

The Second Sunday of Advent

December 5, 2021

in the 168th Year of the Parish

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

142 Market Street, Williamsport, PA 17701

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Rev. Brian D. Vasey, Pastor

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Welcome to Saint Mark's Lutheran Church!

Our Mission: "To know Christ and to make Christ known."

This is Christ's church. There is a place for you here.

We are the church that shares a living, daring confidence in God's grace.

Liberated by our faith, we embrace you as a whole person—questions, complexities and all. Join us as we do God's work in Christ's name for the life of the world.

Please Note: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has provided revised guidelines with regard to mask wearing. Following these guidelines, and the specific recommendations of our bishop (Bishop Collins of the Upper Susquehanna Synod) Church Council strongly recommends that masks be worn, social distancing followed, and to speak and sing in very low tones when worshipping in St. Mark's church building. Thank You!

An Order for Holy Communion, 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m., With One Voice, Setting Five (WOV, "Blue Book")

****Please stand as you are able.***

PRELUDE *Comfort, Comfort Now My People*

Timothy Albrecht

WELCOME/ANNOUNCING THE DAY

***BRIEF ORDER FOR CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

The pastor leads the congregation in the invocation, the sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their baptism.

P In the name of the Father ✠, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

P Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C **Amen.**

P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

P Most merciful God,

C **we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

P In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us and for his sake forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare unto you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

Prepare the Royal Highway



1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; the King of kings is near!
2 God's peo - ple, see him com - ing: your own e - ter - nal king!
3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen to greet your prom - ised king!
4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; it comes from heav'n a - bove.



Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley a lev - el road ap - pear!
Palm branch - es strew be - fore him! Spread gar - ments! Shout and sing!
Your king, yet ev - 'ry na - tion its trib - ute too may bring.
His rule is peace and free - dom and jus - tice, truth, and love.



Then greet the King of glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry:
God's prom - ise will not fail you! No more shall doubt as - sail you!
All lands will bow be - fore him; their voic - es join your sing - ing:
So let your praise be sound - ing for kind - ness so a - bound - ing:



Ho - san - na to the Lord, for he ful - fills God's word!

Text: Frans Mikael Franzén, 1772–1847; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*
Music: BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN, Swedish folk tune, 17th cent.
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*THE GREETING

P The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C And also with you.

*KYRIE



A Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son: C Lord, have mer - cy.
Lord, have mer - cy:



A Chri - ste e - le - i - son: C Christ, have mer - cy.
Christ, have mer - cy:



A Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son: C Lord, have mer - cy.
Lord, have mer - cy:

*LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH- Light One Candle (stanza 2)

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah



1 Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
 2 Light two can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
 3 Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
 4 Light four can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.



He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra - el, God ful - fills the prom - ise.
 He shall feed the flock like a shep-herd, gent - ly lead them home-ward.
 Lift your heads and lift high the gate-way for the King of glo - ry.
 He is com - ing, tell the glad tid - ings. Let your lights be shin - ing!

Text: Wayne L. Wold, b. 1954
 Music: TIF IN VELDELE, Yiddish folk tune
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***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Let us pray. Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming give to all the people of the world knowledge of your salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

INTRODUCTION TO TODAY'S READINGS

Forerunners and messengers advance the advent of our God. While John the baptizer’s voice in the wilderness may be the principal focus of the day, Malachi’s prophecy could as easily herald the coming Christ as forerunner of the LORD of hosts. Finally all the baptized are called to participate in the sharing of the gospel. In so doing we prepare the way for the coming of Jesus and assist all people in capturing a vision of the “salvation of God.”

THE FIRST LESSON.....Malachi 3:1-4

1See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. 2But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap; 3he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. 4Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

CANTICLE OF ZACHARIAH (Luke 1:68-79)

68Blessed are you, Lord, the | God of Israel,
you have come to your people and | set them free.

69You have raised up for us a | mighty Savior,
born of the house of your | servant David.

70Through your holy prophets, you promised of old to save us | from our enemies,

71from the hands of | all who hate us,

**72to show mercy | to our forebears,
and to remember your | holy covenant.**

73This was the oath you swore to our | father Abraham:

74to set us free from the hands of our | enemies,
free to worship you | without fear,

75holy and righteous before you, all the days | of our life.

