



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 Fourth Sunday of Advent *December 21, 2025*

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:

Isa 7:10-14; Ps 24: 1-2,3-4,5-6; Rom 1:1-7; Mt 1:18-24

Monday:

1 Sam 1:24-28; 1 Sam 2:1,4-5,6-7,8abcd; Lk 1:46-56

Tuesday:

Mal 3:1-4,23-24; Ps 25:4-5ab,8-9,10 & 14; Lk 1:57-66

Wednesday: Christmas Vigil

Isa 62:1-5; Ps 89:4-5,16-17,27,29; Acts 13:16-17,22-25; Mt 1:18-25

Thursday: Christmas Day

Isa 52:7-10; Ps 98:1,2-3,3-4,5-6; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18

Friday: The First Martyr

Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Ps 31:3cd-4,6 & 8ab,16bc & 17; Mt 10:17-22

Saturday: St John Apostle & Evangelist

1 John 1:1-4; Ps 97:1-2,5-6,11-12; Jn 20:1a & 2-8

Mass Intentions

Saturday, December 20

4:00 PM - Waztina Kaminsky

Sunday, December 21

8:00 AM - Brian Karahalios

10:00 AM - For our Parish

Wednesday, December 24 - Christmas Eve

4:00 PM - For our Parish

6:00 PM - George Heim

Thursday December 25 - Christmas Day

9:00 AM - For our Parish

Ministers

<u>December 24</u>	<u>December 24</u>	<u>December 25</u>
4:00 PM	6:00 PM	9:00 AM
Youth	Diane Begic	Michele Bullington
Greg Wright	Betsy Kenney	Kelly Stanley

<u>December 27</u>	<u>December 28</u>	<u>December 28</u>
4:00 PM Vigil	8:00 AM	10:00 AM
Diane Begic	Denise Gelinas	Chioma Nwoga
Cindy McHale	Jack Kline	Karen Uhle
Joan Hesik	Betsy Kenney	

Pray for our sick

Rosa Johnson, Paula Thurston, Ellen Heim, Rich Borst, Betty Hyslop, Jeffrey Hesik, Angelo Perrino, John Burke, Krystal Ortiz, Michell Novotny, Nancy Gardzina, Joan Lacombe, 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.

Weekly Collection 12/13-12/14/25

Budget	\$3,799.00
Collected	\$7,771.00
Short/Over	+\$3,972.00
YTD+-	-\$2,005.34

Second Collections

December 28 - Church in Africa

Bible Study

Classes are held on Fridays at 10:00 AM in the church hall. 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#. **No Bible Study Classes on Friday, December 26th and Friday, January 2nd.**

Tabernacle Candle

A special candle should burn continuously near the tabernacle to indicate the presence of Christ and honor it. If you would like to donate in honor or memory of a loved one, please call the church office. The donation is \$25. The candle for December is in memory of Margaret Hadlock, Jeanne N Cooper, and George Heim.

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 hosts for January 3rd are the Beckert and Welsh families.

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.

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 December 20-21: Cake Mixes and Frostings.

Flower Memorials

Christmas Flower Memorials \$25
Please submit NLT December 21

Deacon Chuck's Corner

Reflection: Trusting in God and The Steadfastness of Joseph - Matthew 1:18-24

Today's gospel highlights Joseph's faith and obedience in the face of uncertainty, and illustrates the profound impact God's divine intervention can have in our lives today. In this passage, we learn Joseph, described as a righteous man, initially plans to divorce his betrothed and pregnant Mary quietly to avoid public disgrace.

However, an angel appears to him in a dream, reassuring him to take Mary as his wife, as her child is the long-awaited Messiah who will save people from their sins. This moment fulfills the prophecy of the virgin birth, emphasizing that Jesus is "Emmanuel," meaning "God is with us".

The passage illustrates how God intervenes in human affairs, often in unexpected ways. Can I follow in my imagination the steps Joseph must have gone through before humbly accommodating himself to God's plans? What does this reality of God's "breaking in" say to my life and experience?

Joseph's response to the angel's message is a powerful testament to faith. Despite the societal implications and personal doubts he might have faced, he chooses to trust in God's plan. This theme resonates with many of us today, and it invites us to reflect on how we respond to divine calls in our own lives. As we willing to step out in faith, even when the path is unclear?

Just as Joseph was called to trust in God's plan, we too are invited to surrender our doubts and embrace the unknown. This story reminds us that God is always present in our struggles and guiding us toward His purpose.

Prayer:

Thank you, Lord for this profound reminder of the importance of faith, obedience, and the willingness to accept God's plans, even when they challenge our understanding. Thank you for Joseph's steadfast example, encouraging us to trust in God's presence and guidance in our own lives. Amen.

