



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 1, 2014

Birmingham Christian Lebanese Community Celebrates Its 16th Annual Festival April 25 & 26, 2014

Contact: Paul Bolus - (205) 521-8402 or Ron Council – (205) 250-9900 or (205) 966-6803

NOTE: Opportunities for photos and live coverage:

Church member teams will be preparing Lebanese food in cooking sessions 9 a.m. – 2 p.m., in St. Elias' large kitchen:

Saturday, March 15 – Meat pies

Thursday, March 20– Kibbee

Monday, March 26 – Grape Leaves

Thursday, March 27– Kibbee

And the week of the Festival April 21, through the Festival

St. Elias Maronite Catholic Church (836 8th Street South, Birmingham, Alabama)

Celebrating its 16th Annual

Lebanese Food and Festival Friday and Saturday, April 25 & 26, 2014

With Added 5K Run at 8:00 a.m. and Fun Run at 9:00 a.m. Saturday Morning

St. Elias Maronite Catholic Church will celebrate its 16th Annual Lebanese Food and Cultural Festival 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Friday and Saturday, April 25 & 26. Admission to the Festival entertainment and tour events is free and open to the public, and traditional Lebanese food will be available throughout both days for sale. Paul Bolus, Chairman of the Lebanese Food and Cultural Festival, said, "St. Elias has shared 25% of proceeds from the annual event amounting to over \$310,000 in the past 15 years with area charities as a way for St. Elias to give back and demonstrate, by example, the Christian value of giving to others in need."

Lebanese delicacies offered during the two-day Festival include Baked Kibbee, Rolled Grape Leaves, Spinach Pies, Baked Kibbee and Falafel Sandwiches, Tabouleh (Lebanese Salad), Grilled Lebanese Lemon Chicken, Loobia (green beans), Rice, Homus and Pita Bread. Ample, comfortable dining tables and seating will be available in and outside the Church.

LaVonne Williamson, Chairperson of Heritage and Cultural Information for the Festival, said, "Traditional, healthy Lebanese food is an essential part of our culture and is prepared by members using recipes handed down for generations. Great care and preparation is taken with the time intensive preparation of the food, including Baked Kibbee, the most popular dish."

This year the Saint Elias Cedar 5K Run will be held on Saturday, April 26th, 2014 at 8:00 a.m. followed by the Cedar Shake Fun Run at 9:00 a.m. The run will benefit the SUKI (Spreading Unconditional Kindness Intentionally) Foundation, an organization established to educate the community, fund local research, and help families with children diagnosed with Rett Syndrome. The race will begin at the Church located at 836 8th Street South and will run through the historic Glen Iris neighborhood. For more information and to register visit www.cedarrun5k.com.

Expanded parking will include two offsite parking lots available for use Friday evening and all day and night Saturday from UAB Remote 1 Parking, located at 608 8th Street, South, directly across University Boulevard and next to the car dealership and from UAB parking 15R on 10th Avenue South, next to Epic School. Buses will run from both lots, both evenings, beginning at 5 and ending at 9.

Prices for food will range from \$3.00 a la carte spinach pies to plates of food for \$10.00 and up. Desserts include a variety of baklawa, kiak (Lebanese sugar cookie) and Lebanese ice cream. Prices will range from \$2.50 for most desserts to \$20.00 for a dessert sampler. Friday lunchtime delivery will be available by calling at (205) 252-3867, or placing deliveries on-line at www.stelias.org for any delivery over \$75.00 to the southside or downtown area.

Traditional dances will be performed by youth of the Church on an indoor stage beginning at 6 p.m. Friday and at 12:30 p.m. Saturday and will continue throughout the afternoon and evening. The New York based *Amin Sultan Lebanese Band* will perform on stage in a large tent 6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. nightly.

Hourly guided tours, starting on the front steps of the historic St. Elias Church with its renovated interior, will be available from 11 a.m. until 7 p.m., and self-guided tours may be taken 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., both days with a 5-6 p.m. exclusion Saturday during the Saturday Vigil Liturgy, which all are welcome to attend.

During the Festival a silent auction will take place. The silent auction will feature a variety of interesting offerings including catered Lebanese dinners, vacation packages, collector items and many gift certificates to restaurants and events in the Birmingham area. The Silent Auction will close in two stages at 4:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. on Saturday, April 26, 2014. Items for sale at the St. Elias Booth include cookbooks, coin dancing skirts, hats, T-shirts and cups.

Credit and debit cards will be accepted.

St. Elias is located in Birmingham, Alabama at 836 8th Street, South, between University Blvd. and 10th Avenue South.

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