76And you, child, shall be called the prophet of | the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to pre- | pare the way,

**77to give God's people knowledge | of salvation
by the forgiveness | of their sins.**

78In the tender compassion | of our God
the dawn from on high shall | break upon us,

**79to shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shad- | ow of death,
and to guide our feet into the | way of peace.**

THE SECOND LESSON.....Philippians 1:3-11

3I thank my God every time I remember you, 4constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, 5because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. 6I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. 7It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. 8For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. 9And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight 10to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, 11having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?
Al - le - lu - ia. You have the words of e - ter - nal life.
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

*THE HOLY GOSPEL.....Luke 3:1-6

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the third chapter.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

P 1In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, 2during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. 3He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, 4as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.

5Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall be made straight,
and the rough ways made smooth;

6and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”

The Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

THE SERMON

*HYMN On Jordan's Banks the Baptist's Cry (LBW, "Green" 36)

On Jordan's Banks the Baptist's Cry



1 On Jor - dan's banks the Bap - tist's cry an - nounc - es
2 Then cleansed be ev - 'ry life from sin; make straight the
3 We hail you as our Sav - ior, Lord, our ref - uge
4 Stretch forth your hand, our health re - store, and make us
5 All praise to you, e - ter - nal Son, whose ad - vent



that the Lord is nigh; a - wake and hear - ken,
way for God with - in, and let us all our
and our great re - ward; with - out your grace we
rise to fall no more; oh, let your face up -
has our free - dom won, whom with the Fa - ther



for he brings glad tid - ings of the King of kings!
hearts pre - pare for Christ to come and en - ter there.
waste a - way like flow'rs that with - er and de - cay.
on us shine and fill the world with love di - vine.
we a - dore, and Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er - more.

Text: Charles Coffin, 1676–1749; tr. composite
Music: PUER NOBIS, European tune, adapt. Michael Praetorius, 1571–1621

*THE NICENE CREED

P Living together in trust and hope, we affirm our faith:

C We believe in one God,

the Father, the Almighty,

maker of heaven and earth,

of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,

the only Son of God,

eternally begotten of the Father,

**God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven;
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

After each petition, "Hear us, O God/Your mercy is great."

*THE PEACE

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C **And also with you.**

The ministers and congregation greet one another with these or similar words, and/or gestures of peace, limiting physical touch and contact with one another.

*THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Lift up your hearts.

C **We lift them to the Lord.**

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

P It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and ever-living God. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes again to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and
might, heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry.
Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the
high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

P In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

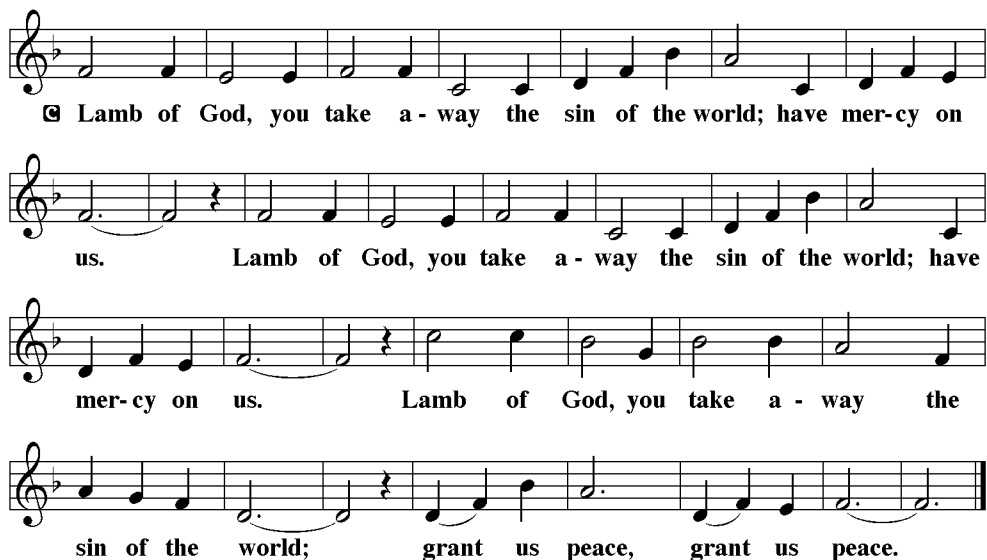
Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

***OUR LORD'S PRAYER**

P Let us pray in the words our Savior gave us:

