

# REQUESTING THE USE OF THE GEORGE WASHINGTON INAUGURAL BIBLE



Thank you for your interest in learning more about the process of requesting the George Washington Inaugural Bible. From the time it was first given to St. John's Lodge No. 1 of New York by its Master in November 1770 until the present day, the Bible has served in numerous important occasions ranging from the inauguration of US Presidents to the laying of the Washington Monument Cornerstone to the Cornerstone Laying of the Washington Arch in New York City.

The St. John's Lodge Inaugural Bible Committee is pleased to make this national treasure available to the general public throughout the year for both Masonic and non-Masonic functions. There are several important steps that must be taken, however, when requesting that the Bible is present at an event you may be hosting.

First, there is a fee associated with having the Bible at your event and it is important that you are aware of the cost. The current fee is Two Thousand Three Hundred and Seventy Dollars (\$2,370.00). The reason for this cost is solely for the maintenance and upkeep of the Bible which is kept in a separate fund. This ensures that the Bible will be around for another 250 years. To put things in perspective, it costs the Lodge tens of thousands of dollars every time we would like to have a few pages of the 1,000 page plus Bible repaired.

Additionally, every time the Bible travels, it goes with an Escort Committee of at least 3 members of St. John's Lodge. The Escort Committee shall have sole charge of all arrangements incidental to the occasion, including transport, display, and precautions for security. The Escort Committee is not to suffer any unreasonable deviation from the time(s), location(s), purpose(s) and occasion(s) for display approved by the Lodge. All travel, lodging, and security arrangement costs should be absorbed by the host of the event. Depending on how far the Bible has to travel, these costs could be significant and should be factored into your decision to request the Bible.

The only time there is no fee associated with having the Bible at an event is in the following conditions:

- The Installation of the Grand Master Elect and Grand Line Elect of the Grand Lodge of the State of New York;
- The Inauguration of the President Elect of the United States of America;
- The Inauguration of the Governor Elect of the State of New York;
- The Inauguration of the Mayor Elect of the City of New York;
- Federal Hall, NYC, for any occasion which does not generate income or revenue;
- George Washington's Inaugural Address as reenacted annually by the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of New York.

The George Washington Inaugural Bible is not to be videotaped, photographed or touched by any person or object without the permission of the Escort Committee. If photography is approved in advance, **NO FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY** is to be used. No one, without exception, is permitted to take any form of oath or obligation upon the Bible, although it may be present on the same table or altar as a bible or other document being used for that purpose, at the sole discretion of the Escort Committee.

Subject to approval of the Lodge, an event will constitute a pre-determined amount of time, both to take into account the preservation of the Bible and the personal comforts of the Escort Committee members. Generally, there is no fee to have the Bible in two relatively close locations. For example, if the Bible is to be displayed at a Grand Lodge ceremony on a Saturday and then displayed at public ceremony on a Sunday, there will only be one fee.

No action shall be taken on any request for outside display, unless the same be by a detailed letter from the requesting party, addressed to the Lodge, in which is set forth fully the time(s), location(s), purpose(s) and nature of the occasion(s) for which the George Washington Inaugural Bible is desired. The George Washington Inaugural Bible shall not be used in any type of parade.

### **STEPS TO TAKE WHEN REQUESTING THE BIBLE**

1. If you do not represent a Masonic organization or are affiliated in any way with Freemasonry, please proceed to Step 2.
  - a. If you represent a Masonic organization domiciled in New York State, you may write directly to the Master and Secretary, but you are strongly encouraged to inform your District Deputy Grand Master of your intention to request the Bible.
  - b. If you are a Masonic organization not domiciled in New York State, you will first need to have your Grand Secretary (or equivalent office) contact the Grand Secretary's Office of

the Grand Lodge of the State of New York. This is proper protocol amongst Grand Lodges. The Grand Secretary can be reached at :

Office of the Grand Secretary  
71 W 23<sup>rd</sup> Street #1829  
New York, NY 10010

(212)741-4520

2. After reading this document, please send an e-mail to [secretary@stjohns1.org](mailto:secretary@stjohns1.org) and also please cc [wm@stjohns1.org](mailto:wm@stjohns1.org). Alternatively, you can submit a request via the form on our website. Regardless of whether or not you submit an e-mail or use the online form, **you must follow that up with a written and signed request on proper letterhead**. An e-mail will begin the process of having the request read in lodge, however, only a signed document as a contract of understanding on behalf of the requestor will be proceeded with.
3. Please include the day(s), time(s), location(s), and purpose(s) of your event. Please also include as much detail of the event as you think relevant to the Lodge taking a decision on your request. Please include the fact that you acknowledge the amount and payment date of the fee, the fact that the requester will cover all costs of travel, accommodation, food and drink, and any necessary and itemized incidental costs of the Escort Committee, and that the Bible cannot be used for the taking of an oath or obligation.
4. The Secretary or an Inaugural Bible Committee member will respond to your e-mail in a timely manner and correspond with you directly about next steps or request more information. The request is read in Lodge and referred to the Bible Committee, who then gather detailed information about the trip and make sure that the Bible is available to travel on the requested days. Once a vote has been taken, the Secretary communicates the results to the requestor.
5. Written correspondence stating that you will not hold the lodge liable, its members and affiliated organizations against any liability, damages or recourse arising from the request for, and/or display of, the George Washington Inaugural Bible must then be received by our Secretary. The written confirmation shall be signed by an authorized representative of the requesting party in the presence of a Notary Public.
6. On notification that your request has been approved, a Bible Preservation Donation shall be Paid to the Foundation by or on behalf of the requesting party in the minimum amount of Two Thousand Three Hundred Seventy Dollars (\$2,370). Such sum shall be payable by bank and/or certified check and/or verified electronic transfer.
7. Prior to the George Washington Inaugural Bible being displayed, the Bible Preservation Donation must have been verified as deposited and cleared. Such Bible Preservation Donation

shall not be refunded unless the Lodge, due to unforeseen circumstances, is unable to provide the display of the George Washington Inaugural Bible at the requested time(s) and location(s).

8. Prior to the George Washington Inaugural Bible being displayed, all expenses incidental to such display request must be paid for by or on behalf of the requesting party including but not limited to travel, lodging and meal expenses for the Escort Committee. There may be additional expenses accrued for things like taxi use or extra airline luggage fees, which will not be known until after the trip is completed.
9. It is the responsibility of the requester to return any items associated with the exhibition of the Bible which the Escort Committee cannot reasonably carry themselves. This is usually (but not limited to) unsold mini-Bibles, the display case, and supportive cushions.

***- Thank you for your interest in the Bible and we look forward to adding to its rich history by having it at your event. -***