

Welcome to the Knights of Columbus



Church Name
Council

Insert Picture of Parish

Membership Handbook

2018

Revision 1

Knights of Columbus

(Church Name) Council (Number)

(Address)

(City, State, Zip Code)

Dear Brother Knight,

Welcome to (Church) Council (). I congratulate you on taking the first step to full knighthood in our order and encourage you to continue your journey through the Second and Third degrees. Information on those events is available from our Worthy Chancellor () and he will be glad to answer any questions you may have and assist you in your goal of knighthood.

Our council meetings are held the () of each month beginning at () p.m. at () Hall, with rosary beginning prayed at ().

As a Brother Knight, you have become part of a fraternal brotherhood that dates back well over a hundred years. As you have learned, the order was founded by Father Michael McGivney to support the collective well-being of Catholic men and Catholic families, and is almost 2 million men strong. The Order has been called “the strong right arm of the Church,” and has been praised by popes, presidents and other world leaders, for support of the Church, programs of evangelization and Catholic education, civic involvement and aid to those in need.

Like the rest of us, you probably lead a very busy life as you fulfill your professional and family obligations. It may difficult to envision fitting even one more activity into your schedule. At our council we focus on making a positive difference through carefully selected actions. We don't and won't place undue demands upon our busy men. Rather, we practice the policy. “If many of us do a little, together we can accomplish our objectives.”

We are truly blessed to have many Knights working for many worthy causes within the parish and community and I understand all Knights cannot make it to all monthly meetings. We have in place many tools to help you stay up to date on planned events, and become more familiar with the Knights of Columbus.

I am certain you will enjoy spending time in the congenial company of other Catholic men, engaged in actions and programs that will help you practice your religion, strengthen your family, support your Parish and assist your community. The time will be well spent and will enrich and add balance to your life.

Fraternally,

()

Grand Knight

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About the Knights of Columbus

The Knights of Columbus is an order of Catholic gentlemen committed to the exemplification of charity, unity, fraternity, patriotism, respect for life and defense of the priesthood and religious freedom.

On Oct. 2, 1881, a small group of men met in the basement of St. Mary's Church on Hill House Avenue in New Haven, Connecticut. Called together by their 29-year-old parish priest, Father Michael J. McGivney, these men formed a fraternal society that would one day become the world's largest Catholic family fraternal service organization. They sought strength in solidarity, and security through unity of purpose and devotion to a holy cause: they vowed to be defenders of their country, their families, and their faith. These men were bound together by the ideal of Christopher Columbus, the discoverer of the Americas, the one whose journeys brought Christianity to the New World. Their efforts came to fruition with the incorporation of their fraternal benefits group under the name the Knights of Columbus on March 29, 1882.

The Order has been called "the strong right arm of the Church," and has been praised by popes, presidents and other world leaders, for support of the Church, programs of evangelization, building the domestic church and Catholic education, civic involvement and aid to those in need.

Father McGivney's founding vision for the Order also included a benefits program to provide for the widows and orphans of deceased members. The Order's benefits program has expanded substantially to serve more effectively the Knights' growing membership. Year after year, the Knights of Columbus has earned the highest possible quality ratings for financial soundness from A.M. Best and Standard & Poor's. The Order provides the highest quality insurance, annuity, and long-term care products to its members, along with many other fraternal benefits. It has over \$100 billion of insurance in effect.

The history of the Order shows how the foresight of Venerable Father Michael J. McGivney, whose cause for sainthood continues to be investigated by the Vatican, brought about what has become the world's foremost Catholic fraternal benefit society. The Order has helped families obtain economic security and stability through its life insurance, annuity, and long-term care programs, and has contributed time and energy worldwide to service in communities and to those in need.

The Knights of Columbus has grown from several members in one council to more than 17,000 councils and 1.9 million members throughout the United States, Canada, the Philippines, Mexico, Poland, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Panama, the Bahamas, the Virgin Islands, Cuba, Guatemala, Guam, Saipan, and South Korea.

