

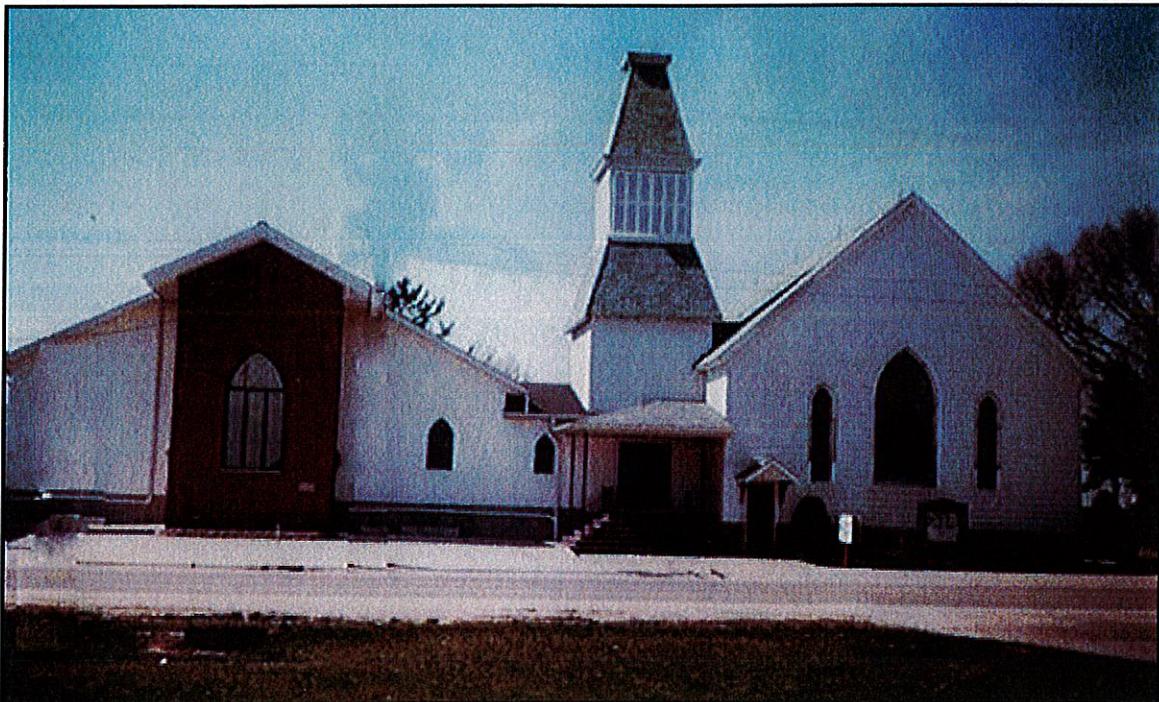
Seward Congregational Church
Box 104, 3029 S. Pecatonica Road
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(815)247-8612
<https://sewardcongregational.com>

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*The
Chimes*

December 2025 Church News



**Seward Congregational Church Chimes
December Announcements**

DIACONATE: Will meet on December 3, at 1:30 p.m.

TRUSTEE'S: The Trustee's will meet on December 17, at 6:30 p.m.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP: Will not meet in December.

PULPIT FILL: On Sunday December 7 Dr. Carroll Smith. December 14 will be the Children's Christmas program-no pulpit fill. December 21 Earl Klinger will be our guest speaker. December 24 will be our Christmas Eve Service at 7 p.m. with Scripture and Christmas Songs, with special music by Ross Kendell. December 28 Larry Roettger will be our guest speaker.

CONGREGATIONAL MEMBER RESOURCES: To cover the needs of the congregation during this time each person has been assigned a church council member as a contact for spiritual needs. If you are unable to reach you assigned council member, please try one of the other church council members listed.

Groups are determined by the first letter of your last name.

