

# Saint Rafka

Catholics of the East in the Upstate!



## 3rd Sunday of Epiphany Season of Epiphany

Saint Rafka Maronite Catholic Church is a Parish of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn. The Antiochene Syriac Maronite Church is one of over twenty Eastern and Oriental Catholic Churches in communion with the Bishop of Rome. Led by His Beatitude, **Bechara Boutros Rai**, Patriarch of Antioch and all the East in Berke, Lebanon, the Syro-Maronite Church has parishes and missions on six continents. Saint Rafka Parish was established as a mission in 2002. The community grew and flourished and was raised to the rank of parish in 2021.

**Most Rev. Gregory  
John Mansour**

**Bishop**

109 Remsen Street,  
Brooklyn, NY, 11201  
718.237.9913

[chancery@stmaron.org](mailto:chancery@stmaron.org)



**Father Bartholomew  
Leon**

**Pastor**

1215 S. Highway 14  
Greer, SC 29650  
864.469.9119  
[bartleon@gmail.com](mailto:bartleon@gmail.com)

## OFFICE HOURS

10:00 AM - 4:30 PM  
Monday - Friday

## DIVINE LITURGIES

The Divine Liturgy is  
celebrated on

Saturday,  
4 PM Vigil  
Sunday, 8:30 AM  
11:00 AM  
Tuesday, 10:00 AM  
Wednesday, 7:00 PM  
Thursday 10:00 AM  
Friday, 10:00 AM  
Holy Days As  
Announced

## CONFESSIONS

Saturday, 3:15 PM  
Sunday 10:15 AM  
Wednesday 6:30 PM  
Weekdays before  
liturgy as requested

## FINANCE COMMITTEE

Joseph Chebeir  
Paula Howard-Casby  
Tom Judge  
[Dee Kalata](#)  
[Ron Rossi, Sr.](#)  
Marlene Saad  
Richard Sleiman

**Joseph Chebeir**  
Financial Administrator  
864.469.9119  
[Joe Chebeir](#)



**Bill Leon**  
Secretary  
864.469.9119  
[Bill Leon](#)

**Sam Jordan Alamat**  
Organist  
[Sam Alamat](#)

**Nadia Najm**  
Choir Director  
**Scott Herr**  
Assistant Director  
[Nadia Najm](#)  
[Scott Herr](#)

**Jessica Dagher Allen**  
First Holy Communion  
[Jessica Allen](#)  
**Lisa Advent**  
MRE Students  
[Lisa Advent](#)

**Lisa Advent**  
MYO/MYA Leader  
[Lisa Advent](#)

**Knights of Columbus**  
**Jim Dyer**  
Grand Knight  
[Jim Dyer](#)

**Marlene Saad**  
Scripture Sharing  
[Marlene Saad](#)  
If Interested, Call  
864.580.1054

**Marie Kidd**  
Food Pantry  
[Marie Kidd](#)

**Hospitality Committee**  
[Marie Kidd](#)  
[Hannan Saade](#)  
[Mark Duffy](#)

**Bridget Nevin**  
Garden Club  
[Bridget Nevin](#)

**Candice King-Palgut**  
Prayers and Squares  
[Candice King-Palgut](#)  
Type to enter text

**Building Committee**  
**Phase 1**  
Richard Sleiman  
Thomas Judge  
Ron Rossi, Sr.

**Anthony Sloan**  
Men's Bible Study  
**Monthly Meeting**  
**Email for details**  
[Anthony Sloan](#)



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## MASS INTENTIONS

Mass intentions are a good way to remember and pray for your loved ones, alive or deceased.

If you would like to request an intention please remember to submit your intentions for Liturgy ASAP by calling the parish office at 864.469.9119 or by email at [bill@saintrafka.org](mailto:bill@saintrafka.org). Please remember that it is rare to be able to have your intention the following Sunday! **Masses are now generally booked up about three months in advance.**

## BAPTISM & CHRISMATION

Baptism in the Maronite Rite is always accompanied by *Chrismation* (Confirmation). Both Sacraments are given by a priest, and always in the same ceremony. Preparation to receive the Sacraments of Baptism and Chrismation is required. We encourage this to happen before the birth of your child. Please contact the [Church Office](#) for more details.

