



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 Advent *December 14, 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 35:1-6a,10; Ps 146:6-7,8-9,9-10; Jam 5:7-10; Mt 11:2-11

Monday:

Num 24:2-7,15-17a; Ps 25:4-5ab,6 & 7bc,8-9; Mt 21:23-27

Tuesday:

Zep 3:1-2,9-13; Ps 34:2-3,6-7,17-18,19 & 23; Mt 21:28-32

Wednesday:

Gen 49:2,8-10; Ps 72:1-2,3-4ab,7-8,17; Mt 1:1-17

Thursday:

Jer 23:5-8; Ps 72:1-2,12-13,18-19; Mt 1:18-25

Friday:

Jud 13:2-7,24-25a; Ps 71:3-4a,5-6ab,16-17; Lk 1:5-25

Saturday:

Isa 7:10-14; Ps 24:1-2,3-4ab,5-6; Lk 1:26-38

Mass Intentions

Saturday, December 13

4:00 PM - Souls in Purgatory

Sunday, December 14

8:00 AM - Brian Karahalios (D)

10:00 AM - Anne Green (D)

Tuesday, December 16

8:15 AM - For our Parish

Thursday December 18

8:15 AM - For our Parish

Friday, December 19

8:15 AM - For our Parish

Weekly Collection 12/6-12/7/25

Budget \$3,799.00

Collected \$5,872.50

Short/Over +\$2,077.50

YTD+- -\$5,977.34

Second Collections

December 14 - Retirement Fund for Religious

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.**

Ministers

<u>December 20</u>	<u>December 21</u>	<u>December 21</u>
4:00 PM Vigil	8:00 AM	10:00 AM
Joel Southwick	Denise Gelinas	Janet Menefee
Cindy McHale	Kelly Stanley	Jackie Brown
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.

Flower Memorials

Christmas Flower Memorials \$25
Please submit NLT December 21

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 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.

Deacon Chuck's Corner

Reflection on Escaping Our Expectations Matthew 11:2-11

Today we celebrate the Third Sunday of Advent – patiently waiting for the Messiah. We also hear someone else patiently waiting – John the Baptist now imprisoned by Herod and soon to be beheaded. John was wondering about what Jesus was doing and so he is making inquiries by sending messengers to Jesus. Not unlike John, we as disciples of Christ may or may not be able to see the creative power of God at work amid the suffering of this world. Where do we find ourselves to be instruments of God's creative power? For disciples of any age, such seeing is not always easy. Jesus is reminding us today that the deeds and words of renewal and hope taking shape in our world because of him through us and through others are marks of God's salvation.

"Blessed are your eyes," Jesus commends his disciples when he uses parables to help them envision the new ways of God's kingdom (13:16). We need to keep asking ourselves: Is the good news of God's blessing in Jesus taking root in us this Advent season and producing the fruits of faith and good will. Like John, can we live with a Messiah that comes to forgive, to show mercy and call even the unrighteous to repentance. God calls us to see what the Advent expectation is all about – it's His promise to transform our vision and hope.

John the Baptist is a man of expectations. How did he go from being a prophet with all the answers to a prisoner with questions? Do we try to confine God's work and life to our own expectations? Are we people with expectations of hope or dread and do we let them imprison us or become the reality of our lives? Advent is the season of escaping our expectations of God. A new world awaits us - what will we see and hear?

Lastly, we see John extolled by Jesus as the greatest of human beings – for his unique place in human history. John's ministry marks both the end of the old order, and the beginning of the new. He is the bridge between the kingdoms of earth and the Kingdom of Heaven. That's our mission here: pointing people to Jesus - offering Christ to people so they can experience the same grace we have experienced, so they can choose to follow Jesus. Amen.

The Third Sunday of Advent

A third candle—a pink one—is lit on the Advent Wreath for the third Sunday of Advent. This candle, often called the Shepherd's Candle or the Joy Candle, represents joy, such as the joy the shepherds experienced when the angel told them that Christ was to be born. The Advent season is now half over, and Jesus' coming—both his first coming, liturgically, and his second coming, historically—is nearer now than it was two weeks ago.

Lord Jesus,
You are my Joy and my Salvation.
Come into my heart this week,
shine in my life,
and renew the hope and gladness
that only Your presence can bring.