A-C Karleen Merchant 815-222-7744----D-K Tari Woods 815-222-3037----L-R Teresa Gobeli 608-214-2971
S-Z Char Remer 815-315-3455

BEARS/PACKERS PAPER CHALLENGE: The Bears/Packers challenge will be on December 7. Feel free to deposit your paper goods to vote for your favorite team in the annual conflict. This year, the food pantries are asking to concentrate on paper towels as that is the most needed item. Collection containers will be available in the church on and after November 30.

The Board of Trustees is looking for a person to assume the role of Treasurer. This job is a paid position responsible for paying church invoices, managing payroll distribution, and handling required legal filings. Please get in touch with Char Remer (815-315-3455) if interested.

The Board of Trustees is looking for a church member to assist with the Financial Investment team. This person is responsible for reviewing church investments with Investment Agents and promoting financial stability for our members. Please get in touch with Maury Daubs at 815 262 8307 if interested.

We are looking for a volunteer to learn how to program our outdoor digital sign. Contact a board member if you are willing to do that task.

REMINDER: All contributions for the CHIMES newsletter are due to the Office by the 3rd Friday of every month.

MONTHLY SUMMARY

October

General Fund	Income	\$3,854.00
	Expense	\$6,033.01

Monthly Budget \$7,338.59

January-October

\$ 51,568.35
\$ 79,778.34

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Birthdays

- 1 Kirsten Peterson (Kendell)
- 2—Abigale Cowman, Nathaniel Cowman
- 4— Alice Craven
- 5— Jeffrey Merchant

Trustees Meeting Minutes
Date: 10/15/25
Next Meeting: November 19, 2025

1. Opening: Pastor Joel led us in prayer.

2. Minutes

- September's meeting minutes were not available.
- Review will be scheduled for the next council meeting.

3. Financial Reports

Updates were provided as follows:

- Jean – Income/Expenses
- Brenda – Income
- Maury – Investments
- Tari – Sunday School

Motion: Char motioned, Tari seconded. Motion passed.

4. Pastor's Report

- Report provided by Pastor Joel.
- Jean reminded Pastor Joel to submit his October report on time to ensure payment before his last day of service.

5. Old Business

- Rental Property Sale: Maury reported the closing is tentatively scheduled for mid-January 2026.
- Financial Personnel Transition: Replacement for Jean is in progress. Training will begin soon.
- Pastoral Transition: Preparations are underway to begin navigating this process.

6. New Business

- The Chimes: Pastor Joel requested, on behalf of Theresa, that meeting minutes be emailed to her as a Word document for inclusion in The Chimes newsletter.
- Parsonage Move-Out & Repairs: Pastor Joel advised that their move-out date is scheduled for Monday, October 27, 2025. He also submitted a list of needed repairs.
- Scott Fund Proposal:
 - Maury proposed allocating \$2,000.00 from the Scott Fund for ongoing youth camp ministry scholarships and Community outreach efforts.
 - He also proposed holding one breakfast in the fall (Rally Day weekend) and one in the spring (before Vacation Bible School).
- Motion: Tari motioned, Brenda seconded. Motion passed.
- Sunday school Matching Donation:
 - Maury expressed interest in exploring a matching donation for Sunday School offerings to support Rock House Kids and the Heifer International Program.
- Fire Safety Check – October Fire Safety Month:
 - Maury contacted the Pecatonica Fire Chief, who will visit the church on October 24 to conduct a thorough fire Safety check.
 - This will include inspection of fire extinguishers, exit lights, and smoke detectors.
- Motion: Tari motioned, Brenda seconded. Motion passed.

7. Adjournment

Next meeting scheduled for November 19, 2025.

November 5th, 2025 Diaconate Meeting minutes

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Teresa Gobeli at 2:25pm. Others present were Bev Weerda, Delores Poppen and Karleen Merchant.

Karleen led us in an opening prayer. The October 1st minutes were read. Delores made motion to approve, second by Bev. Minutes approved.

Bev gave the Treasurers report. Balance is 748.15. Motion by Karleen to approve, second by Delores. Report approved.

Volunteers for greeters are needed. We encourage everyone to take a Sunday.

Those present reported on shut ins that they have visited.

