



Knights of Columbus

Fr. Hennepin Province

Michigan District 1

Gene Suchyta
District Master

Minutes from the November 9, 2024 Fall Harvest District Meeting

Opening Ceremonies

- Meeting was called to order at 9:30 AM at SS. Cyril & Methodius Slovak Catholic Church, 41233 Ryan Rd, Sterling Heights, MI 48314
- District Marshal Curt Best apprised the Assembly of Membership Card Status
- Opening prayer was led by Deacon Phil McCowan.
- Marshal Emeritus Herb Stacer 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).
- The meeting minutes from the 2024 Spring District meeting were approved as corrected. Motioned by Matt Elias, Seconded by Bob Bielinda, passed unanimously.

Master's Report (Gene Suchyta)

Brings Greetings from Supreme Master, Vice Supreme Master and State Board
Thanks to Assembly 1839, Blessed Virgin Mary for hosting today.
Prayers for State Secretary Charles McCuen who was supposed to be here today.

Veterans Day - Could all our veterans please stand and be recognized!

Officer Installations

- 24 of 31 Officer Installations were completed
- Much thanks to those assemblies that hosted
- Always looking for assemblies to host an officer installation.

Awards

- I have not received any awards as of yet from Supreme.
- I am hopeful I will have them for the Spring District Meeting, and will distribute those, and the district awards, at that time.

District Update

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- Please Stand and Be Recognized
 - $\geq 100\%$ of quota
 - 484 Richard Cardinal Cushing
 - 1963 Msgr. Clement H. Kern
 - 2032 Edward Cardinal Mooney
 - 2149 St. Michael the Archangel
 - 2599 Sacred Heart
 - 2696 St. Paul on the Lake
 - 2804 St. Mary of the Lake
 - 3057 Bishop Schoehnerr
 - 3082 Divine Mercy

- Membership
 - We started the year on July 1, 2023 with 3132 Sir Knights
 - In the 2023-2024 Fraternal year, 128 new Sir Knights were exemplified
 - We started this fraternal year with 3123 Sir Knights, a difference of -9
 - 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
 - Keep in mind that our state reached Circle of Honor for the last 3 years - There should be plenty of new knights out there in the councils that we can talk to and try to recruit!

- Inactive Assembly Sir Knights
 - 2 years ago I mentioned we had 66 Sir Knights in inactive assemblies

- We are down to 45
- I continue to work this, though it has been difficult, and I want to thank former master John Hundiak for helping me with some
- I would prefer not to leave any Sir Knight behind
- I have sent two letters giving these Sir Knights options on how to proceed. To date, I have heard from 5.
- Assemblies
 - We currently have 31 active assemblies
 - 1 of those is in the process of shutting down and we are working through the process of transferring the Sir Knights. I expect this process will be completed by the end of the year.
 - I am concerned about 3 others. 2 of them are working hard to keep their assembly going, though it can be difficult when the officer positions can't be filled and few people show up for meetings. The third assembly I am very unsure about.
 - 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 have moved only one council between assemblies, and the two assemblies and the council are aware of the change.
 - I am still working with the VSM on how to change assembly locations, though I am now of the opinion that it will likely require a resolution from the assembly.
 - Henry Testa inquired about a template for resolutions to get Supreme to correct the Assembly cities, as most are still listed as Detroit.

Color Corps

- **Could all current Color Corps members please stand and be recognized!**
- 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
- Please do everything you can to continue to grow the Color Corps
 - We have assemblies that have programs to help people buy the uniform
 - We have some councils that are helping people buy 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
 - Questions/Comments:
Curt Best suggests that GK's FN should be given copies of the CC Request Forms so that they can keep them in mind when churches are requesting CC well ahead of time.
Similar responses from Henry Testa, George Roumaya, Dale Miller – around CC request and the importance of submitting requests.
 - A suggestion from Tom Parsch to instruct DDs, at the Winter Meeting, how to fill out CC request forms.
- Patches and Baldrics
 - I received from the VSM patches for berets. Why they gave us white, I have no idea.
 - They are bagged and on the table where you came in, along with any exemplification photos for your assembly.
 - Larry Sulokowski – Add a line to CC sign in sheet to indicate the location so that travel time can be accurately reflected.
 - A general question was asked if there can be more than one commander. – Only 1 commander per bylaws, This does not mean that an “assistant” or “Lieutenant” cannot be assigned to help train a replacement.
 - Bob Greening – Only 1 commander is in charge per event.
 - Dale Miller – Offered to contact all his DDs about how to fill out CC request. Tom Parsch asked if he could include a cover letter for the instructions. Tom also asked who is in charge when a Marshall is there.

The General answer is that the Marshall will determine who is in charge of the Fall Out.

- Robert Rencel – request to know how many people are falling out – this is a general concern for all fall outs.