Our Principles

All the good works we do are informed by our four Core Principles:

Charity – (ADMISSION (1st) DEGREE) Our Catholic faith teaches us to “Love thy neighbor as thyself.” Members of the Knights of Columbus show love for their neighbors by conducting food drives and donating the food to local soup kitchens and food pantries, by volunteering at Special Olympics, and by supporting, both spiritually and materially, mothers who choose life for their babies. Knights recognize that our mission, and our faith in God, compels us to action. There is no better way to experience love and compassion than by helping those in need, a call we answer every day.

Unity – (FORMATION (2nd) DEGREE) No one of us is as good as all of us. Members of the Knights of Columbus all know that – together – we can accomplish far more than any of us could individually. So we stick together...we support one another. That doesn't mean that we always agree or that there is never a difference of opinion. It does mean that – as a Knight of Columbus – you can count on the support and encouragement of your brother Knights as you work to make life better in our parish and community.

Fraternity – (KNIGHTHOOD (3rd) DEGREE) The Venerable Father Michael J. McGivney founded the Knights of Columbus, in large part, to provide assistance to the widows and children left behind when the family breadwinner died – often prematurely. The Order's top-rated insurance program continues to do this today, as do individual Knights, who annually give more than 10 million hours of their time and over \$176 million to assist sick and/or disabled, members and their families and communities. In the Knights of Columbus, we watch out for and take care of one another.

Patriotism – (PATRIOTIC (4th) DEGREE) Members of the Knights of Columbus, be they Americans, Canadians, Mexicans, Cubans, Filipinos, Poles, or Dominicans, are patriotic citizens. We are proud of our devotion to God and country, and believe in standing up for both. Whether it's in public or private, the Knights remind the world that Catholics support their nations and are amongst the greatest citizens.

The Structure of the Knights of Columbus

Supreme Council Office

The Knights of Columbus international headquarters is located in New Haven, Connecticut. Led by the Supreme Knight, Carl Anderson, the chief executive officer of the Knights of Columbus, the office provides administrative support and leadership for our more than 17,000 local units.

Jurisdictions

The Supreme Council has more than 75 state and territorial council organizations to help guide regional activities that are consistent with the principles of the Order. We are part of the Arizona State Council.

Districts

Each state council is divided into districts - groupings of several local councils.

Local Councils

Local councils are the basic unit of the Knights of Columbus. Most are based in parishes, though some still have their own council hall within a community. Each local council works to assist with the needs of its community consistent with the principles of the Order.

Insurance Agents

Every council is assigned a certified and licensed insurance agent, who is a Knight, and whose job it is to provide members of the Knights of Columbus with top-rated products focused on the financial needs of members' families. Our Council's General Agent (GA) is Sir Knight (). He is available to answer any questions about insurance & investment options and upcoming workshops. He can be reached at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or XXXXXXXXXXXX@kofc.org.

The Fraternal or Columbian Year

There are many calendar formats in the world. The one most familiar to us is the Gregorian calendar which begins on January 1 and ends on December 31. After that, for those of us in government and the business world, we are familiar with the term Fiscal Year. Fiscal Years can be many things to many people. Some governmental organizations operate on a Fiscal Year that starts on July 1st and ends on June 30th. Other Fiscal Years begin October 1st and end September 30th.

The Knights of Columbus has what we refer to as a Fraternal Year, sometimes referred to as the Columbian Year. It runs from July 1st through June 30th. Council activities and reports, in addition to the election of officers, are based on the Fraternal Year.

About our Council

Being a Knight is more than camaraderie, it is being involved in your community; it is supporting your local Catholic Church, while enhancing your own faith; it is about protecting and enhancing your family life.

Our organization is fortified by its past, and driven by its goals for the future. It is through these five service areas - faith, community, family, youth and fellowship - that we truly make a difference. We are also pledged to support our Seminarians, who are the future of our Catholic Church.

Council Officers: Their Duties and Responsibilities

The fifteen offices of the Council are shown below with photos of the 2018-2019 incumbents and descriptions of their duties and responsibilities. These officers serve a term of one fraternal year from July through June. Elections for officers are held each fraternal year in May or June. Members must have completed the Third Degree to be eligible to hold any of these offices. It is important for you, the members of our Council, to understand the duties and responsibilities of the various offices within the council. One day, you may very well ascend to one or more of these positions, and knowledge about them is mandatory.

