



## *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 Second Sunday of Lent*

## *March 1, 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](http://www.stgerardinaiken.org)

### **Readings for The Week**

#### **Sunday:**

Gen 12:1-4a; Ps 33:4-5,18-19,20,22; 2 Tim 1:8b-10; Mt 17:1-9

#### **Monday:**

Dan 9:4b-10; Ps 79:8,9,11 & 13; Lk 6:36-38

#### **Tuesday:**

Isa 1:10,16-20; Ps 50:8-9,16bc-17,21 & 23; Mt 23:1-12

#### **Wednesday:**

Jer 18:18-20; Ps 31:5-6,14,15-16; Mt 20:17-28

#### **Thursday:**

Jer 17:5-10; Ps 1:1-2,34 & 6; Lk 16:19-31

#### **Friday:**

Gen 37:3-4,12-13a,17b-28a; Ps 105:16-17,18-19,20-21; Mt 21:33-43,45-46

#### **Saturday:**

Mic 7:14-15,18-20; Ps 103:1-2,3-4,9-10,11-12; Lk 15:1-3,11-32

**Mass Intentions**

**Saturday, February 28**

4:00 PM - Betty Rubbery (D)

**Sunday, March 1**

8:00 AM - Jimmy Bowers (D)

10:00 AM - For our Parish

**Tuesday, March 3**

8:15 AM - For our Parish

**Thursday, March 5**

8:15 AM - For our Parish

**First Friday, March 6**

8:15 AM - For our Parish **Benediction & Divine Chaplet of Mercy following Mass**

**Ministers**

**March 7**

4:00 PM Vigil  
Michele Bullington  
Cindy McHale  
Joan Hesik

**March 8**

8:00 AM  
Peter Srednicki  
Betsy Kenney  
Betsy Kenney

**March 8**

10:00 AM  
Chioma Nwoga  
Greg Wright  
Greg 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 2/14-2/15/26**

Budget	\$3,799.00
Collected	\$3,577.00
Short/Over	-\$222.00
YTD+-	+\$7,654.16

**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.

**Welcome to St. Gerard Catholic Church**

We welcome all who are visiting. If you attend regularly and consider St. Gerard Church your parish, we encourage you to register as a member. You can fill out a registration form, located in the back of the church, and return the form to the parish office. If you have any questions, please contact the office: 803-649-3203.

## Deacon Chuck's Corner

### Reflection on The Transfiguration Matthew 17:1-9

Today is Transfiguration Sunday. According to the gospel of Matthew, the Transfiguration is roughly the middle point of Jesus' public ministry.

The disciples see Jesus revealed in all his divine glory. Jesus saw that the experience was too much for them and told them to keep it in their hearts as they headed back towards their everyday lives. His words reassure that whatever happens next will be in God's hands, no matter how frightening the circumstances.

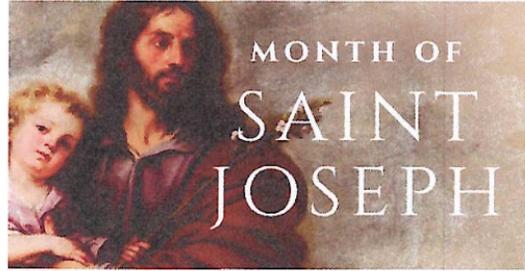
Perhaps some of you can point to moments in your own life when you've had that encounter with the divine. Maybe it was a miraculous event, something you could not explain. The mountaintop experiences give us strength to go back down the mountain and do the hard work of faith.

The disciples in today's Gospel might be asking the same kind of questions, especially if they too were feeling the wind of change blowing through their lives. We are constantly being pushed forward, into deeper discipleship, greater love, more profound faith. We're never quite ready, and yet we have to move forward. That's what God calls us to do.

**Prayer:** I thank God for the inspiration and encouragement I discover in my prayer life and ask that I may know how best to cherish it in my everyday life. Lord, give me the courage to keep moving forward for you even when I feel unprepared or unqualified. Glory be to the Father, to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

#### \*\*\*\* Request for Volunteers \*\*\*\*

We are in need of volunteers to serve as Sacristans and Eucharistic Ministers for the weekend Masses (Saturday 4 p.m. and Sunday 10 a.m.). If you are interested in volunteering for one of these ministries, please contact the church office by phone (803-644-4059) or email ([stgerard@gmail.com](mailto:stgerard@gmail.com)).



The Church traditionally dedicates the month of March to the special veneration of St. Joseph, whose feast day is March 19<sup>th</sup>. He was chosen by the eternal Father as the trustworthy guardian and protector of his greatest treasures, namely, his divine Son and Mary. Throughout the ages, the saints have attested to the power of Saint Joseph's intercession and propagated special devotion to this most holy saint.

When we bring our needs to him, we should have confidence that he will obtain for us the graces we seek. In the words of Saint Augustine, "What could Jesus Christ refuse Saint Joseph, who never refused him anything during his mortal life on earth?"

This month, let us strive to honor Saint Joseph in a special way. Place your soul under the care of this gentle father, and with childlike trust, confide to him all your cares, burdens, and necessities.

#### Prayer to St. Joseph for Protection

Gracious St. Joseph, protect me and my family from all evil as you did the Holy Family. Kindly keep us ever united in the love of Christ, ever fervent in imitation of the virtue of our Blessed Lady, your sinless spouse, and always faithful in devotion to you. Amen.