Exemplifications

- 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
- 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
 - 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, though all bets are off for a future exemplification I will talk about in a few minutes
 - Basket donations for the raffle really help in this regard, as they help spread the cost and keep it down for everyone.
- Future Exemplifications
 - Planning team
 - I need help, especially with the large exemplifications.
 - Doing large events like these is not my strong suit, and they become more stressful every time we do one.
 - When we were at DeCarlo's, it was very turn-key - we told Gary what we needed, showed up, took care of the ceremonial chamber, and wrote a check. It doesn't work that way anymore.
 - I'll back to this in a few minutes, so think on that...
 - 2024 December Mini-Exemplification
 - Tuesday, December 3, 2024 Immaculate Conception, Ira Township (a.k.a Anchor Bay)

- Need all the paperwork prior to Thanksgiving, (Tuesday, November 26)
- Registration starts at 6pm
- Fr. Christopher Talbot is our Class Honoree
- The big difference is the music and how we start
- Supreme 125th Anniversary Exemplification
 - February 22, 2025, St. Patrick's Cathedral, NYC
 - Banquet tickets are \$125, limited to 1400 tickets
 - Everyone should have received an email from Supreme on how to register
 - There will be about 2 weeks later in LA, then one two weeks after that in Indianapolis (no details on these events)
- 2025 March
 - Saturday, March 15, 2025, St. John Neumann, Canton
 - Need all the paperwork 10 days prior to the event, which will be March 5
 - Registration starts at 9am
 - Basket donations would be appreciated, as they greatly help with the cost of the exemplification. Would any assemblies like to donate baskets?
- 125th Anniversary Exemplification
 - The Supreme Master has charged all district masters with holding a 125th Anniversary Exemplification.
 - The goal is to have 125 candidates.
 - Districts must do this themselves (they cannot join with another district).
 - It must be after the February 22, 2025 exemplification in NYC, and on or before August 31, 2025
 - For this to be successful, the venue needs to sit between 400 and 500 people for the banquet
 - I have reserved Knight Club in Port Huron for Saturday, August 30, 2025. While a little out of the way it is owned by PSD Walter Winkle and we have had an event there in the past.
 - St. Christopher is about 1/2 mile away, and the pastor, Fr. James Arwady, is very Knight friendly. Saturday Mass is at 4:30pm and, according to the office, the church can seat about 500, and there is usually a lot of room at the evening Mass
- I need help planning and executing this event and future exemplifications. I need people to step up and take on some of the stuff I feel we should be doing, and some of the stuff that maybe we are missing.

- It's great having an assembly host the event, but having a team that knows what is happening provides continuity between events.
- I don't know what this will look like exactly, nor do I know what future exemplifications will look like until we see the new ceremonial. Even so, I do think it will be similar.
- Not sure the cost for the participant will be \$70 (it may be higher), and I anticipate the banquet cost will be a little higher.
- Kathy is mentioning a bit of this in the packing party, as I am open to help from our ladies, as well.
- So, I need some people to step up and say they can help... (and this is where I shut up and wait)
 - Tommy Gray, John Carry, Ray Bilyk – Volunteers
 - Henry Test – after he's done after current office.
- General Questions about recruiting for 125th exemplification.

Future District Meetings

- Spring District Meeting
 - 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 PFN Brian Kowalski for volunteering his location and assembly as host
- Fall Harvest District Meeting and Packing Party
 - Saturday, November 1, 2025 will be All Saints Day
 - We agree to move the packing party to November 8 next year
 - 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
 - It was suggested we try and use Bishop Murphy KofC Hall (Ryan Rd north of 8 Mile)

Supreme Topics

- Please follow the chain of command when asking questions
 - FN, Master, VSM, Supreme Master

- Youth Protection Requirement for FN's
 - I have heard nothing more on this, though I would be supportive if that was the decision
- 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)
- Korean War and Vietnam War Veterans
 - **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 need to have earned the Korea or Vietnam Service Medals to be included in the census
 - 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
 - The Supreme Master gave us this task about 6 months ago. If you have not started, then you are late.
 - If you have started, I am hopeful things are going well. Remember, we do the best job we can. Over 50 have passed since the Korean War ended, and almost 50 years since the Vietnam war ended. That is a long gap, and remembering everyone that passed away is hard.
 - 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
 - Supreme will send us certificates for all those that we turn in for the census.
 - Please start thinking about some kind of event to honor the survivors, recognize those that have passed away, and how to distribute the certificates.

- The supreme master would like some kind of special event (maybe a banquet, a remembrance mass, etc.) Be creative. Maybe a barbecue.
- Think about having this in May, especially around Memorial Day.
 - Dale Miller stressed the importance of communication beyond meetings. Suggested using newsletters and mailings to engage absent members. Encouraged outreach for better member engagement and information sharing. Explained campaign medal eligibility based on service in specific conflict areas, including Korea and Vietnam.