Grand Knight



The Grand Knight is in charge and responsible for the operation, welfare and accomplishments of the council. He presides over council meetings, acts as an ex-officio member of all committees, appoints a membership and programming director, convenes officers for a monthly meeting, and ensures all necessary reports are submitted to the state and Supreme Council. He should also be aware of the council's financial status and ensure that his signature appears on all checks drawn.

Chaplain



The Chaplain is the spiritual advisor of the council. He is expected to make a report at council meetings on religious matters. The Grand Knight appoints a priest in accordance with any rules established by the bishop of the diocese to serve as council chaplain. Bishop () of the Diocese of () has approved the appointment of our pastor Father () for this Fraternal Year.

Deputy Grand Knight



The Deputy Grand Knight is second in command. He assists the Grand Knight with council affairs and fulfills all duties assigned to him by the Grand Knight. Should the Grand Knight be absent from a council meeting, the Deputy Grand Knight will preside. He serves as the general Programs Director of () council and is the chairman of the council's Retention Committee.

Chancellor



The Chancellor has a variety of responsibilities. Primarily, he assists the Grand Knight and the Deputy Grand Knight in the execution of their duties and oversees the council in both their absences. He is charged with strengthening the members' interests in council activities. The Chancellor is also chairman of the Admission Committee

Recorder



The Recorder is similar to a court reporter or a secretary. He is responsible for maintaining a true record of all actions of the council and its correspondence. A Recorder's Minute Book (#1403) is available from the Knights of Columbus Supply Department for keeping a record of council meetings.

Financial Secretary



The Financial Secretary is appointed by the Supreme Knight (the Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board of the Knights of Columbus), upon recommendation of the council. His main area of responsibilities is maintaining all financial and membership records. He collects and receives all moneys from all sources, including annual dues from council members. He also handles supply orders for the council officers and members, filing the Report of Officer (#185), and submitting all membership transactions to the Supreme Council.

Treasurer



The Treasurer is responsible for the safekeeping and maintaining of records of all council funds and accounts. He is responsible for depositing money into the council accounts and provides a voucher or certificate of deposit of such monies to the Grand Knight. He is also responsible for payment of all expenses.

Lecturer



The Lecturer is appointed by the Grand Knight to provide both educational and entertaining programs to the council. He is responsible for the 'Good of the Order' portion of council meetings. In order to provide members with informative and educational programs, he must be knowledgeable and aware of all council programming.

Advocate



The Advocate is the parliamentarian of the council and serves as the council's attorney at trials and investigations of any interest to the council. While he does not need to be a member of the legal profession, he should be familiar with the council by-laws, the Order's Charter, Constitution and Laws (#30), Methods of Conducting a Council Meeting (#1937), and Robert's Rules of Order. When a by-law is to be revised, the Advocate serves as chairman of the revision committee.

Warden



The Warden is the 'watchdog' for council property and degree paraphernalia, except the property of the Financial Secretary, Treasurer, and Recorder. He is also responsible for setting up the council chambers for meetings and ceremonial work. During ceremonial exemplifications, he will appoint and supervise the inside and outside guards.

Inside & Outside Guards



The Guards have similar responsibilities, but distinct differences. The Outside Guard tends to the outer door admitting visitors and members to the inner door. Once at the inner door, the Inside Guard checks to make sure that their membership cards are current.

Board of Trustees



The Board of Trustees consists of three members elected by the council and the Grand Knight, who serves as Chairman of the Board. They oversee the work of the Financial Secretary and Treasurer, and with the Deputy Grand Knight serve on the council's Retention Committee. During council elections, only the three-year trustee is voted on, with the others moving on to become two-year and one-year trustees, respectively.

The Degrees of the Order

There are four degrees in the Knights of Columbus; each is associated a Principle of the Order.

