



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 Third Sunday of Lent

March 8, 2026

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 and by appointment

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:

Exo 17:3-7; Ps 95:1-2,6-7,8-9; Rom 5:1-2,5-8; Jn 4:5-42

Monday:

2 Kng 5:1-15ab; Ps 42:2,3;43:3,4; Lk 4:24-30

Tuesday:

Dan 3:25,34-43; Ps 25:4-5ab,6 & 7bc,8-9; Mt 18:21-35

Wednesday:

Deu 4:1,5-9; Ps 147:12-13,15-16,19-20; Mt 5:17-19

Thursday:

Jer 7:23-28; Ps 95:1-2,6-7,8-9; Lk 11:14-23

Friday:

Hos 14:2-10; Ps 81:6c-8a,8bc-9,10-11ab,14 & 17; Mk 12:28-34

Saturday:

Hos 6:1-6; Ps 51:3-4,18-19,20-21ab; Lk 18:9-14

Mass Intentions

Saturday, March 7

4:00 PM - For our Parish

Sunday, March 8

8:00 AM - Dick & Connie Valers (in Mem.)

10:00 AM - For our Parish

Tuesday, March 10

8:15 AM - For our Parish

Thursday, March 12

8:15 AM - For our Parish

Friday, March 13

8:15 AM - For our Parish

Ministers

<u>March 14</u>	<u>March 15</u>	<u>March 15</u>
4:00 PM Vigil	8:00 AM	10:00 AM
Tony DaVino	Perry Stanley	Janet Menefee
Joel Southwick	Kelly Stanley	Gregg Wright
Joan Hesik	Betsy Kenney	Gregg Wright

Pray for our Sick

Rosa Johnson, Paula Thurston, Ellen Heim, Rich Borst, Betty Hyslop, Jeffrey Hesik, Angelo Perrino, John Burke, Krystal Ortiz, Michell Novotny, Casey Bay, Dennis HooChung, Joe Monahon

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 .

Sunday After Mass Social

The Sunday After Mass social is March 15, after the 10 a.m. Mass. A sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board in the back entrance to the social hall.

Weekly Collection 2/28-3/1/26

Budget	\$3,799.00
Collected	\$9,991.00
Short/Over	+\$6,192.00
YTD+-	+\$13,846.16

Second Collections

March 15 Catholic Relief Services

Bible Study

Classes are held on Fridays at 10:00 a.m. in the Parish Center. If you are unable to attend in person, you can participate by teleconference. The phone number is: 1-978-990-5273 and the Access Code is 236101#.

Tabernacle Candle

A special candle should burn continuously near the tabernacle to indicate the presence of Christ. If you would like to donate in honor or memory of a loved one, call the church office. The donation is \$25. The candle for March: William E Beckert, birthday memorial.

Our Lady of the Valley Food Pantry

Our collection for the OLV food pantry is the third weekend of the month. Food donations are welcome at any time during the month; however, our focused collection is the third weekend of the month. The focus food for the weekend of March 21-22 is Pancake Mix & Syrup.

Monthly After Mass Social

The Monthly After Mass Social is the first Saturday of the month after the 4:00 p.m. Mass. If you would like to host a social, contact the office: 803-649-3203. The host for March 7 is the McHale family.

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. All men of the parish are welcome to the meetings.

Girl Scout Cookies

Girl Scouts of Troop 1417 will be selling Girl Scout cookies after all the Masses the weekend of Saturday, March 7, and Sunday, March 8. Cookies are \$5 per box. Cash, credit card and Venmo are accepted. Gave up sweets for Lent? Cookies freeze well and you can buy cookies to donate to hometown heroes!

Deacon Chuck's Corner

Reflection: The Woman at the Well - John 4:5-42

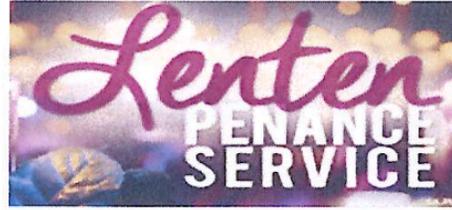
In today's Gospel, we have one of the most momentous and instructive passages in Scripture: the Samaritan woman at the well. "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water". She doesn't hear Jesus, not really, until he says to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back". "The woman answered "I have no husband."

One can almost hear the thud of her response: quiet, defeated, maybe ashamed. Have you ever misunderstood when God tried to communicate with you, as the woman was initially unaware that God was breaking into her ordinary day-to-day routine?

This text is really about security and dignity. I hear a sense of crushing disappointment in life, in the drudge work assigned to her, of going to a well of promise (men who said they would take care of her), only to find that the well of covenantal manhood had run dry. The woman comes to Jesus without even a name. Instead, her identity is obscured by markers of her exclusion. As a Samaritan woman, she lives her daily life in the shadows of her own marginality, but she speaks to Jesus under the sweltering heat of a midday sun. Jesus initiates this dialogue in broad daylight, raising eyebrows almost immediately: such a conversation with a woman of Samaria was potentially scandalous.

Even today, many women who live on the streets have "husbands" - men to whom they "marry" themselves, providing sex in exchange for food and shelter. Popular culture tries to romanticize marriage, but on the streets, being in a partnership often functions as a form of security for women who are acutely vulnerable to predators. These exchanges may offer a measure of security, but only a measure: these marriages often come with slavery and beatings.

