



Knights of Columbus

Fr. Hennepin Province

Michigan District 1

Gene Suchyta
District Master

Minutes from the March 2, 2024 Spring Bi-Annual District Meeting

Opening Ceremonies

- Meeting was called to order at 9:33 AM at Knights of Columbus Wyandotte Council, 3530 Biddle Ave, Wyandotte, MI 48192,
- District Marshall Dale Miller apprised the Assembly of Membership Card Status
- Opening prayer was led by District Friar Paul Ballien.
- District Sr. Marshal George Roumaya led the Assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Dignitaries that were present were introduced (see the list at the end of the minutes).
- The roll call of attending Assemblies was taken (see table at end of minutes).
- Recognition of resolutions committee – SK Robert Bielenda, SK Andrew Young, SK Michael Kostrzeba
- The meeting minutes from the 2023 Fall District meeting were approved. Motioned by Eric Suchland, Seconded by Larry Hinds, passed unanimously.

District Friar Remarks (Rev Paul Ballien)

- Rev. Ballien spoke about the importance of patriotism, quoting Bishop Fulton Sheen “Our Love of Our Country, our love of our fellow man, go together”. If we don’t have one, we are not going to have any of those things.
- Related a story about a speaker heard on MSNBC about rights being given by Christian National Values. Without our right from God, we are slaves of the state.
- Freedom of religion and faith are important in building up our country. Without the truths given to us by God, we are lost and will not have peace or joy, and we will be miserable.
- Encourages the 4th Degree to stand up for these truths and morals, and that we are made in the image and likeness of God and no one can take that away from us.
- Encourages us to take back this message to our Assemblies and encourage them to continue the good works we have done.

Master’s Report (Gene Suchyta)

Brings Greetings from Supreme Master, Vice Supreme Master and State Board
Thanks to Assembly 0475 Msgr. Antwerp for hosting today.

District Update

- Please Stand and Be Recognized
 - $\geq 100\%$ of quota
 - 1963 Msgr. Clement H. Kern
 - 2599 Sacred Heart
 - 2696 St. Paul on the Lake
 - 2804 St. Mary of the Lake

- Need 1 more to make quota
 - 3057 Bishop Schoehnerr
 - 3408 St. George Chaldean
- Need 2 more to make quota
 - 0492 Msgr. Schulte
 - 0521 Father Solanus Casey
 - 1795 Rev. Paul M. Onderbeke
 - 2032 Edward Cardinal Mooney
- Membership
 - We started the year on July 1, 2023 with 3132 Sir Knights
 - Since then, we have exemplified a total of 73
 - District quota is 188, so we have 115 to go
 - As of March 28, 2024, the district has **3137** Sir Knights, for a difference of **+5**
 - While some Sir Knights have transferred out, and some have decided to no longer participate, most of these are due to the passing of our brothers
 - Our average age is almost 69 years old
 - Over 1700 members, 55%, are in their 60's and 70's
 - The other 45% are about evenly split 80 and above and 59 and below
 - I can't emphasize how important it is to recruit
 - Councils should be visited regularly to provide a 4th Degree update and to recruit
 - The FN should visit each council for which they are responsible at least twice per year
 - Each assembly should have, as a goal, to recruit at least one member from each council for which they are responsible
 - FN's should have a business card, and there are plenty of places to get them online and inexpensive
 - FN SK Andrw young inquired if there was a standard font for the business cards. There isn't a standard.
- Inactive Assembly Sir Knights
 - Last year I mentioned we had 66 Sir Knights in inactive assemblies
 - We are down to 61
 - I am still working the issue with my insurance rep, the VSM and Supreme, though it has been difficult
 - I would prefer not to leave any Sir Knight behind
 - My plan would be to reach out as best I can to make sure they stay with us
- Assemblies
 - We currently have 31 active assemblies
 - I am concerned about 3 of them, 2 of which are really having issues
 - I am looking at how and where to possibly form new assemblies
 - I will contact any impacted assemblies for a discussion before I approach anyone else
- Assembly/Council Alignment and Assembly Location Updates
 - I am still working these issues with the VSM and Supreme, and this is proving to be difficult, as well