## ANOINTING OF THE SICK

The Anointing of the Sick is routinely offered during the Divine Liturgy on Wednesday evening and during pastoral visits by the priest to homebound and ill parishioners. Let me know if you will be in the hospital or have other special needs. Contact the [Church Office](#).

## THE MYSTERY OF CROWNING (MARRIAGE)

Couples must contact the pastor **at least** six months prior to the desired date of the wedding. To initiate the marriage preparation process or if you have questions for weddings taking place at Saint Rafka. Contact the [Church Office](#).

## PARISH REGISTRATION

Registration forms and welcome packets are available in the church office and the vestibule. Membership is a condition for the reception of the sacraments of baptism/confirmation, first reconciliation, first Eucharist, and Crowning (marriage). Registration is also required before the parish can issue a sponsorship certificate for those asked to be sacramental sponsors. You must be a registered, contributing member for at least three months before a certificate is provided.

## YOUTH MINISTRY

Teenagers are invited to join our Maronite Youth Organization, aka MYO. Contact **Lisa Advent** [lisaadventphotography@gmail.com](mailto:lisaadventphotography@gmail.com) for more information.

## Ramsho (Evening Prayer)

Join us on Tuesday at 5:45 PM for evening prayer and prayers of intercession to Saint Sharbel.

## WICKETT HALL AND ASHY PAVILION

Wickett Hall and Ashy Pavilion can be used by our registered and supporting parishioners for family events, reunions, etc. Others may request permission to rent the Hall or Pavilion. Please contact the [Church Office](#).

## MARONITE RESOURCES

Daily [readings](#) for the Divine Liturgy.  
Daily morning prayer and evening prayer of the Divine Office [here](#).

## TRAVELING AND NEED TO GO TO MASS?

Where to go to Mass when traveling? Look here!  
[MassTimes.org](http://MassTimes.org)  
[The Catholic Directory](#)  
[Parishes Online](#)

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Please follow us at @saintrafkagreenville on **Instagram** and/or **St. Rafka Maronite Church** on **Facebook**. <http://www.facebook.com/strafka>  
Also [YouTube](#)!

## SAINT RAFKA FOOD PANTRY

Established in 2019, the Saint Rafka Food Pantry is for those who need immediate food assistance. Need food? Call the church office or come by, 10 AM - 2 PM. You can also email **Marie Kidd** who is coordinating this project. All gifts of food are anonymous. Donations of food are accepted either at the Church Office or the back of the church.

## SCRIPTURE SHARING

Scripture haring discussion following the Carmelite Way with Saint Therese of the Little Flower and Saint John of the Cross

**IN DEFENSE OF CHRISTIANS** [IDF](#) Individuals banning together help and make know the plight of the Christians in the Middle East and their suffering.

**SHRINE OF THE PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS** in the United States. [Video here](#).

## Scripture Readings

John 3:1-16

Numbers 21:4-9

From Mount Hor they set out by way of the Red Sea, to bypass the land of Edom, but the people's patience was worn out by the journey; so the people complained against God and Moses, "Why have you brought us up from Egypt to die in the wilderness, where there is no food or water? We are disgusted with this wretched food!"

So the LORD sent among the people seraph serpents, which bite the people so that many of the Israelites died.

Then the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned in complaining against the LORD and you. Pray to the LORD to take the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people, and the LORD said to Moses: Make a seraph and mount it on a pole, and everyone who has been bitten will look at it and recover.

Accordingly Moses made a bronze serpent and mounted it on a pole, and whenever the serpent bit someone, the person looked at the bronze serpent and recovered.

Galatians 3:23-29

Before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.' Jesus answered him, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, "You must be born from above." The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can these things be?' Jesus answered him, 'Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? 'Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.



