



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 Advent *December 7, 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 11:1-10; Ps 72:1-2,7-8,12-13,17; Rom 15:4-9; Mt 3:1-12

Monday Feast of The Immaculate Conception of The Blessed Virgin Mary

Isa 3:9-15,20; Ps 98:1,2-3ab,3cd-4; Eph 1:3-6,11-12; Lk 1:26-38

Tuesday:

Isa 40:1-11; Ps 96:1-2,3 & 10ac,11-12,13; Mt 18:12-14

Wednesday:

Isa 40:25-31; Ps 103:1-2,3-4,8 & 10; Mt 11:28-30

Thursday:

Isa 41:13-20; Ps 145:1 & 9,10-11,12-13ab; Mt 11:11-15

Friday: Our Lady of Guadalupe

Rev 11:19a; 12:1-6a,10ab; Jud 13:18bcde,19; Lk 1:39-47

Saturday: St Lucy, Virgin & Martyr

Sir 48:1-4,9-11; Ps 80:2ac & 3b, 15-16,18-19; Mt 17:9a,10-13

Mass Intentions

Saturday, December 6

4:00 PM - Leonard Haneiko (D)

Sunday, December 7

8:00 AM - Brian Karahalios

10:00 AM - For our Parish

Monday, December 8 - Holy Day of Obligation The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

9:00 AM - Anne Green (D)

Tuesday, December 9

8:15 AM - Jonathan Hewitt & Family

Thursday December 11

8:15 AM - Souls in Purgatory

Friday, December 12

8:15 AM - Souls in Purgatory

Ministers

<u>December 13</u>	<u>December 14</u>	<u>December 14</u>
4:00 PM Vigil	8:00 AM	10:00 AM
Karen Southwick	Peter Srednicki	Chioma Nwoga
Joel Southwick	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, Mary Rose, Michell Novotny, Nancy Gardzina, Joan Lacombe, Casey Bay, Dennis HooChung, Joe Monahan

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 11/29-11/30/25

Budget	\$3,799.00
Collected	\$2,010.00
Short/Over	-\$1,768.00
YTD+-	-\$8,050.84

Second Collections

December 14 - Retirement Fund for Religious
December 28 - Church in Africa

Bible Study

If you've been wanting to visit our Bible Study or do something extra for Advent, this is a great opportunity. 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#.

Tabernacle Candle

A special candle should be kept alight near the tabernacle to indicate and honor the presence of Christ. 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 host for December 6th is Kari Dawson-Ekeland.

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 on A Call to Baptism Matthew 3:1-12

In our gospel reading today, Matthew again shows us how the coming of Jesus and the ministry of Jesus are fulfillments of the words of the prophets. The Chosen People lived in expectation - waiting for the day when God's "envoy" would appear on earth and set right the affairs of the world. This Messiah would represent the Lord in person and the people needed to purify themselves in readiness - baptism - cleansing by water.

Here we see John the Baptist, the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, 'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness'. John is called to prepare the way of the Messiah with his clear message: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." Change your hearts! We see him issue a strong warning also that a deeper purification is to come, at the hands of the 'one...coming after me' - purification by fire.

God is telling us that He does not want us to passively receive the Word. In this new Advent season, we can all hear John's call to Baptism. Help us to rediscover our individual baptismal call in our lives, expectantly waiting for Jesus. Let us each renew our commitment to our baptismal call today!

Prayer: Lord thank you for my baptism. Help me not take for granted this most important event of my life. Let me never forget I was reborn to eternal life, promised to believe in God, renounce sin, and to serve you faithfully each day of my life. Amen.

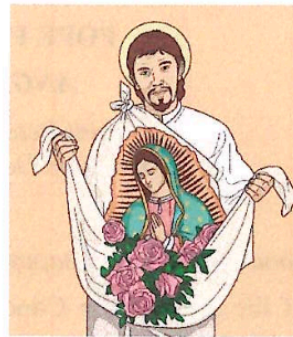
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Prayer for the Second Week of Advent The Bethlehem Candle – Love

Lord, teach us to love unconditionally as You have loved us. Help us to show compassion and kindness to everyone we meet. Let our love be a reflection of Your divine love. Amen

St. Juan Diego

Feast day: December 9



Saint Juan Diego was born in 1474 as Cuauhtlatoatzin, a native of Mexico. He was an Indigenous Mexican convert to Roman Catholicism and became the first Roman Catholic indigenous saint from the Americas.

