

St. Gerard Catholic Church

640 Edrie Street, NE
Aiken, SC 29801
803 649-3203

Rev. Emmanuel O. Andinam, Pastor
Deacon Dr. Charles Cooper, Retired

Mission Statement

Anchored by faith, hope and love in Jesus Christ, we strive to be active disciples, serving each other and all God's people by welcoming and embracing the enriching diversity of our community of faith.

The First Sunday of Advent
November 29,2026

Weekly Mass Schedule

Tuesday, Thursday and Friday – 8:15 AM

Saturday Vigil - 4:00 PM

Sunday - 8:00 AM and 10:00 AM

First Friday: Benediction & Divine Mercy Chaplet following 8:15 AM Mass.

Confessions: Tuesday & Thursday after Mass

Baptisms, Marriages, Funerals: By appointment

Religious Education: Contact office for information

OCIA: Contact office 803-649-3203

Bible Study: Fridays 10:00 AM in the church hall

Website: www.stgerardinaiken.org

Readings for The Week

Sunday:
Isa 63:16b-17,19b;64:2-7; Ps 80:2-3,15-16,18-19; 1 Cor 1:3-9; Mk 13:33-37

Monday: St. Andrew, Apostle
Rom 10:9-18; Ps 19:8,9,10,11; Mt 4:18-22

Tuesday:
Isa 11:1-10; Ps 72:1-2,7-8,12-13,17; Lk 10:21-24

Wednesday:
Iosa 25:6-10a; Ps 21:1-3a,3b-4,5,6; Mt 15:29-37

Thursday:St. Francis Xavier, Priest
Isa 26:1-6; Ps 118:1 & 8-9,19-21,25-27a; Mt 7:21,24-27

Friday:
Isa 29:17-24; Ps 27:1,4,13-14; Mt 9:27-31

Saturday:
Isa 30:19-21,23-26; Ps 147:1-2,3-4,5-6; Mt 9:35-10:1,5a,6-8

Mass Intentions

Saturday Vigil November 28
4:00 PM - For our Parish
Sunday, November 29
8:00 AM - For our Parish
10:00 AM -Roger Miller (D)
Tuesday, December 1
8:15 AM - The Dorthalina's Anniversary
Thursday, December 3
9:00 AM - James Clausius (D)
First Friday, December 4
8:15 AM - For our Parish
Benediction & Chaplet of Divine Mercy following Mass

Ministers

December 5	December 6	December 6
4:00 PM Vigil	8:00 AM	10:00 AM
Linda Cooper	Peter Srednicki	Chomia Nwoga
Joel Southwick	Jack Kline	Gregg Wright
Joan Hesik	Betsy Kenney	Gregg Wright

Anointing of the Sick

The Rite of Anointing tells us there is no need to wait until a person is at the point of death to receive the Sacrament. In this Sacrament, the Holy Spirit gives us peace and courage to deal with the difficulties that accompany serious illness and our frailty. To receive the Sacrament of Anointing, contact the church office.

Communion for Hospital/Homebound

If you would like Holy Communion brought to someone in the hospital or confined to home, please contact the church office: 803-649-3203.

Legion of Mary

Active members meet Tuesdays at 2:00 PM in the church Conference Room. Auxiliary members can pray at home. If you are interested in becoming an active or auxiliary member of the Legion of Mary, contact the church office.

Tabernacle Candle

Candle for December: The Carriero & George Families, living and deceased, and Margaret C Hadlock and Jeanne Cooper, birthday memorials.

Bible Study

Bible Study classes are held on Fridays at 10:00 AM in the church hall. If you can't attend in person, you can participate by teleconference. The phone number is 1-978-990-5273, and the Access Code is 236101#.

Weekly Collection 11/21-11/22/26

Budget	$4,325.00
Collected	$2,785.92
Short/Over	-$1,539.08
YTD+-	-$5,011.49

Second Collection

December 13 - Retirement Fund for Religious

Men's Prayer Group

Meetings are on Tuesdays in the parish social hall at 7:30 a.m. for prayer and discussion. Following the meeting, the group will attend the 8:15 a.m. Mass. For more information contact Bill Collins at 803-998-7191.

Monthly After Mass Social

The Monthly After Mass Social is the first Saturday of the month after the 4:00 p.m Mass. The host for December 5th is Dawson-Ekeland.

Christmas Flowers Memorials

Memorials are due no later than December 20th. The donation is $25 each. Please indicate the name(s) for the memorials.

ANNUAL/BUILDING FUND CAMPAIGN

October - December are the key months for our annual/building fund campaign. The campaign is the primary source of funding for major capital improvement projects in the Parish. Last year, thanks to your generosity, we raised nearly $26K or roughly 10% of our fiscal year total contributions. Our goal is 100% participation. As shared by our Finance Council Chair, the success of the campaign is critical to the financial health of St. Gerard's. If using envelopes, please use the one designated "Annual Fund". If giving by check is your preferred method of donating, please put "Annual/Building Fund" in the memo line of the check. Finally, if you prefer to give cash anonymously, please put it in an envelope with "Annual/Building Fund" on the outside.

