

**The First Sunday of Advent  
December 3, 2023**

**St. Mark's Lutheran Church**

142 Market Street, Williamsport, PA 17701

[stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org](mailto:stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org)

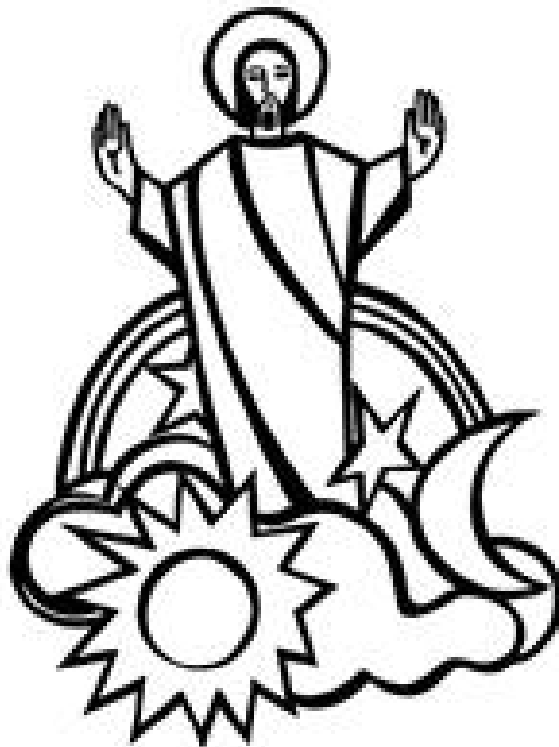
Office (570-323-4619) Fax (570-323-2452)

Rev. Brian D. Vasey, Pastor

[bvasey@stmarkswilliamsport.org](mailto:bvasey@stmarkswilliamsport.org)

*Welcome to Saint Mark's!*

*This is Christ's church. There is a place for you here. Join us as we seek, "To know Christ and to make Christ known."*



## **An Order for Holy Communion (Veni Emmanuel Setting)**

**8 and 10:30 am**

### **Please Note:**

**Hand sanitizer is available for your use; face masks are optional; offerings may be received by way of baskets as you enter or leave.**

*A guide to hymnal use: LBW, Green Book; WOV, Blue Book*

*\*Please stand as you are able.*

### **INTRODUCTION TO TODAY'S WORSHIP**

*Stir up your power, and come! Jesus encourages his followers to look forward to the day when he returns in power and glory to end all suffering.*

**PRELUDE**      *Celebration*      (Callahan)

### **WELCOME/ANNOUNCING THE DAY/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **\*BRIEF ORDER FOR CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

*All may make the sign of cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the pastor begins.*

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
who opens the heavens  
and draws near to us with salvation.

**Amen.**

God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance.

Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.

*Kneel/Stand*

**Everlasting God,**

**you love justice and you hate wrongdoing.**

**We confess the fear, greed, and self-centeredness  
that make us reluctant to work against oppression.**

**We are complicit in systems of exploitation.**

**We choose comfort over courage.**

**We are careless with creation's bounty.**

**Look upon us with mercy.**

**Turn our hearts again to you.**

**Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways**

**for the sake of our waiting world.**

**Amen.**

Hear these words of assurance:

God clothes you with garments of salvation  
and covers you with robes of righteousness.

In the tender compassion of † Jesus Christ,  
your sins are forgiven.

God's covenant is eternal,  
and God's blessing rests upon us all.

**Amen.**

**\*HYMN                      Fling Wide the Door**

**LBW, "Green", 32**

**\*THE GREETING**

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

**And also with you.**

**\*KYRIE**

Cantor                      All

Lord, \_\_\_\_\_ have mer - cy.      Lord, \_\_\_\_\_ have mer - cy.

3                      Cantor                      All

Christ, \_\_\_\_\_ have mer - cy, \_\_\_\_\_      Christ, \_\_\_\_\_ have mer - cy, \_\_\_\_\_

5                      Cantor                      All

Lord, \_\_\_\_\_ have mer - cy.      Lord, \_\_\_\_\_ have mer - cy.