Color Corps

- I am very proud of the number of Color Corps that have been turning out for events, especially funerals, of which some areas have had many
- The Archbishop commented on the large number of Color Corps at the Journey of the Saints dedication, and the State Deputy was pleased to see the turnout for PSD and FVSM Tom Clark's funeral
- Please do everything you can to continue to grow the Color Corps

- We have assemblies that have programs to help people by the uniform
- We have some councils that are helping people by the uniform, as well
- Many of the assemblies have a small armory containing swords and baldrics to loan to new Color Corps members
- While I know we are an older group of men, the Greatest Generation, those that fought in WW2, Korea and Vietnam are passing away
- We need Sir Knights to rise up and take their place to honor them as well as the rest of our brothers
- Assignments
 - Every assignment we do is important
 - I am asking that **ALL** events for which Color Corps is requested be sent to the marshals so the event can be put on the calendar and the marshals are aware of the commitment. This includes those commitments that might be considered local, like funerals
 - Some days of the year we get a lot of requests, and we want to make sure we can staff them appropriately. The marshals and I would prefer to not be surprised when an assembly is unavailable because they didn't tell us about a local event
 - I like to get out to events as well, and if the event isn't on the calendar I am robbed of an opportunity to come visit and participate
- Update on Patches and Baldrics – Supreme is aware of the color mismatches between the Beret patch and the Baldrics and is working on a solution. A request is in to Supreme to get Red patches for Color Corps Members.
- Comments by members:
 - FN Henery Testa – Please let the Marshalls know if an event is cancelled.
 - District Marshall Curt Best – A note to Color Corps Commanders and Faithful Navigators – please help councils fill out the Color Corps Request Forms.
 - District Marshall Bob Greening – Holy Thursday Color Corps Requests, lots of requests coming in.

Help

- VAVS
 - Dennis Lipski is our representative
 - Dennis States that it takes 2 hours per month for the duties
 - Supreme has asked that we have a deputy representative
 - Rob Seeterlin volunteered to be the second representative
- Exemplifications
 - One person to run the “teleprompter”
 - Supreme requests that the exemplification team memorize their parts
 - Not only is it difficult, but we have also had last minute substitutes that make it difficult for the person to memorize the part in time
 - We've usually co-opted a SK to do this, but I would like to make it more formal so we have some consistency on the team
 - Ron Thomas volunteered to be the teleprompter person.
 - Photographer
 - Kathy took the photo at the mini-exemp
 - For the upcoming exemp, using the same photographer we used at St Isidore
 - Again, if anyone knows a Sir Knight that would be willing to do this, please let me know
 - Danny Champine asks if this is a paid position – We have compensated photographers in the past.

Exemplifications

- Rumors
 - New Exemplification
 - We are still expecting the new exemplification ceremonial to be rolled out in 2025, the 125 anniversary of the 4th Degree, though I have not heard anything further on it
 - Baldrics
 - Social baldrics ARE NOT going away
 - Supreme is telling us they should be OPTIONAL to purchase after June 30, 2024
 - I plan to add an option to the exemplification registration that would effectively reduce the cost for a candidate should they choose to NOT purchase a social baldric
 - Cost
 - Supreme has said we can raise the cost for candidates to \$90
 - The Michigan District Masters plan to hold at \$70 for as long as we can
 - Basket donations for the raffle really help in this regard, as they help spread the cost and keep it down for everyone.
- Future Exemplifications
 - 2024 Spring
 - SS. Cyril & Methodius Slovak Catholic Church, Ryan Rd and 18 Mile Rd, Sterling Heights
 - Need all the paperwork 10 days prior to the event, which will be April 10
 - Registration starts at 9:00 am
 - Basket donations would be appreciated, as they greatly help with the cost of the exemplification. Would any assemblies like to donate baskets?
 - 2024 June Mini-exemp
 - Likely Our Lady Star of the Sea, Grosse Pointe
 - This is to pick up any potential new Sir Knights before the end of the fraternal year
 - 2024 SHMS Mini-exemp for seminarians
 - Waiting to hear back from Fr. Mabee at the seminary
 - 2024 Fall
 - Planning on the Knights of Columbus Hall (0488 Raisin River), Monroe, probably Saturday, September 28
 - 2025
 - St Edith, Livonia (A-1536 Pope John XXIII and C-13645 St Edith)
 - Need another location
- Dress code
 - The dress code doesn't require a tux, but it does require a dark suit, white shirt and tie
 - You are the first line of defense when it comes to how people dress for this event. Please be sure candidates are dressed appropriately
- Mini-Exemplification
 - A smaller event that still has all the meat but none of the other stuff
 - Depending on the number of candidates and those knighting, can complete the ceremony in about 80 minutes
 - For Color Corps, I ask the marshals to be there and do all the heaving lifting.
 - I have not asked for any other Color Corps mainly to keep the size of the entire ceremony and the meal relatively small such that the sponsoring assembly has a