## Reflection

Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit." (John 3:5)

As we continue to celebrate Jesus's immense mercy in going down to the Jordan to be baptized this Epiphany season, we hear in today's Gospel an interesting exchange about the very same Mystery of baptism Jesus has given to the world for eternal life and the remission of sin. Nicodemus, one of the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, is confused when Christ tells him that only someone born again can enter heaven (John 3:3). Nicodemus wonders how someone can be born a second time, but Christ is referring to a second birth through baptism. Appropriately, this reading is the Gospel read at every baptism in the Maronite Church. Baptism is not just a ceremony but, as St. Paul says, we die with Christ in baptism that, through Him, we may also be raised to new life as He was (Rom. 6:4). This is why the Maronite baptismal ritual calls the waters of baptism "a new womb which gives birth to spiritual children" and why baptism in the East was always done by immersion – plunging under the water is a symbol of entering into the tomb of Christ, dying to this world, and rising out of the water we rise to new life.

Jesus Christ, Life Himself, united His divine nature to our weak human nature and subjected Himself to death and resurrection that we too may have the eternal life of His divinity. Through baptism "all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ" (Gal. 3:27) as St. Paul says. As the Maronite priest says during baptism to the newly baptized, "You are clothed in the Living Father, you receive the Son, the Christ, and you are wrapped in the Holy Spirit; you receive the robe of glory that Adam had taken off." Adam brought death into the world by his sin and ignoring of God, Who is Life. But when one accepts baptism, whether an infant or an elderly person, one receives God Himself into his or her person.

It might sound a bit strange that new life comes through this death of baptism. However, we die in baptism only in the sense that we are separating ourselves from the passing things of this world. It is not truly a death – as living a fleeting life is not truly living at all. But by casting off this fleeting life, we can accept eternal life from Jesus Christ by being born again by baptism, which He revealed Himself on the Jordan. And baptism is not simply a ritual of water but, just as His baptism revealed when the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove, it is also endowed with the Spirit. In the beginning of creation, as Genesis describes, the Holy Spirit hovered over the waters during the making of all things. The Holy Spirit once again hovers over the waters of baptism, and makes the baptized His permanent dwelling, recreating them anew.

It is by this new birth that we become spiritual children of the Father, and brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ. But baptism is only the beginning of our spiritual lives. As the priest calls baptism in our rite, it is the "clothing of righteousness," "the heavenly robe," "the shield of faith against the arrows of the Evil One" and "the armor of salvation." Baptism is not the end of our journey but the equipment. Having received the new life of baptism, whether as children or adults, we are called to the feast of heaven. To get there, we must follow the path of righteousness which Christ Himself walked before us to instruct us in His way, just as He gave us the example of His baptism. Following Him will lead us to the Kingdom of God.

**Father Michael Shami**



# Abouna's Corner

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

What weeks of excitement and history that we have lived through. The 39th and oldest living President, **Jimmy Carter**, died and was laid to rest just before the 47th President, **Donald Trump** took office. Then we had a second "snow storm!" that hit us on Tuesday night. Thankfully, it was a non-event, but it caused enough problems to make it inconvenient! Anytime you have a delay of two hours at banks, schools, etc., that is an inconvenience! Stay away snow!!

For several weeks I was experiencing technical problems with our broadcasting on Facebook. The problem turned out to be the computer we were using. It was a good, solid computer but 13 years old. It finally gave up the ghost last Sunday, in the middle of a test broadcast during the 8:30 AM Mass. I purchased a newer used MacBook for our broadcasting and editing needs and hopefully all is correctly installed for broadcast this weekend. Technology is great when it works!

Next Saturday, January 25 we will have the honor of hosting **Vivian Akel**, a lifetime member of the Maronite Cathedral Parish of Our Lady of Lebanon in Brooklyn, New York. Vivian is the child of Lebanese immigrants to the US and married for 39 years and the mother of 2 adult children, aged 37 and 35. A New York State Licensed Clinical Social Worker and a Licensed Bilingual Arabic Social Worker in the New York City Public School system, After retirement she became the Eparchy of Saint Maron's Safe Environment Coordinator for Child and Youth Protection and a member of the USCCB's National Review Board for Child Safety Protection. The Eparchial Couples Ministry grew out of an identified need for greater support for seriously dating, engaged and married couples of all ages throughout the Eparchy. This is a new ministry for the Eparchy. Recent Marriage Enrichment Days have focused on topics supporting and strengthening relationships while encouraging a shared prayer life. Marriages can be strengthened and enriched through a day of prayer and reflection together with Vivian. I urge you to attend and tell your friends. There is no charge for the day.

