

**FEATURE**

The benefits of baking 'bark'

**FAITH TALK**

We are all chosen

**MY STORY**

Bringing Christmas kindness to others

# The messiness of Christmas

Celebrating the hope of the greatest story ever told



# SALVOS

MAGAZINE





*After a challenging, chaotic, and difficult year both in Australia and around the world, may the Christmas season fill your home with hope and celebration, your heart with comfort and peace, and your life with love, laughter, and hope.*

*From the Salvos Magazine team*

To connect with the Salvos this Christmas through church services, carols, nativity plays, and community fun days, to volunteer, or to receive help and assistance, go to [salvationarmy.org.au/christmas](https://salvationarmy.org.au/christmas)

## Good news for all

Well, I think 2021 was slightly better than 2020, and I'm hoping 2022 will be better still for the world and us all. The Christmas season can be viewed as a bridge, a transition path into the new year. It provides an opportunity to gather as a community with family and friends. During such time, we reflect and talk about past experiences, highs, and lows.

These are the precious, intangible gifts starting with words, underpinned with emotion and captured with visual memories. Similarly, as I consider Christmas, I ponder the intangible gifts of God's grace in Christ. The gift of God's spirit indwelling his people – sharing spiritual qualities of love, joy, peace, and hope. While these gift words are intangible, they come wrapped with emotions that are real and strangely tangible.

As the angel declared in the Bible, "I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord" (Luke chapter 2, verse 10).

As we step into the new year, my prayer for us all is that we may hear and receive this good news of grace found in Christ – that his love fills our loneliness, joy replaces our sadness, peace consumes our anxiety, and hope takes away any sense of despondency – and we walk into 2022 with confidence.

Every blessing,

Lieut-Colonel Neil Venables

**Editor-in-Chief**

### What is The Salvation Army?

The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church.

#### Vision Statement

Wherever there is hardship or injustice, Salvos will live, love and fight alongside others to transform Australia one life at a time with the love of Jesus.

#### Mission Statement

The Salvation Army is a Christian movement dedicated to sharing the love of Jesus by:

- Caring for people • Creating faith pathways
- Building healthy communities • Working for justice



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[salvosmagazine.org.au](http://salvosmagazine.org.au)

# The messiness of Christmas

Celebrating the hope of Christmas that includes us all

**WORDS** Belinda Cassie

It is just under a month until Christmas. Bah humbug!

One of my work colleagues decorated her office weeks ago, and another purchased a Christmas shirt for each of us to wear in the lead-up to Christmas. Bah humbug!

The shops are full of decorations, and, as legend has it, Michael Bubl  is being defrosted and made ready to make his Christmas carols appearance as we speak. Bah humbug!

I'm not really a Christmas-loving kind of girl. I appreciate Easter, I have a lot of fun with Halloween, but Christmas – it's not really my thing. You'd think being a Salvo officer (pastor), I'd be a huge fan of the season that celebrates the birth of Christ, but ... I'm just not.

I've tried, I've really tried. In the past, I've worn themed socks and ugly Christmas jumpers. I've put up handmade wreaths and cooked special meals for guests but – sigh – the bah-humbug feeling remains. Sometimes it feels a lot like it isn't the season that celebrates the birth of Christ. Mostly, it feels like it's the season in which we celebrate commercialism. It's the season we celebrate overspending and overconsumption.

I used to be an emergency department nurse – did you know there is a spike in cardiac presentations at around 2.30pm on Christmas Day? Too much food, too much alcohol and too much arguing end up meaning too much indigestion and too much chest pain. It all just feels a little bit ... too much.