Pulpit fill is going well and we are hearing many positive responses so far. Pastor Lee Eclow will join us Nov. 9th. Sid Moate will represent the Gideons and give a message on November 16th. That will also be Bible Sunday and the Sunday School will be singing during worship. We are still working to fill November 23rd, Dec. 21st and Dec. 28th.

Church decorating for Advent/Christmas will be on Sunday, November 23rd, after worship. We hope everyone can help that day as we prepare for the birth of Christ.

For November, we will not have a communion Sunday.

Before our meeting we met with Dr. Carroll Smith, who will be doing our pulpit fill on Nov. 30th and Dec. 7th. He brought the Advent readings for those two Sundays. We already have Dec. 7th readers in place and are working on Nov. 30th, Dec. 14th and Dec. 21st.

It was decided that our Christmas Eve service will be scripture readings and Christmas songs and will begin at 7pm. We will not have pulpit fill that evening. Ross Kendall has agreed to provide special music at the service.

The Church Website was updated with information about our church and answers to questions for visitors.

Next meeting Dec. 3rd, 2025 @ 1:30pm. With no other business, Bev motioned to adjourn with second by Karleen. Motion approved and meeting was adjourned at 3:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Karleen Merchant, Diaconate secretary

NEWS FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Everyone is excited for the Sunday School Christmas Program
December 14th!

Mark your calendars. This year the program is based on relationships. Our relationship with God and our relationship with our families. We are asking for pictures of your family as well of family gatherings. This includes our extended families. These slides will be used during a special song, "I'll Give My Love"

Our lesson for the first week in December is:

BIG IDEA

Jesus came so we would have something to celebrate

KEY QUESTION

Why do we have a reason to celebrate?

MEMORY VERSE

John 2:11 "And his disciples believed in him"

Watch your bulletin for our weekly Memory Verse, we challenge everyone to learn them along with all the Sunday school children.

December 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 Diaconate 1:30 p.m.	4	5	6
7 Sunday School 9:15 a.m. Worship Service 10:30 a.m. Fellowship following the service 2nd Sunday of Advent Bears Packers Sunday	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 Sunday School 9:15 a.m. Sunday School program during Worship Service 10:30 a.m. Fellowship following the service 3rd Sunday of Advent Sunday School Program	15	16	17 Trustee's 6:30 p.m	18	19	20
21 Sunday School 9:15 a.m. Worship Service 10:30 a.m. Fellowship following the service in honor of Doris Spielman 4th Sunday of Advent	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Service Time 7 p.m.	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			