The Advent Wreath

On the last Sunday of Advent, a fourth candle on the Advent Wreath is lit. Traditionally, this purple candle has been called the "Angel Candle" or Candle of Love and represents the peace that Christ's birth brings to earth.

The Fourth Week of Advent: Understanding Love

During the Fourth Week of Advent, Christians reflect on the deepest truth of Christmas. Advent love is not emotion or sentiment. It is sacrifice, mercy, compassion, and the willingness to give ourselves as Christ gave Himself for us. As Christmas approaches, the Church calls us to open every corner of our hearts—our joys, our wounds, our relationships—to the transforming love of Jesus. This is the love Advent invites us to rediscover: a love that gives, heals, forgives, and restores.

Heavenly Father, as we enter the Fourth Week of Advent, fill my heart with Your perfect love. Help me love as You love—with patience, gentleness, mercy, and compassion.

Lord Jesus, you are Love made flesh, the Light who enters our darkness and the Savior who comes to dwell among us. Prepare my heart to welcome You at Christmas with faith, humility, and devotion.

Holy Spirit, kindle in me a spirit of charity. Remove all selfishness and coldness, heal every wound of the heart, and teach me to love generously those You have placed in my life.

O Mary, Mother of Love, walk with me in this final week of Advent. Help me receive Jesus with a pure heart, serve others with tenderness, and reflect God's love in all I do. Amen



LEO XIV
GENERAL AUDIENCE

Wednesday, 17 December 2025

Catechesis Cycle – Jubilee 2025: Jesus Christ Our Hope.

IV. The Resurrection of Christ and the Challenges of today's world.

8. Easter as the refuge of the restless heart

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning and welcome!

Human life is characterized by a constant movement that drives us to do, to act. Nowadays, speed is required everywhere to achieve optimal results across a wide variety of fields. How does Jesus' resurrection shed light on this aspect of our experience? When we participate in his victory over death, will we rest? Faith tells us: yes, we will rest. We will not be inactive, but we will enter God's repose, which is peace and joy. So, should we wait, or can this change us right now?

We are absorbed by many activities that do not always leave us satisfied. A lot of our actions involve practical, concrete things. We must assume responsibility for many commitments, solve problems, and face difficulties. Jesus too was involved with people and with life, not sparing himself, but rather giving himself to the end. Yet we often perceive how too much doing, instead of giving us fulfillment, becomes a vortex that overwhelms us, takes away our serenity, and prevents us from living to the fullest what is truly important in our lives. We then feel tired and dissatisfied: time seems to be wasted on a thousand practical things that do not, however, resolve the ultimate meaning of our existence. Sometimes, at the end of days full of activities, we feel empty. Why? Because we are not machines, we have a "heart;" indeed, we can say that we *are* a heart.

The heart is the symbol of all our humanity, the sum of our thoughts, feelings, and desires, the invisible center of our selves. The Evangelist Matthew invites us to reflect on the importance of the heart, quoting this beautiful phrase of Jesus: "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (*Mt* 6:21). It is therefore in the heart that true treasure is kept, not in earthly safes, not in large financial investments, which today, more than ever before, are out of control and unjustly concentrated at the bloody price of millions of human lives and the devastation of God's creation.

It is important to reflect on these aspects, because in the numerous commitments we continually face, there is an increasing risk of dispersion, sometimes of despair, of meaninglessness, even in apparently successful people. Instead, interpreting life in the light of Easter, looking at it with the Risen Jesus, means finding access to the essence of the human person, to our heart: *cor inquietum*. With this adjective "restless," Saint Augustine helps us understand the human being's yearning for fulfillment. The whole sentence refers to the beginning of the *Confessions*, where Augustine writes: "Lord, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."

Restlessness is the sign that our heart does not move by chance, in a disordered way, without a purpose or a destination, but is oriented towards its ultimate destination, the "return home." The authentic approach of the heart does not consist in possessing the goods of this world, but in achieving what can fill it; namely, the love of God, or rather, God who is Love. This treasure, however, can only be found by loving the neighbor we meet along the way: brothers and sisters in flesh and blood, whose presence stirs and questions our heart, calling it to open and give itself. Our neighbor asks us to slow down, to look them in the eye, sometimes to change our plans, perhaps even to change direction.

Dear friends, here is the secret of the movement of the human heart: returning to the source of its being, delighting in the joy that never fails, that never disappoints. No one can live without a meaning that goes beyond the contingent, beyond what passes away. The human heart cannot live without hope, without knowing that it is made for fullness, not for want.

Jesus Christ, with his Incarnation, Passion, Death, and Resurrection, has given us a solid foundation for this hope. The restless heart will not be disappointed if it enters into the dynamism of the love for which it was created. The destination is certain, life has triumphed, and in Christ it will continue to triumph in every death of daily life. This is Christian hope: let us always bless and thank the Lord who has given it to us!