Charities

- Patriotic Charities of Importance to Supreme
 - Warriors to Lourdes (Knights of Columbus Charities)
 - Father McGivney Military Chaplain Scholarship Fund (Knights of Columbus Charities)
 - Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA
- Each assembly has charities to which they have given - and they are all good

Website and Communications

- Emails
 - I send emails about once a month (sometimes more) to FN's and comptrollers, sometimes FN's and commanders.
 - I also post them on the web for people to read
 - I can't visit every assembly every month.
 - You should feel free to pass the information on, as appropriate, to your assembly members.
- Let's visit the web site!
 - Major changes to the home page
 - After my pic, there is a map of all the districts in the Hennepin province. You can click on it and it will take you to a page with more information.
 - In the menu (upper left corner), I have made changes to make it easier to find charities and chalices.
 - If you are looking for a charity, I encourage you to visit the web site and look at those that are listed.

Old Business

- Danny Champine asked about the removal of giving social Baldricks to new Sir Knights. DM Suchyta explained that this was a decision by Supreme.

New Business

- No new business

Dignitary Remarks and Comments

- Former Master of the Fourth Degree John Hundiak – State Board Representative
 - Greetings from state deputy Barry Borsnick, supreme knight Patrick Kelly, and state secretary Charlie McCuen (absent due to health issues).
 - Emphasis on the importance of recruiting younger members for both the third and fourth degrees.
 - Encourage navigators and representatives to gather a list of new exemplified members from Grand Knights or membership directors for recruitment targets.
 - New exemplification process allows direct entry into the third degree without prior first or second degree requirements.
 - Reminder to maintain a sharp appearance, especially for the color corps, under new supreme director Chris Kolomjec's expectations.
 - Upcoming leadership meeting in December will focus on the CORE initiative.
 - CORE is described as the heart of the organization, emphasizing the importance of openly discussing faith.
 - Aim to make families comfortable living their faith publicly, beyond just home and church settings.
 - Historical reference to a young man starting a movement of faith discussions 2,000 years ago.
 - CORE is positioned as a way of life for all members, councils, and parishioners, not limited to brother knights or Catholics.
 - Emphasis on the priority of faith over patriotism within the organization.
- Former Master of the Fourth Degree Mark Brezenski
 - Importance of communication emphasized; need to maintain consistent communication efforts.
 - Suggestion for a fourth degree representative to speak at each council meeting to enhance visibility and engagement.
 - Noting that repeated lack of reports on the fourth degree can lead to perceptions of inactivity.
 - Example of a simple report for the month: "Reaching Across America" initiative in December.
 - Recommendation to improve communication from assemblies to councils.
 - Proposal for Navigators to create brief talking points for council meetings, similar to what Dan Remika provides for district deputies.

Open Floor Questions

No additional questions

Good of the Order

- Comments from Gene
 - No further comments
- Prayer Requests
 1. Repose of the Soul - Most Revered Bishop Thomas Gumbleton,

2. Repose of the Soul - Father Dennis Dominski

Closing Ceremonies

- Deacon Phil McCowan led the district in a closing Prayer.

Meeting adjourned at 11:41 am

Respectfully submitted,
Mark Palmer, District Secretary

Dignitaries in Attendance

District Master Gene Suchyta

Deacon Phil McCowan

Sr. Marshal George Roumaya

Marshall Curt Best

Marshall Bob Greening

Marshall Dale Miller

District Comptroller Norm Pranger

Former Master Mark Brezenski

Former Master John Hundiak – State Board Representative

Assembly #	Assembly Name	Sir Knights
0470	Detroit Cardinal Mercier	1
0475	Msgr. Francis F. Van Antwerp	3
0477	A.X.M. Sharpe	1
0478	St. John Neumann	Not Present
0480	Richmond	Not Present
0482	Bishop Michael Gallagher	4
0483	Msgr. Van Dyke	Not Present
0484	Richard Cardinal Cushing	4
0488	Raisin River	2
0490	Bishop Kelley	3
0492	Msgr. Schulte	4
0520	Monsignor Hunt	1
0521	Father Solanus Casey	2
1536	Pope John XXIII	4
1622	Holy Cross	3
1795	Rev. Paul M. Onderbeke	Not Present
1839	Blessed Virgin Mary	9
1963	Msgr. Clement H. Kern	Not Present
2032	Edward Cardinal Mooney	2
2136	St. Francis of Assisi	2
2149	St. Michael the Archangel	2
2521	Father John R. Hogan	1
2599	Sacred Heart	6
2696	St. Paul on the Lake	2
2804	St. Mary of the Lake	2
2942	Pope John Paul II	Not Present
3057	Bishop Schoehnerr	3
3082	Divine Mercy	5
3099	Father John A. Hardon, S.J.	2
3392	Father Vincent Capodanno	1
3408	St. George Chaldean	Not Present