Joy To The World

20 DAY BIBLE READING PLAN
ORGANICCHRISTIANLIVING.COM

Preparing The Way

DAY 1: JOHN 1:1-5, 14-18

DAY 2: LUKE 1:1-25

DAY 3: LUKE 1:57-66
+ JOHN 1:6-9

DAY 4: LUKE 1:67-80

DAY 5: LUKE 3:1-6
+ JOHN 1:19-42

The Christ Is Born

DAY 11: LUKE 2:8-14
+ JOHN 10:1-30

DAY 12: LUKE 2:15-20
+ ISAIAH 9:6-7

DAY 13: MATTHEW 1:1-17

DAY 14: LUKE 2:21-38

DAY 15: ISAIAH 53

Jesus' Birth Announced

DAY 6: LUKE 1:26-38

DAY 7: LUKE 1:39-45

DAY 8: LUKE 1:46-56

DAY 9: MATTHEW 1:18-25

DAY 10: LUKE 2:1-7

The Three Wisemen

DAY 16: MATTHEW 2:1-12
+ MICAH 5:2

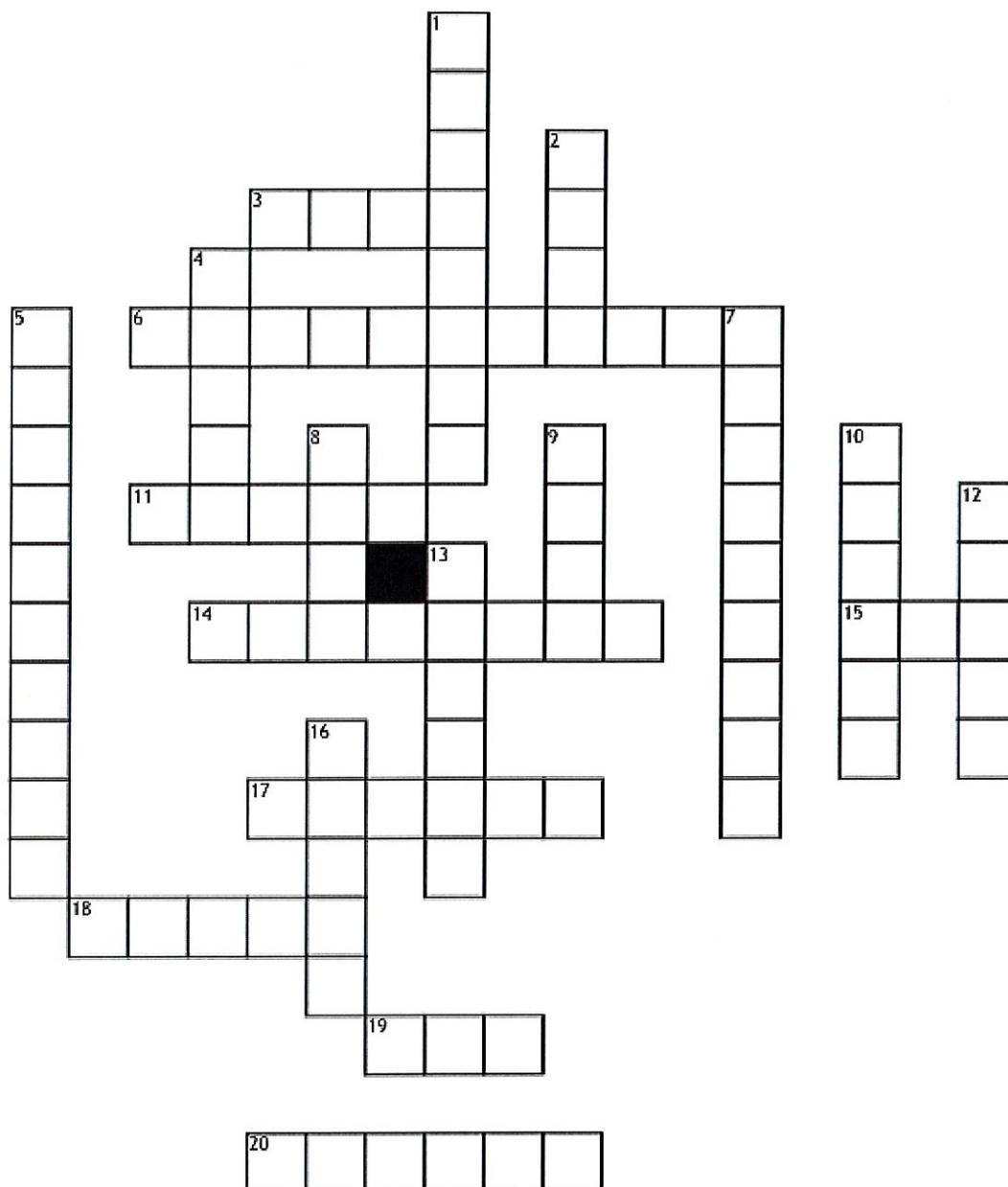
DAY 17: MATTHEW 2:13-15
+ PSALM 2

DAY 18: MATTHEW 2:16-23
+ PROVERBS 19:21

DAY 19: LUKE 2:39-52

DAY 20: 1 JOHN 4:9-11
+ PSALM 98

Bible Trivia Crossword Puzzle



Across

3. What does Paul say may "abound more and more in knowledge and in all judgment?"
6. He was king of Salem
11. What language was most of the New Testament originally written in?
14. Where did the jailer find his faith?
15. Who fell off a seat and broke his neck?
17. Who was a Jezreelite that owned a vineyard next to the grounds of King Ahab?
18. Let your _____ so shine before men

19. This book of the Bible speaks about a womb bringing forth ice.

20. Who was king when Paul escaped in a basket?

Down

1. Who was king of the southern kingdom when the northern kingdom of Israel fell to Assyria?
2. Paul's death is recorded in what book of the bible?
4. Which disciple found a coin in the mouth of a fish?
5. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have _____ one with another
7. Fear of the Lord is the beginning of what?

