



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

208 West Sandusky Avenue

Bellefontaine, Ohio 43311

937-592-7699

Website: www.flcbellefontaine.org

Email: info@flcbellefontaine.org

First Hand December 2024

OUR WELCOME STATEMENT

At First Lutheran, all means all, and the gifts of God are free. We welcome, love, affirm, and include everyone in our faith community regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Here in this place, you will find a warm, loving Christian family which strives to faithfully proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to all of God’s children. We renounce racism, discrimination, and persecution in any form, in faithfulness to the gospel, and to the best of our ability, we promise to provide ministries and pastoral care to all who seek God in this place.

GOD WELCOMES ALL, AND SO DO WE.



Pastor Larry Novak- lnovak@flcbellefontaine.org

Office Mngr. , Rachel Gillespie- rgillespie@flcbellefontaine.org

Director of Music, Judy Vassar- jvassar@flcbellefontaine.org

Bell Choir Director, Stephanie Oaks- sloaks1737@gmail.com



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The Church Office will close on December 24th and will reopen on January 2nd.



Mission Statement
Sharing God’s grace through prayer, witness and service.

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

On December 22, 1989, the temperature in Columbus, Ohio was 17 degrees below zero. With the wind-chill factor, it was nearly 50 below. Carolyn and I packed the car, including a roof carrier, for the trip to Bradenton, Florida, to spend Christmas with my parents. Ahhh...Florida, land of warmth and sunshine. I couldn't wait to get there. Our daughter was 7, and our son would soon turn one. We got into the car at 7 a.m., and off we went.

The first day was uneventful. We made good time, stopping as planned in Atlanta, and spending the night in a nice motel. It was still cold outside, even in Georgia. But soon we would be in sunny Florida, and all would be well.

On December 23, we had a nice breakfast, packed the car, and headed south. As we approached the Georgia-Florida state line, I was getting worried. It was still cold. And now...it was... oh my gosh...it was SNOWING. We hit the Georgia-Florida state line at 4 pm. It was snowing. It was 20 degrees and snowing. In Florida. The traffic on I-75 was bumper to bumper, and everyone was slowing down. Must be an accident up ahead. Probably someone who doesn't know how to drive in the snow. Once we pass the accident site, things will open up. But they didn't. At 7 pm, after driving in Georgia for three hours, we had traveled 10 miles into the state of Florida. Three and 1/3 miles per hour. Our nerves were shot. Carolyn saw a Stuckey's restaurant off the exit. Get off here, she said. Let's stop for dinner, call your parents and let them know what's happening. I was all too happy to oblige. The parking lot was full. Only one spot was available. A sign at the spot said: "No Parking". "Park there", Carolyn said, pointing to the spot. I started to protest: "But the sign says no..." "PARK THERE" she snapped, clearly on her last nerve..... I parked there!

The restaurant was packed, but we managed to find a booth and ordered burgers and fries. This was before we had cell phones, and the only available phone was a pay phone in the parking lot, with a long line of people waiting to use it. I stood in the line in the freezing cold, and eventually was able to reach my parents and let them know what was happening. Everyone was fine, but the roads were a mess, and we probably wouldn't get in until well passed midnight.

Shortly after coming back inside, a deputy sheriff came in the restaurant and announced that I-75 was closed due to the snow and ice. "The interstate Closed?" Isn't that the first road that gets salted?, someone asked. "This is Florida.", replied the deputy. "We haven't needed salt for 25 years, and we don't have any road salt available".

It got worse. At 9 pm, the manager made an announcement: It was closing time. Everybody had to leave. For a few seconds, there was stunned silence. Then all at once, the entire crowd burst into spontaneous fits of laughter. "Leave?" someone asked, "Where are we supposed to go? The interstate is closed. The back roads are impassable. Fire up that grill my friend. Keep those burgers and fries coming. We are hungry, we are tired, and we ain't going anywhere!". The entire restaurant burst into applause. We were stuck...ironically...at Stuckeys!

I went back to the car to get pillows and blankets. Our son slept in his car seat. Our daughter slept on pillows and blankets on the floor. Carolyn and I tried to sleep in the booth, but we were not very successful.

