



Lodge Officers

Worshipful Master

Mike Cornell

Senior Warden

Dominic Cavalco

Junior Warden

Nolen Swendrowski

Senior Deacon

Winston Hermann

Junior Deacon

Eric Vesel

Senior Steward

Greg Neal

Junior Steward

Kelly Clingaman

Secretary

Michael B. Meyer PM

Treasurer

Jake Harycki PM

Chaplain

Byron Borck PM

Counselor

Nate Butts PM

Tiler

Larry Chadderdon PM



July 1st, 2026

Master's Message

What a time for Damascus! We were recognized at the Annual Communication for having a net gain in membership for 2025-26 and if all goes right, we'll be in line for that again next year. We also initiated 2 new brothers! See pg. 3

In July, in a gesture of giving back to the community that we are in, the lodge is putting on a "Thank you to our First Responders" cookout and hope to feed as many Police, Firefighters and EMS that St. Francis can send us.

If you're free on the 14th, we will be having our stated meeting. Stop by and enjoy fellowship with us at 6pm for dinner and 7pm for the meeting. It will be **"Sports Jersey"** night; come out and show your support for whatever team in any sport (except the bears...that's just a social faux pas) by wearing their jersey to the meeting.

Till then my brother....
WM Mike



Hawaiian shirt night at our June stated meeting. Great turn out! Our July stated will have a "sports jersey" dress code. Come show your support for which ever team you love, unless it's the Bears...that jersey can just go in the trash can. HA! Just kidding.

INVITING ALL ST. FRANCIS FIRST RESPONDERS!
(Police, Fire, EMS)

COOK OUT & THANK YOU CELEBRATION

★ THANK YOU, ST. RESPONDERS! ★
We want to say **THANK YOU** for all you do to protect and care for our community!
Join us for **Food, Fellowship, and Fun** as we honor your dedicated service!

DATE: SUNDAY, JULY 28th
TIME: 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM
LOCATION: LAKE MASONIC CENTER
ADDRESS: 1235 E HOWARD AVE, ST. FRANCIS, WI

ALL FIRST RESPONDERS WELCOME!
Free Food, Drinks!
Host: Damascus Lodge No. 290. We are grateful for your service!

DISTRICT 12

BBQ COMPETITION

★ BRISKET & PULLED PORK ★

SUNDAY SEPT 27
NOON JUDGING
BROOKFIELD MASONIC CENTER

EACH TEAM MUST PREPARE:
2 BRISKETS AND 2 PORK SHOULDERS
Portions for judging and portions for samples for the **PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD!**

★ BRISKET ★ **★ PULLED PORK ★**

★ MUST ENTER BY JUNE 30 ★

THINK YOUR LODGE HAS CHAMPIONSHIP BBQ?
FIRE UP THE SMOKER AND REPRESENT YOUR LODGE!
GOOD BBQ. GREAT COMPANY. STRONGER BROTHERHOOD.

CONTACT MATT KONRADT FOR RULES AND TO ENTER
✉ matthewkonradt@gmail.com

Damascus and South Shore Lodge's

National Night Out

Monday, August 3rd 5:30-8:30pm

Franklin Public Library grounds
9151 West Loomis Rd, Franklin WI.

Come on out this night and join your brothers in talking with our community. Lets get our lodge(s) name out there and let them know who we are and what we do. Bring a lawn chair and masonic swag to wear. We will have pop up tents and tables with information about the craft. We will need brothers for set up (30-45 minutes before) and tear down. Bring you family too! There will lots for the kids to see and do from the other presenters. Please RSVP to W. Bro. Byron Borck beborck03@gmail.com to let him know if you can help. We look forward to seeing you there!





Damascus Lodge No. 290 F. &A.M. 1235 East Howard Ave. Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53207



On June 23rd, Damascus welcomed to our ranks two more EA's. Bro. Andrew Gordon and Bro. Ronald Cox were initiated in a double degree night. Your officers performed some great work and received compliments (especially Bro. Winston) on our ritual work from visiting brethren. Keep up the great work!

SCRIBBLES FROM THE SIDELINES

Michael Fairbanks – Past Master

“Myths and Conspiracy Theories”

