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NEWS FLASH — PRESS RELEASE

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Birmingham Christian Lebanese Community Celebrates Its Twelfth Annual Festival and 100 Years in Birmingham!

St. Elias Maronite Catholic Church is extending an invitation to the public to attend its Twelfth Annual Lebanese Food and Cultural Festival to be held on Friday, April 9, 2010 and Saturday, April 10, 2010, from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. both days. There is no admission charge. The public will have an opportunity to taste the food and experience the atmosphere of this Lebanese Maronite Catholic Church — celebrating its 100 years of existence.

To celebrate and commemorate our 100 years in Birmingham, there will be special hats, t-shirts, cups and a hand-out explaining the history of our Church in Birmingham. Visitors will be able to tour our newly renovated Church and learn more about our Maronite Catholic heritage. In July of this year, our Church will host the National gathering of Maronites from all over the United States as part of our 100 year celebration.

Some of the Lebanese delicacies that will be offered during the Festival will include: Baked Kibbee, Rolled Grape Leaves, Spinach Pies, Baked Kibbee and Falafel Sandwiches, Tabouleh (Lebanese Salad), Grilled Lebanese Lemon Chicken, Homus and Pita Bread. For dessert the public can sample Lebanese sweets including a variety of baklawa, kiak (Lebanese sugar cookie) and Lebanese ice cream.

Many cultural events explaining the rich history and tradition of the Maronite Catholic faith, which originated in Lebanon, will be held during the two day event. Some of the cultural events will include a Heritage Room where demonstrations of the Birmingham Lebanese Community and cultural displays from Lebanon will occur. Also, daytime tours of the newly renovated Church will be held each day. The tours will include a discussion of the famous stain glass windows surrounding the Church and the use during Church services of Aramaic, the native language spoken by Jesus.



Nightly entertainment will again feature the extremely popular world renowned Amin Sultan Band from New York outside in a tent with music and dancing from 6:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. The public is also invited to attend our Liturgy service which will start at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday (this is the Catholic Sunday Vigil Liturgy (or Mass) service held weekly). Inside the main Hall, Friday night and Saturday, on stage, our youth will perform traditional Lebanese dances.

Beginning on Friday night and concluding Saturday at 8:30 p.m., a Silent Auction will be held.

Twenty-five percent of all proceeds for the Festival will go to local and national charities other than St. Elias. In the last eleven years St Elias has donated over \$195,000.00 to other charities from Festival proceeds.

Starting Monday, April 5, 2010 and ending Thursday, April 8, 2010 at 5:00 p.m., advance **delivery** food orders may be requested by ordering on-line at: www.stelias.org or by calling **252-3867**, for orders greater than \$75.00 to the downtown and Southside areas. Walk up take out orders are available throughout the Festival and no advance orders are needed for takeouts or dining in during the Festival. Free shuttle parking from UAB Lot 15R on 10th Avenue South (next to the Epic School parking lot) to one of the main entrances of the Festival will be available on Friday and Saturday nights from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

St. Elias Maronite Catholic Church is located at **836 8th Street South** directly **across from Epic School** and **Bessie Estell Park on the southwest side of the UAB Campus** near the corner of University Boulevard and 8th Street South.

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