In the booth across from us was a little girl peppering her mother with questions: "What if we are still here on Christmas Day? What if Santa Clause doesn't find us? What if he can't leave us any presents?" "Shut up, shut up, SHUT UP!" snapped the mother, clearly at the end of her rope. But Immediately, she realized what she had done and hugged the daughter tight, assuring her that it would be okay. Santa would find them just fine, and she was sorry she lost her temper.

There was a spirit of camaraderie among the customers. Someone starting singing Christmas Carols, and everyone joined in. people introduced themselves to their neighbors and shared their stories.

On December 24, we got back on the road. I-75 was reopened, but it was still bumper to bumper and quickly slowed down again to about 3 miles an hour. We were able to find a parallel route-and made better time.

It was late when we finally made it to my parents' house: I think it was about 10 pm. Dad wanted to go to Midnight Mass at the Catholic Church. I wanted to go to bed, but I wasn't about to tell him that, so to church we went. Carolyn and I were exhausted, but we went. And once again we heard the story; the story of how God became incarnate and came into the world. Born in a small backwater town, placed in a cow's feed trough. His earthly parents were weary travelers, having traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem, only to find no homes available and having to spend the night in a small stable. We sang those wonderful Christmas hymns, lit the candles, and once again came to the table to receive the body and blood of our Lord; a foretaste of the feast to come. Jesus came for all of us, but especially for those of us who are weak, weary, hungry, homeless, poor in spirit, in mourning, meek, and in search of justice.

I fully realize that as bad as that Christmas experience was in 1989, it pales in comparison to thousands of refugees today, fleeing war, searching for safety after their homes were destroyed. Jesus himself would become a refugee when Herod went on a rampage in an attempt to kill him. We pray this Christmas for an end to war and suffering and injustice. We pray for an end to terrorism, an end to hate, and an end to violence.

God has broken into our world. This Christmas, let us commit ourselves to building a world where God truly reigns, and where everyone can live in safety, having the abundant life that God wants for us all.

Carolyn and I wish you all a blessed and holy Christmas.

in the abiding hope of the empty tomb,

Pastor Larry

A Christmas Gift for Your Church

In order to balance our church budget every year we rely heavily on the generous gifts that come to us through the Christmas collection. We also rely heavily on the weekly offering that are made 52 weeks out of the year. For this reason, we ask you to please be as generous as possible with your Christmas gift to the church. If possible, use both your weekly envelope and your Christmas envelope this Christmas. We need your support. Thank you for your generosity both throughout the year and at Christmas!



Again I want to remind you about the end of the year giving. The financial records for 2024 end on December 31, 2024. If you want contributions to go towards 2024 taxes I need to have your offering in the church office by December 31. All donations received on January 1, 2025, will go towards 2025 giving statement. Thanks, Judy



Director of Music

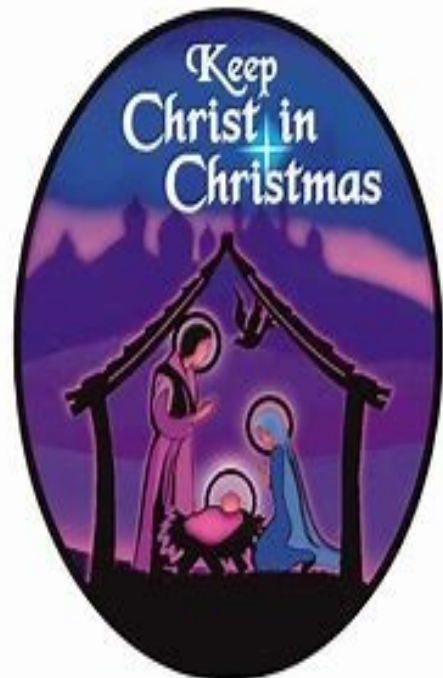
Dec. 2024

The night of Christmas,
A baby was born,
A Savior for all,
On that first morn.

The angels sang,
And the shepherds came,
To see the newborn King,
And praise His name.

The wise men followed,
A star in the sky,
To bring gifts to Jesus,
And worship Him high.

So let us remember,
On this Christmas day,
The love of our Savior,
And the price He did pay.