Flocknote

If you haven't signed up for flocknote, use this QR to register:

Deacon Chuck's Corner

Reflection: "Staying Awake"
Mark 13:33-37

This is the last day of our liturgical year! And on this day, the Gospel reminds us of how easy it is to become lazy in our life of faith. As the liturgical year comes to a close today, God is calling us to become wide awake. He wants our full attention and He wants you and I completely sober in our life of faith. In this short gospel passage, Jesus tells us five times to be attentive. The world of God is breaking in everywhere, like an invasion. "I ask for the grace to seek God in all things", as St Ignatius says.

Jesus talks about the Master who has left his servants – that is, you and me – in charge of his affairs, each one with their own task. What has Christ put me in charge of? What is my task, my role in this world? "Stay awake because you do not know when the master will come back – "stay awake."

How do we stay awake? By keeping in touch with those around us - by doing our best to live lives of love, of compassion, of forgiveness, of honesty and integrity each day. We keep in touch with our God through lives of prayer. And the simplest and deepest prayer is to be aware of the active presence of God in our lives.

Advent also begins today where we spend time preparing for the coming of Christ into our world. During this new Advent of Hope we are called to a deeper and truer meaning of hope - a virtue that goes beyond optimism or pessimism - a trust rooted in a relationship with God, knowing God will never fail us, no matter the circumstances, and we can find joy amidst life's uncertainties. Actively seek Him and may He keep you continually prepared for His imminent return.

Prayer: "O Lord, help me to recognize you and respond to you in love through every person and every experience of this day." During this Advent season, may we reflect on Mary's "yes" to God and her role in the Incarnation, seek her intercession for purity, grace, and openness to God's will, and prepare our hearts to welcome Jesus with the same faith and love Mary showed in bringing him into the world. Amen.

Feed 5K Ministry

Thanks to the love and generosity of many in our church, we provided 103 lunches and extras to the folks in need at the Salvation Army shelter. Thanks to all who helped and are living the gospel this way.

For Christmas, we will help provide food for 81 children and their families at Our Lady of the Valley Catholic Center. We would like to provide 35 whole hams for their families' Christmas baskets. Someone from our Feed 5K Ministry will have a collection container ready after each Mass the weekend of December 5th & 6th. Please donate any amount you can. For more information contact doctony.47@gmail.com

Prophecy Candle

On the first Sunday of Advent, the first purple candle is lit. This candle is typically called the "Prophecy Candle" in remembrance of the prophets, primarily Isaiah, who foretold the birth of Christ: Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14) This first candle represents hope or expectation in anticipation of the coming Messiah.

The Pope's Intention for December
For single-parent families

Let us pray for families experiencing the absence of a mother or father, that they may find support and accompaniment in the Church, and help and strength in the Faith during difficult times.

Summary of the Holy Father's words

In our continuing catechesis on the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, today we focus on Chapter 5, dedicated to promoting peace. This hopeful project embraces all of humanity and creation. In the name of the Lord, we are called to work for peace throughout the world. Indeed, true peace comes from the cross of Christ and is offered to everyone as the fruit of our redemption, a gift of grace to which we must respond. The Council Fathers combine their firm condemnation of war with a solemn appeal to convert minds and hearts to the King of Peace, encouraging us to break the ideological chains and economic interests that fuel conflicts. Moreover, the right to legitimate self-defense is always linked to supporting international institutions that promote peace between peoples and integral human development.

LEO XIV

Wednesday, 25 November 2026

Catechesis. The Documents of the Second Vatican Council.
V. Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*.

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning and welcome!

Today we continue our reflection on Chapter V of *Gaudium et Spes*, dedicated to promoting peace. The Council Fathers first admire God's plan for humanity: "in Christ Jesus this family is called to the family of the sons of God." As such, in the name of the Lord, we are called to be brothers and sisters, and to build a world of peace. This hopeful perspective is meant to embrace not only humanity, but also all of creation.

Through Christ and for Him, in fact, God was pleased "to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross". The peace that springs from the cross of Christ is offered as the fruit of redemption to all peoples and to all creation. This peace is both a gift of grace to be received and a commitment to freedom to be lived out in accordance with the beatitude Jesus proclaimed: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (*Mt* 5:9).

The teaching of *Gaudium et Spes* is not naïve; aware of human sin, we know that "peace is never attained once and for all, but must be built up ceaselessly". There is no room for resignation, as if violence were inevitable. On the contrary, the nature of modern wars leads the Council Fathers to update the Church's teaching on the matter: such atrocities, they say, "compel us to undertake an evaluation of war with an entirely new attitude".

This is indeed an "obligation", sustained by the Holy Spirit, so that Christ's disciples may observe history today in the light of the Gospel. As we renew this focus, we see that "the digital revolution is changing the nature of conflict. Alongside conventional warfare, hybrid forms such as cyberattacks, information manipulation, influence campaigns, and the automation of strategic decisions exist. What is created for defense can be rapidly repurposed for offense, and the fine line between protection and aggression becomes blurred". Conflicts, which today appear increasingly inhuman and devastating, fuel hatred and injustice amongst peoples, whilst also disfiguring creation and its beauty.

