



*An Advent
wrapped in Love.*

I was Santa...

by Carol Stephenson

My 13th Christmas was the year my father left my mother for the last time. My father had always been a here-and-gone-again father my whole life, but this time he left with my mother's best friend. Momma cried day and night.

There wouldn't be any Christmas presents this year. We didn't have a Christmas tree and momma wouldn't even put the lighted Santa in the window. When asked she would say with no emotion "not this year." Any money we had from my babysitting and my brother's paper route was spent on food.

But that year our neighbors each came bringing a special present for the five of us. My baby sister got a doll, my little brother got a dump truck, my middle sister got a dress, and my brother got baseball mitt. My present was a beautiful, soft, red sweater which I put on immediately.

That night when the two little ones had been put to bed, us three older ones sat in the living room talking about how kind our



neighbors were and what perfect presents they had given each of us.

And then my sister said, "Maybe...maybe Santa couldn't find us." All six eyes looked toward the Santa-less window. And then my brother, who I didn't think still believed in Santa, said, "I'm sorry. Next year I'll try harder to be good so Santa can come." My sister

added, "Yes, next year I'll try extra hard to be good, and we'll put the Santa in the window."

That Christmas night I went to bed still wearing my soft, red sweater. I thought. Santa doesn't always wear a red suit. She could also wear a red sweater.

I was Santa for my brothers and sisters for the next five years. And even though we had to move, Santa always found them.

Prayer: Dear God, I thank you that you don't require good behavior in order for you to love and bless us. I thank you that you can always find us even when it's not Christmas. Amen

