

St. Thomas Council Meeting Minutes - February 2, 2025

Meeting Called to Order

The regular St. Thomas Council # 13861 meeting was called to order by Grand Knight Gregory Cyr at 7:00 pm on Monday, February 2, 2026. 27 knights were present.

Decade of the Rosary

Chancellor Ron Robichaud led the council in a decade of the rosary to lead our country to a culture of life.

Pledge of Allegiance

Grand Knight Gregory Cyr led the council in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Officer Roll Call

The officer roll call was taken and recorded by Recorder Jonathan Brock. Attendance was as follows:

Grand Knight, Gregory Cyr:	Present
Deputy Grand Knight, Nate Libbey:	Present
Chancellor, Ron Robichaud:	Present
Chaplain, Fr. Bill Labbe:	Excused
Financial Secretary, John Greenlee:	Present
Recorder, Jonathan Brock:	Present
Warden, Bob Demers:	Present
Treasurer, Matthew Pettine:	Present
Advocate, Richard Caroti:	Present
Outside Guard, Rene Robichaud:	Present
Inside Guard, Gerry Newport:	Present
Lecturer, Kevin Neely:	Present
3rd Year Trustee, Ray Sargent:	Present
2nd Year Trustee, Rick Southwick:	Present
1st Year Trustee, Brian Theriault:	Present

Reading of the Previous Month Meeting Minutes

Rick Southwick motioned to accept the January council meeting minutes as submitted. Romeo Zuniga seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The January 2026 minutes were accepted as presented.

Lecturer's Presentation

Lecturer Kevin Neely gave a presentation:

"Worthy Grand Knight, distinguished guests and Brother Knights;

We all receive the Columbia magazine published by the Knights of Columbus. The January/February edition for this year features a cover story of one of our newest saints, St. Josephine Bakhita. She is the patron saint of those impacted by human trafficking. She was canonized on October 1, 2000, at St. Peter's Basilica by Pope John Paul II, and her feast day is next Sunday, February 8th. The article in the Columbus magazine gives a good background of her life; how she was kidnapped as an 8-year-old child and spent the next decade in slavery.

The next three pages document the fact that slavery and human trafficking still exist in our world today. The Knights of Columbus have established a partnership with the Arise Foundation in the Philippines, which has become a global hub where trafficking rings exploit children for labor and sex trafficking. This partnership will offer a series of training efforts to provide a deeper understanding of the crisis and ways to identify and combat the practice.

The article goes on to document trafficking in Ukraine as a result of the war with Russia. It explains that trafficking occurs in 90% of wars and armed conflicts. In response to this, the Knights of Columbus partners with the Ukraine Greek Catholic Church to support safe havens such as the House of Happiness and the Beryslav Hive for refugees to live in safety.

In Nigeria the Order partners with Arise and other groups to provide staples and life skills training for the more than 3 million people displaced by the ongoing violence initiated by terrorist groups like Boko Haram and others.

My brief research shows that Human trafficking is a widespread and serious issue across North, Central, and South America, as well as the Caribbean. The Americas account for an estimated 5.1 million people in human trafficking, or about 5% of the global total. Migrants, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, indigenous peoples, women, and children are particularly at risk. The ongoing political and economic situation in Venezuela, for example, has led to a significant increase in Venezuelan trafficking victims across several countries.

Victims are exploited for both **forced labor** and **sex trafficking**. Forced labor occurs in various sectors, including agriculture, construction, mining, domestic service, and food processing. Sex trafficking is prevalent in bars, brothels, tourist areas, and via online platforms.

Today, modern slavery — including forced labor, sexual exploitation and forced marriage — affects an estimated 50 million people, according to the United Nations' International Labor Organization.

So, is there something, anything that we can do about this?

The first and most important thing we can do is pray. St. Bakhita bore 144 physical scars throughout her life which were received after she was kidnapped and sold into slavery. Such was the trauma experienced that she forgot her birth name and her kidnappers gave her the name Bakhita meaning 'fortunate'. Pray to St. Bakhita for guidance and direction. Pray for the victims. Pray also for the perpetrators.

The second thing is to be aware. If you think there may be a potential trafficking victim;

Signs to Look for

- **Physical Signs:** Evidence of abuse (bruises, scars, burn marks) or poor, branded tattoos (names, symbols).
- **Behavioral Red Flags:** Inconsistencies in their story, scripted answers, and lack of knowledge of their location.

How to Help

- **National Human Trafficking Hotline:** Call 1-888-373-7888 or text "HELP" or "INFO" to 233733.

St. Josephine Bakhita famously said of her captors, "If I were to meet them, I would kneel and kiss their hands, for through their wrongdoing I came to know Jesus".

Let us ask St. Bakhita to show us how to free the bitterness in our hearts against those who have wronged us. Pray with me now for the strength to cast aside the nursing of hurts so there is more room for God's light to shine.

Hail Mary full of grace...

Vivat Jesus!

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Matthew Pettine reported for January 2026:

Beginning	2,910.58
Disbursements	
John C - Award	46.94
Postage	78
St Thomas (supper)	565
KC Supreme (per capita)	346
Daughters of Isabella	150
Receipts	
Dues	1545
50/50	14
Donation	14
Bean Supper	565
Ending	3,862.64
Christmas Party:	0
General Fund:	3,862.64

Financial Secretary's Report

Financial Secretary John Greenlee reported:

147 Total Membership
84 Associate Members
55 Insured Members
8 Inactive Members
1 Honorary Member
32 Honorary Life Members
6 Exempt Members

Grand Knight's Report

Grand Knight Greg offered for any brother Knights to attend the State convention. We need two delegates to attend to vote as delegates from our Council. We need to select the candidates as a Council.