reasonable chance of handling the logistics in the relatively small spaces we are using

- Sr. District Marshall George Roumaya emphasized the importance of proper dress, including black socks.
- Danny Champine requested a repeat of the fall exemplification date and location. 9/28 – K of C Hall in Monroe
- Ron Thomas volunteered to run the teleprompter for the Mini-exemp.

Future District Meetings

- Fall Harvest District Meeting and Packing Party
 - Saturday, November 2 is All Souls Day
 - Not a Holy Day of Obligation, but a day a lot of Catholics go to Mass
 - Because it is a Saturday, evening Mass will not be an option
 - Next year All Souls Day will be Saturday, November 1, and that is a Holy Day of Obligation
 - I propose moving the meeting to the 2nd Saturday in November for 2024 and 2025. Any strong objections to this?
 - District Marshall Curt Best asks if the delay in the date will impact on delivery of packages? – Will not impact.
 - We need a location for this event
 - To be successful, we need to large rooms - one for the packing party, and one for the meeting
 - In addition, I would like the host assembly to take responsibility for the morning and lunch meals
 - Who would be willing to take this on?
 - St. Cyril and Methodius is offered for the meeting.
- Spring District Meeting (about 1 year from now)
 - Although the date is still TBD, it will be at Knights of Columbus - Columbia Banquet and Convention Center, St. Clair, MI.
 - This will be a bit of a drive for most, though I am grateful for FN Brian Kowalski for volunteering his location and assembly as host

Officer Installations

- 23 of 31 Officer Installations where completed last fraternal year
- Assembly 2136 hosted an installation with 9 assemblies, with proceeds donated to Fisher House
- Would like to get all done next year
- Again, two per marshal (which is on average 4 assemblies per event) I feel works well, though I am also OK with doing more if the assembly feels they can handle the group
- If you feel your group is somewhat unwilling to travel, perhaps your assembly might consider hosting the event

Supreme Topics

- Help and support
 - The Supreme Master has moved to New Haven so he can be full time in his role
 - He has six directors helping him have more direct involvement in goal setting for provinces and districts as well as provide help and support. Areas are:
 - Ceremonials
 - Communications
 - Membership
 - Programs
 - Training
 - Assembly Development

