Salem

REVIVING A LEGACY, BUILDING COMMUNITY

GRAND UNITED ORDER OF SALEM

“DO GOOD TO ALL”

The Grand United Order of Salem is being revived as a modern social and benevolent organization rooted in the historic traditions of the United Sons and Daughters of Salem.

Our purpose is simple: bring people together, strengthen families, serve our communities, and build lasting bonds of fellowship.

The Salems once helped create networks of unity, mutual support, service, and social fellowship within Black communities. Today, we are working to bring that spirit back for a future generations.
We invite you to help us build it.

WHO ARE THE SALEMS?

The historic United Sons and Daughters of Salem was a fraternal and benevolent organization established in Wilmington, North Carolina during the late nineteenth century; operating at the local level as early as 1889. The Order changed its name to the Grand United Order of Salem on March 5, 1925.

At a time when African Americans were building their own churches, schools, businesses, mutual-aid societies, lodges, and community institutions, the Salems, or Salemites, provided another important place where men and women could come together for fellowship and the common good.

Membership included people from many walks of life—community leaders, educators, ministers, laborers, farmers, professionals, and working families.

Unlike many traditional fraternal organizations of the era, the Salems included both men and women, with women also serving in positions of leadership.

The Order operated under a simple but powerful motto:

"DO GOOD TO ALL."

That principle remains at the center of the revived Grand United Order of Salem.

OUR PLACE IN HISTORY

The Salems were part of a larger tradition of Black mutual-aid and fraternal organizations that helped sustain African American communities during periods when discrimination and segregation often limited access to public and private institutions.

Organizations such as the Salems created spaces where members could:

- Build relationships and trusted community networks
- Assist one another during difficult times
- Encourage morality, education, responsibility, and service
- Organize charitable and benevolent work
- Develop leadership
- Create opportunities for social fellowship
- Strengthen connections between families and communities

Much of the early history of the Order has been lost or scattered, making the work of preservation even more important.

The revival of the Grand United Order of Salem is therefore more than the restoration of an organization.

It is the restoration of a piece of our community history.

WHO ARE THE SALEMS?

Our communities do not lack organizations. What is often missing is **connection between them**. Churches serve. Fraternities and sororities serve. Civic groups serve. Neighborhood organizations serve. Schools, nonprofits, clubs, families, and individuals all work to improve their communities.

The Grand United Order of Salem does not seek to compete with these organizations. **We seek to connect with them**. We believe there is **strength in unity**. The revived Order will encourage its lodges to collaborate with existing organizations on their community projects and invite those organizations to participate in Salem projects whenever possible.

When several groups work together, a school-supply drive can reach more children. A senior-assistance program can serve more elders. A neighborhood cleanup can cover more streets. A mentoring program can reach more young people.

Our goal is not to ask:
"Who gets the credit?"

Our goal is to ask:
"How much good can we accomplish together?"

WHAT DOES REVIVAL LOOK LIKE

The modern Grand United Order of Salem is being rebuilt as a community oriented social and benevolent fraternal organization.
Local Salem Lodges will provide members with a place to:

SERVE
Participate in meaningful projects that address real community needs.

CONNECT
Build relationships with people from different professions, backgrounds, generations, and experiences.

LEAD
Develop leadership skills through lodge offices, committees, programs, and community initiatives.

MENTOR
Help young people develop confidence, discipline, character, leadership, and direction.

SUPPORT
Create a network of members who uplift and encourage one another personally, professionally, and socially.

PRESERVE
Protect and teach the history of the Salems, as well as the history, culture and traditions of the African-American community.

FELLOWSHIP
Enjoy the social side of belonging to a genuine community that provides an safe outlet for mature and family-oriented fun.

MORE THAN MEETINGS

The Salems are meant to be a community—not simply an organization whose members see one another during lodge meetings or service projects.

Fellowship is an important part of the Salem experience.

Lodges may organize:

- Cookouts and family gatherings
- Holiday celebrations
- Game nights
- Theme parties
- Community festivals
- Group dinners
- Cultural outings
- Excursions and day trips
- Educational programs
- Youth activities
- Family events
- Lodge anniversaries
- Joint events with neighboring lodges
- Regional and national gatherings

We want members to serve together—but we also want them to **laugh together, celebrate together, travel together, and build lasting bonds.**

IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR!

