



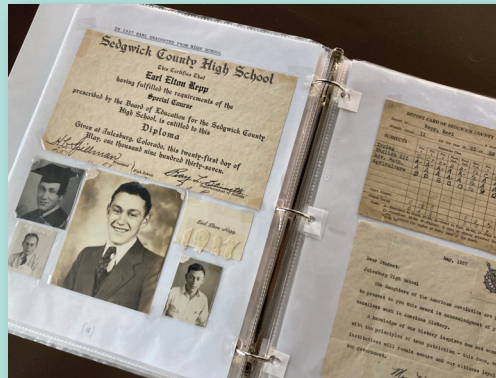
*An Advent wrapped in Love.*

### An Advent Wrapped in Love By Rev Trudy Robinson

When I was young, I loved playing the Partridge Family Christmas Card album on my parent's turntable, turning off all of the lights in the living room, plugging in the Christmas tree, plopping down at its base, and dreaming. Some nights I dreamt of David Cassidy singing just to me. Some nights I calculated how many more school days and piano lessons I had left before Christmas. Most nights I imagined what was in each of the presents under the tree.

One night, a new package appeared, addressed to me from my dad. No matter how much I tried to read through the paper and shake the contents for clues, I had no idea what it could be. It was too heavy for clothes, too quiet for toys, too blocky for stuffed animals. I was stumped.

On Christmas morning, I eagerly unwrapped that package first. It was a large hardcover book, and the pages were absolutely empty. It was a scrapbook. I had to be told what to do with it. Dad said, "Paste your memories in here. Photographs, ticket stubs, special notes, anything you want to remember." I've been keeping a scrapbook ever since.



It wasn't until my dad moved, that I discovered he had his own collection of scrapbooks. He had saved his report cards from elementary school, a playbill from a play he starred

in, his letters from his sister while he served in WWII. I hadn't realized how much that gift from long ago came from my Dad's heart.

It's not often that Christmas gifts maintain their relevance over the years. Toys break. Digital playlists replace turntables. David Cassidy crushes wane...Dad's gift to me is still relevant. At its most basic, it was a gift of seeing what is holy. The scrapbook was just the means to find, preserve, mark, remember, and return to life's holiness. At its most basic, the gift of God at Christmas is the holiness of life. Jesus helps us define what makes life sacred. And he is the gift from God's heart.

*Dear God, as we receive your gift to us, help us to give gifts of sacred meaning that enhance our awareness of life's holiness and offer to others a bit of our hearts. Amen.*