8. Which tribe of Israel looked after the religious aspects of life?

9. Thy word is a _____ unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

10. Whose bones were carried out of Egypt?

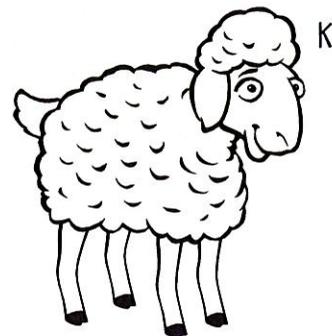
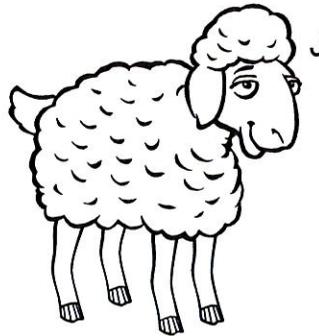
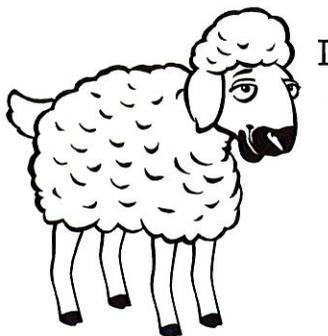
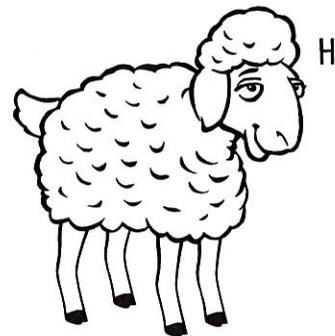
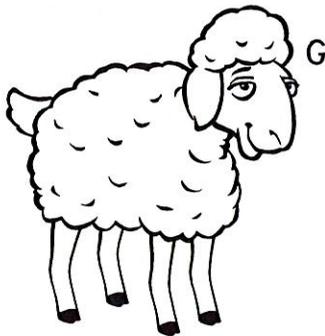
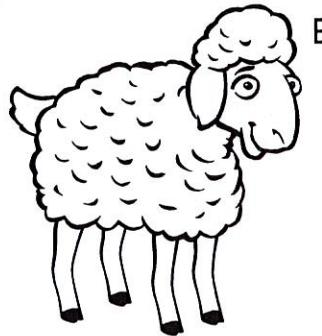
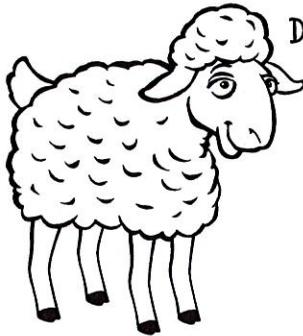
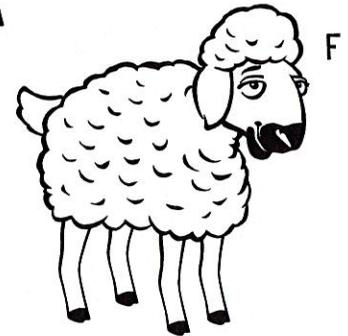
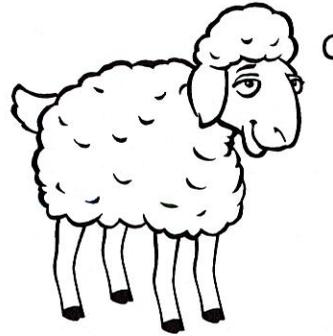
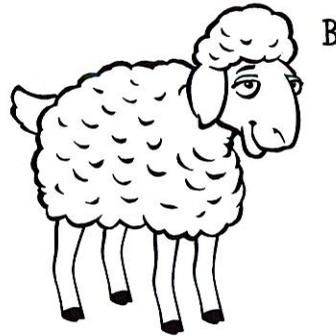
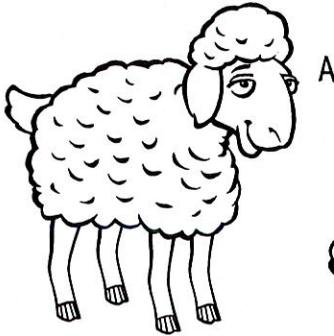
12. What type of leaf did the dove bring to Noah?

