

# **Lebanon Lutheran Church January 2023 Newsletter**

*Sunday School 9:30 am  
Worship Service 11:00 am  
Phone (540) 465-5456*

*10120 Middle Road  
Lebanon Church VA 22641  
Email: [pastor.lebanon@gmail.com](mailto:pastor.lebanon@gmail.com)*



**NALC**

North American Lutheran Church

## HOLY SMOKE AND THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD



Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.<sup>1</sup>

141 A Psalm of David.

- <sup>1</sup> O Lord, I call upon you; hasten to me!  
Give ear to my voice when I call to you!
- <sup>2</sup> Let my prayer be counted as incense before you,  
and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice!<sup>2</sup>

<sup>8</sup> And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.<sup>93</sup>

If you examine the central magi in the image above, you can see him offering smoking incense to the Lord Jesus. It seems a funny kind of thing to do. How is Jesus going to use burnt frankincense? It's odd until one considers that the context for the production of most churchly imagery is the worship of the Church. And, this gift-giving visit of the magi is indeed an event of real worship. Why is he offering the incense in this manner? Because this is how the Church offers it in its Services. A thurifer (the minister who swings the censer) censers the altar, the place where our Lord's body and blood are laid prior to the distribution, and where the monetary gifts are brought forward for blessing. The incense marks the center of the Church's worship, the altar, and thereby also the Lord Jesus Christ as He is present for His gathered disciples. Further, it is a visible sign of the prayer and thanksgiving that is due the Incarnate Lord – the "worthy" one, as the

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<sup>1</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Mt 2:11.

<sup>2</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ps 141:title–2.

<sup>3</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Re 5:8–10.

whole heavenly host confesses in the vision from Revelation. As Psalm 41 has it, the holy smoke rises as the congregation's prayer also "rises" to the heavens.

We should also be quick to note that the Lord Jesus accepts the gifts: the gold, the frankincense, and the myrrh. What does a baby need with any of these things? Sure, they could be for the entire Holy Family (Joseph, Mary, and the Lord Jesus). More important than this is recognize them as signs of something more profound. They point to the reality of Gentile offering, of Gentile faith; that the Gentiles will recognize the Saving Child and claim Him as their Lord. Jesus accepts their gifts even as he continues to accept our own forms of self-offering. Jesus is manifesting Himself as Savior to the Gentiles! What wonderful news for us!

The Church has in its history reflected on the offerings of these rather curious figures, "*magi*", as they are called. The foreign-born astrologers from the East want in on this thing that is happening with Jesus, *and Jesus is pleased*. The gold is obvious, the world's wealth is Jesus' creation and is rightfully returned to Him to be used as He sees fit. The frankincense is one of constituent parts of the old Tabernacle/Temple worship and is now offered to the new and abiding Temple of God, Jesus Christ. Myrrh was used in burial rites for preparing bodies... and Jesus will make use of this as well, before His crucified body is placed in the tomb.

But, I can hear the objections. Isn't this a "Catholic" thing? Well, perhaps, if by that you mean a practice that many thousands of Christians throughout time and space have observed in their worship of the Triune God. Yes, Lutherans too. More than this, it's Biblical. God Himself declares that He appreciates incense, particularly when used in the pure worship of the Church of Christ. Don't believe me? Take a look at Exodus chapter 30:

**30** "You shall make an altar on which to burn incense; you shall make it of acacia wood... <sup>7</sup>And Aaron shall burn fragrant incense on it. Every morning when he dresses the lamps he shall burn it, <sup>8</sup>and when Aaron sets up the lamps at twilight, he shall burn it, a regular incense offering before the Lord throughout your generations.<sup>4</sup>

God even provides a recipe for the use of incense in the Tabernacle:

<sup>34</sup>The Lord said to Moses, "Take sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum, sweet spices with pure frankincense (of each shall there be an equal part), <sup>35</sup>and make an incense blended as by the perfumer, <sup>36</sup>seasoned with salt, pure and holy.

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<sup>4</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ex 30:7-8.

<sup>5</sup> [Lev. 2:13]

<sup>36</sup> You shall beat some of it very small, and put part of it before the testimony in the tent of meeting where I shall meet with you. It shall be most holy for you.<sup>5</sup>

While it is true that the use of incense in worship is not something commanded by the Lord for the Christian Church, it is also true that the heavenly worship depicted in St. John's vision in Revelation includes it. See the prefatory citations above. We can and should say that while it is not an essential part of Christian worship, it is a *free thing*, something that the Christian Church may do to beautify her worship when and where she finds it to be fitting.

