



*An Advent
wrapped in Love.*

A Gift of Love

By Carol Blessing

1John 7-8: 7 Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.

Christmas 1977 will always be a special one for my husband George and me, as it was the time that we became engaged. Though we were only 20 and 21 years old, not well-off financially, and I had not yet completed college, we decided to take this major step. We had known each other from school since I was nine and he was ten, grew in close friendship through our church youth group, went on a disastrous date when I was 15, and then only began a romantic relationship after I moved from South-Central Pennsylvania to Houghton College in New York, when we exchanged letters, and he began driving the ten-hour roundtrip to visit or drive me home and back. George used what savings he had to buy me a small but perfect diamond ring, invited me to our favorite rural restaurant, the Deer Lodge, and officially proposed; because of the restaurant conversations, I could not hear him at first, causing what he said seemed like the world's longest delay for my positive response, as I had previously turned him down five times.



Although stereotypically young and foolish, we shared a strong faith in God and Christ's love as the basis of relationship. We know that is the sustaining force of our forty-three-year marriage, upholding us through financial, physical, and emotional hardships as well as great joys. Each year, we sign our cards to each other with a heart and how many Christmases we have been together. The Christmas he

gave me an engagement ring, I gave George a hand-crafted, written, illustrated, and sewn book of poems I wrote for him, including this one:

*Christmas Star
One particularly bright star in the sky
Shines down on us
Illuminating our love
And reminding us of One greater.*

Prayer: Our Holy Creator and Sustainer, we know that you are Love. Help us to show the love of you to others, especially in our deepest relationships. Thank you for this Christmas season, as we celebrate you becoming flesh and dwelling among us, the embodiment of Love. Amen.

