order were communicated freely to all Master Masons and their relatives. Dr. Morris and other prominent Master Masons gave many lectures and conferred the degrees on many ladies throughout the nation.

Order of the Eastern Star ----- Oregon Philanthropic Projects

ESTARL Scholarships: for those studying in the fields of religious leadership

Scholastic Scholarships: for those studying in an accredited college or university

Cancer Research at OHSU

Heart Institution at Providence Hospital

Scottish Rite Language Clinics

Shrine Hospital

ALS

Masonic and Eastern Star Home at Jennings McCall II

Eastern Star Membership

Who may join: Only men who are Masons are eligible and only women with specific Masonic affiliation may be members. These affiliations include:

Affiliated Master Masons in good standing

stepdaughters

the wives

stepsisters

daughters

daughters-in-law

legally adopted daughters

grandmothers

mothers

great granddaughters

widows

nieces

sisters

great nieces

half sisters

mothers-in-law

granddaughters

sisters-in-law

stepmothers

aunts

female first and second cousins of an affiliated Master Mason in good standing, or if deceased was in good standing at the time of his death, as well as members – either active for three (3) years or majority – of the International Order of the Rainbow for Girls or of the International Order of Job's Daughters, each of whom having attained the age of eighteen (18) years at the time the petition is read at a Stated Meeting of the chapter, are eligible to membership in the Order of the Eastern Star.

How to Join: To inquire about membership, talk to a current member, or contact a local chapter. To find a chapters in your area, contact the Grand Secretary of that state or province. Petitions are carefully read, eligibility investigated and election to membership must be by a vote of the Chapter. The Order strives to select persons of mental, moral, and spiritual quality who will work together in harmony to perform its objectives.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Is the Order of the Eastern Star a secret society?

A. No. Secret societies are underground and hard to find. We are easily found within the community, but we enjoy a distinctive means of identifying each other. Only members are allowed in a closed meeting.

Q. Can I afford membership in the Order of the Eastern Star?

A. Yes, Financial position is not considered in the Order. Members come from all economic stations of life.

Q. Is my religious faith allowed in the Order of the Eastern Star?

A. Yes. Members of all religions may belong to the Order of the Eastern Star. We only require a belief in a Supreme Being.

Q. Is the Order of the Eastern Star time consuming?

A. After your initiation into our Order, you may attend as your time permits.

Q. Is there any memory work?

A. There is no mandatory memory work except the means of making yourself known if you wish to visit a Chapter or if you become an officer.

Q. Is the Order patriotic and democratic?

A. Yes. Members are taught an allegiance to preserve the good of their country.

Knowles Chapter No. 12, McMinnville, Oregon

Worthy Matron – JoAnna P. Foster 503-434-9138

Worthy Patron – Hunt Compton 503-472-3082

Secretary – Evelyn Bach 503-472 2387

Meetings – 2nd Monday of each month except July and August. 7:30 pm

Dues: \$25.00 annually, Initiation fees \$10.00 and \$5.00