Do you have your *Hafli* ticket yet? Please see the flyer further back in this bulletin for more precise details. Mark your calendar for this great social event before the beginning of Great Lent.

At the right, there is a wonderful and life-sized image of **Richard Wickett** in the lobby of the church. The extended Wickett Family wanted Richard to be present last week when taking the photos for the new parish directory, so they had this image made up. This image will now reside in Wickett Hall which bears his name. Welcome home, Richard!

Have a wonderful and joyful Epiphany Season!

Have a great weekend! See you in Church!

Ab. Bart



## The Servants of Mary and Joseph Lay Carmelite Community

The Lay Carmelite is called to the Family of Carmel to be deeply involved in the mission of the Church and to contribute to the sanctification of the secular world through our charisms of prayer, community and service.

The Community meets on the First Saturday of every month from 9:00 AM - 1:30 PM at Saint Joseph Catholic Church, 1200 Cornelia Rd, Anderson, SC for the Liturgy of the Hours, Mass and meeting.

Catholic men or women interested in learning more may contact Jon at [joanelizabethrn@gmail.com](mailto:joanelizabethrn@gmail.com)



Join us for our 4th Annual

# Pink & Blue Gala

Fluor Dining Venue • FEB. 21, 2025 • 6:00pm

Discounted Early Bird Tickets on sale until Jan 15th!

You are invited to join us for a Mardi Gras themed evening with fine dining, an open bar, and a live and silent auction.

Our special guest speakers include Bishop Jacques Fabre-Jeune, CS and Fr. Rhett Williams!



*Find out more here!*



We can't host a successful event without your help! Please consider becoming a sponsor today! Scan QR code or visit [stclareshomesc.org/pink-blue-gala](http://stclareshomesc.org/pink-blue-gala).



*St. Clare's Home*  
RESTORING HOPE - SAVING LIVES

Contact Colleen Chmiel for Questions  
[Stclaresvolunteer@charlestandiocese.org](mailto:Stclaresvolunteer@charlestandiocese.org)  
843-259-1108

**NEXT SUNDAY**

First Sunday

Potluck Luncheon

Holy Hour

Building Fund Collection

## Church Offerings and Attendance

January 12 2025		
4 PM	88	\$1612.00
8:30 AM	31	\$750.00
11 AM	107	\$1307.00
Mail		\$496.00
PayPal/Electronic		\$560.00
Total	<b>226</b>	\$4,725.00
Budget 2025	<b>230</b>	<b>\$4,350.00</b>
+/-	<b>-4</b>	<b>\$375.00</b>
<b>Year to Date</b>		\$12,065.00
Budget for year +/-		<b>\$985.00</b>
<b>Building Fund</b>		
4:00 PM		\$0.00
12:00 AM		\$0.00
11:00 AM		\$0.00
Total	0	<b>\$0.00</b>
Holy Hour		0
Funeral		0
<b>2025 Totals</b>		
4:00 PM		253
8:30 AM		79
11 AM		352
Weekday Masses		192
Holy Hour		15
Holy Day		221
Special Liturgy		0
Funerals		0
Weddings		60

## Average Attendance

4 PM	8:30 AM	11:00 AM
<b>84</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>117</b>

### Facts regarding our bulletin!

Bulletins emailed last weekend: 405+

Percentage opened 66% -

**Opened emails: 269 - Unopened emails: 136 +**

## Masses, Sanctuary Lamp & Flowers

To have the Sanctuary Light for your relatives or intentions, please use the envelope provided at the entrance. Donation is \$5.00. [The Sanctuary Light burns this week in Memory of +Joseph R. Shaluly, Sr., by his daughter, Terry Shaluly.](#)

To have flowers for a memorial of a loved one, please use the envelope provided at the entrance. Donation is \$50.00 per Sunday.