13. Who is the first hunter mentioned in the Bible?

16. Paul was shipwrecked in what island?

Jesus Is Born Activity Page

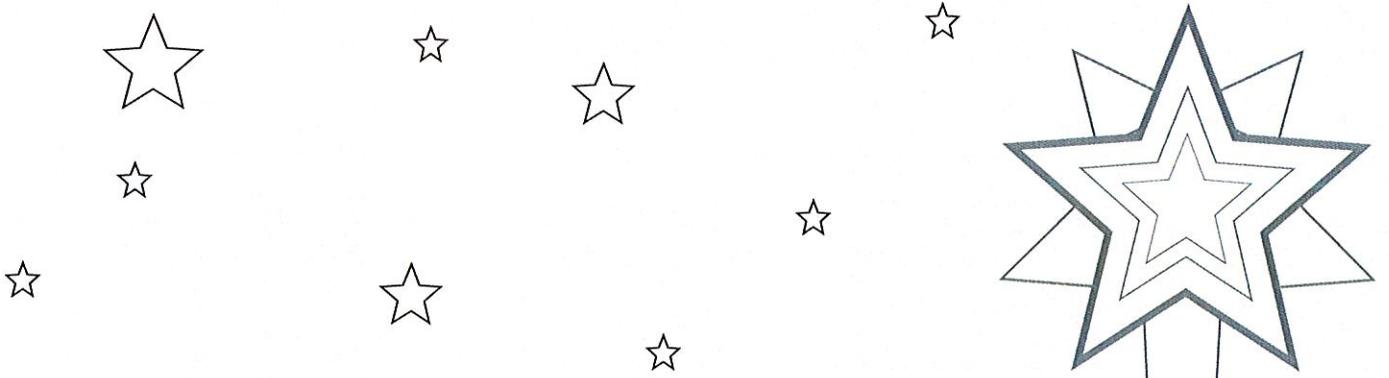
All but one of these sheep has a match. Find the matches and circle the lonely sheep.