No one can ignore the suffering afflicting men and women of all ages. The Council's solemn appeal to convert minds and hearts to Christ, the King of Peace, calls upon all people to break the ideological and economic chains that enslave them to war. In this regard, it must be strongly reiterated that "the arms race is an utterly treacherous trap for humanity, and one which ensnares the poor to an intolerable degree. It is much to be feared that if this race persists, it will eventually spawn all the lethal ruin whose path it is now making ready". These prophetic words of the Council resound today as an even more urgent warning: indeed, they are the very cry that rises to the world's powerful from the suffering of peoples, children killed and maimed, and of destroyed families.

The Second Vatican Council calls upon all men and women of good will to prepare for a time when it will be possible "to eliminate the danger of war". That said, "governments cannot be denied the right to legitimate defense", but this highlights the need for international bodies capable of intervening effectively to restore justice that has been violated, acting in defense of the oppressed. The Council therefore calls for a willingness to promote institutions dedicated to the service of peace, working together to build a global political and economic order founded on cooperation, dialogue and the sharing of nations' cultural and material resources, at the service of integral human development.

Faced with these tasks, Christians are called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Trusting always in the grace of God, we must not be afraid to work on the front line to build peace and defend human dignity, both through constant prayer and through consistent social and political choices. We are all invited to participate in these processes, with a common voice. The proclamation of the Gospel is achieved through the formation of consciences, the conversion of hearts, and the sacramental life, always taking Christ as our guiding principle.

Let us ask God for the strength to enlighten our lives and the world with the witness of the Gospel, which is the word of reconciliation and salvation for all peoples. May the Spirit of Christ always inspire experiences of fraternity and peace, nurturing sincere dialogue between individuals and between peoples. Especially in times of suffering, let us never tire of seeking and sharing that true peace, which is at once a gift from God and the fruit of tireless human endeavor. May the Virgin Mary, Queen of Peace, support every effort for good with her powerful intercession, now and always.



What's Rite? The Advent Wreath

The Advent Wreath is surely the most popular Advent tradition in homes and churches today. The custom of lighting candles originated among Lutherans in Germany in the 16th century and quickly became popular in other areas. Along with the Christmas tree, it is probably an example of Christianizing practices popular from pre-Christian times. There had always been a festival of burning special lights and fire at the end of November and beginning of December in Germanic lands as the darkness of winter deepened. This tradition came to the United States with German immigrants and was popularized among Catholics with the liturgical movement in the mid-1900s.

The Advent Wreath, which is usually made of evergreens and placed on a table, a stand or suspended from the ceiling, may be of any size. There are four candles, one for each week of Advent, and their color is not essential. Because it is a symbol and not a sign, it has more than one meaning. The symbolism lies more in the flame than in the colors of the candles, which may be white, or purple and pink. Each Sunday another candle is lit, light increases, pushing out darkness until all four are lit. Out of spiritual darkness came the Messiah, the light of the world.

While the Advent Wreath is optional, most parishioners have come to expect it as the symbol of Advent. This practice is given legitimacy by its inclusion in the Orders of Blessings within Mass in the *Book of Blessings*. The blessing of the Advent wreath is found in Chapter 47 and is recommended on the First Sunday of Advent. On the following Sundays, the appropriate number of candles are lighted before Mass or between the Penitential Rite and the Opening Prayer. Parishes, however, may prefer to bless the wreath during the gathering rites. In the dioceses of Canada, as well as in parishes that use other ritual books, the blessing takes place in the introductory rites, a place that seems more logical.

Often, there are three purple candles and one rose. The first three signify the more penitential, anticipatory aspect of Advent, while the other candle signifies the rejoicing of "Gaudete" Sunday, the 3rd of Advent. While some have called for the addition of a white "Christ" candle in the center, it should be noted that for Catholics, the Paschal candle is our Christ candle and that symbol should not be duplicated. The Advent candles could be replaced by four white or red ones at Christmas.

For instructions on making your own Advent wreath at home, see the Advent & Christmas Playlist on the www.StGerardAiken.org or Facebook.com/StGerardAiken page.

Advent Playlist: Preparing for Christmas

¡En español también p.3!

The **playlist** is a curated group of digital (online, video, audio, print) faith formation content and experiences on specific themes published on a webpage for easy access and learning. Descriptions and links to activities and experiences are organized by categories: **Learn, Read, Watch, Listen, Participate, Pray, Live**. This gives you and your family control over **what** and **when** and **where** you will participate, **and how much.** You can watch a short presentation or a long video, do an activity with your family, read an article or study for 4 weeks, listen to a podcast or music, pray alone, or prepare the Sunday readings. The choice of how you prepare for Christmas is yours. Check it out and have fun!

Catherine Combier-Donovan, MLS