On 9 December 1531, when Juan Diego was on his way to morning Mass, the Blessed Mother appeared to him on Tepeyac Hill, the outskirts of what is now Mexico City. She asked him to go to the Bishop and to request in her name that a shrine be built at Tepeyac, where she promised to pour out her grace upon those who invoked her. The Bishop, who did not believe Juan Diego, asked for a sign to prove that the apparition was true.

On 12 December, Juan Diego returned to Tepeyac. Here, the Blessed Mother told him to climb the hill and to pick the flowers that he would find in bloom. He obeyed, and although it was winter time, he found roses flowering. He gathered the flowers and took them to Our Lady, who carefully placed them in his mantle and told him to take them to the Bishop as "proof". When he opened his mantle, the flowers fell to the ground, and there remained, in place of the flowers, an image of the Blessed Mother, the apparition at Tepeyac.

The bishop first kept Juan Diego's imprinted cloak in his private chapel, but then placed it on public display in the church built on Tepeyac Hill the following year. Juan Diego's imprinted cloak has remained perfectly preserved from 1531 to the present time. The "Basilica of Guadalupe" on Tepeyac Hill has become one of the world's most-visited Catholic shrines.

St. Juan Diego was beatified on May 6, 1990, by Pope John Paul II and canonized on July 31, 2002. His feast day is December 9, and he is the patron saint of Indigenous peoples.

SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

*Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 8 December 2024*

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning and happy feast day!

Today, on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, the Gospel tells us about one of the most important, most beautiful moments in the history of humanity: the Annunciation (cf. *Lk* 26-38), when Mary's "yes" to the Archangel Gabriel permitted the Incarnation of the Son of God, Jesus. It is a scene that inspires the greatest wonder and emotion because God, the Most High, the Omnipotent, by means of the Angel, converses with a young girl from Nazareth, asking for her collaboration for His plan of salvation. If you have a little time today, look in the Gospel of Saint Luke and read this scene. I assure you that it will do you good, a lot of good!

As in the scene of the creation of Adam, painted by Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel, where the finger of the heavenly Father touches the finger of the man; thus, here too the human and the divine encounter each other, at the beginning of our Redemption, they meet with a wonderful delicacy, in the blessed instant in which the Virgin Mary utters her "yes." She is a woman in a small peripheral village, called forever to the center of history: on her answer depends the fate of humanity, which can smile and hope again, because its destiny has been placed in good hands. She will be the one to bear the Savior, conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Mary, then, as the Archangel Gabriel greets her, is "full of grace" (*Lk* 1:28), the Immaculate, entirely at the service of the Word of God, always with the Lord, to whom she entrusts herself completely. In her, there is nothing that resists His will, nothing that opposes truth and charity. Here is her blessedness, which all generations will sing. Let us also rejoice because the Immaculate has given us Jesus, who is our salvation!

Brothers and sisters, contemplating this mystery, we can ask ourselves: in our time, ravaged by wars and bent on the effort to possess and dominate, where do I place my hope? In strength, in money, in powerful friends? Do I place my hope there? Or in God's infinite mercy? And in the face of the shiny false models circulating in the media and on the internet, where do I look for my happiness? Where is the treasure of my heart? Is it in the fact that God loves me freely, that His love always goes before me, and is ready to forgive me when I return repentant to Him? In that filial hope in God's love? Or am I deluding myself in trying to assert my ego and my will at all costs?

Brothers and sisters, let us open the doors of the heart and the mind to the Lord. He was born of Mary Immaculate; let us implore the intercession of Mary. And I will give you some advice. Today is a good day to decide to make a good Confession. Open your heart and the Lord will forgive everything, everything, everything. And so, in Mary's hands, we will be happier.