Recently, I paid a visit to family in Southwest Michigan. Since it's essentially a day trip to drive there, visit, and drive back because it was a Tuesday and Damascus was scheduled for a Stated Meeting. I decided to wear my Damascus Polo shirt. You know? The one that has the Square and Compasses, the name of our Lodge on it, and our names? While in Michigan, my sister needed something from the local Home Depot. We found what she needed and headed for the check out. I noticed a gentleman looking at me, then my shirt, then back at me and he says “MIKE FAIRBANKS???”. I had no clue at first who this was and without my name on my shirt, I'm certain he would not have recognized me either. As it turns out, he was indeed one of my closer friends when I lived in Benton Heights but the last time we even saw each other we were freshmen in High School and all of 14 years old. We chatted and caught up on what we had done with our lives and where we wound up. Then came the question? And he was serious. “Mike, are you a Freemason? You can tell me where the National Treasure is, I won't tell anyone.” Remembering that the church he was a member at time of our youth was one that today, is very anti-masonic. I began to answer question after question. Myths and untruths about our Fraternity abound amongst the people of the world today. Some of the more popular conspiracy theories surrounding our Craft are “World domination by the Masons”, or how about “The Masons own the Federal Reserve”, or the ever popular “The Masons? Yea, they are a super-secret society”, and the “The Masons are a religious cult”, and the conspiracy theories go on and on. So, for the benefit of my long lost friend and for the newer Brothers we have brought into the Fraternity, I jumped onto the internet and with the help of a bit of research from the World Wide Web, let the debunking begin. All quoted paragraphs were copied verbatim from queries posed on the Internet. World Domination: “Popular Masonic conspiracy theories allege that Freemasons covertly manipulate governments, economies, and historical events to establish a totalitarian “New World Order” or enforce moral subversion. Emerging in the late 18th century, these claims attribute revolutions, assassinations, and institutional shifts to the fraternity's secretive rites and elite membership, despite a lack of empirical evidence linking their documented practices to global domination. “Owning the Federal Reserve: “Academic reviews, such as those in the Yale Journal on Regulation, explicitly conclude that neither the Freemasons nor any other secret society is in control of the Fed. Claims linking the Fed to Masonic control often rely on misinterpretations of symbols on the one-dollar bill or unfounded assertions about banking families. “Secret Society: “The Masonic Fraternity is not a secret society, though it is frequently mischaracterized as one. While Freemasonry maintains private rituals, passwords, and modes of identification that are not shared with non-members,

(continued on pg. 5)

BEGIN U.

By Bro.s Dom and Mike



*Happy Independence Day
from your 2026 Line Officers!*

Lodge Birthdays

July

Richard T. Lang Jr 7/4, James J. Janczak 7/6,
Jeff Woosley 7/9 ,Basil E. Ryan 7/24, Mick Olson
John Delakis 7/30. Sean Paczesny, 7/31

August

Paul Graeven 8/14, Bernard C. Baumgardner 8/21,
Sean R. Schult 8/24, Nathan Butts 8/28.



Upcoming Dates

July 14th Stated Meeting Dinner at 6pm and Gavel drops at 7pm. **Sports Jersey Night!**

July 28th _Damascus Lodge cookout to thank 1st responders. See flyer on pg. 2 **Volunteers needed!**

August 3rd National Night Out with partners from *South Shore Lodge*. See flyer on pg. 2. Volunteers needed!

August 11th. Stated Meeting Dinner at 6pm and Gavel drops at 7pm. **Concert "T" Night!** See flyer on pg. 5



If you have any questions, edits and or suggestions for this newsletter, please contact Bro. Mike Cornell .

If you have an article that you would like to see published, please have them in to the WM by the 15th of the month .

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the organization itself is open and public. Key distinctions include: Public Existence: Masonic buildings are clearly marked, membership lists are often public, and the fraternity openly promotes its charitable and social activities. Secrets vs. Secrecy: The "secrets" are limited to initiation rituals and symbols used for recognition, similar to other fraternal or professional organizations, rather than concealing the group's purpose, existence, or membership.

Official Stance: Leading Masonic authorities and historians explicitly state that the fraternity is a "society of secrets" rather than a secret society, emphasizing that it does not hide its operations from the public. "Religious Cult: "Freemasonry is not a cult; it is widely defined as the world's oldest fraternal organization, structured to teach moral philosophy through allegory and ritual rather than exerting high-control over members' lives. While not a religion itself, it requires members to believe in a Supreme Being (referred to as the "Grand Architect of the Universe") and provides a framework for spiritual reflection within one's own faith." "Critics, particularly from certain Christian denominations like the Catholic Church, have historically labeled it a "false religion" or cult due to its secretive rituals and syncretistic elements, arguing it replaces Christian doctrine. However, members and sociologists emphasize that it lacks cult characteristics: there is no central charismatic leader, members are not isolated from families or society, and participation is voluntary with no coercion or control over daily behavior. Brethren, Damascus Lodge meets every second and fourth Tuesday of each month. If you have not been there in a while.....dinner is at 6:00 p.m ,come back and see what is happening. If you have been there.....dinner is at 6:00 p.m., and either way, join in the fellowship. Be there AND be square

August Stated Meeting Theme:

Concert "T" Night!

Do you have a favorite band and musical act?



For the last of our Summer "dressed down" meetings: **August 11th**, wear your favorite Concert T or item in support of you favorite group!



On June 28th, 10 members and their ladies boarded the Edelweiss for a two hour brunch cruise on the Milwaukee River and Lake Michigan. The weather, fortunately, cooperated; It was 74 degrees and sunny. Several bridges and several glasses were raised!

Submitted by Bro. Matt Schmidt