**\*LIGHTING OUR ADVENT WREATH**

**Lord Jesus is coming and so we prepare,  
Our homes and our lives for Messiah so fair.  
It's Advent, we're happy, for Jesus is near,  
O Come and live in us, our Savior so dear.**

*Words, B. Vasey, 1995  
Tune, CADLE SONG*

**\*PRAYER OF THE DAY**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray. Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**THE FIRST READING.....Isaiah 64:1-9**

1 O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,  
so that the mountains would quake at your presence—  
2 as when fire kindles brushwood  
and the fire causes water to boil—  
to make your name known to your adversaries,  
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!  
3 When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,  
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.  
4 From ages past no one has heard,  
no ear has perceived,  
no eye has seen any God besides you,  
who works for those who wait for him.  
5 You meet those who gladly do right,  
those who remember you in your ways.  
But you were angry, and we sinned;  
because you hid yourself we transgressed.  
6 We have all become like one who is unclean,  
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.  
We all fade like a leaf,  
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.  
7 There is no one who calls on your name,  
or attempts to take hold of you;  
for you have hidden your face from us,

and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.

8 Yet, O LORD, you are our Father;  
we are the clay, and you are our potter;  
we are all the work of your hand.

9 Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD,  
and do not remember iniquity forever.  
Now consider, we are all your people.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **PSALM 80:1-7, 17-19**

1 Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph | like a flock;  
shine forth, you that are enthroned up- | on the cherubim.

2 **In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, | and Manasseh,**  
**stir up your strength and | come to help us.**

3 Restore | us, O God;  
let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.

4 **O LORD | God of hosts,**  
**how long will your anger fume when your | people pray?**

5 You have fed them with the | bread of tears;  
you have given them bowls of | tears to drink.

6 **You have made us the derision | of our neighbors,**  
**and our enemies laugh | us to scorn.**

7 Restore us, O | God of hosts;  
let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.

17 **Let your hand be upon the one at | your right hand,**  
**the one you have made so strong | for yourself.**

18 And so will we never turn a- | way from you;  
give us life, that we may call up- | on your name.

19 **Restore us, O LORD | God of hosts;**  
**let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.**

### **THE SECOND READING.....1 Corinthians 1:3-9**

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4 I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has

been given you in Christ Jesus, <sup>5</sup>for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind—<sup>6</sup>just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—<sup>7</sup>so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>8</sup>He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup>God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**\*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

All

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

2  
You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

**\*THE HOLY GOSPEL.....Mark 13:24-37**  
 The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter

All

Glo-ry to you, O \_\_\_\_\_ Lord.

[Jesus said:] 24“In those days, after that suffering,  
the sun will be darkened,

and the moon will not give its light,

25and the stars will be falling from heaven,

and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

26Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and

glory. 27Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds,  
from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

28“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and  
puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. 29So also, when you see these  
things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. 30Truly I tell you,  
this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. 31Heaven  
and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

32“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor  
the Son, but only the Father. 33Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the  
time will come. 34It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and  
puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be  
on the watch. 35Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of  
the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at  
dawn, 36or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. 37And what I say  
to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

The Gospel of the Lord.



## THE SERMON

**\*HYMN** Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending LBW, “Green”, LBW 27

## **\*THE NICENE CREED**

Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

**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, “Merciful Lord/Hear Our Prayer”*

## **\*THE PEACE**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**And also with you.** *The ministers and congregation greet each other.*

## **ANTHEM**

*Lord for thy Tender Mercy’s Sake*

Farrant

## **\*GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

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 everlasting God. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new. And so, with Christ on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

1 Cantor



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and God of might.

2 All



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and God of might.

3 Cantor



Heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry.

4



Ho-san - na in the high - est, ho-san-na in the high - est.

5 All



Ho-san - na in the high - est, ho-san-na in the high - est.