JOIN US FOR 2 CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

7:00 PM Lessons and Carols service with communion and candlelight

10:30 PM Full Liturgical with extra music, communion, and candlelight



The Meaning of Advent

From the Latin word for “coming”, Advent is a time of preparation and anticipation for the coming of Christ both in the past in His incarnation as the baby Jesus, but also in the future with His promised second coming as Christ Triumphant. Furthermore, Advent is a time to focus on His present coming to us in the Word and Sacraments. In the Lutheran church there have been many traditions observed during Advent that help Christians to both prepare for and anticipate His coming at this time. Martin Luther encouraged families to observe Advent as a time for them to teach their children about the coming of Christ.

Advent marks the beginning of the church calendar. It traditionally starts on the Sunday closest to St. Andrew’s Day (November 27th) and continues for four Sundays until Christmas. During this time the liturgical paraments and vestments in many churches will change to violet to recognize Advent as a time of preparation and repentance as well as a symbol of the royalty of the coming King. The color blue can also be used as a symbol of anticipation and hope.

merry *Christmas*
to all, and to all
a good *breakfast!*

CHRISTMAS BREAKFAST ON DECEMBER 15th

at 9:00 am in Rice Hall

Following the breakfast will be the Communion Worship Service which will include a Christmas Program.

Come and enjoy a wonderful breakfast and a celebration of Christmas.

(Sign up sheets in lower narthex for food donations)



THE MITTEN TREE

DONATIONS OF NEW HATS, SCARFS, GLOVES (MITTENS), SOCKS FOR CHILDREN ARE ALL ACCEPTED.

THE TREE WILL BE TAKEN DOWN ON 12/ 15 AND ALL OF THE DONATIONS WILL BE TAKEN TO LUTHERAN COMMUNITY SERVICES ON DECEMBER 16TH SO THEY CAN BE ADDED TO THE CHRISTMAS BASKETS.



“SUNSHINE BAGS” BAGS WILL BE IN THE SANCTUARY FROM Dec. 1st through Dec. 22nd. Congregation members may share Christmas greetings with our FLC members-of-concern and Luther Community residents.

Please do not seal the envelopes as some folks have difficulty opening them if sealed,

ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8TH AFTER DECORATING THE CHURCH WE WILL BE GOING CAROLING TO HOMES OF “MEMBERS OF CONCERN”.

ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15TH WE WILL BE PARTICIPATING IN THE COMMUNITY CAROLING. MEET AT THE COURTHOUSE AT 3:00 PM.



Santa's Gift Shop

First Lutheran Church will be hosting Santa's gift shop in Rice Hall on **Saturday, December 14 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

Kids from the neighborhood can come in and "buy" (it's free!) a gift for Mom, Dad, Brother, Sister, or Grandparent. Cookies and juice boxes will be available, and pastor will be reading the story of Christmas to the kids.

We are looking for people to donate small new or gently used gifts suitable for men, women, or children. Please bring the items to the church on or before Sunday, December 8.

In addition, we would love it if people donated Christmas wrapping paper.

We also need people to volunteer on the day of the event to help kids wrap presents, and serve Christmas Cookies and juice boxes to kids. Sign up sheets are in the lower narthex. Help us spread the joy of Christmas!



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TUESDAYS IN THE PARK & FAITH CIRCLE

“Tuesday’s In The Courtyard” will meet only one Tuesday at noon on Tuesday December 3rd Bring your lunch and enjoy good fellowship!

Everyone is welcome to join us! Bring a Friend!

CHRISTIAN ACTION MINISTRY TEAM will meet on Monday, December 9th at 6:00 pm. We will be finalizing Christmas breakfast plans among other events.

Come join us!



Faith Circle Holiday Lunch!

On Tuesday, December 17th, Faith Circle will travel to Coldwater Café in Tipp City.

We will enjoy a holiday luncheon in a beautiful setting. Please let Susan Wyckoff know if you are interested in going. Guests and men are welcome to join us. We will carpool from the church

Come, Join us for some Christmas cheer!

**THE DEADLINE FOR ARTICLES TO BE IN THE JANUARY NEWSLETTER IS
DECEMBER 18TH**



Saturday, Dec. 21st

7:00 P.M.