- Even with this help, please follow the chain of command when asking questions
 - FN, Master, VSM, Supreme Master
- 4th Degree Newsletter
 - The Supreme Master is publishing a 4th Degree Newsletter via email with items of interest and recognition
 - I have posted all of these on the district website to make them available to all assembly members
 - If you have something you think might be worthwhile, please send it to me (all the masters have been asked to be the gatekeeper for articles as this is getting off the ground)
- Youth Protection
 - There is active consideration regarding youth protection and the role of the FN
 - I have heard nothing more on this, though I would be supportive if that was the decision
 - Andrew Young asked if there is a difference between AOD and K of C youth protection training.
 - Henery Testa commented that the AOD training is required for anyone working with youth.
- Korean War and Vietnam War Veterans
 - The Vietnam War ended in April 30, 1975
 - On April 26, 2025, Supreme is planning a Memorial Mass at the Basilica in Washington, D.C., with the Supreme Knight laying wreaths at the Vietnam and Korean Memorials after the Mass
 - They also want to remember all those Knights of Columbus that served in the armed forces during both of these events
 - After World War I and World War II, the Knights of Columbus did a census of all those in the order that served during those two wars; no such census has been conducted since then
 - **THE ASK** of us is to complete a census, as best we can, of those veterans that served in the armed services during both the Korean and the Vietnam conflicts.
 - The Supreme Master wants the Fourth Degree to lead the effort, which means visiting councils to get the information
 - We want to include any fraternal brothers that were in the armed services during the conflict, living as well as deceased
 - They do NOT need to have been in Korea or Vietnam, they just need to have been in any of the armed services
 - The spreadsheet to be used was sent to all FN's and Comptrollers and is also on the district website
 - We do the best we can - that's all we can do
 - Alex Dominique suggests that we extend the survey to ALL veterans.
 - Danny Champine asks why this couldn't be added to the Form 4 – This has been proposed in the past and turned down.
 - Bob Belinda – comments that this isn't fair because if someone doesn't have a service medal for the campaign, they will be excluded even though they served during that era, even if it was in another country.
 - I suggest starting sooner, rather than later
- Swords
 - The Supreme Master has asked districts to donate swords and baldrics to help jump start the Fourth Degree effort in South Korea

- We only need to donate two
 - `Assembly 521 offered to donate a sword and baldric

Supreme Topics

- Patriotic Charities of Importance to Supreme
 - Warriors to Lourdes (Knights of Columbus Charities)
 - The Supreme Master, in his newsletter, has asked to assemblies to give to this worthy cause
 - For information on the program, go to kofc.org and search for **Warriors to Lourdes**
 - Father McGivney Military Chaplain Scholarship Fund (Knights of Columbus Charities)
 - The Supreme Master will be asking for assemblies to give to this cause in the summer
 - Funds are low, and he asks that assemblies consider making a contribution this fraternal year
 - For information on the program, go to kofc.org and search for **Father McGivney Military Chaplain**
 - Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA
 - The AMS is the sole certifier of Roman Catholic chaplains to the United States government.
 - All priests endorsed for military service serve on loan from their home diocese or religious order
 - The AMS keeps all records of any sacraments performed at military installations
 - The AMS receives no US government funding, only donations
 - For information on this organization, go to milarch.org
- Michigan WW2 Legacy Memorial
 - On Woodward Ave north of 13 Mile Rd
 - Group started with Honor Flights and wanted to move to something more permanent, if you will
 - Have flags and a small portion completed
 - Looking for donations to complete the project
 - Handouts are available for each assembly

Veteran and First Responder Support

1. Dennis Lipski asks how many are veterans – members respond
2. Dennis Center for Development and Civic Engagement – phone calls to Veterans
 - a. Dennis had flyers to pass out with information about how to participate.
 - b. This is a volunteer opportunity – only phone calls to reach out and provide contact over the phone.
 - c. This can be added to the Patriotic Duty form that is reported to the VA
 - d. Must be over 18, pass a background check, and they do not need to be a Knight
 - i. Henry Testa comments that despair the vets go through, these calls could be life saving.

Resolutions

- The Resolutions Committee recommend adoption of the resolution
- The resolution Committee is dismissed and thanked for their service
- Resolution 2024-01 Flag Pin - was read in full

- Motion to accept resolution was moved by Guy Ansell, Seconded by Vincent Cusamano
- Discussion around the history of the flag pin, and the sequence of events once the resolution is sent to Supreme.
- A vote to pass the resolution passed with one no vote, all the rest yes.