And what is the point? As with everything we do in worship, it has *significance* or *sign value*. It is a visible sign of the invisible things we offer, it renders our invisible praise, prayer, thanksgiving, and faith, visible in a sacramental way.

Of course, the best visible sacrifice we may offer the Lord Jesus is the "reasonable service" enjoined upon us by St. Paul (Romans 12:1) – faith that clings to Christ, proclaims Him, makes use of His gifts of grace, lives a life of new obedience, and offers itself to in good works toward the neighbor. This is finally the point of all that we do as we worship and exercise our faith together in the Divine Service. It is our constant "Gentile gift", offered in response to the saving work of our Lord.

This Epiphany, consider the ways in which your own lives may be given in their totality to the Lord as a signs of faith, love, and hope in the God manifest in human flesh. Consider how to make your praise, thanks, and service physically and visibly present to Jesus. As He has become *manifest* (the meaning of Epiphany) to us, let us manifest ourselves to Him as His faithful people. Consider the resources you have and lay them at His holy feet. Such gifts please our Lord, and He renders them holy in the work of the Christian Church.

Prayerfully,

Pastor Porter

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<sup>5</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ex 30:34–36.

# Events at Lebanon

Do you or someone you  
know need a ride to  
Church?

Please contact Ann Deming  
(540)869-5795 Leave Mssg.

## Wednesday's

8:15 AM Matins

10:00 AM Individual  
Confession & Absolution

1:30 PM Communion

5:30 PM Vespers

## January Birthday's

3<sup>rd</sup> Helen Bricker  
Baker

9<sup>th</sup> Fran Hughes

13<sup>th</sup> Edwin Kimmons

18<sup>th</sup> Tina Lowe

26<sup>th</sup> Colleen Porter

*Women's Meeting*  
Wednesday, January 25<sup>th</sup>  
@ 7:00 PM

*Men's Prayer Breakfast*  
Saturday, January 14<sup>th</sup>  
8:00 AM @  
Queen Street Diner

## Chili Cook-Off

Sunday, January 15<sup>th</sup>  
@ 12:30 PM

We need chili makers  
and tasters!! Come,  
bring a friend and  
enjoy an afternoon of  
fellowship and food.

*\*Free Will Offering - to benefit  
activities for Lebanon Lutheran  
Church's 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Celebration in 2023.*

## January Anniversaries

1<sup>st</sup> Tom Schwictz &  
Missy Hockman

Sunday School Class led by  
Rev. J.D. is at 9:30 Sunday

Sunday School Class led by  
Lucy King is at 9:30 Sunday

Children's/Elementary  
Sunday School Class led by  
Leslie Heird and Dorothy  
Harriman is at 9:30 Sunday

## Choir Practice

Choir will practice  
Thursday, January 5<sup>th</sup>  
and January 19<sup>th</sup> @  
7:00 PM

*\*See Evelyn if interested in  
joining the Choir*

## Church Anniversary Planning Meeting

Sunday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>  
following the Divine  
Service (Lunch Provided)

## Flowers For Sunday Morning Worship

If you would like to provide  
flowers, please see Dorothy  
Harriman (540)409-6470

# Chili Cook-Off!



**Winner Receives "Bragging Rights"**



**Sunday, January 15,  
2023 @ 12:30**

**Lebanon Lutheran  
Church**

**We need chili makers & tasters!! Come, bring a friend and enjoy an afternoon of fellowship & food. We would love to have you join us for Sunday School @ 9:30 and Divine Worship Service @ 11:00.**

**\*Free Will Offering - to benefit activities for Lebanon Lutheran Church's 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration in 2023**

# Reaching **OUT** Thru Outreach



Thanks be to God for all of the generous donations of gifts and gift cards that went to a family in need in our community. A church member delivered the gifts to the family and they were so thankful for everything that was received. Thank you to everyone at Lebanon for your generous donations.

Jan.	Bar Bath Soap – Cornbread Mix	July	Bar Soap – Hamburger Helper
Feb.	Hamburger Helper – Dish Detergent	Aug.	Small Laundry Detergent
Mar.	Pancake Syrup – Instant Scalloped Potatoes	Sept.	Pudding Mix – Jello
Apr.	Evaporated Milk – Instant Mashed Potatoes	Oct.	Stuffing Mix – Sauerkraut
May	Canned Pasta (any kind) – Ramen Noodles	Nov.	Instant Mashed Potatoes – Can Meat
June	Dry Drink Mix (lemonade, Tang) – Tea Bags	Dec.	Evaporated Milk – Saltine Crackers

## Compassion Cupboard Monthly Needs For 2023

Above is a list of items which are needed each month and distributed to those in need in our community. You can bring them to church and place them in the basket. (No glass please - jars, etc.)