At the Council Level:

Admission (First) Degree – Charity

Formation (Second) Degree –Unity

Knighthood (Third) Degree – Fraternity



Every applicant must take the Admission, or First, Degree before he can be considered a Member of the Knights of Columbus. Once he has taken his Admission Degree, he becomes a member in good standing of the Order. To reach full Knighthood, members must also take the Formation, or Second, and the Knighthood, or Third, Degrees, and all members are strongly encouraged to do so at their first opportunity. At the Council Level, First, Second, Third, and Fourth degree members meet on at least a monthly basis. Members must have attained the Third degree to be elected to Council offices or to enter into the Fourth Degree.

At the Assembly Level:

Patriotic (Fourth) Degree – Patriotism



The Patriotic, or Fourth, Degree is separate from the first three degrees. Once a man has been a member of the Knights of Columbus and has completed his Third Degree, he is eligible to join a Fourth Degree Assembly. The Fourth Degree has its own organizational and dues structure separate from that of the Council. Fourth Degree Assemblies gain their membership from Third Degree members of several Councils within a larger geographic area. The most visible members of the Order are often the Fourth Degree Color Corps, with their colorful capes, chapeaux, and swords. Our Council is affiliated with () Assembly () to which most all of our Fourth Degree members belong.

For a Knight to be both a member of the Council and the 4th Degree Assembly, they must keep their dues current in both organizations. Failure to do so will result in a change in status from a Member in Good Standing to possibly suspension and termination of membership within the Order.

What is expected of you as a member of () Council ()

What you get out of membership in our council depends entirely on what you put into it. You will certainly know more about the council and what activities might interest you, or benefit you from contributing your time and talents, by attending the monthly business meetings. Attendance at business meetings also gives you an opportunity to interact with the officers and the other members to become better acquainted both with them and the Council's service programs.

There are only six firm requirements as explained to you by the Grand Knight at your first degree:

1. Pay your dues on time.
2. Attend at least three business meetings each fraternal year.
3. Support the annual Tootsie Roll drive in October with at least two hours of your time
4. Support our "Works of Mercy" projects with at least two hours of your time.
5. Wear your nametag to Mass and other church functions.
6. Volunteer to participate in at least one other Council activity per year.

Meeting Schedules

Council Activities

The activities listed below are only a sample of what our council is involved in around the parish and community. We invite your suggestions and encourage your ideas as to other activities that will continue to help us in our mission of service to the membership, our families, and the community at large. You are also referred back to the information contained in the "FAITH IN ACTION" or many programs within the Order.

Dress Code

BUSINESS MEETINGS

Normally, Council attire (polo or short or long sleeve shirt) or casual dress is considered appropriate unless otherwise instructed. Don't forget your name tag and rosary.

SOCIAL MEETINGS

DEGREE CEREMONIES

Council members attending any degree ceremony, whether as a candidate or an observer, should be dressed in a business suit or sport coat and tie. Naturally, the Knights blazer is always appropriate. For members being honored at a degree ceremony, always wear a coat and tie. Don't forget your name tag, membership card, and rosary.

STATE MEETINGS

Dress attire (coat / tie / nametag / rosary) is always appropriate for all State Council events, unless instructed otherwise by the State Deputy in the meeting announcement.

OTHER GATHERINGS

Normally, Council attire is considered appropriate unless otherwise instructed. The Grand Knight, Deputy Grand Knight or the event coordinator will instruct members of any special dress considerations.

Procedures for Entering Meetings Late/Leaving Early

Do not feel embarrassed to enter a Council meeting once it has started. Don't skip one simply because you are running a little late. On these occasions, quietly enter the room, show your membership card to the Inside Guard, then quietly walk to the center of the room, salute the Grand Knight without comment, then turn around and salute the Deputy Grand Knight without comment, then take any available seat.

Use the same procedure if you must leave the room for any reason during a meeting. There is no need to say anything, or ask permission; simply execute the double salute and depart quietly.

IN SUMMARY

So, what about you? If you have made it this far in the Member Handbook for new members, you have a pretty wide array of choices to make as far as being an active participant in the Knights of Columbus and our Council in particular. Remember that you must go to the event. No events are going to come to you, or wait for you to make up your mind. If there is an activity you think we should be involved in, bring it to the attention of the General Program Director (DGK) or the appropriate service program chairman and be prepared to help make it a reality!

An involved Knight is a person who receives many blessings. Don't sit idly on the sidelines, become involved. You will be glad you did.