Old Business

- No Old Business

New Business

- Nominations for Master
 - Gene Suchyta - Nominated by SK Walter Glinka, Seconded by SK Andrew Young - Nomination Accepted
 - Dale Miller - Nominated by SK Ray Bilyk, Seconded by SK David Hayward, Nomination Accepted
 - Mark Palmer - Nominated by SK John Reeser, Seconded by SK George Roumaya, Nomination Accepted
- Henery Testa – is there a way to get a roster of all the 3rd Degree Knights in the District for recruitment? The best way is from the Financial Secretary of those councils.

Dignitary Remarks and Comments

- Former Master of the Fourth Degree Mark Brezenski
 - FDM Mark offers a perspective of the distance needed to cover for meetings and exemplifications for the other districts in Michigan, and while it may take 45 minutes to get to a location in District 1, but it is much better than 5-6 hours one way for District 4.
 - Impressed the importance of recruiting.
- Former Master of the Fourth Degree John Hundiak
 - Veterans Benefits – Pontiac office should be finished in July of 2024, SW Wayne County should be completed by July 2024 and are looking for another location in Northwest Detroit by the end of 2024.
 - Fisher House – Contractor is now working on framing and rough mechanical
 - The PACT ACT – Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics – In the past validation for health care needed to go through the VA. The act no longer required VA validation of toxin exposure during Vietnam, such as Agent Orange, radiation, and burn pits. Thailand, Cambodia, American Samoa, Guam, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran are locations that are covered.
 - If you served on active duty in any of those locations you are covered.
 - Not only VA has the information but VFW, American Legion can provide information.

Open Floor Questions

No additional questions

Good of the Order

- Comments from Gene
 - No further comments
- Prayer Requests
 1. Repose of the soul of Lady Lisa Cybulski, wife of SK Bill Cybulski, Bishop
 2. Repose of the soul of PSD and FVSM Tom Clark

3. Repose of the soul of Msgr. James Moloney
4. Repose of the soul of Msgr. Dan Trapp
5. Repose of the soul of Rev. John Libens, S.J.

Closing Ceremonies

- District Friar Rev. Pasul Ballien led the district in a closing Prayer.

Meeting adjourned at 11:32 am

Respectfully submitted,
Mark Palmer, District Secretary

Dignitaries in Attendance

District Master Gene Suchyta
District Friar Rev. Paul Ballien
Sr. Marshal George Roumaya
Marshal Curt Best
Marshal Bob Greening
Marshal Dale Miller
District Comptroller Norm Pranger
Former Master Mark Brezenski
Former Master John Hundiak

Assembly #	Assembly Name	Sir Knights	Delegates
0470	Detroit Cardinal Mercier	Not Present	Not Present
0475	Msgr. Francis F. Van Antwerp	4	2
0477	A.X.M. Sharpe	2	2
0478	St. John Neumann	3	3
0480	Richmond	2	2
0482	Bishop Michael Gallagher	4	3
0483	Msgr. Van Dyke	2	1
0484	Richard Cardinal Cushing	4	2
0488	Raisin River	1	2
0490	Bishop Kelley	4	2
0492	Msgr. Schulte	3	2
0520	Monsignor Hunt	2	2
0521	Father Solanus Casey	2	2
1536	Pope John XXIII	5	3
1622	Holy Cross	2	1
1795	Rev. Paul M. Onderbeke	Not Present	Not Present
1839	Blessed Virgin Mary	2	2
1963	Msgr. Clement H. Kern	2	2
2032	Edward Cardinal Mooney	2	2
2136	St. Francis of Assisi	3	2
2149	St. Michael the Archangel	3	2
2521	Father John R. Hogan	Not Present	Not Present
2599	Sacred Heart	3	3
2696	St. Paul on the Lake	2	
2804	St. Mary of the Lake	Not Present	Not Present
2942	Pope John Paul II	1	2
3057	Bishop Schoehnerr	2	2
3082	Divine Mercy	3	2
3099	Father John A. Hardon, S.J.	2	2
3392	Father Vincent Capodanno	2	2
3408	St. George Chaldean	Not Present	Not Present