#### Meditation

*"Always give good heed to the Word of God, whether you hear or read it in private, or hearken to it when publicly preached: listen with attention and reverence; seek to profit by it, and do not let the precious words fall unheeded; receive them into your heart as a costly balsam; imitate the Blessed Virgin who 'kept all the sayings' concerning her Son, 'in her heart.' And remember that as we hearken to and receive God's words, so will He hearken and receive our supplications." —St. Francis de Sales*

**MESSAGE OF POPE LEO XIV FOR LENT 2026**  
***Listening and Fasting: Lent as a Time of Conversion***

*Dear brothers and sisters,*

Lent is a time in which the Church invites us to place the mystery of God back in the center of our lives, to find renewal in our faith and keep our hearts from being consumed by the anxieties and distractions of daily life. Every path towards conversion begins by allowing the word of God to touch our hearts and welcoming it with a docile spirit. There is a relationship between the word, our acceptance of it, and the transformation it brings about. For this reason, the Lenten journey is a welcome opportunity to heed the Lord's voice and renew our commitment to following Christ, accompanying him on the road to Jerusalem, where the mystery of his passion, death, and resurrection will be fulfilled.

I would first like to consider the importance of making room for the word through *listening*. The willingness to listen is the first way we demonstrate our desire to enter relationship with someone. In revealing himself to Moses in the burning bush, God teaches us that listening is one of his defining characteristics: "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry". Hearing the cry of the oppressed is the beginning of a story of liberation in which the Lord calls Moses, sending him to open a path of salvation for his children who have been reduced to slavery.

Our God seeks to involve us; he shares with us what is in his heart. Because of this, listening to the word in the liturgy teaches us to listen to the truth of reality. Amid the many voices in our personal lives and in society, Sacred Scripture helps us recognize and respond to the anguished cry of those who are suffering. To foster this inner openness to listening, we must allow God to teach us how to listen *as he does*. We must recognize that "the condition of the poor is a cry that, throughout human history, constantly challenges our lives, societies, political and economic systems, and the Church."

If Lent is a time for listening, *fasting* is a concrete way to prepare us to receive the word of God. Abstaining from food is an ancient ascetic practice essential to the path of conversion. Precisely because it involves the body, fasting makes it easier to recognize what we "hunger" for and what we deem necessary for our sustenance. Moreover, it helps us to identify and order our "appetites," keeping our hunger and thirst for justice alive and freeing us from complacency. Thus, it teaches us to pray and act responsibly towards our neighbor.

With spiritual insight, Saint Augustine helps us to understand the tension between the present moment and the future fulfillment that characterizes this custody of the heart. He observes that: "In the course of earthly life, it is incumbent upon men and women to hunger and thirst for justice, but to be satisfied belongs to the next life. Angels are satisfied with this bread, this food. The human race, on the other hand, hungers for it; we are all drawn to it in our desire. This reaching out in desire expands the soul and increases its capacity." Understood in this way, fasting not only permits us to govern our desire, purifying it and making it freer, but also to expand it, so that it is directed towards God and doing good.

However, to practice fasting in accordance with its evangelical character and avoid the temptation to pride, it must be lived in faith and humility. It must be grounded in communion with the Lord, because "those who are unable to nourish themselves with the word of God do not fast properly." As a visible sign of our inner commitment to turn away from sin and evil with the help of grace, fasting must also include other forms of self-denial aimed at helping us to acquire a more sober lifestyle, since "austerity alone makes the Christian life strong and authentic."

In this regard, I would like to invite you to a very practical and often unappreciated form of abstinence: refraining from words that offend and hurt our neighbor. Let us begin by disarming our language, avoiding harsh words and rash judgment, refraining from slander and speaking ill of those who are not present and cannot defend themselves. Instead, let us strive to measure our words and cultivate kindness and respect in our families, among our friends, at work, on social media, in political debates, in the media, and in Christian communities. In this way, words of hatred will give way to words of hope and peace.

Lent emphasizes the communal aspect of listening to the word and fasting. The Bible itself underlines this dimension in multiple ways. The Book of Nehemiah recounts how the people gathered to hear the public reading of the Law, preparing to profess their faith and worship through fasting to renew the covenant with God. Likewise, our parishes, families, ecclesial groups, and religious communities are called to undertake a shared journey during Lent, in which listening to the word of God, as well as to the cry of the poor and of the earth, becomes part of our community life, and fasting is a foundation for sincere repentance. Conversion refers not only to one's conscience but also to the quality of our relationships and dialogue. It means allowing ourselves to be challenged by reality and recognizing what truly guides our desires, both within our ecclesial communities and regarding humanity's thirst for justice and reconciliation.

Let us ask for the grace of a Lent that leads us to greater attentiveness to God and to the least among us. Let us ask for the strength that comes from the type of fasting that also extends to our use of language, so that hurtful words may diminish and give way to a greater space for the voice of others. Let us strive to make our communities places where the cry of those who suffer finds welcome, and listening opens paths towards liberation, making us ready and eager to contribute to building a civilization of love. I impart my heartfelt blessing upon all of you and your Lenten journey.



## **GODSPELL & A LIGHT SUPPER**

**Friday, March 13 at 6:00 pm**

Join us for a light, meatless supper and the musical GODSPELL, based on the Gospel according to Matthew.

The show is structured as a series of parables with catchy musical numbers such as Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord and Day by Day, with the passion of Christ appearing briefly near the end.

The 1973 movie is directed by David Greene with stars Victor Garber (in his film debut) as Jesus and David Haskell as Judas/John the Baptist. The film is set in contemporary New York City.

The movie is rated G and runs for 1 hour 43 minutes. We will begin the movie at 6:30 pm!

Please bring a finger food type dish to share: sandwiches (tuna, egg salad, peanut butter & jelly, cheese, etc.), cut up vegs & dip, cheese & crackers, chips & salsa/dip, desserts (cookies, brownies, mini muffins, etc.).

Keep it simple and make it easy!