The Longest Night Service provides a message of hope and reminds us that you not alone.

In the midst of the Christmas season, you are invited to gather with others, to find support for yourself through prayer and song.

Jesus is coming – The night is long – Come and find peace

First Christian Church
215 E Sandusky Ave.
(937)592-8656



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH CHRISTMAS SERVICES

DECEMBER 15TH - CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

“TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS”

DECEMBER 24TH - 7:00 PM - LESSONS AND CAROLS

DECEMBER 24TH - 10:30 PM CHRISTMAS SERVICE

The Peak of Hope proudly presents our annual

HOLIDAY MATERIAL DRIVE

Blankets of all sizes, bath towels, wash cloths, Twin bedding, toothbrushes, tooth paste, deodorant, nail clippers, body wash, soap, laundry detergent, toilet paper, paper towels, and 10 gallon totes for storage (these are provided to the resident when they move).

NOVEMBER 25TH - DECEMBER 30TH



Drop off locations include:



Native Coffee



The Morning Riot



Logan County Job and Family



Brewfontaine



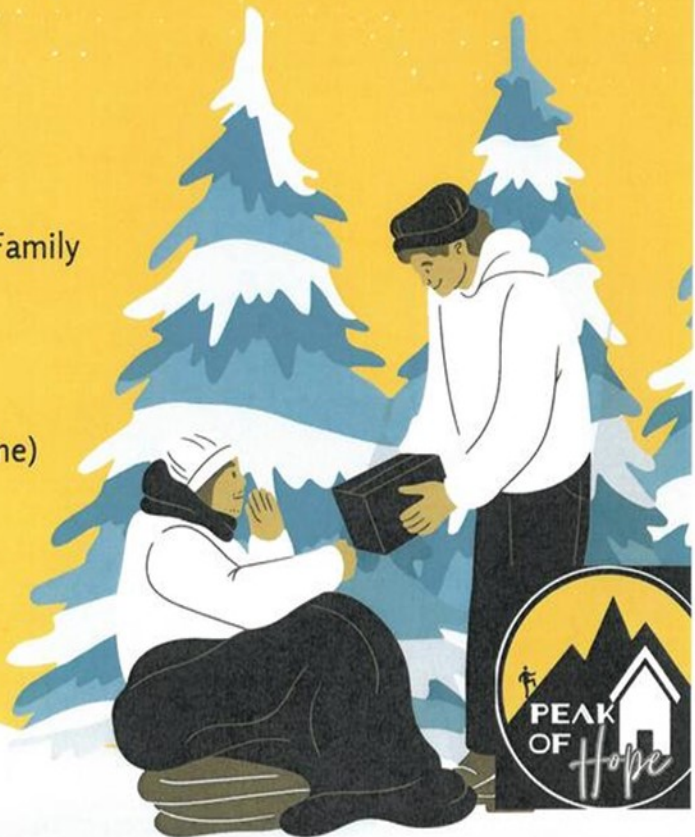
Dollar Tree (Bellefontaine)



YMCA



Recovery Zone





December Ministry Team Meeting

Dates:

- 12/02 7:00 pm Church Council
- 12/09 6: 00 pm Christian Action
- 12/19 6:00 pm Outreach



Faith Circle (WELCA)

Faith Formation Team

Christian Action Team

Finance Ministry Team

FLIRT

Outreach Ministry Team

Property Ministry Team

Worship Ministry

Copies of reports from the monthly meetings of each ministry team is available for you to view in the Partners In Ministry Book located

2024 Church Council

President- Chris Hildreth Blair

Vice-President- John Bodin

Secretary- Carolyn Novak

Financial Secretary – Judy Vassar

Members- Kathy Fultz, Brian Hogan, Gary Kauffman, Judy Lunz, Sue Neer, Liz Rose

Ministry Team Leaders & Congregation Members

NLCF is requesting you please consider submitting your needed grant request(s) during December and January so the NLCF team can review them during our February 2025 meeting. This will provide the team sufficient time to review and consider all requests for approval.