**C Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power,
and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

*LAMB OF GOD



☪ Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on
us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

*INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Persons may come forward to the chancel to receive Holy Communion. This format will be more “continuous” noting the following procedure:

- *Communicants, masked and observing social distancing, are asked to come forward as directed by ushers by way of the center aisle, take a cup from the tray provided and receive the bread from Pastor Vasey.*
- *Once receiving the bread, communicants will proceed to one of two stations (left or right) to receive wine from the pouring chalice.*
- *After receiving wine, communicants will place the empty cup in the designated tray and return to their pew by way of the side aisles.*

Please do not kneel at the rail. Kneeling at the rail will return at a time to be determined by pastor and Church Council.

P Come to Christ's banquet. Feast on grace.

C Amen. Come Lord Jesus.

THE COMMUNION

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P Most High God,

you have come among us at this table.

By the Spirit's power, form us to be bearers of your word,

sharing gifts of mercy and grace with all,

through Christ Jesus, our host and our guest.

C Amen.

*THE BLESSING

P The God of hope

fill us with all joy and peace in believing,

so that we may abound in hope

by the power of the Holy Spirit,

through Christ Jesus for whom we wait.

C Amen.

*HYMN Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus (LBW, "Green" 30)

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus



1 Come, thou long-ex - pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo-ple free;
2 Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and yet a king;



from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king-dom bring.



Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art,
By thine own e - ter - nal Spir-it rule in all our hearts a - lone;



dear de - sire of ev - 'ry na - tion, joy of ev - 'ry long-ing heart.
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

***DISMISSAL**

P Go in peace, Christ is near.

C **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE *Fugue in g minor*

J.S. Bach

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Prayer List: Victims of COVID-19 and their families, Gregg Dancho and his mother, Eleanor, Liz Ruesskamp, Grace Arner, Diane Damaska, Vanessa Morgan, Gary Clark, Doris Brown, Charles Miller, Jerry Miller, Patricia Alexander, Joann Zeigler, Diana Zeigler, Richard Ritter, Ashton Ott, Lucille Sider, April Clark, Lenny Sherlinski, Ruth Sherlinski, Gary Cable, Elsie Sechler, Virginia Pulaskie, Bernadette Jones, Susan Kalabacas, Bunny Ditchfield, Judy Fortin, Roy and Gloria Meyer, Mary Lou Doebler, Walt Haussmann, Lou and Linda DeSeau, the family of Kay Poliska, the victims, shooter and their families from Oxford High School (Michigan).

In sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life the **MEMORIAL SERVICE** for Kay Poliska will take place on Thursday, December 9 at noon in our Nave. A time to greet the family and express condolences will precede the Memorial Service at 11 a.m. All are welcome.

WORSHIP LEADERS (12/5/2021)

Lector 8 a.m. Becky Pryor

10:30 a.m. Pam Jensen

Cantor/Song-leader (10:30) Karen Mariano

Communion Assistants

8 a.m. Becky Pryor

10:30 a.m. Ken & Laura Schreckengast

Guest Organist Carol Waltz

USHERS:

8 a.m. Dick Miller/Herb Poff

10:30 a.m. Mike Jensen, Captain. Gary Weber, Sean Jensen and Shelby Weber

WELCOME CAROL WALTZ! Today we welcome Carol Waltz as our guest organist and thank her for sharing her talents with us.

COVID CONTACT: Please note that your attendance at worship will be recorded. This serves as a precaution in case contact-tracing due to the pandemic is warranted. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

ADVENT BIBLE STUDY: continues on Wednesdays in Advent, 12:15 p.m. This year a Bible study during the noon hour replaces the traditional mid-week Service of the Word. Our study will be the traditional themes of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love associated with the Advent Season, and the schedule will be as follows:

+PEACE: Luke 1:57-79, December 8

+JOY: Luke 1:39-56, December 15

+LOVE: John 3:16-21, December 21

We will meet in Fellowship Hall 12:15-12:45 p.m. No meal will be served but feel free to bring a “bag lunch” if you so desire. Coffee, water and tea will be provided. All are welcome!

MUSICAL EVENTS AT ST. MARK’S:

West Branch Chorale presents *Beautiful Savior* – Brian Scott, Director and Kristin Ivers, Pianist. The concert will be Monday, December 6 at 7:00 p.m. in the nave. Masks are required and a free-will offering will be taken.