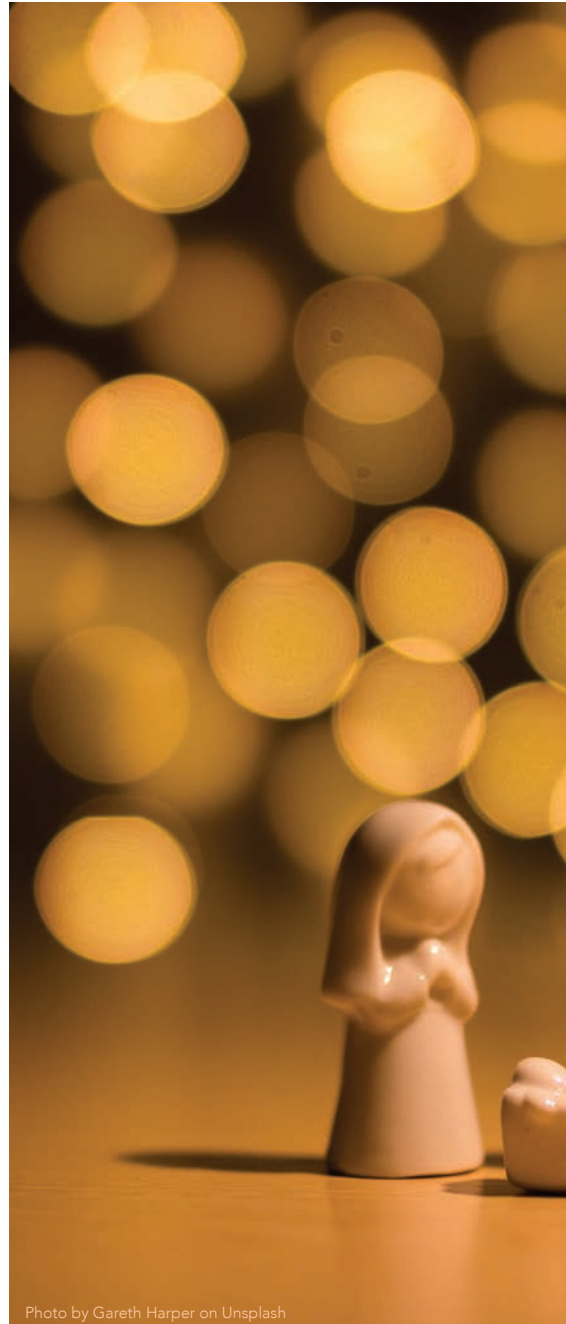


Photo by Gareth Harper on Unsplash



## A MESSY STORY

And I can't help but think it could all look so different. We've probably all heard the Christmas story referred to as 'the greatest story ever told'. But how well do we know that story? Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a pregnant teenager who gave birth in a barn, who then with her husband Joseph had to flee a tyrannical king, and they became refugees in Egypt.

The real story of Christmas is a messy one. Jesus, the Son of God, the one who would become the Saviour of all humanity, born into a messy situation in a messy world – is a story that brings me hope. Because this world is messy, my world is messy, and sometimes I'm really messy.

But in among all that mess, there is hope. Because that baby born in a barn grew up and spoke of a world in which those of us with messy stories could find hope, and peace, and love. That baby grew up and valued women in an era in which they had little value. That baby grew up and taught that people should care for their neighbours, the poor, and the marginalised. That baby grew up and showed us how we could include those that others exclude. And maybe, just maybe, that's worth celebrating.

Maybe that's the real meaning of Christmas. And maybe that's what makes it the greatest story ever told – no bah humbug about it.

*Captain Belinda Cassie is a Salvation Army officer (pastor) in Tasmania.*



Scan here for more on the need for community.

# Our forgetful God

The radical teachings of Jesus continue to change lives today

**WORDS** Dean Clarke

I don't always remember things. I forget messages, where I put my keys, and people's birthdays. Just after we got married, I purchased personalised number plates with our wedding date to help me remember when to celebrate my marriage and pay my car rego. Sadly, we sold that car, and now when I'm asked for my car's registration, I have to go and look at the vehicle. As for our wedding anniversary, I have a perpetual reminder in my calendar on that date. However, I don't always remember to pre-purchase a card.

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**He gave hope to the depressed, defeated and disillusioned.**

”

Did you know that God forgets? Not because his memory is going, but because he chooses to. God chooses to forget the bad things we have done and treats us as good people. That is my meaning of Christmas. The reason why Jesus was born into our world.

There in a stable sleeping in a feeding trough, lies a baby bundled in cloths. There is no magic aura around this baby. No special glow. At first glance, he looks like any other newborn babe. Except for his first room

environment, and that special things happen around him.

He is visited by shepherds who, at the time, were considered lower class citizens and looked down upon by others. They visited Jesus because they believed him to hold the key to hope and peace for their world.

Magi, astrologers or wise men, travelled a great distance to bring him gifts as one would a king or person of power. They came to worship Jesus as a person of great significance and influence in their world.

There was something about Jesus that attracted people from across society. Something very special about this Jesus born in a manger.

After his birth, people began to put together the links from Old Testament prophetic scriptures to the life and person of Jesus. Seven hundred years earlier, the prophet Isaiah wrote this about Jesus as a baby and about his life: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah chapter 9, verse 6 *New International Version*).

In adulthood, lots of people thought he was special. Crowds would listen to him speak. He gave hope to the depressed, defeated and disillusioned. He taught about the Kingdom of God – a new way of living with its focus on love for all people. Ultimately, Jesus died on a cross. Not



because he had committed any crime, but because he wanted to forget and forgive our failings. The book of Ephesians chapter 1, verse 7 says, "He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins" (*New Living Translation*).