After her encounter with Jesus, this woman, who seemed world-wise and weary, speaks in unapologetic outbursts: "Come and see! Could this one be the Messiah?" Instead of laboring in the shadows of menial labor, she becomes a forerunner of the proclamation of the gospel: "Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I have ever done'. According to John's gospel, a Samaritan woman joins John the Baptist, each of them pointing to the One who is truly the Savior of the world. Yet still, she has no name; she, the beloved disciple.



Parish Penance Service March 20, 2026

Continue your Lenten preparations by attending our **Parish Penance Service on Friday, March 20, at 6:00 pm**. Two priests will be available to hear confessions, and we will support and celebrate five children in our parish as they receive their First Reconciliation. Veronica Barker will lead a short examination of conscience at 5:30 to help youth and families prepare for the sacrament. We will have dinner together following the service; the Winn family will be doing a fish fry! Please let us know by Monday, March 16, whether you will be joining us for dinner by calling or texting Veronica at 803.262.8934!

Summary of the Holy Father's words*

Dear brothers and sisters, in our continuing catechesis on the Second Vatican Council, today we consider the mystery of the human and divine dimensions of the Church as presented by the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*. Just as Jesus' humanity was immediately apparent to those who walked by his side, so too the human dimension of the Church is easy to perceive; it is a community of men and women who, with their gifts and their flaws, seek to proclaim the Gospel within a visible structure. Those who followed Jesus more closely, however, recognized that his humanity — his loving gaze, his merciful gestures, and his powerful word — manifested his divinity, which led them to salvation. In a similar way, through the visible and human dimension of the Church, the spirit of Christ and his saving action are present and active in the world. Let us strive to be authentic witnesses of the love of Christ so that all can recognize in us and among us the charity that characterizes true Christians and builds up the Church.

*The full text of the Pope's Audience is on the last page of the bulletin.

LEO XIV
GENERAL AUDIENCE
Wednesday, 4 March 2026
Catechesis. The Documents of Vatican Council II.
II. Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*.
2. *The Church, a Visible and Spiritual Reality*

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning and welcome!

Today, we will continue our exploration of the Conciliar Constitution *Lumen gentium*, a dogmatic Constitution on the Church. In the first chapter, which is primarily intended to answer the question of what the Church is, she is described as a “complex reality”. Now we ask ourselves: what does this complexity consist of? Some might answer that the Church is complex because she is ‘complicated’ and therefore difficult to explain; others might think that her complexity derives from the fact that she is an institution steeped in two thousand years of history, with characteristics that differ from those of any other social or religious group. In Latin, however, the word ‘complex’ indicates rather the orderly union of different aspects or dimensions within the same reality. For this reason, *Lumen gentium* can affirm that the Church is a well-organized body, in which the human and divine dimensions coexist without separation and without confusion.

The first dimension is immediately perceptible: the Church is a community of men and women who share the joy and struggle of being Christians, with their strengths and weaknesses, proclaiming the Gospel and becoming a sign of the presence of Christ who accompanies us on our journey through life. Yet this aspect – which is also evident in its institutional organization – is not sufficient to describe the true nature of the Church, because it also has a divine dimension. The latter does not consist in an ideal perfection or spiritual superiority of its members, but in the fact that the Church is generated by God’s plan for humanity, realized in Christ.

Therefore, the Church is at the same time an earthly community and the mystical body of Christ, a visible assembly and a spiritual mystery, a reality present in history and a people journeying towards heaven.

The human and divine dimensions integrate harmoniously, without one overshadowing the other; thus, the Church lives in this paradox. She is a reality that is both human and divine, welcoming the sinful man and leading him to God.

To illuminate this ecclesial condition, *Lumen gentium* refers to the life of Christ. In fact, those who met Jesus along the roads of Palestine experienced his humanity, his eyes, his hands, and the sound of his voice. Those who decided to follow him were moved precisely by the experience of his welcoming gaze, the touch of his blessing hands, his words of liberation and healing. At the same time, however, by following that Man, the disciples opened themselves to an encounter with God. Indeed, Christ’s flesh, his face, his gestures, and his words visibly manifest the invisible God.

In light of the reality of Jesus, we can now return to the Church: when we look at her closely, we discover a human dimension composed of real people who sometimes manifest the beauty of the Gospel and at other times struggle and make mistakes like everyone else. However, it is precisely through her members and her limited earthly aspects that Christ’s presence and his saving action are manifested. As Benedict XVI said, there is no opposition between the Gospel and the institution; on the contrary, the structures of the Church serve precisely for the “realization and concretization of the Gospel in our time”. An ideal and pure Church, separated from the earth, does not exist; only the one Church of Christ, embodied in history.

This is what constitutes the holiness of the Church: the fact that Christ dwells in her and continues to give himself through the smallness and fragility of her members. Contemplating this perennial miracle that takes place in her, we understand ‘God’s method’: He makes himself visible through the weakness of creatures, continuing to manifest himself and to act. For this reason, Pope Francis, in *Evangelii gaudium*, exhorts us all to learn “to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other”. This enables us, even today, to build up the Church: not only by organizing its visible forms, but also by building that spiritual edifice which is the body of Christ, through communion and charity among ourselves.

Indeed, charity constantly makes the presence of the Risen One known. “If only we could all just let our thoughts dwell on the one thing, charity! It’s the only thing, you see, which both surpasses all things, and without which all things worth nothing, and which draws all things to itself, wherever it may be”.