6 Cantor



Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

7



Ho-san - na in the high - est, ho-san-na in the high - est.

8 All



Ho-san - na in the high - est, ho-san-na in the high - est.

Holy God, mighty Lord, glorious Father:  
Endless is your mercy and eternal your reign.  
You have filled all creation with light and life;  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Through Abraham you promised to bless all nations,  
and rescue your chosen people who were slaves in Egypt.  
Through prophets you renewed your promise;  
and at this end of all ages, you sent your Son,  
who in words and deeds proclaimed your kingdom

and was obedient to your will,  
even to giving his life.

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.

For as often we eat this bread

and drink from this cup,

we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

**Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.**

Therefore gracious Father we await his coming in power  
to share with us the promised feast.

**Amen. Come Lord Jesus.**

Send now your Holy Spirit,

the spirit of our Lord and of his resurrection,

that we who receive our Lord's body and blood

may live to the praise of your glory

and receive our inheritance with all the saints in light.

**Amen. Come Holy Spirit.**

Join our prayers with your servants of every time and place,

and unite them with the ceaseless petitions of our great high priest

until he comes as victorious Lord of all.

**Amen.**

## \*OUR LORD'S PRAYER

Lord as you have taught us, so now we pray,

**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

**Cantor**

Je sus, wis - dom and might - y Lord, you take a way the sins\_\_\_ of the  
Je-sus, true branch of Jes - se's Tree  
Key of Dav - id and Day - spring from on high.  
De sire of na - tions, our Em - man - u - el,

2. 1.2.3. **All**

world: have mer - cy on us. Have mer - cy on us.

3. 4. **All**

world: Grant us\_\_\_ peace. Grant us\_\_\_ peace.

## \*INVITATION TO COMMUNION *All Are Welcome to Receive.*

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

- *Communicants as directed by ushers are asked to come forward by way of*

*the center aisle, take a cup from the tray provided and receive the bread.*

- *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.*

In this meal righteousness and peace dwell together. Come take your place at the table.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **THE COMMUNION**

### **\*AFTER COMMUNION**

The body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

**Amen.**

### **\*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Generous God,  
in bread and cup you have revealed your glory  
for all people to see together.

Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim  
your good news of liberation and release,  
brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior.

**Amen.**

### **\*THE BLESSING**

The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord 's face shine on you with grace and mercy.  
The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

**Amen.**

### **\*HYMN**

**Savior, of the Nations Come**

**LBW, “Green”, 28**

### **\*DISMISSAL**

Go in peace, keep awake.

**Thanks be to God.**

**POSTLUDE**      The Rejoicing                      (Callahan)

+++++

*Portions of this service are reprinted with permission from...*

*Lutheran Book of Worship (copyright, 1978)*

*Augsburg-Fortress Publishers (#2562-L).*

*Evangelical Lutheran Worship (copyright 2006)*

*Augsburg-Fortress Publishers, under license #2562-L.*

*sundayandseasons.com (copyright 2019), Augsburg-Fortress. All rights reserved.*

*Augsburg-Fortress Liturgies Annual License #SB144818.*

*“One License” A-738528.*

+++++



**Prayer List:** Victims of COVID-19 and their families, Liz Ruesskamp, Grace Arner, Diane Damaska, Vanessa Morgan, Gary Clark, Charles Miller, Jerry Miller, Patricia Alexander, Richard Ritter, Ashton Ott, Lucille Sider, April Clark, Lenny

Sherlinski, Ruth Sherlinski, Gary Cable, Elsie Sechler, Virginia Pulaskie, Susan Kalabacas, Bunny Ditchfield, Judy Fortin, Ezra Buckman, Sheila Brassard, Kevin Rosini, Kathy Eshelman, Micah, Deb Buckman, Linda Rosini, Mike Ford, Walt Haussmann, Kristin Rehm, the Family of Diana Zeigler.