The Williamsport Civic Chorus presents “*A Rutter Christmas*”, the music of **John Rutter** on Friday, December 17 at 7:00 p.m. in the nave. Tickets are \$12 at the door for general admission and \$10 for students and seniors.

GIVE BLOOD: The Outreach Committee in collaboration with the Northcentral PA Chapter of the American Red Cross will hold a **Blood Drive** on **Friday, December 10, 2021 from 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall**. Please consider being a donor as the Red Cross experiences critical shortages of blood during the holiday season. Call 1-800-733-2767 or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter: “St. Marks” to schedule an appointment.

Work commitments and health issues prevent all of our committee members from assisting at this event. We are in need of volunteers to assist in bringing equipment into Fellowship Hall, greeting donors, serving snacks and helping to return equipment to the Red Cross van at the end of the Blood Drive. All equipment is packed in suitcases with wheels. We work in two-hour shifts. If you could lend a hand on this day, please contact Becky Miller Pryor at 570-971-4585.

Our **ANNUAL MEETING** will take place on Sunday, December 12 immediately following 9:30 a.m. Holy Communion. There will be one worship time on this Sunday. By action of our Church Council St. Mark's will host one annual meeting and not two as in previous years. The business of the meeting will be to vote on our annual 2022 budget, members of Church Council, and special projects of the congregation. See you there!

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP TIMES:

+ Friday, December 24, 7 p.m. A brief “Family Friendly Service” with a message especially appropriate to children. Join us for candlelight liturgy, Holy Communion, familiar carols.

+ Friday, December 24, 10 p.m. “Traditional Holy Communion by Candlelight” substituting carols for the Christmas Liturgy.

+ Sunday, December 26, 9:30 a.m. “The Feast of Stephen”; the First Sunday of Christmas. Our theme will be why the day we remember the death of the first deacon, Stephen, is part of our Christmas tradition. The story of “Good King Wenceslaus” will be shared and sung.

The New Year 2022 **ALTAR FLOWER SIGN-UP BOOK** will be available starting the first week of January.

NEEDED: HATS, GLOVES AND MITTENS: The Newberry Branch of NGA (National Giving Alliance) is in need of hats, gloves and mittens for boys and girls in sizes from toddler to adult. We provide NEW clothing and coats to needy children, women and families in the Greater Williamsport Area. During the month of November, we have already distributed more than 80 coats with hats, gloves or mittens. Although we have coats, our tub of hats, gloves and mittens is almost empty. Much needed donations may be placed in the gift box in the Narthex. Thank you for any help you can give.

GIFTING THE LADIES OF CM-6: Our annual Christmas party for the Ladies of CM-6 at the Selinsgrove Center is cancelled for yet another year. But the staff welcomes our gifts for a much smaller celebration they will host for the ladies. We are in need of moisturizing body wash and slipper socks. Monetary donations are needed to gift the caregivers with an assortment of snacks and for other items not donated for the ladies. A special thank you is given to the Newcomer family for their large donation of pudding cups. Checks may be made payable to St. Mark's with the memo line indicating Selinsgrove party.

READ ANY GOOD BOOKS LATELY? Faith and Fellowship has temporarily "moved some books" from our church library to the Front Lounge in order to make them more accessible. Stop by the Front Lounge and take a look!

OUR STEWARDSHIP

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Regular Offering | \$ 2,492.00 |
| Plate Offering | \$ 15.00 |
| Thanksgiving | \$ 60.00 |
| Theological Fund | \$ 10.00 |
| Synod Benevolence | \$ 10.00 |
| Grand Total | \$ 2,587.00 |

ALTAR FLOWERS today are given to the glory of God:

+ In loving memory of Larry Lundy, on his birthday, by the family.

+ In honor of my sisters, Barb, Karen and Diane, and in loving memory of my sister, Peggy, by Jackie Kinney.

COMMEMORATIONS

Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, died around 342

Monday, December 6, 2021

Little is known about Nicholas, except that he was a bishop in present-day Turkey. According to legend, he was famous for his giving to the poor, and so has become a symbol of anonymous gift-giving. Nicholas is the historical basis for the “Santa Claus” legend.

Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, died 397

Tuesday, December 7, 2021

While a governor of northern Italy, Ambrose was elected bishop of Milan on the same day he was baptized. He was a famous preacher, a writer of hymns we still sing today, and helped lead Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, to faith.