# Ladies Christmas Brunch



The Ladies Christmas Brunch was held on Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup>. Above are items that were donated by the ladies and members at Lebanon. Libby Smoot delivered the items to the Pregnancy Center and they were so appreciative of the generosity of everyone at Lebanon. There was a \$250 Thrivent Card that was also donated by Carolyn Frye for the purchase of the diaper bags. Thank you to Carolyn Frye for organizing the Brunch and to everyone at Lebanon for their generous donations.

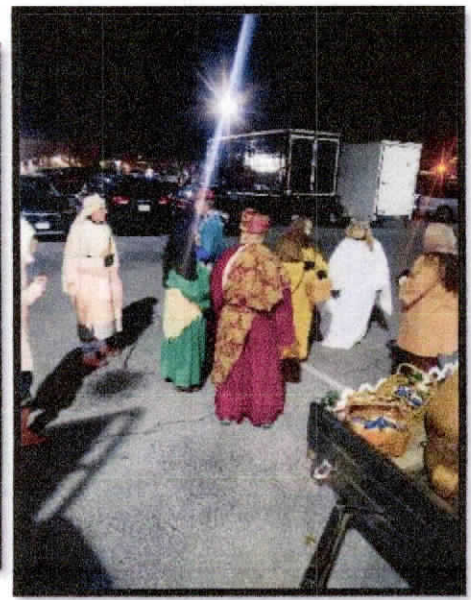
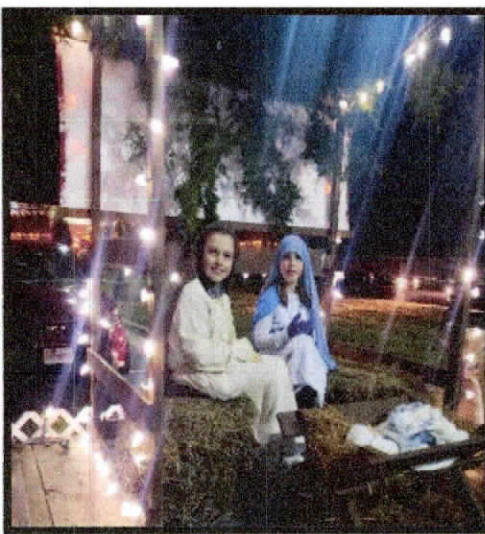
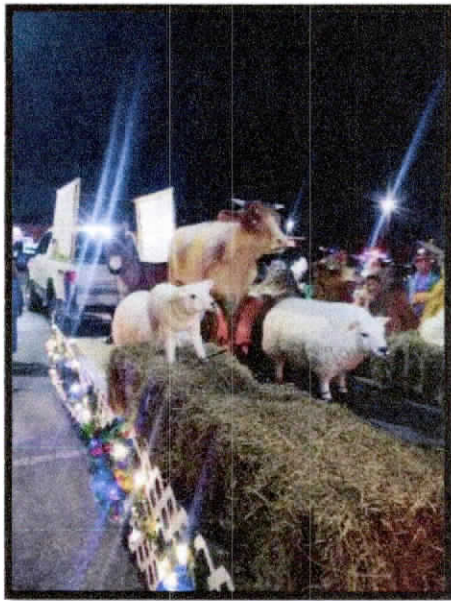
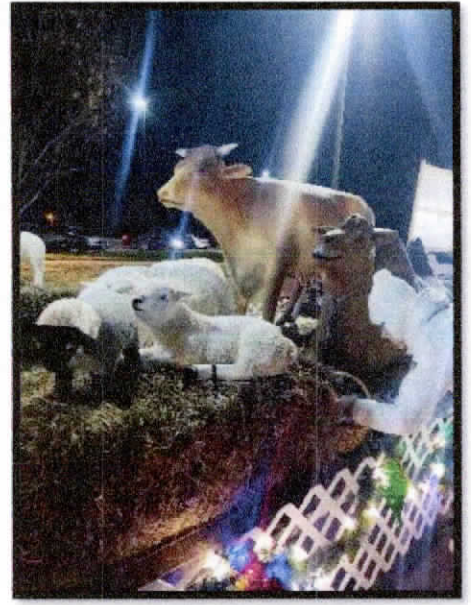
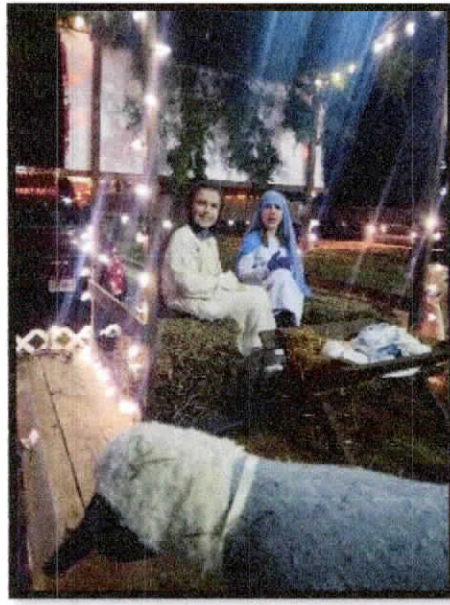
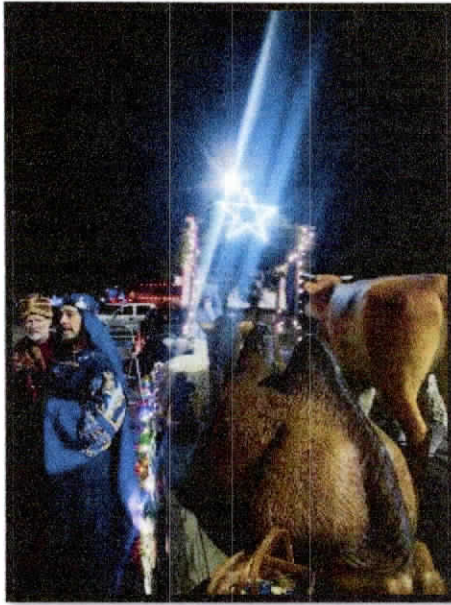




