



The Mace

St. Francis of Assisi Council 4981
Knights of Columbus
Cupertino • San Jose • Saratoga, CA

Issue 687 • April 2026
District 34 • Division 4
www.kofc4981.net

Upcoming Events

- Easter Sunday April 5
- Council Bus. Mtg. April 7, 7:00 p.m.
Sacred Heart Church
- Council Bus. Mtg. May 5, 7:00 p.m.
Church of the Ascension

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Grand Knight's Message

Brother Knights,

Christ is Risen! Happy Easter to everyone! Welcome to springtime with blossoms abounding. This is a time for families to gather again. Enjoy time together and a nature walk or two. Renew your body, mind, and spirit. Our April 7th business meeting will be at Sacred Heart Parish in the Transfiguration room in the back. We will begin by reciting the rosary at 7 pm. Inside and Outside Guard positions are still available. The meeting will also be available on Zoom. Look for the meeting link by email. This is the last quarter of the Columbian Year, time to look ahead to the next year and consider officer positions.

Our Cupertino-Saratoga Columbian Corporation's charitable efforts were

launched in March. Tasks ahead are reviewing grant requests and initiating distributions. We are seeking a few more members for the review team. Grant requests have arrived.

I look forward to seeing you at the business meeting. Come and join your brothers in person or virtually on Zoom. Longer evenings will make driving easier. Listen to the reports and participate in planning discussions. At the meeting's close, listen for the rattle of the attendance raffle box. Odds of winning are surprisingly high, better than any lotto! Will you be the winner? Come to the meeting and find out.

Joy and Blessings,

Ed Johnson, Grand Knight

Chaplain's Message

Easter Joy Amid Uncertainty

A new survey by the National Retail Federation reveals that despite economic uncertainty, Americans are projected to spend a record \$24.9 billion on Easter this year, averaging \$195.59 per person and surpassing the previous record of \$24 billion set in 2023. While economic concerns persist, consumers remain focused on major celebrations like Easter.

For us Christians, Easter is more than just a celebration or holy day—it's the cornerstone of our belief, making the

Church a living community proclaiming hope. Even amid uncertainty and fear, Easter remains relevant and inspiring, echoing the journey of the disciples who moved from despair to joy at the resurrection of Christ.

Our faith and hope are not grounded in worldly optimism but in trust in the risen Lord, who continues to be present with believers just as he was with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, offering comfort and guidance even when not immediately recognized.

Fr. Hao



Lecturer Article April 2026

As Lent comes to an end, it is a time for celebration as we know the Savior will rise again. This period is also a time to remember what Christ endured for us all. If we take a moment to think about the passion, there are many virtues that we can take away from what Christ did. The first being the virtue of patience that Christ endured while suffering through the trials and the scourging with the Roman nine-tails. Christ was able to endure all this and continued to be questioned by Pilate; this incredible amount of patience is something that we can all integrate into our lives. Secondly, if we look at all that he

endured on the cross and still asks for God's forgiveness towards humanity, it can be used as a lesson in seeing the everlasting love that Christ has for us all in His final trial. This love that Christ exhibited for all of humanity should be remembered, as we may find it hard when we fall short of a goal we may have set for ourselves. If Jesus was able to continue to outwardly love us throughout the entire trial of the passion, then we should find it in ourselves to forgive ourselves throughout our daily lives.

Joseph Wescoat



Treasurer's Report

Balances as of March 31, 2026

Charity Checking	\$ 259.20
Checking	\$ 2,301.42
Council Savings	\$ 1,5842.34
TOTAL	\$ 18,402.96

Income

Interest Capital One Savings	\$1.35
TOTAL	\$1.35

Expenses

MACE Printing	\$146.84
Charities	\$225.00
Computer and Website	\$203.88
Supreme Catholic Advertising	\$ 39.50
Supreme Per Capita	\$ 48.75
TOTAL	\$663.97

Monthly Attendance Raffle

Dennis Heinz won the March \$100 raffle but was not present to receive the prize. The April 2026 raffle is worth \$110. **The winner must be present at the meeting to win!**

