



Thousands pay tribute to fallen correctional brother

Helicopters flew overhead and bagpipes played mournfully as Stillwater Correctional Officer Joseph Gomm was laid to rest with full honors Thursday.

More than 3,500 correctional and peace officers from around the nation packed North Heights Lutheran Church to honor Gomm and his family. Gomm was killed by an inmate July 18, the first correctional officer in Minnesota to die in the line of duty.

So many people came out to honor him, the mourners spilled into the church's overflow areas and even the parking lot. The procession from the church to Roselawn Cemetery stretched nearly nine miles.

Adults and children lined the route in front of homes, strip malls, churches and schools. They waved American flags and homemade signs. Many saluted or stood with



(Photos by David Pierini)

their hands over their hearts. As the lengthy funeral procession passed, firefighters and police who were helping block the road stood at attention. So did MnDOT workers who barricaded exits to keep the road clear.

Correctional workers from across the state volunteered to fill in at Stillwater to make sure Gomm's coworkers could attend the funeral. Honor guard members stood watch 24/7 to make sure Gomm was never alone, from the time he died until he was buried. His funeral

VOTE IN PRIMARY

The primary is coming fast on **Tuesday, Aug. 14**, and it's an exciting chance to vote for candidates who truly support workers, our families and our communities.

AFSCME Council 5's Executive Board – elected by members, for members – endorsed state Rep. Erin Murphy for governor. She is a nurse, and a former organizer and executive director of the Minnesota Nurses Association. She serves on the House Health and Human Services Finance Committee, and the Ways and Means Committee. She's former Majority Leader of the Minnesota House.

Murphy will stand up for our freedom to join unions and to raise our voices together for better wages, benefits and working conditions.

So will the candidates AFSCME members endorsed for state, county and local offices.

You can find those endorsements at www.afscmemn.org/vote.

Volunteer

Want to get involved and volunteer with a campaign? There's still time to make a difference. AFSCME political organizers can help connect you with a campaign. Email Laura.Askelin@afscmemn.org or call 651-238-5334.

Not sure where to vote?

Check polling places at www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/.

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service was filled with mentions of his sense of humor, his faith and his integrity.

“I can assure you, from the very bottom of my heart, Joe will never be forgotten,” said the Rev. Martin Shanahan, the chaplain from Minnesota Correctional Facility in Stillwater, who led the service. “This is the time to celebrate the life of an amazing man.”

Memorials can be sent to the Joseph Gomm Memorial Fund c/o BMO Harris Bank, 1520 - 109th Ave. NE., Blaine, MN 55449.

Read tributes to the Local 600 member at www.afscmemn.org/story/thousands-pay-tribute-our-fallen-correctional-brother.

Standing Up for Joseph Gomm, Safe Staffing

Following the death of CO Joseph Gomm, the AFSCME Council 5 Correctional Policy Committee released this statement Friday:

We and our 2,000 correctional brothers and sisters from across Minnesota have spent the past week and a half mourning the loss of our fallen brother, correctional officer Joseph Gomm.

We send our condolences to his mother, brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews, and friends.

We will hold Joe and his wicked sense of humor, his great sense of integrity and his commitment to our

mission close in our hearts.

We want to thank all of the correctional workers, other law enforcement officers and the communities who helped us through this past week. We greatly appreciate the outpouring of love and support for Joe and our correctional family.

We will not let Joseph Gomm die in vain. We want to ensure that every person who works in corrections can come home safely, and that we can keep our institutions and communities safe.

Although the Department of Corrections has communicated during this time of mourning, they have not communicated with us about the safety measures presented Friday nor given us an opportunity to work with them to find solutions.

We have several policy issues that we will be demanding get resolved. We have dangerously low numbers of correctional officers, levels that are far worse than the statistics reported by DOC Friday. This is unacceptable.

Officers are not given all the equipment they need to safely do their jobs, and that also must be addressed.

After years of asking legislators for enough funding to do our jobs safely, we are demanding bipartisan support, communication and collaboration from the

department and all levels of state government to provide us with the adequate level of correctional officers, tools, resources and policies we need to do our job and to keep our institutions and the public safe.

Westmoreland Elected IVP



AFSCME Council 5’s executive director John P. Westmoreland was elected international vice president (covering Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota) during the AFSCME Convention in Boston (pictured above). Convention-goers also honored retired executive director Eliot Seide for his service.

A large contingent of Council 5 members from across Minnesota attended the Convention, which had the theme Rise Up!, a message of strength and solidarity.

Picnic Volunteers Needed

Don’t forget to save the date for the AFSCME Family Picnic at Battle Creek Regional Park in Maplewood on **Aug. 19** from 1 to 5 p.m.

Potluck items are welcome and encouraged.

More volunteers are needed. Call Duane at 651-472-2787 or email kkirk77dg@comcast.net.

Mark Your Calendars

Event	Date	Place/details
Vote in Primary	Aug. 14	www.sos.state.mn.us
AFSCME Family Picnic	Aug. 19, 1 to 5 p.m.	Battle Creek Regional Park, Maplewood
Council 5 Convention	Sept. 27 to 29	DoubleTree Bloomington Hotel