The Grand United Order of Salem recognizes that strong communities begin with strong relationships.

The Order is intentionally designed to bring together people of different ages and generations while creating opportunities for families to participate in the life of the organization.

Whether connected by blood or by bond, Salem members are encouraged to look after one another and help build the kind of community in which children, adults, and elders can all feel valued.

- Parents can serve.
- Young people can be mentored.
- Elders can share wisdom.
- Families can fellowship together.
- Members without relatives nearby can build meaningful community relationships of their own.

As a Salem, community becomes family.

ARE WE A SECERT SOCIETY?

Fraternal traditions often use ceremony and symbols to turn values into lessons that members can remember and carry into everyday life. Salem follows that tradition.

ARE WE A SECRET SOCIETY?

No. The Grand United Order of Salem is not a secret society. Our purpose, history, values, community work, and opportunity for membership are public; the exect oposite of a true secret society.

Like many fraternal and benevolent organizations, however, the Order has an initiation ceremony that is open only to members and individuals who are seeking to join. The Salem initiation is conducted in three degrees, and each degree teaches moral lessons through ceremony, instruction, and reflection.

WHAT ABOUT OUR SYMBOLS?

Salem's symbols are visual teaching tools. They are used to represent principles, preserve tradition, and remind members of the lessons and responsibilities they accept as part of the Order. They are not objects of worship or signs of hidden power.

We think of Salem as a family. Like any family, we have traditions, conversations, and information that are shared within the family rather than publicly. Respecting those private portions of Salem life helps preserve trust, meaning, and fellowship among members.

Fraternal traditions do not make Salem a secret society;
they are part of the bond and trust of membership.

OUR COMMUNITY GOALS

The revived Grand United Order of Salem will focus its service around several major areas.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

We seek to connect young people with positive role models and mentors while encouraging:

- Academic achievement
- College and career preparation
- Skilled trades
- Entrepreneurship
- Financial literacy
- Leadership
- Character development
- Conflict resolution
- Community service
- Cultural pride
- Self-Awareness

SUPPORT FOR ELDERS

Our lodges will identify practical ways to support seniors through projects such as:

- Friendly visits
- Wellness checks
- Technology education
- Home-safety support
- Seasonal assistance
- Provide Community Resources
- Social activities that reduce isolation

COMMUNITY GOALS CONTINUED...

STRONGER FAMILIES

Whenever possible, Salem programs will encourage healthy family relationships, intergenerational connections, and family participation in community life.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Each lodge will be encouraged to identify the actual needs of its community rather than simply repeating traditional service projects.

EDUCATION & CULTURAL PRESERVATION

We will preserve Salem history while also encouraging members to learn more about the history of their own communities and the institutions built by those who came before us.

COLLABORATION

Salem Lodges will actively seek partnerships with churches, schools, nonprofits, civic associations, fraternities, sororities, businesses, neighborhood organizations, and other groups doing positive work.
We believe cooperation leads to greater impact.

WHAT MEMBERS RECEIVE

Membership in the Grand United Order of Salem is an opportunity to help build something meaningful from the ground up.

Members can benefit from:

FELLOWSHIP
Build lasting friendships and meaningful connections with people who believe in helping others while improving themselves.

NETWORKING
Meet members from different careers, professions, businesses, trades, and communities.

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE
Serve as an officer, committee chair, mentor, organizer, or project leader.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION
Become more involved in the place where you live.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES
Participate in social and community programs that welcome and strengthen families.

LEGACY
Help establish lodges, programs, traditions, and community projects that future generations can inherit.

You are not simply being invited to join an established organization.
You are being invited to help rebuild one.

OUR THREE-YEAR PLAN

The revival of the Grand United Order of Salem will grow carefully and deliberately.

YEAR ONE
RESTORE • ORGANIZE • INTRODUCE

Our first year will focus on rebuilding the foundation of the Order.
We will:

- Recruit the first generation of modern Salem members
- Establish and strengthen the Grand Lodge
- Operate a virtual lodge for qualified members who do not yet live near a local lodge
- Establish the first new local lodges
- Introduce Salem history, traditions, and principles to members
- Develop leadership and lodge-management resources
- Establish regular social and service activities
- Begin partnerships with existing community organizations
- Participate in projects already being led by churches, nonprofits, civic groups, schools, fraternities, sororities, and other organizations
- Invite community partners to participate in Salem-sponsored projects
- Expand public awareness of the history of the Order

Year One Goal: Build a strong foundation and demonstrate that the Salems can once again become a useful community organization.