Council Officers

Grand Knight

Ed Johnson
408-296-8146

Chaplain

Fr. Hao Dinh
408-725-3939

Deputy Grand Knight

Dick Sherman
408-444-3725

Chancellor

Donald Goers
630-329-9765

Financial Secretary

Ron Schoengold
408-309-9830

Treasurer

John Steffens
408-985-9079

Recorder

Mark Wright
408-203-0942

Warden

Thomas Gaynor
408-839-3473

Advocate

John Ruzzo
408-417-9089

Inside Guard

Open

Outside Guard

Open

Trustees

1 yr — *Patrick Kwok*

408-896-1462

2 yr — *John Pozniak*

408-230-6006

3 yr — *Joseph Kenney*

408-823-4162

Lecturer

Joseph Wescoat — 408 724 0797

Insurance Field Agent

Fernando Motas, Insurance Agent

510-404-8080

District Deputy

Toby Laufer

408-455-7321

Father Michael J. McGivney — A Natural Born Director

March 1, 2026

By Troy J. McMullen

Father McGivney's pastoral genius included directing popular plays to draw parish and social life together



The ongoing restoration of the Thomaston Opera House, built in 1884, is reflected in this image of the ornately painted ceiling, completed in 2024. (Photo by Ryan Lavine / Litchfield Magazine)

In March 1885, days before a stage production directed by Father Michael J. McGivney was set to open at the Opera House in Thomaston, Connecticut, the town's new parish priest embarked on a 100-mile journey to New York City.

The Connecticut Catholic, the official publication of the Diocese of Hartford, reported: "Father McGivney is now in New York, where he will procure costumes and all that is necessary for the production of the drama 'Eileen Oge,' which will be performed by members of St. Thomas' Christian Doctrine Society, on St. Patrick's night, at the Opera House."

This was not the first time the energetic priest — who had founded the Knights of Columbus three years earlier — navigated the chaotic and noisy streets of Manhattan on an artistic mission. By the time he was reassigned from St. Mary's Church in New Haven to St. Thomas Church, some 30 miles north, Father McGivney had already produced or directed five plays and had made at least one other trip into the city to rent theatrical supplies.

While his roles as parish priest and founder of the Knights are widely known, Blessed Michael McGivney's keen appreciation and use of the dramatic arts to foster friendship and charity further attest to his pastoral genius.

"He wanted to engage his parish by staging faith-based plays and community events that would connect people to the joy of the Gospel," explained Father Joseph Crowley, pastor of St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish in Thomaston, which

includes St. Thomas Church and Immaculate Conception Church in Terryville — both formerly under Father McGivney's pastoral care.

For a visionary like Father McGivney, the opera house became a bridge between the sacred space of the parish and the secular pulse of the street — a place where faith met the life of the town. "Through music and drama on the stage, he established a sense of fellowship with his parish and town community," added Father Crowley, who serves as chaplain of Atlantic Council 18 in Thomaston.

That legacy continues into the 21st century as local Knights bear witness to Father McGivney's vision both on and off the stage of the historic Thomaston Opera House, which is undergoing restoration.

STAGESTRUCK IN NEW HAVEN

Father McGivney's interest in theater almost certainly predated his arrival as curate, or assistant priest, of St. Mary's Church in January 1878. Given what is known about his upbringing in Waterbury and what a seminary friend described as his "fund of good humor," young Michael McGivney likely enjoyed — and participated in — school or parish stage productions prior to his ordination on Dec. 22, 1877.

The earliest documented evidence of his affinity for drama comes from Thomas Clark, one of his first Sunday school students at St. Mary's.

"I never tired of him," said Clark, as quoted in *Parish Priest*, the 2006 biography by Douglas Brinkley and Julie M. Fenster. "His course on Catechism was well planned, and he often used the children to personify characters of the Gospels." Sunday school children from St. Thomas Church assemble on stage at the Thomaston Opera House during an event organized by Father Michael McGivney, circa 1885. (Photo courtesy of the Thomaston Historical Society)

Beyond catechesis, Father McGivney was particularly concerned for teenagers and young working men of his largely Irish parish who were vulnerable to alcoholism. One of the first parish organizations he joined was St. Joseph's Young Men's Total Abstinence and Literary Society (TAL), a temperance group whose principal activity was staging plays.