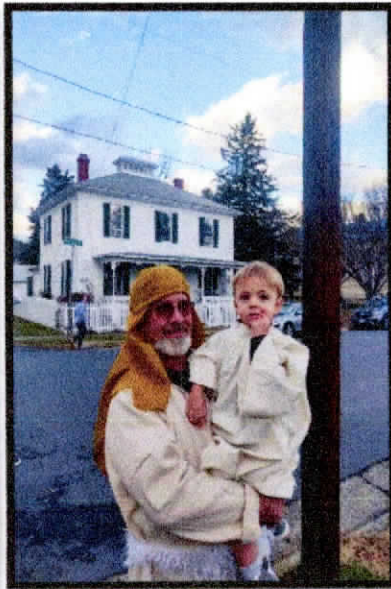
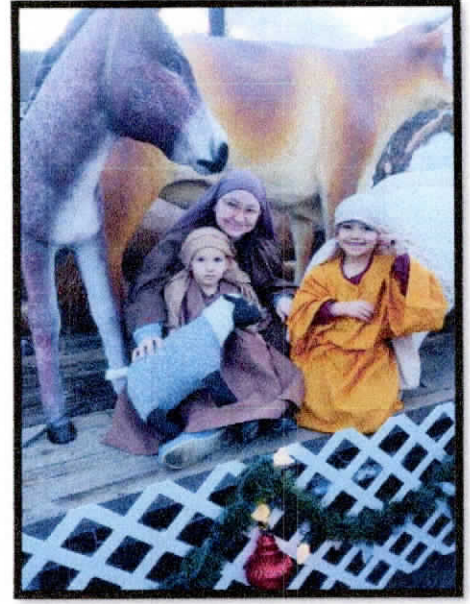
**Prepared & delivered 212 bags filled with candy to Valley Health Woodstock, Skyline Terrace Nursing Home, and Hidden Springs Senior Living (Valley). Also made bags to give out at the Christmas services.**