A lot happens at Christmastime. So much so that it is easy to forget the reason for it all. I am celebrating the gift of hope and forgiveness that came to us as a gift from God in the form of a baby, the baby Jesus. From his birth, through his life and confirmed in his death and resurrection, Jesus showed himself to be special. Unique. And faith in

him gives me hope, forgiveness, and a new way of fulfilled living.

I can't remember my registration, and sometimes forget where I parked the car, but this I will never forget: Christ came into our world, and this world, my world, is forever changed because of it.

*Major Dean Clarke is a Salvation Army officer (pastor) in South Australia.*



Scan here for more on finding meaning.



Christmas:

# 'Tis the season to be jolly *and* money savvy



**Christmas in Australia is not just a day, it's a season that starts in October. Christmas can be an amazing, joy-filled celebration, but it can also be stressful. We can feel *overwhelmed* with pressure to spend, *overloaded* with too many to-dos or simply *over it!***

## ASK YOURSELF 3 WISE CHRISTMAS QUESTIONS:

1.

### Where do you find joy at Christmas?

It might help to think back to your childhood - what made Christmas special? It will be different for everyone. Perhaps you remember the time spent with family, or the special food, decorations and music.

2.

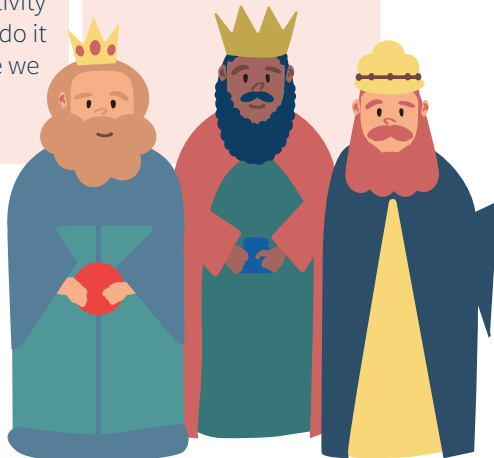
### Do you have to...?

Buy your niece/nephew/second cousin an expensive gift they won't even know they've received? Attend all the Christmas functions you're invited to? Much of our Christmas activity is habit-based - we do it because we feel like we "should".

3.

### Can it wait?

Is it an emergency? Can you do some of your yearly catch-ups after Christmas? Remember that holidays and New Year's Day are just around the corner.







## CHRISTMAS IS ABOUT *GIVING*; THAT DOESN'T MEAN *SPENDING*.

There are many meaningful ways to give that don't leave our wallets empty. So, what can we give more of this Christmas?

### **Give** *purposefully*:

- What will bring those you love joy this Christmas?
- How can you express your gratitude to them in a unique, meaningful way?

### **Give** *experience*:

- Experiences make great gifts and are more memorable than things.

### **Give** *your time (presence over presents)*:

- This could be time spent preparing your house with home-made decorations, making that special Christmas dessert, or playing backyard cricket with your children.

### **Give** *back*:

- Many people take the opportunity to volunteer, or give to those who would otherwise miss out.

### **Give** *yourself a break*:

- Think about what might bring you rest from all the stress the season can bring.
- Now plan for it!

### **Give** *only from what you've got*:

- Or put another way: don't borrow for Christmas.
- Give within your existing resources – time, money and emotions.

*And remember:*

**Your gift is good enough!**

This information was taken from The Salvation Army's booklet *You're the Boss – Money Wisdom for Life*.

For more information on the Salvos Moneycare Services, to make an appointment with a financial counsellor or to download the full digital copy of *You're the Boss*, go to [salvationarmy.org.au/about-us/our-services/moneycare/](https://salvationarmy.org.au/about-us/our-services/moneycare/), call 1 800 722 363 or email [moneycare@salvationarmy.org.au](mailto:moneycare@salvationarmy.org.au)

# We are all chosen

The kindness of a God  
who favours us all

**WORDS** Star Conliffe

When I was little, my grandmother's house was one of my favourite places to visit. A devoted Catholic, her home was full of mysterious religious images. I especially loved the icons of the Virgin Mary.

I didn't really know who Mary was, but I knew that I loved her. This dark-haired beauty who seemed so serene and faultless. In kindergarten, I desperately wanted to play Mary in the school Christmas nativity play. But, of course, a much older girl with beautiful raven hair was chosen, and I was relegated to the chorus of angels.