Though TAL lacked resources and momentum, Father McGivney quietly helped transform it. Elected treasurer in June 1878, he encouraged and advised the members as

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

they organized fundraisers and rehearsed their lines, building confidence along the way.

TAL's first theatrical production, *Handy Andy*, opened in a professional theater on St. Patrick's Day in 1879. Though he did not direct the play, Father McGivney served as its de facto executive producer.

The production proved a "smash hit." Reviews were glowing, and it netted \$300 for St. Mary's — nearly \$10,000 in today's currency. TAL membership soon topped 100.

In 1880, the group staged a more ambitious St. Patrick's Day play: *Pyke O'Callaghan*, a patriotic Irish drama performed at the Grand Opera House in New Haven — later destroyed by fire in 1915. Directed by Father McGivney, it featured a large cast, including women — a bold move at a time when female roles were generally played by men. The production sold 1,800 tickets and raised a substantial sum for the debt-laden parish.

After staging shorter sketches and entertainments in 1881, TAL performed *Eileen Oge, or Dark's the Hour Before the Dawn* under Father McGivney's direction on March 17, 1882, before a full house.

Just 12 days later, on March 29, the Knights of Columbus was officially chartered by the state of Connecticut.

Father McGivney's final theatrical production in New Haven was the newly written *My Geraldine*, staged on St. Patrick's Day in 1883 with special permission from nationally acclaimed playwright Bartley Campbell.

During his nearly seven-year tenure at St. Mary's, Father McGivney helped transform a struggling parish society into a successful theatrical and fundraising enterprise. Through full-scale productions, he provided young working men with a wholesome social outlet that strengthened fraternity and drew them more deeply into the life of the Church.

As *Parish Priest* summarized, "He was a natural-born director, with a steady stream of newspaper reviews noting that time and again the performers in his shows surpassed all limitations."

In the fall of 1887, after five weeks of rehearsals with the children of the Sunday school, he staged a Thanksgiving recital at the opera house. "It was no mere afternoon recital," *Parish Priest* noted, "but a full-blown extravaganza."

A large audience gathered, and the young thespians gave it their all. Act after act, the crowd responded with roaring laughter and applause.

"Michael McGivney, it seems, had the audience in the palm of his hand — but only because he had his players feeling so good about themselves," the biography recounts.

The success of these performances reflected Father McGivney's understanding that music and theater could captivate parishioners and non-Catholics alike.

One St. Thomas parishioner declared, "He has been the best friend to youth since he came here."

The Thomaston Opera House, erected in 1884 in the heart of the working-class town along the Naugatuck River, served as the community's cultural center. Father McGivney viewed it as more than a place of secular amusement. He saw it as a stage for building community, strengthening Catholic identity, and funding works of charity.

Father McGivney established Atlantic Council 18 on April 8, 1885, and served as its chaplain, integrating the Knights into the fabric of Thomaston life. Over time, the council regularly hosted events at the theater, showcasing the principles of charity and unity to the wider community.

"In an era before radio or film, Father McGivney recognized that the local play was the primary source of storytelling," said David Verdosci, an artist and member of Atlantic Council 18.

In 2018, Verdosci co-directed a performance of *He Was Our Father*, written by Dominican Father Peter John Cameron, portraying Father McGivney on the very stage he once used to serve his parish.

The play emphasized McGivney's care for widows and orphans — a concern that ultimately inspired Verdosci to join the Order.

"I was touched in that performance by Father McGivney's care for the everyday needs of people and his genuine concern for their spiritual well-being," Verdosci said. "Then, seeing this in action through individual Knights was the spark that led me to become a Knight myself."

Editor's Note: Maureen Walther, co-author of The Knights of Columbus: An Illustrated History (2020), contributed to this article.

TROY J. MCMULLEN is a former staff reporter for the Wall Street Journal and currently an executive producer for ABC News in New York City.