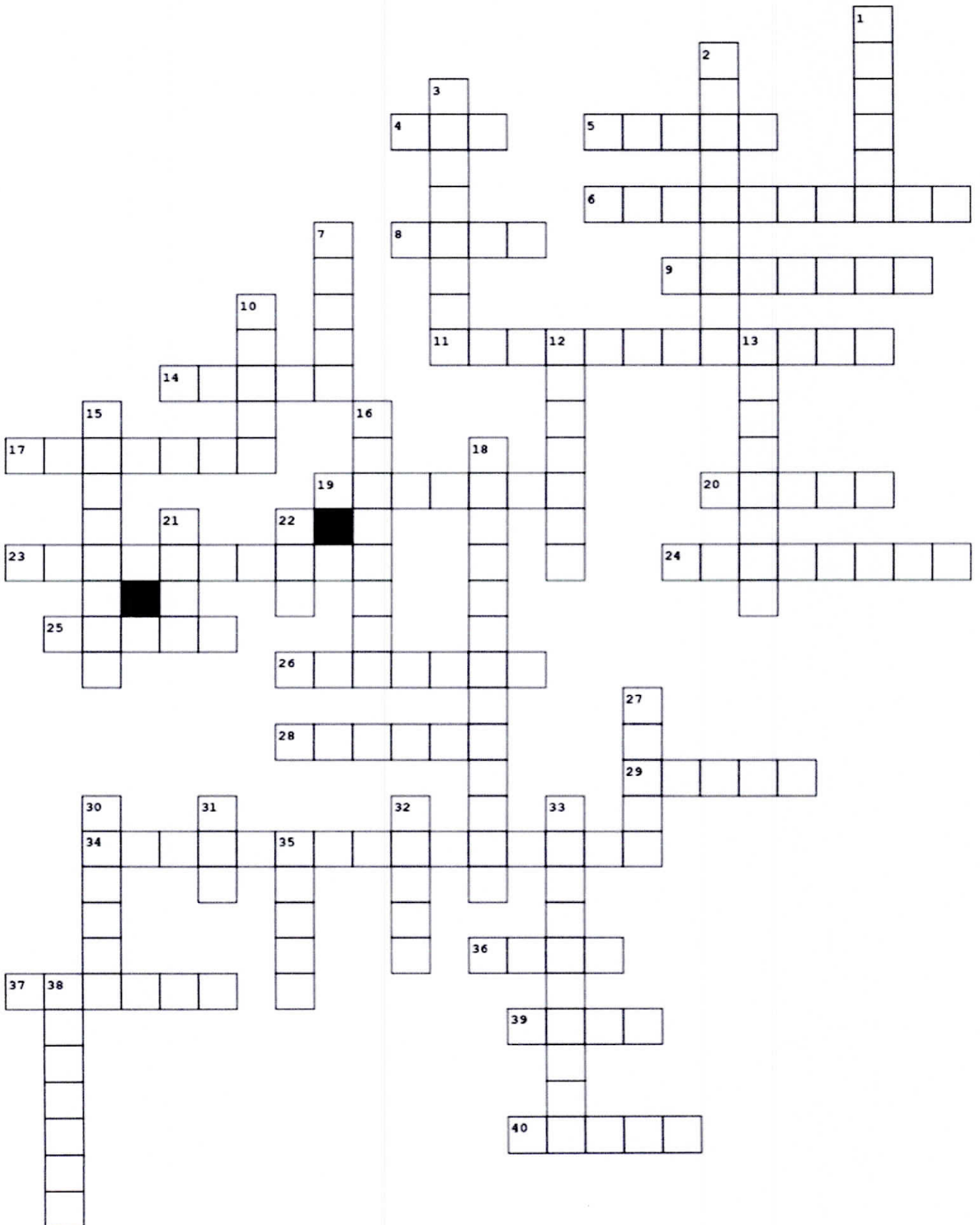
# Woodstock Christmas Parade



# Strasburg Christmas Parade



# Romans Chapters 1-3



## Romans Chapters 1-3

### Across

4. All who have sinned under this will be judged by the law? (2)
5. According to this Jesus was a descendent of David? (1)
6. "But now the righteousness of God has been \_\_\_\_\_ apart from the law," (3)
8. "There is no \_\_\_\_\_ of God before their eyes." (3)
9. "For God is my \_\_\_\_\_," (1)
11. "For this reason God gave them up to \_\_\_\_\_ passions." (1)
14. This of God is revealed from heaven against the ungodly and unrighteous men? (1)
17. Paul was called to be this? (1)
19. "Their throat is an open grave, they use their tongues to \_\_\_\_\_." (3)
20. "He will render to each one according to his \_\_\_\_\_:" (2)
23. God shows none of this? (2)
24. The law of faith executed this? (3)
25. The unrighteousness of men suppresses this? (1)
26. "because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the \_\_\_\_\_," (1)
28. "To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be \_\_\_\_\_:" (1)
29. "For all have sinned and fall \_\_\_\_\_ of the glory of God," (3)
34. There will be wrath and fury for those who obey this? (2)
36. "God gave them up to a debased \_\_\_\_\_ to do what ought not to be done." (1)
37. "For I am not ashamed of the \_\_\_\_\_, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes," (1)
39. The book of Romans is written by him? (1)
40. "Grace to you and \_\_\_\_\_ from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." (1)

