

self would get for Christmas. She was so good at doing all this, she could have written a book, but she was always "low key." She never sought praise for all she did but passed along her love for Christmas and all that Christmas means.

Indeed, she has passed along much to many people. I have come to realize what special gifts I received as a child those Christmas Eves past. They weren't the ones wrapped in bright paper with beautiful bows, but rather, they were the gifts wrapped inside the hearts of my family: Love, the joy of giving, the happiness that comes from loving, caring for, and rejoicing with one another.

When Grandmaw Lail died on December 20, 1983, just four days before our Christmas Eve celebration, I felt that our special tradition was over. I have since come to realize that it had only just begun. My Grandmaw Lail still lives on through the legacy of her children....they are so like her.... giving and loving....qualities that have been passed from her to them.....and, I pray, to me (her youngest granddaughter) as well.

Thanks for these memories, Grandmaw, and for the love you lavished on your family. It has been the best gift!

NOTE: Thanks to everyone who submitted articles to this month's newspaper. Next edition our focus is on YOUTH. Submit articles to me, Ann Sipe, or telephone me at 464-3718.

VISITING CHRISTMAS EVE

- Jill Lafone

I remember my first Christmas Eve service here at Mt. Zion - seeing as how it was only four years ago... Tim Warren had asked me to sing with the choir since I knew the music they were doing. I didn't know what to expect, except that I would be tired from working and that it would be late at night. But I brought my two daughters, and we sat with the choir in the balcony. My girls were very impressed with the solemnity of the evening since they had never visited a Lutheran church and took in every part of the service. (What an educational experience for them and me!)

As we exited the building, we looked around at the luminarias the youth and other members had set up, then visited the lighted cemetery. The night was so quiet that it almost gave an eerie feeling, yet there was the feeling of something special in the air. Just as we were ready to leave, the carillons began to play a Christmas carol. It brought the evening to life and stirred within each of us the joy we had just experienced both in worship and in sight. How we anticipated future Christmas Eves here at Mt. Zion!

Almighty God, we thank you for the examples of faith-filled lives you place around us. As we share our stories, help us also to serve as examples of your gracious love.
Amen.