THREE YEAR PLAN CONTINUED...

YEAR TWO
EXPAND • CONNECT • SERVE

The second year will focus on growing our network and increasing our community impact.
We will:

- Establish additional Salem Lodges
- Develop regional connections between lodges
- Expand mentoring and youth-development efforts
- Increase programs benefiting elders and families
- Organize larger collaborative community-service projects
- Develop relationships with local businesses and community leaders
- Encourage lodges to create annual signature events and service projects
- Increase joint events with other civic and fraternal organizations
- Expand social, family, and fellowship programming
- Develop training for future lodge leaders
- Continue documenting and preserving Salem history

Year Two Goal: Transform individual lodges into a connected network capable of serving communities together.

THREE YEAR PLAN CONTINUED...

YEAR THREE
STRENGTHEN • PARTNER • BUILD FOR THE FUTURE

The third year will focus on sustainability.
We will:

- Strengthen successful lodges and assist developing lodges
- Establish stronger regional and national coordination
- Expand partnerships with established community organizations
- Create recurring collaborative service initiatives
- Develop stronger leadership pipelines
- Increase youth, family, and senior programming
- Encourage members-at-large to establish lodges where viable
- Develop major annual Salem fellowship and service gatherings
- Create programs that can be repeated by lodges from year to year
- Preserve records so future generations inherit a stable institution

Year Three Goal: Establish the Grand United Order of Salem as a sustainable network of lodges known for service, fellowship, collaboration, and community-building.

STRENGTH IN UNITY

We understand that no single organization can solve every challenge facing a community.

That is why collaboration will be one of the defining principles of the revived Salem movement.

A Salem Lodge should be just as willing to put on a volunteer shirt and support another organization's project as it is to organize one of its own.

- We want to build relationships rather than territories.
- Partnerships rather than competition.
- Community rather than division.

When another organization is doing good work, **we should help.** When we organize good work, **we should invite others to help.** Because when organizations cooperate, communities benefit.

There is strength in unity.

WHO ARE WE LOOKING FOR

We are looking for people who believe their community can be stronger, safer, and more prosperous—and who are willing to help make that happen.

You do not need previous experience in a fraternity, lodge, nonprofit, or civic organization. You do not have to be wealthy. You do not have to hold an important title. You simply need a willingness to contribute your **time, ideas, talents, relationships, and energy** toward something greater than yourself.

We need:

- The organizer.
- The mentor.
- The neighbor.
- The parent.
- The youth.
- The entrepreneur.
- The educator.
- The life of the party.
- The tradesperson.
- The professional.
- The retiree.
- The young adult searching for community.
- The person who knows everyone in town.
- The person who quietly gets things done.

There is room for each of them in Salem.

DON'T HAVE A LODGE NEAR YOU?

Distance does not have to keep you from becoming part of the Salem community.

Qualified individuals who do not live near an established lodge may join as a **Members-at-Large through Union Lodge No. 187**, the Order's virtual lodge dedicated to expansion and unity.

Members-at-Large can participate in the Order while helping build connections in their own communities.

As membership grows in an area, members are encouraged to come together and establish a local lodge.

Today you may be the only Salem in your community. Tomorrow, you may be the person who helped bring Salem there.

HELP US WRITE THE NEXT CHAPTER

The first Salems built joined together because their communities needed unity, service, fellowship, and mutual support. Those needs have not disappeared.

Now we have an opportunity to take the values that inspired the Salems generations ago and give them new life.

Not simply by remembering the past—but by building something useful for the present.

- A place to serve.
- A place to belong.
- A place for families.
- A place to build friendships.
- A place to mentor the next generation.
- A place to honor those who came before us.
- A place where people and organizations can work together.

THE GRAND UNITED ORDER OF SALEM
VIRTUE • PEACE • UNION
"DO GOOD TO ALL."

Join the revival.
Help build a lodge.
Help strengthen a community.
Help write the next chapter.

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