**WORSHIP LEADERS (12/3/23)**

Lector	8:00AM	Vicki Haussmann
	10:30AM	Phil Thomas
Communion Assistants	8:00AM	Becky Pryor
	10:30AM	Deb Buckman and Mindy Wentzel
Organist		Sam Robinson
Ushers	8:00AM	Herb Poff and Richard Miller
	10:30AM	Tim Maggs, captain Carl Hieber, Charles Kuntz
Altar Guild	December	Wanda Fortin and Mindy Wentzel



**READ ANY GOOD BOOKS LATELY?** Faith Formation has temporarily “moved some books” from our church library to the Front Lounge in order to make them more accessible. Stop by the

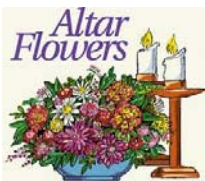
Front Lounge and take a look!

**OUR STEWARDSHIP November 26, 2023**

Regular Offering	\$2,192.00
Plate Offering	20.00
Thanksgiving	95.00
Food Pantry	60.00
Christmas Flowers	240.00
Family Promise Hosting	50.00
Flower Memorials / Tributes	30.00
Pastor's Discretionary Fund	50.00
Lutheran World Relief	50.00
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,787.00</b>



**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 by Jackie Kinney
- +In Loving Memory of my Sister Peggy by Jackie Kinney.



Please join us on today, December 3, for our annual Advent Wreath-making event. We will gather in Fellowship Hall during the Sunday School hour (9:15 ish) and create an Advent Wreath for your family to use at home during the Advent season. We will be making our wreaths in a variety of vessels and containers, using wet floral foam to keep the greens fresh throughout the Advent season. All materials will be provided!

## Reverse Advent Calendar

The Faith Formation and Evangelism and Fellowship Committees are once again giving congregation members an alternative to the traditional chocolate Advent calendars. And instead of *receiving* something each day of Advent, we are counting down to Christmas by *giving* something each day of Advent.



This year we would really like to focus our efforts on collecting hygiene products for Wise Options and Liberty House shelters. At any point in time these shelters may be housing up to 80 individuals, and hygiene products for women and children are in high demand. Please take a holiday bag from the Narthex and each day of Advent place a hygiene product in your bag. Soap/body wash, shampoo, shaving cream, toothbrushes, toothpaste, loofahs, deodorant, etc. may be found at any of the “Dollar Stores” and would be perfect donations. Please pray that these small items might be a blessing to those who receive them. Return your filled bag on Christmas Eve or New’s Year Eve. Even sometime in January would be fine! All items will be sorted and delivered to the YWCA. We hope that this Reverse Calendar will be a blessing to your Advent preparations. Thank you for your generosity!

## ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

### Congregational Meeting



The **ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING** is scheduled for **Sunday, December 10, 2023, immediately following the 9:30 a.m. single service of worship.** In case of an emergency cancelation of the worship service that day (due to weather or other cause), the Annual Congregational Meeting will be moved to the following Sunday, December 17.

Among the items to be presented, discussed, and/or voted upon are

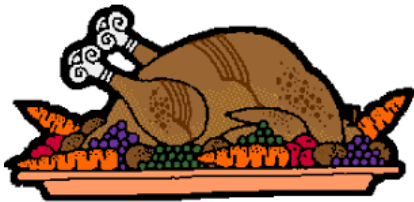
- Annual Report of Committees to the Congregation
- Election of four Council members
- Adoption of the 2024 budget to support the ministry of St. Mark’s
- Any other business that needs to be addressed

Please mark your calendars and plan to participate in this Annual Congregational Meeting. If you need additional information or have items that you would like to discuss, please contact one of the Council officers: Ralph Zeigler, president; Melvin Wentzel, vice-president; Vicki Haussmann, secretary;



or Debra Buckman, treasurer. Thank you!

## Turkey and all the Fixings.



Following after the Congregational meeting there will be a luncheon served to celebrate the start of our new year and the successful conclusion of this past year. A chance to celebrate those elected to council and bid a great thank you to those leaving the council (for now).