Report of the bean supper that was held in January. The January bean supper, after all expenses, produced a profit of \$565 to donate to St. Thomas School. So far this school year, the four bean suppers have produced a \$2322 net profit for donation to the school. The next bean supper is Saturday, February 7. The final bean supper for this school year will be Saturday, April 18.

There was a balance of \$235.06 in supplies owed to the school to pay for the turkey dinners. \$117.53 was paid by the Fourth Degree Assembly. Ray Sargent motioned that the Third Degree council pay the balance, Rick Southwick seconded. The motion passed without discussion.

The January Turkey dinner netted \$899.47 profit which will go to the new Fourth Degree Honor Guard uniform fund.

Richard Caroti submitted to GK Greg the names of women who have supported the bean suppers and turkey dinners, GK Greg said we should recognize them for their contributions.

Lent starts on February 18, K of C fish suppers start on February 20. GK Greg will bring soft drinks to the fish suppers to sell to supplement income.

SSYAA free throws: GK Greg is working with SSYAA to help coordinate. Springvale Council is interested in participating and they were thinking of holding an event on Saturday, February 28.

Sanford Mainers concessions--the concession stand schedule has been published. GK Greg will print the schedule and circulate at the next meeting.

Sunday, February 8 after 10 am Mass there will be rosary prayed for life around the church. Rain or shine. Friday, February 6 at 10:30 am brother knights and parishioners will pray the rosary in front of Planned Parenthood.

On Wednesday, March 4 the March for Life will be held in Augusta, ME.

Creche update: Terry Sylvanus' brother-in-law, Guy Boucher, would like to donate a creche set to the Council for display next year. This will replace the set that was vandalized.

K of C membership drive: if we get three new members in our council between now and end of March, Supreme Council will donate \$750 for the Alpha Pregnancy Center.

By the end of this month we need to submit our funding request to the State Deputy for the Waypoint Tootsie Roll drive.

Ray Sargent reminded that Council that there is a charity fund where money is held by Supreme Council and interest is gathered every year. Ray suggested we nominate a family in need for the charity fund.

Chaplain of the Year nominations are due by end of the month.

There is a new K of C Into the Breach Program is coming out in March.

GK Greg received an email about donating money to the hermitage in the Waterville area. There is one nun who lives there. Ray Sargent suggested we donate \$50. Will determine recipient of check and seek Council authorization next meeting.

District Deputy's Report

District Deputy John Chandonnet reported:

- I have scheduled a Sacred Heart Holy Hour at Holy Family Church in Sanford on Friday, June 12 at 7:30 am. This will be the Feast of the Sacred Heart, which is the third Friday after Pentecost Sunday.
- Much emphasis was placed [at the State Council business meeting] on Safe Environment compliance. I am pleased to say that the St. Thomas, Springvale, and Limerick councils are either Safe Environment compliant or are in the process of being.
- Phil Lizotte, Past State Deputy and District 16 Director reported that the Maine State Council raised \$28,747 from the Cash Calendar program. This figure is still counting, as cash calendars are still available. The drawings go on until April 1.
- I have scheduled a District 15 meeting on Monday, February 16 at 7:00 pm at the Limerick council chambers. Limerick Grand Knight Tom Hawley verified that the hall will be available on that date.

New Business

Ray Sargent stated that there will be a Fourth Degree exemplification in Lewiston on Sunday, February 15. There will be a 10:30 mass at the basilica followed by a luncheon and exemplification.

Kevin Neely reminded the Council that Lent is coming up. During Lent there will be Mass on Tuesday nights at 6 pm. This Lent, after the Tuesday 6 pm Mass there will be a men's retreat.

Terry Sylvanus updated the Council on our position for qualifying for Star Council. We need to work on recruitment and increasing attendance to Fraternal Benefits Events. Aaron Weiss proposed doing a Fraternal Benefit Event at one of the Lenten fish suppers.

Field Agent Report

In January, K of C asset managers passed their first billion dollars in assets under management by the Knights.

Aaron urged brother knights to ensure they understand their benefits. Aaron learned of a recent case in another Council where someone lost the ability to work because of a disability but was unexpectedly not covered by employer benefits.

Knights of Columbus can do not only financial services but also estate planning and long term care benefits.

50/50 Drawing

Jonathan Brock won the 50/50 drawing. The amount was \$23, which Jonathan donated to the Council.

Good of the Order

The following prayer petitions were presented:

Paul Cunningham
Aaron Downs and Family
Margaret Hebert
Nancy L'Heureux
Wendy L'Heureux
Lynda Murphy
Cathy Neely
Gerry Newport
Ron Robichaud
David Roy
Dennis Roy
Rick Southwick
Joe Sylvanus
Terry Sylvanus
Missy Weymouth
David Wright

Closing Prayers

Both the Blessed M. McGivney prayer and the Bill Sheehan prayer, which were recited by the council, were dedicated to the above prayer petitions.

Next Council Meeting

The next council meeting will be on Monday, March 2 at 7:00 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan T. Brock
Recorder