Thank you, Chris McKenrick

NLCF Chairman



Sunday Attendance for October

	On Site	Online
October 6	67	96
October 13	70	85
October 20	82	121
October 27	72	109
Average	73	103



During the past month we have remembered many in prayer. We remember in prayer all who are in need of God's presence and care ... especially:

Health Issues

Eddy Comstock

Margie Bixler

Patrice Miller

Anita Evans

Dave Anderson

Jordan Banks

Pam Pulfer

Recovering from Surgery

Debora Shannon

Carolyn Ellis

Brian Hogan

Entered the Church Triumphant



THANK YOU

I received a gift card from the church and I wanted to thank the congregation for the generous gift. I look forward to seeing everyone over the holidays.

Jacob McKenrick

12/01 Barb Detrick
12/02 Rick Ramsey
12/04 Mary Beth Stoltz
12/08 Heath Allen
12/09 Jan Van Hoose
12/13 Cheryl Chamberlain
12/15 Connor Rose
12/18 Derek Bingaman
12/18 Daniel Weikart
12/18 Robby Weikart
12/22 Pat Sebring
12/25 Chris Hildreth-Blair
12/25 Alex Pulfer
12/26 Diane Anderson
12/27 Cheryl Kramer
12/29 Kris Swisher

I would like to thank the church for the gift card, it will help greatly. I have always appreciated the continued support from the church community that I have grown up with.

Luke McKenrick

I would like to Thank First Lutheran for the privilege of being your Office Manager the last 3+ years. I have especially enjoyed the opportunity to get to know members of the congregation better. This has given me a renewed sense of how important Church is in my life.

Rachel Gillespie

12/20/2003 John & Colleen
Bodin



Worship Assistant

12/1 Kris Swisher
 12/8 Chris Hildreth Blair
 12/15 Cindy Weikart
 12/22 Brenda Shively
 12/24 Kris Swisher (7 pm)
 12/24 Kris Shannon (10:30 pm)
 12/29 Lucas McKenrick

Communion Assistant

12/1 Cheri Comstock
 12/8 Sue Neer
 12/15 Ray Swisher
 12/22 Barb Triplett
 12/24 Marshall Blair Hildreth (7 pm)
 12/24 Chris Hildreth Blair (10:30 pm)
 12/29 Misty Kipker

Reader

12/1 Chris Hildreth Blair
 12/8 Bodin Family
 12/15 Christmas Program
 12/22 Dan Shively
 12/24 Gail Keck (7:00 pm)
 12/24 Chris Hildreth Blair (10:30 pm)
 12/29 Beth Harman

Fellowship Hosts for December: Worship

Altar Guild: Cindy Weikart

Acolyte

12/1 Misty Kipker
 12/8 Brooks Bodin
 12/15 Delaney Reffner
 12/22 Dane Reffner
 12/24 Alexis Hogan
 12/24 Dane Reffner
 12/29 Ray Kramer

Crucifer

(7 pm)
 Delaney Reffner
 (10:30 pm)

Greeter(s)

12/1 Joann Karn
 12/8 Bodin Family
 12/15 Walt Stephan
 12/22 Ray & Cheryl Kramer
 12/24 Jinny Fergus (7 pm)
 12/24 Carl & Rachel Gillespie (10:30 pm)
 12/29 Kevin Miller

Ushers for December

12/1 Dave O'Brien
 12/8 Carl Gillespie
 12/15 Kathy Fultz
 12/22 Walt Stephan
 12/24 Gail Keck (7 pm)
 12/24 Mike Zoldak (10:30 pm)
 12/29 Susan Wyckoff