If you would like a **Mass** offered for your loved ones, please call the church office at 864.469.9119 or [secretary@saintrafka.org](mailto:secretary@saintrafka.org). Envelopes for Masses also available at the door of the church.



**CATHOLIC**  
INFORMATION CENTER

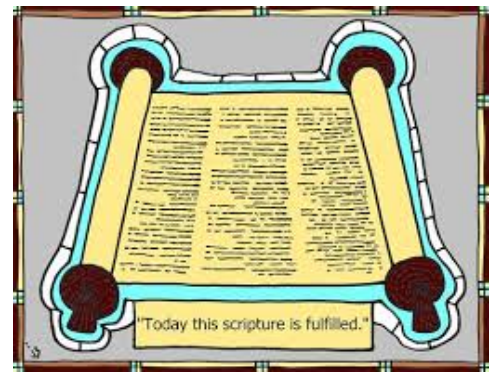
<https://catholic.center/>





# Liturgical Readings

Old Testament (English) Numbers 21:4-9	<b>Darcy Bolak</b>
New Testament (Arabic) Galatians 3:23-29	<b>Rania Sammour</b>



## Mass Intentions

<b>January 25 - 26</b>	<b>3rd Epiphany</b>	
Saturday, 4 PM	Thomas Dowd, Birthday	Bob Dowd
Sunday, 8:30 AM	Faithful Departed	Annellett Hallett
Sunday 11:00 AM	Sandra Ashy, 40 Day Memorial	Family
Tuesday, 10:00 AM	Steve Knight	Ceil & Andy
Wednesday, 7:00 PM	+Leila Chebier	Ceil & Andy
Thursday 10:00 AM	+Virginia Guzman	Ceil & Andy
Friday, 10:00 AM	Greg Mytych	Barb Mytytch
<b>February 1 - 2</b>	<b>Presentation in the Temple</b>	
Saturday, 4 PM	+Joan & Sean Moynihan Mother & Son	Mickey Sayegh
Sunday, 8:30 AM	+Pauline Wersinger	Kristie Killough
Sunday 11:00 AM	+Leila Chebeir	Marie Kidd
Tuesday, 10:00 AM	+Tony Roberts	Ceil & Andy
Wednesday, 7:00 PM	Open	
Thursday 10:00 AM	Bob Dowd, Eye Surgery February 7	Self
Friday, 10:00 AM	+Lillian Sasso	Sasso Family



All men of the parish are invited to join men from Prince of Peace parish for breakfast and fellowship. The Catholic Men's Breakfast meets on the first Thursday of each month at 8:00 AM at the Eggs Up Restaurant, 3935 Pelham Road, Greenville. Please join us and feel free to bring a friend! Any questions call Jack Stewart, 864 787-7592.

Video on the Sainted Massabki brothers on Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/NoursatEnglish/videos/1008068293229859>

# Calendar of Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>26 3rd Epiphany</b> 8:30 AM, Divine Liturgy 10:30 AM, Holy Rosary 11:00 AM, Divine Liturgy 5:00 PM, Syro-Malabar Mass	27	28 10 AM Divine Liturgy Arabic Devotions to follow	29 6:30 PM, Holy Rosary 7:00 PM, Divine Liturgy	30 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy	31 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy	<b>February 1</b> 11:00 AM, Funeral 3:15 Confessions 4:00 PM, Vigil Liturgy
<b>2 Presentation</b> 8:30 AM, Divine Liturgy 10:30 AM, Holy Rosary 11:00 AM, Divine Liturgy Potluck Luncheon 3:00 PM, Holy Hour 5:00 PM, Korean Mass	3	4 10 AM Divine Liturgy Arabic Devotions to follow	5 6:30 PM, Holy Rosary 7:00 PM, Divine Liturgy	6 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy	7 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy First Friday Devotions to follow	8 3:15 Confessions 4:00 PM, Vigil Liturgy
<b>9 Saint Maron Sunday of the Priests</b> 8:30 AM, Divine Liturgy 10:30 AM, Holy Rosary 11:00 AM, Divine Liturgy 5:00 PM, Syro-Malabar Mass	10	11 10 AM Divine Liturgy Arabic Devotions to follow	12 6:30 PM, Holy Rosary 7:00 PM, Divine Liturgy	13 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy	14 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy	15 3:15 Confessions 4:00 PM, Vigil Liturgy
<b>Fast of Nineveh</b>						
<b>16 Righteous &amp; Just</b> 8:30 AM, Divine Liturgy 10:30 AM, Holy Rosary 11:00 AM, Divine Liturgy 5:00 PM, Korean Mass	17	18 10 AM Divine Liturgy Arabic Devotions to follow	19 6:30 PM, Holy Rosary 7:00 PM, Divine Liturgy	20 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy	21 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy	22 3:15 Confessions 4:00 PM, Vigil Liturgy