Candlelighting Service

St. Gerard's Family Ministry invites the parish to our Advent Program and Family Friday on Friday, December 19 at 5:30PM. We will have a family-friendly Candlelighting Service at 5:30PM followed by pizza in the Fellowship Hall. Our definition of family is broad and inclusive and we would welcome all parishioners to join us for this evening. Note that there will be kids and likely some kid chaos, but there will be lots of joy in the season as well. No RSVP is needed to attend the Candlelighting Program; however, we would appreciate an RSVP (see insert in bulletin for online link) for the dinner afterwards so we order enough pizza. You can also text your RSVP to Veronica at 803.262.8934.

Catechesis Cycle – Jubilee 2025: Jesus Christ Our Hope.

IV. The Resurrection of Christ and the Challenges of the Contemporary World.

7. The Pasch of Jesus Christ: the final answer to the question of our death.

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning! Welcome to you all!

The mystery of death has always raised profound questions among humans. Indeed, it seems to be the most natural and, at the same time, the most unnatural event that exists. It is natural, because every living being on earth dies. It is unnatural, because the desire for life and eternity that we all feel for ourselves and for the people we love makes us see death as a sentence, as a “contradiction.”

Many ancient peoples developed rites and customs linked to the cult of the dead, to accompany and to recall those who journeyed towards the supreme mystery. Today, however, we see a different trend. Death seems to be a sort of taboo, an event to keep at a distance; something to be spoken of in hushed tones, to avoid disturbing our sensibilities and our tranquility. This is often why we avoid visiting cemeteries, where those who have gone before us rest as they await resurrection.

So, what is death? Is it truly the last word on our lives? Only human beings ask themselves this question, because only they know they must die. But being aware of this does not save them from death; on the contrary, in a certain sense, it “burdens” them compared to other living creatures. Animals suffer, of course, and they realize that death is near, but they do not know that death is part of their destiny. They do not question the meaning, purpose, and outcome of life.

Considering this aspect, one might think we are paradoxical, unhappy creatures, not only because we die, but also because we are sure that this will happen, even though we do not know how or when. We find ourselves aware and at the same time powerless. This is probably where the frequent repressions and existential flights from the question of death originate.

Saint Alphonsus Maria de’ Liguori, in his famous work *Apparecchio alla morte* (Preparation for Death), reflects on the pedagogical value of death, emphasizing that it can be a great teacher of life. To know that it exists, and above all to reflect on it, teaches us to choose what we really want to make of our existence. Praying to understand what is beneficial in view of the kingdom of heaven, and letting go of the superfluous that instead binds us to ephemeral things, is the secret to living authentically, in the awareness that our passage on earth prepares us for eternity.

Yet many current anthropological views promise imminent immortality and theorize the prolongation of earthly life through technology. This is the transhuman scenario, which is making its way onto the horizon of the challenges of our time. Could death really be defeated by science? But then, could science itself guarantee us that a life without death is also a happy life?

The event of the Resurrection of Christ reveals to us that death is not opposed to life, but rather is a constitutive part of it, as the passage to eternal life. The Pasch of Jesus gives us a foretaste, in this time still full of suffering and trials, of the fullness of what will happen after death.

The Evangelist Luke seems to grasp this harbinger of light in the dark when, at the end of that afternoon when darkness had shrouded Calvary, he writes: “It was the day of Preparation, and the sabbath was beginning” (Lk 23:54). This light, which anticipates Easter morning, already shines in the darkness of the sky, which still appears overcast and mute. The lights of the Sabbath, for the first and only time, herald the dawn of the *day after the Sabbath*: the new light of the Resurrection. Only this event can fully illuminate the mystery of death. In this light, and only in this, what our heart desires and hopes becomes true: that death is not the end, but the passage towards full light, towards a happy eternity.

The Risen One has gone before us in the great trial of death, emerging victorious thanks to the power of divine Love. Thus, he has prepared for us the place of eternal rest, the home where we are awaited; he has given us the fullness of life in which there are no longer any shadows and contradictions.

Thanks to Him, who died and rose again for love, with Saint Francis we can call death our “sister.” Awaiting it with the sure hope of the Resurrection preserves us from the fear of disappearing forever and prepares us for the joy of life without end.