Communion Bread: Rachel Gillespie

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1</p> <p>First Sunday of Advent 8:45am Confirmation Class 9:00am Fellowship Time 10:00am Communion Worship Service 11:30am First Sunday Christmas Event</p>	<p>2</p> <p>10:00am Staff Meeting 12:00pm AA 1:45pm Bible Study 6:00pm Windmill Practice 6:30pm Dulcimers 7:00pm Council Meeting</p>	<p>3</p> <p>9:00am Quilters 12:00pm "Tuesday Lunch" (Courtyard) 6:00pm Windmill Practice 7:00pm Bible Study</p>	<p>4</p> <p>9:30am Cluster Meeting, St. John's 3:00pm NA (RH) 3:00pm Pastor's Meeting</p>	<p>5</p> <p>10:00am Housing Count (zoom) 11:00am Homeless Board Meeting 3:00pm NA (RH) 6:00pm Windmill Practice 7:00pm Choir Practice 8:00pm Bell Practice</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Office Closed 12:00pm Hunger Network Board Meeting 6:00pm Christmas Parade</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Office Closed</p>
<p>8</p> <p>Caroling after decorating 8:45am Confirmation Class 9:00am Fellowship Time 10:00am Communion Worship Service 11:00am Decorating the sanctuary for Christmas</p>	<p>9</p> <p>10:00am Staff Meeting 11:00am Chaplain MRH 12:00pm AA 1:45pm Bible Study 6:00pm Christian Action Meeting 6:00pm Windmill Practice</p>	<p>10</p> <p>9:00am Hunger Network Event 9:00am Quilters 11:00am Chaplain MRH 6:00pm Windmill Practice 7:00pm Bible Study</p>	<p>11</p> <p>11:00am Chaplain MRH 3:00pm NA (RH) 3:00pm Pastor's Meeting</p>	<p>12</p> <p>9:00am Housing Coalition 9:30am LaComedia Event 11:00am Chaplain MRH 6:00pm Windmill Practice 7:00pm Choir Practice 8:00pm Bell Practice</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Office Closed 11:00am Chaplain MRH</p>	<p>14</p> <p>9:00am Christmas Program Rehearsal 11:00am Santa's Gift Shop 2:00pm ETB</p>
<p>15</p> <p>Christmas Program 9:00am Christmas Breakfast 10:00am Communion Worship Service 3:00pm Christmas Caroling (Downtown)</p>	<p>16</p> <p>10:00am Staff Meeting 12:00pm AA 1:45pm Bible Study 6:00pm Windmill Practice</p>	<p>17</p> <p>9:00am Quilters 12:00pm "Tuesday Lunch" (Coldwater Cafe, Tipp City) 6:00pm Windmill Practice 7:00pm Bible Study</p>	<p>18</p> <p>3:00pm NA (RH) 3:00pm Pastor's Meeting</p>	<p>19</p> <p>3:00pm NA (RH) 6:00pm Outreach Meeting 6:00pm Windmill Practice 7:00pm Choir Practice 8:00pm Bell Practice</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Office Closed</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Office Closed</p>
<p>22</p> <p>9:00am Confirmation Class 9:00am Fellowship Time 10:00am Communion Worship Service</p>	<p>23</p> <p>10:00am Staff Meeting 12:00pm AA 1:45pm Bible Study 7:00pm Bible Study</p>	<p>24</p> <p>7:00pm Lessons & Carols Candlelight Christmas Service 10:30pm Christmas Candlelight & Communion Service</p>	<p>25</p> <p>MERRY CHRISTMAS 3:00pm NA (RH)</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Office Closed 3:00pm NA (RH)</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Office Closed</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Office Closed</p>
<p>29</p> <p>CHEF & Noisy Money 9:00am Fellowship Time 10:00am Communion Worship Service</p>	<p>30</p> <p>Office Closed 12:00pm AA</p>	<p>31</p> <p>Office Closed</p>	<p>1</p> <p>HAPPY NEW YEAR Office Closed 3:00pm NA (RH)</p>	<p>2</p> <p>3:00pm NA (RH)</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>

MERRY CHRISTMAS



The True Meaning Of Christmas

In todays' day and time,
it's easy to lose sight,
of the true meaning of Christmas
and one special night.

When we go shopping,
We say "How much will it cost?"
Then the true meaning of Christmas,
Somehow becomes lost.

Amidst the tinsel, glitter
And ribbons of gold,
We forget about the child,
born on a night so cold.



The children look for Santa
In his big, red sleigh
Never thinking of the child
Whose bed was made of hay.

In reality,
When we look into the night sky,
We don't see a sleigh
But a star, burning bright and high.

A faithful reminder,
Of that night so long ago,
And of the child we call Jesus,
Whose love, the world would know.



~ Written by Brian K. Walters



http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Nubia_group/