### Down

1. "whom I serve with my \_\_\_\_\_ in the gospel of his Son," (1)
2. "so that he might be just and the \_\_\_\_\_ of the one who has faith in Jesus." (3)
3. "but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were \_\_\_\_\_." (1)
7. The righteous shall live by this? (1)
10. We have received this from Jesus? (1)
12. Paul wants to come to the Romans to reap some of this? (1)
13. "they not only do them but give \_\_\_\_\_ to those who practice them." (1)
15. "women exchanged natural relations for those that are \_\_\_\_\_ to nature;" (1)
16. "but glory and honor and peace for \_\_\_\_\_ who does good," (2)
18. "For in the \_\_\_\_\_ of God is revealed from faith for faith," (1)
21. Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus we are justified by his grace which is what from God? (3)
22. Through the law comes knowledge of this? (3)
27. We thank God through him? (1)
30. God does this, of the secrets of men through Christ Jesus? (2)
31. "God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to \_\_\_\_\_," (1)
32. "men likewise gave up natural relations with \_\_\_\_\_ and were consumed with passion for one another," (1)
33. God's kindness is meant to lead you to this? (2)
35. "For although they knew God, they did not \_\_\_\_\_ him as God or give thanks to him," (1)
38. The Jews were entrusted with this of God? (3)

All questions are formed from the ESV Bible. Chapters are in parenthesis.



# Lebanon Lutheran Church



◀ Dec 2022		January 2023					Feb 2023 ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
<b>1</b> <b>New Year's Day</b> <b>9:30</b> Sunday School  <b>11:00</b> Divine Service <i>*The Circumcision and Name of Jesus</i>	<b>2</b> <b>10:00</b> Acts Bible Study  <b>7:00</b> Adult Catechism Class	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> <b>8:15</b> Matins <b>10:00</b> Individ. Confession <b>1:30</b> Communion Service <b>5:30</b> Vesper Service	<b>5</b> <b>7:00</b> Choir Practice	<b>6</b> <b>8:15</b> Divine Service  <b>7:00</b> Vespers <i>*The Epiphany of our Lord</i>	<b>7</b>	
<b>8</b> <b>9:30</b> Sunday School  <b>11:00</b> Divine Service <i>*The Baptism of our Lord</i> <i>*Epiphany 1</i>	<b>9</b> <b>10:00</b> Acts Bible Study  <b>7:00</b> Adult Catechism Class	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> <b>8:15</b> Matins <b>10:00</b> Individ. Confession <b>1:30</b> Communion Service <b>5:30</b> Vesper Service	<b>12</b> <b>6:00</b> Outreach Meeting <b>7:00</b> Church Council Meeting	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> <b>8:00</b> Men's Prayer Breakfast @ Queen Street Diner	
<b>15</b> <b>9:30</b> Sunday School  <b>11:00</b> Divine Service <b>12:30</b> Chili Cook-Off  <i>*Epiphany 2</i>	<b>16</b> <b>10:00</b> Acts Bible Study  <b>7:00</b> Adult Catechism Class	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> <b>8:15</b> Matins <b>10:00</b> Individ. Confession <b>1:30</b> Communion Service <b>6:30</b> Pastor @ H-burg Lutheran Church of Valley <b>7:00</b> Worship/Music Meet	<b>19</b> <b>7:00</b> Choir Practice	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	
<b>22</b> <b>9:30</b> Sunday School  <b>11:00</b> Divine Service <i>*Anniversary Meeting – lunch provided</i> <i>*Epiphany 3</i>	<b>23</b> <b>10:00</b> Acts Bible Study  <b>7:00</b> Adult Catechism Class	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> <b>8:15</b> Matins <b>10:00</b> Individ. Confession <b>1:30</b> Communion Service <b>5:30</b> Vesper Service <b>7:00</b> Women's Meeting	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	
<b>29</b> <b>9:30</b> Sunday School  <b>11:00</b> Divine Service <i>*Noisy Offering</i> <i>*Transfiguration</i>	<b>30</b> <b>10:00</b> Acts Bible Study  <b>7:00</b> Adult Catechism Class	<b>31</b> <i>*Pastor Porter is at Conference</i>					