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**Downtown Chapel**  
 639 North Main Street  
 Greenville, SC 29601  
 (864) 232-6733

**Northwest Chapel**  
 6710 White Horse Road  
 Greenville, SC 29611  
 (864) 294-6415

**Southeast Chapel**  
 1604 NE Main Street  
 Simpsonville, SC 29681  
 (864) 688-1600

## Saints of the Day

### January

January 25, Conversion of Saint Paul  
January 26, Saint Agnes  
January 27, Saint Paula  
January 28, Saint Ephrem, the Syrian  
January 29, St. Hippolytus of Antioch  
January 30, St. Maximus the Confessor

### February

February 2, Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple  
February 5, Saint Agatha, Martyr  
February 9, Saint Maron  
February 12, Saint Melatius of Antioch, Confessor  
February 15, Coptic Martyrs of Libya, 2015  
February 18, Pope Saint Leo I, Confessor

## Prayer List

Pat Moore, Deacon Bob Smith, Richard Wickett, Anna Maria Portilla, Sandra Reece, Charles Howard, Marcia Palmer, Mary Howard, Lisa Moman, Leslie Ziminsky, Dan Beckman, Lisa Bolt, Crysten Yammine, L. Stadler, Mary Killough, Thomas Sloan, Ciera D, Irene Ponce, Philomena Reed, Rick Argon, Sister Mary Emmanuel, OSC, Hewitt Dickerson, Brielle Sheriff, Carol, Gina, Jeni Yacu, Rodena and Bruce Thompson, Andrea Emilia Bernabey, Nadim Chebeir, Mike, Leo, B J Dursse, Deacon Dick Murtaugh, Vicki Gosnell, Sam Clutter, Michael Tierney, Paul Shimow, Betty Mileski, Doug Logan, Rita Charbonete, Frances Danton, Diane Hickey, Alan Frechette, Jacob and Jaxson Rivera, Andrea Wise, Patrizia, Susan Clarke, Andy Frisari, Beth, Mary Dowden, Karen Rodgers, Nancy Georgion, Rosemary & Jim King, Mark Knight, Stephen Wedgeworth, MR, Hilda Hix, Catherine Caul, Albert Martin, Nanine D'Aquin, Elizabeth Fallet, Anthony Kozakiewicz, Bill Riley, KG, Linda Crosby, Jenny Gould, Maurice Mercier, Breese, Jennifer Payne, Matt Smith, Leila Chebeir, Tammy Lopez, Anthony Fagliarone, Fernando, Carolyn Groner, Tim Eaton, Kelly Mullens, Carol Craven, Mel Casby, Vincent Howard, K.F., Eileen Howard, Jack Campbell, Hilda Hix, Sue Bauer, Chrisoula, Theresa Woodson, Noah Scott Kestler, Art and Judy Pape, Suhail Yousiff, Tom Craven, Jr., Michael Rau, Chris Davis, Pixie Geren, Mike Dyer, Christian Pereira, Art Newton, Nancy Georgion, Recovery of RS, Claire Barnett, Ethel Brassel, Katrina Shunk, George Vargo, Irma Galvan, Mary Cleary, Joe Lemire, Virginia LaFave, Nabeel

