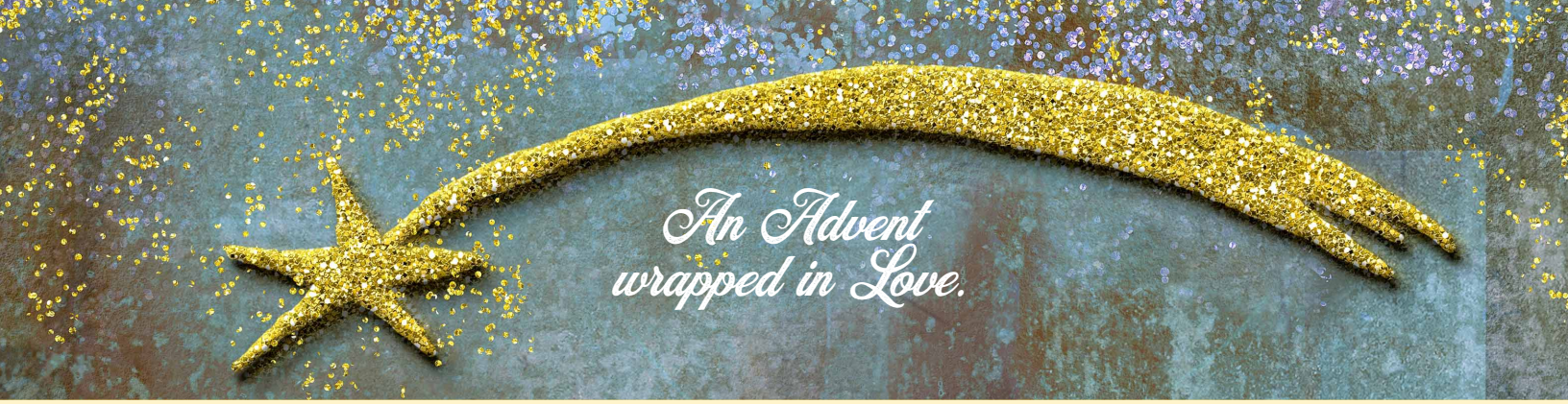

A gift of love.

By Richard Stager

James 1:17 tells us that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above….."
This verse became reality in my life, Christmas 1965.

I was stationed at Madigan Army Hospital, Tacoma, Washington with two months left on my tour of duty. I had some leave time accumulated and my bunk mate, Peter, invited me to spend Christmas with his family in San Leandro, California. Not wanting to spend Christmas alone I accepted his offer.

We left Tacoma in the early evening in a light drizzle arriving in San Leandro 11 hours later. The next day I met Peter's cousin Stephanie Gress and my life was permanently changed. I completed my military service in February, 1966 and 7 months later in September we were married.

Was Stephanie a gift? Absolutely. But consider all of the things that had to happen for a quarter of a century for our meeting to take place. A good and perfect gift from above had brought a 'homecoming queen' from California and a 'wise cracking kid' from New Jersey together. Thank you Lord!

This Christmas, as you share the festivities with family and friends consider all the gifts and blessings that had to take place for you and yours to be together. Every year I reflect on Christmas 1965 and wonder who and where I'd be if I had not gone to San Leandro. Four children, nine grandchildren, and one great grandchild in 50 years equals one blessed life. A good and perfect gift from above. Merry Christmas.

"Lord, this Christmas help us to understand that who we are, what we are and where we are is a good and perfect gift from above…from you!" Amen