### FAMILY SUPPORT

When you or a family member are ill, have a crisis of faith, or have a personal concern of which you wish to make the pastor aware, please contact him directly by church office telephone (570-323-4619) or email ([bvasey@stmarkswilliamsport.org](mailto:bvasey@stmarkswilliamsport.org)). Do not assume the pastor will know of your need any other way.



When you or a loved one has a change of address, telephone number or email, please contact the church office at 570-323-4619 or [stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org](mailto:stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org). Please direct your intentions whether or not to share this information with our church family

## Evangelism and Fellowship Activities for Advent



We are collecting items, due December 10, for .....

- The Ladies of CM-6 at the Selinsgrove Center: Body wash, slipper socks and pudding cups.
- Residents of Danville State Hospital: Clothing, socks and underwear for men and women in sizes large and up, slippers, inexpensive watches and wallets.
- Check out the December Lion for information about our Habitat Faith Build Luncheon and the sending of Christmas cards.
- Monetary donations may be made to offset the cost for items not donated. Checks can be made payable to St. Mark's with the memo line indicating Evangelism and Fellowship.
- Donations may be placed in the tubs in the Narthex.

## **Give Something That Means Something**

### **Give Blood**



The Evangelism and Fellowship Committee is hosting a Community Blood Drive this Friday, December 8, 2023 from 11:00 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. consider being a donor or share this information with family and friends.

### **Christmas Ornaments**



As you enter the Narthex there is a display of Christmas ornaments, crafted by Lou Ann Zeigler. The Evangelism and Fellowship Committee is giving them away at no cost. But to make the joy the ornaments give stretch further; we are accepting a modest monetary donation. The combined donations will be used to purchase \$10.00 and \$15.00 grocery cards to be given to the United Churches Food Pantry. These gift cards allow families to purchase fresh fruits, meat and dairy products that are not available at the pantry.



## Monday, December 4, - Sunday, December 10, 2023

Monday, December 4  
Tuesday, December 5  
Wednesday, December 6

WCC Rehearsal 7:00PM FH  
Pastor's Lunch 1:00PM ML  
Mid-Week Advent Service 12:15PM CH

*We gather for mid-week services in our Chapel, 12:15 pm, Wednesdays in Advent (December 6, December 13, December 20). Our theme this year is, "Wait, Watch and Wonder". Please join us for these times of worship which will heighten our awareness and anticipation for the celebration of Christ's coming in the flesh.*

Friday, December 8

Red Cross Blood Drive 11AM-3PM FH

Sunday, December 10

**Holy Communion 8:00 AM and 10:30AM**

### **BIRTHDAYS**

David Elkin

December 4

Laura Schreckengast

December 7

### **ANNIVERSARIES**

None

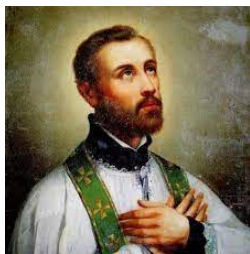
### **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Please remember to let the administrative assistant know when committee meetings are scheduled, or changed, so it can be included in the bulletin.

If there is anything you would like to include in the "This Week at Our Church" please let the administrative assistant, Joe Baur, know at [jbaur@stmarkswilliamsport.org](mailto:jbaur@stmarkswilliamsport.org)

## COMMEMORATIONS

### **Francis Xavier, missionary to Asia, died 1552**



*Sunday, December 3, 2023*

A native of the Basque region of Spain, Xavier became a missionary to India, Southeast Asia, Japan, and the Philippines. He also helped to found the Society of Jesus (Jesuits).

### **John of Damascus, theologian and hymnwriter, died around 749**



*Monday, December 4, 2023*

A monk in an abbey near Jerusalem, John wrote many hymns as well as theological works. One of his works, *The Fount of Wisdom*, remained influential for centuries.

### **Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, died around 342**



*Wednesday, December 6, 2023*

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.

### **Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, died 397**



*Thursday, December 7, 2023*

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 and theologian of the fourth century) to faith.