## Birthdays

### January

26, Robin Paul  
27, Art Newton  
28, Chris Beckman

### February

2, Rosemarie Sleiman  
2, Hanan Saadeh  
2, Jeni Yacu  
2, Margaret (Micky) Sayegh  
3, Lance Hopper  
5, Terry Goodman  
6, Marlene Saad  
10, Bernadette Mileski  
11, Martin Palgut  
13, Thomas Zemitz  
14, Peri Hill

## Anniversaries

### No Anniversaries noted in January

### February

9, Billy and Helen Rouch  
10, Bassam & Suhair Nmair  
16, Tony and Marie Kidd

## Necrology

### January

+Leroy J. Howard, January 25, 2023  
+Michel Hanna Saade, January 26, 2024  
+Joseph R. Shaluly, Sr., January 27, 2021  
+Madeline Majeed Issa, January 28, 2008

### February

+George Louis Sijon, February 1, 2018  
+Ramza Sleiman, February 9, 2023  
+Michael Gorgis Issa, February 13, 2014

## Important Dates to Remember

Marriage Enrichment Day of Reflection,  
January 25  
Professions of Faith, Confirmation, February 2  
Fast of Nineveh, February 10 - 13  
*Haflī*, February 22, 2025  
Ash Monday, March 3  
Pastoral Visit of Bishop Gregory, March 15-16

## Special Announcements

### MRE - Maronite Religious Education Classes

Our thanks to **Jessica Dagher Allen** preparing our children for First Holy Communion and to **Lisa Advent** and assistants for teaching our other children in our religious education program. Below is the schedule of classes for this “academic” year. Classes meet after the 11 AM Divine Liturgy.

**January 26**, February 9, February 23, March 9. First Confessions, Practice, etc. to be announced.

## Marriage Enrichment

A Marriage Enrichment Day of Reflection will be held on Saturday January 25, 2025. The Day of Reflection will be given by **Vivian Akel, LCSW** (Clinical Social Worker). Vivian is a Maronite Catholic from Brooklyn, NY, and the Safe Environment Coordinator for the Eparchy of Saint Maron. She brings many years of social work, pastoral counseling and theology along with a deep commitment to the Catholic Faith. The day will include talks, prayers and lunch.

## Church Directory Photos January 17 & 18



**Arise** Mother/Tween  
Daughter Retreat

A CHANCE TO HANG OUT,  
TALK ABOUT SOME IMPORTANT  
GIRL MATTERS,  
AND MOST IMPORTANTLY:  
**HAVE FUN!**

Friday-Saturday  
Jan. 31- Feb. 1



**HEART & RIDGE**  
Retreat and Cultural Center

# Marriage Enrichment Day

## Reflection & Prayer

Hosted by Saint Rafka Parish &  
Eparchy of St. Maron Couples Ministry



JAN 25, 9AM-2PM

Saint Rafka Church  
1215 SC-14  
Greer, SC 29650

EMAIL US TO RSVP:  
[saintrafkagreenville@gmail.com](mailto:saintrafkagreenville@gmail.com)

FOR COUPLES OF ALL AGES

Themes for Marriage Enrichment Day of Dialogue, Reflection and Prayer

1. How does a secular marriage differ from a Catholic marriage.
2. Qualities and habits that contribute to a successful marriage.
3. Virtues necessary to reach your 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.
4. What does Faithfulness to each other really mean?
5. Balancing children, parents and work obligations.
6. The role your community of faith plays in supporting your marriage and family life.
7. Praying together as a couple.

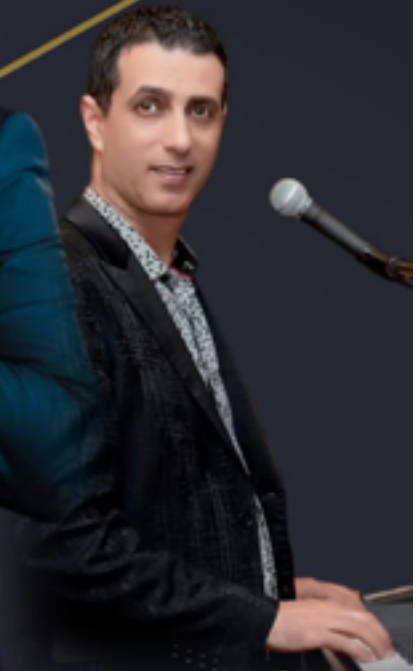


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## SHINING THE LIGHT ON THE DARKNESS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Saturday, February 8, 2025

from 6 to 8:30 p.m.