☆ Jesus, the Light of the World, Is Born

Activity Page

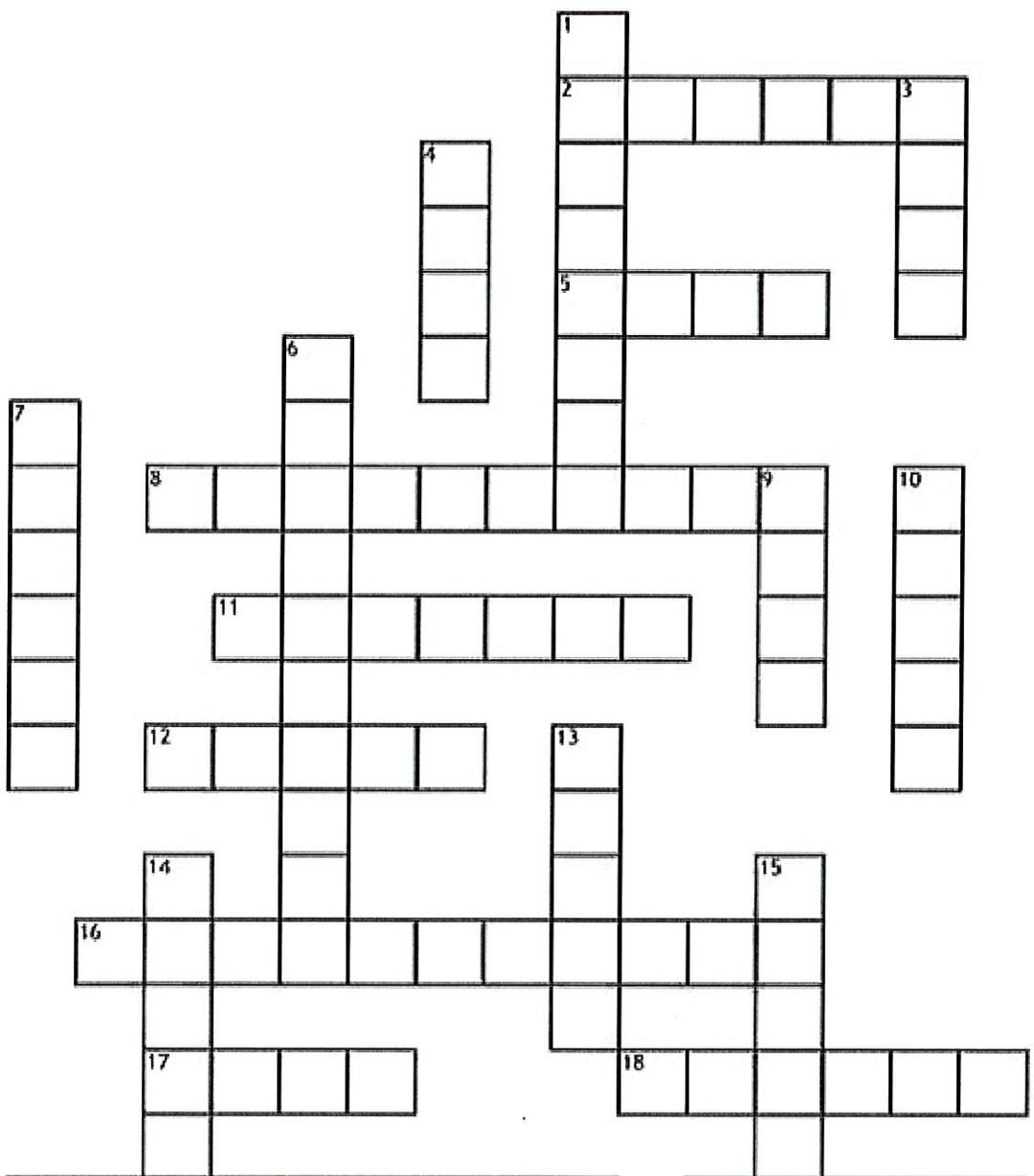
The wise men followed the special star. There's only one word hidden in this word search: STAR. Can you find it?



R	A	T	A	S	T	A	S	R	T
S	T	R	A	A	A	S	T	R	A
A	S	A	T	R	R	T	A	A	T
S	T	R	A	R	S	S	S	T	S
R	A	T	T	A	R	T	A	R	S
T	A	R	S	A	A	R	A	T	T
A	R	R	T	R	S	S	R	A	T
R	T	A	A	R	A	A	T	S	A
S	A	R	A	T	T	S	S	R	R
A	S	T	R	A	S	T	A	A	S



Christmas Songs



Across

- 2. _____ We Have Heard on High
- 5. Do You Hear What I _____ Is
- 8. _____ Comin To Town
- 11. Feliz _____
- 12. Have a Holly _____ Christmas
- 16. Its a _____ World
- 17. Silver and _____

- 18. _____ Night
- 19. O _____ Tree
- 20. We Wish You a _____ Christmas

Down

- 1. O Come, All Ye _____
- 3. Let It _____, Let It _____, Let It _____
- 4. _____ the Hall
- 6. Here Comes _____

- 7. _____ Around the Christmas Tree
- 9. _____ Snowflake
- 10. _____ Old St Nicholas
- 13. Jingle _____, Jingle _____
- 14. Away in a _____
- 15. The _____ of Christmas