Directors & Chairmen

Program Director

Ron Schoengold

Church Director

John Pozniak

Vocations	John Steffens
McGivney Shrine	Ron Schoengold
Bingo	open
Parish Round Tables	
Queen of Apostles	open
Sacred Heart in Saratoga	open
St. Joseph of Cupertino	Joe Kenney
Church of the Ascension	Ron Schoengold

Community Director

Culture of Life	Joe Kenney
Charities	Patrick Kwok
Divine Mercy & Rosary Visitation	John Steffens
Food for Families	Dick Sherman

People with Intellectual Disabilities	open
Mass of Reparation	open
Community Projects	Round Table
<i>Members</i>	
Breakfast Supreme	Ron Schoengold

Council Director

<i>Open</i>	
Fraternal Affairs	Ron Schoengold
First Degree Team	John Pozniak
Public Relations	Ron Schoengold
Website	Ron Schoengold
Communications	Ron Schoengold
Past Grand Knights Dinner	open
Special Appreciation Night	Patrick Kwok
McGivney Pilgrimage	John Pozniak

Family Director

<i>Ed Johnson</i>	
Leisure Nights	open
Memorial Mass	open
Ladies Night	John Steffens
Ice Cream Social	Grand Knight
<i>Elect</i>	
Christmas Dinner	Ron Schoengold
Annual Picnic	open

Youth Director

<i>Open</i>	
Scholarship Program	Patrick Kwok
Altar Servers Appreciation	Patrick Kwok
Free Throw Contest	Ed Johnson
Essay Contest	Ed Johnson

Membership & Retention

Mark Wright*
John Pozniak



Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.
Where there is injury, pardon.
Where there is discord, unity.
Where there is doubt, faith.
Where there is error, truth.
Where there is despair, hope.
Where there is darkness, light.
Where there is sadness, joy.

Oh Divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled, as to console;
to be understood, as to understand;
to be loved, as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
it is in dying that we are born
to Eternal Life.

Prayer Requests



The following Brother Knights, their families, and friends are remembered in the monthly Rosary prayer held each month before the Council's Business Meeting. If any member wishes to submit a name or remove a name from the list, please telephone or email Ron Schoengold, FS, at 408 309 9830, ron@egoldsolutions.com

Prayers

- Brother Art Salazar
- Brother Ron Miller's wife, Shirley
- Brother Jim Mathews
- Brother Mark Wright's sister Anne
- Brother Harry Tibbetts
- Brother Peter Pozniak's wife, Patricia
- Brother Peter Pozniak
- Brother Ron Schoengold's wife, Arline
- Brother Tom Lewis
- Brother Fernando Motas' mother, Concepcion
- Brother Mark Wright's wife Manny
- Brother Ken Rose

Deceased

- Brother Eugene Levitre (05/02/2024)
- Brother Robert MacKinnon (05/05/2024)
- Brother Patrick's wife, Susan (04/28/2020)
- Brother Robert Rolufs, PGK (06/26/2022)
- Brother Mark Wright's mother-in-law Yingio Leung (06/29/2022)
- Brother Ted Wyess' wife Ann (01/11/2023)
- Brother Dominic Guido's wife Roca (03/11/2023)
- Brother Ted Wyess (03/19/2023)
- Brother John Steffens sister-in-law Mary Steffens (11/30/2023)
- Brother James Campbell (12/13/2023)
- Brother Joseph Kenney's wife Sheila (02/18/2024)
- Brother Tony Seidl's wife Helen Rose (08/21/2024)
- Brother John Lehane, PGK (09/14/2024)
- Brother John Steffens' mother-in-law Emma Firpo (11/8/2024)
- Brother Rodger O'Brien (12/24/2024)
- Brother Raymond Mark Gallant (04/10/2025)

April 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Mar 29	30	31	Apr 1	2 Holy Thursday	3 Good Friday	4
5 Easter Sunday	6	7 7:00pm Council Business Meeting (Meeting at Sacred Heart Church)	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	May 1	2

May 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Apr 26	27	28	29	30	May 1	2
3	4	5 7:00 pm Council Business Meeting at Church of the Ascension	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	Jun 1	2	3	4	5	6

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