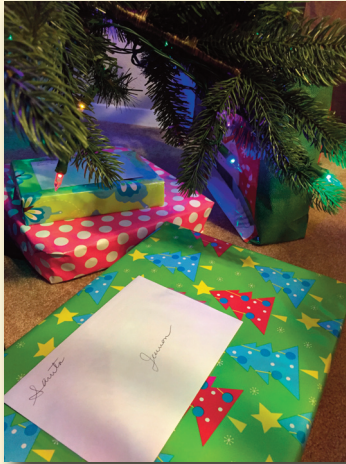




## An Advent wrapped in Love

By Rev Hannah Ka

Just like any kid, my daughter believed in Santa when she was little. The problem was the wrapping paper though. I was too cheap to buy new wrapping paper every year and so I used the same paper for years! My daughter, having a great visual memory, remembered that her gifts from Santa were always wrapped in the same wrapping paper. So, I worked up this story that Santa had a wrapping paper factory and used the same one over and over.



Whether my daughter believed it or not, the presents from Santa always brought her joy each year. I can't name every Christmas gift I prepared on behalf of Santa as his little elf. I'm sure they must have been age-appropriate gifts for her as she grew older.

While the gift was a once-a-year thing from Santa, it took a lot more than one day of relationship on my part. It took everyday interaction with her year-round. I had to pay attention to our conversations, to our playtimes, and beyond to know what would be just the right gift. Each special Santa present came from this caring and loving

and holistic relationship we shared. It was based on my deep understanding of my daughter and my love for her cultivated every day and each passing year.

The season of Advent is God's gift to us. It is God's gift not only for Christmas day, but for our whole of our lives. God has prepared this gift with love based on God's everyday relationship with all of us (John 3:16). If you believe in the giver's love, it brings joy each day and eternally here and now.

My daughter tried to behave year-round so she could receive a special gift from Santa on Christmas. But, the reality was that she failed some days. The gift from Santa was not there to judge her on her bad days. It would come no matter what. This gift was just one little expression of my love for her in both the good times and bad times, embracing her as who she is and who she will become. God did the same thing for us when sending Jesus (John 3:17).

*Prayer: Thank you, God, for your everlasting gift of redeeming grace in Jesus Christ, wrapped in love. Amen.*