St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Church

Parish Life Building

2252 Woodruff Rd., Simpsonville, SC 29681

“It is a call to take action ... If we close our eyes and ears, if we do nothing, we will be guilty of complicity.”

- Pope Francis

Join us as we listen to expert speakers to learn how to recognize how traffickers work, how to protect our families, friends and strangers from traffickers, how to ensure we are not inadvertently aiding the traffickers, and the Catholic role in efforts to help those impacted.

This program is recommended for adults, high school, and mature middle school students.

There is no cost for this event, and childcare is available, but we ask that you RSVP by February 3. Light refreshments will be provided.

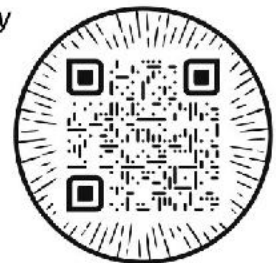
To learn more about this event and to RSVP, please scan the QR code or visit [www.smmcc.org/rsvp-traf](http://www.smmcc.org/rsvp-traf).

Please contact [respectlife@smmcc.org](mailto:respectlife@smmcc.org) if you have any questions.

*This event is sponsored by  
Respect Life Ministry.*

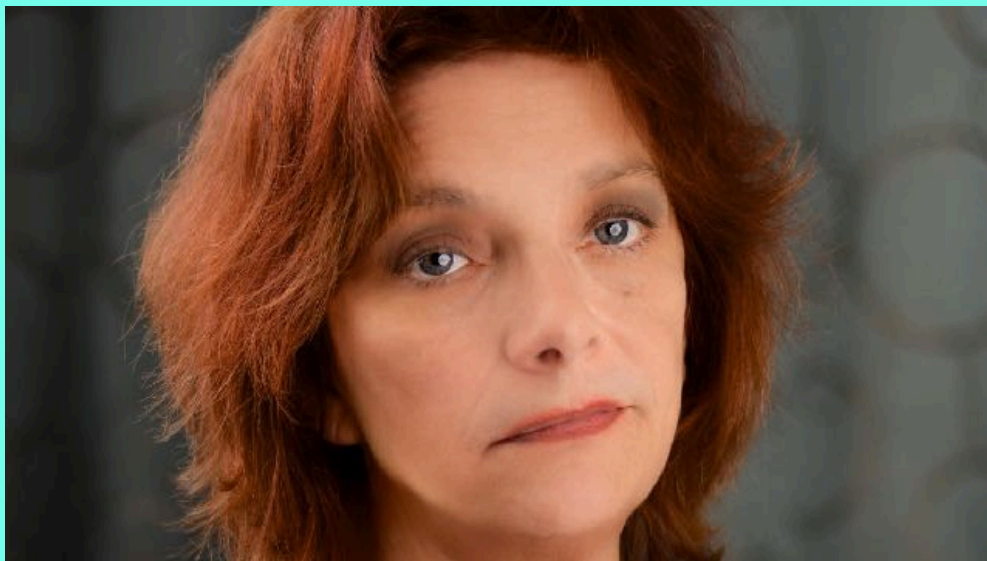


ST. MARY MAGDALENE  
CATHOLIC CHURCH





**Mary Dowden** suffered a debilitating stroke on November 5, 2021 and she and husband Greg are in great need of having to add ramps, bars, etc. to their home as well as facing great medical bills. **Greg Dowden** has set up a [GoFund.Me page](#) for anyone who would wish to help with the great expenses involved. You can also write a check to Saint Rafka for Mary Dowden. Thanks to all who have reached out. May God continue to heal Mary and bless each one who helps this loving family in their time of need.



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**Saint Rafka Council #15519**

2nd Monday of the Month, 7 PM, Wickett Hall



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