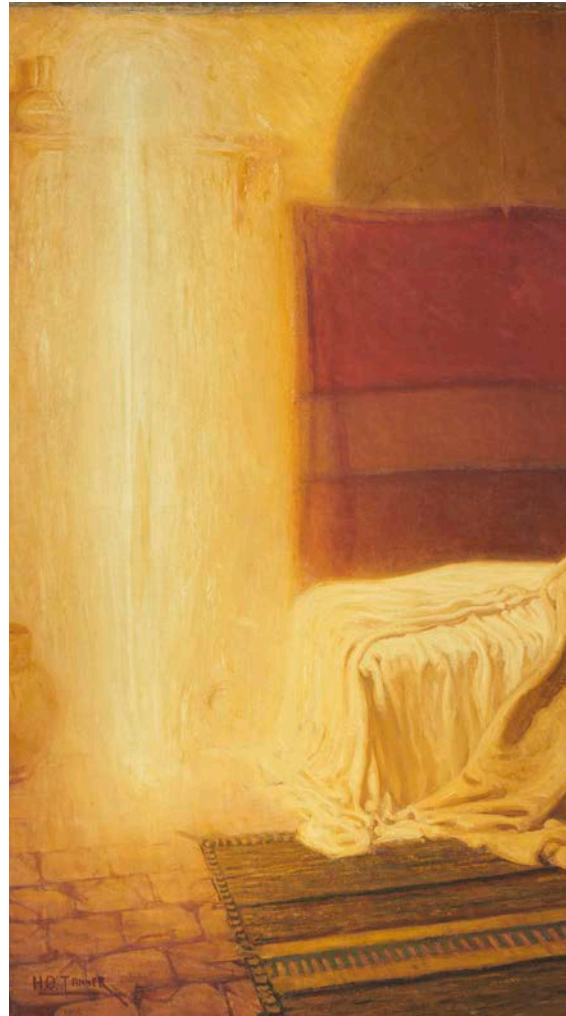
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**The kindness of a God  
who would show love to  
all of us ordinary people  
by becoming one of us.**

”

Why did I love her so much? Perhaps it was simply a little Catholic girl looking for a strong female role model. Perhaps it was because she was the chosen one. She was noticed and favoured by God. Maybe I wanted to be noticed, too.

As I've gotten older, my perspective has changed. In becoming a mother, I understand better the sacrifice Mary agreed to when she



"The Annunciation"; 1898, by Henry Ossawa Tanner, American (active France), Wilstach Fund, 1899. Image courtesy Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2020.

said yes [to having Jesus] that day. But I'm not sure that Mary was so different to any of us.

That is why I love the painting of the Annunciation by Henry Ossawa Tanner. Mary sits meekly on her bed, her hands clasped. She seems so young and uncertain, so ordinary. The blazing light is Gabriel, a messenger of God who has come to tell Mary



1859–1937. Oil on canvas, 57 × 71 1/4 inches. Purchased with the W. P.

that she would become the mother of Jesus. We read in the book of Luke that Mary was “greatly troubled at his words”, and so the angel Gabriel must comfort her. He tells her twice that the Lord favours her.

The artist seems to be showing us Mary’s confusion. And why wouldn’t Mary be confused? She cannot even understand how

this impossible possibility will come to pass.

Me? Who am I? Why am I favoured? How can the Lord be with me?

“

**God loves us and has noticed us, too.**

”

Mary knows her place. She knows who she is. And this should not be happening.

It is no small thing to be noticed, to be chosen, especially when you are exceedingly aware that you should not be. But maybe that is the story of Christmas. Maybe this is God’s proof to us that we are all chosen. We are all regarded with favour, not because of anything special we have done, but because God loves us and has noticed us, too. The kindness of a God who would show love to all of us ordinary people by becoming one of us.

In this season of Advent (lead-up to Christmas), in the middle of everything that is this season, I invite you to remember that God favours you, too. God’s presence is with you right now. Amid the busyness of this season, take time to be still and ponder, how can this be?

*Captain Star Conliffe is a Salvation Army officer (pastor) in Victoria.*



Scan here for more on finding meaning.

# When 'Happy Christmas!' is anything but!

Discovering hope and joy in a season of anxiety

**WORDS** Jo-anne Brown

Historically, the first Christmas was announced as “good news of great joy”, and common themes leading up to Christmas include love, joy, peace, and hope.



For many, though, Christmas is definitely not a season of “great joy” and may seem to have little connection with hope, peace, or love. Everywhere we look, Christmas is presented as a season of beautiful decorations, feasting, gift-giving, and enjoying time with family and friends. But what if the Christmas we actually experience is more like the day after – scrunched-up paper, discarded food, unwanted gifts, and toys already broken and tossed aside?

Perhaps, if we are truly honest, most of us recognise that this season often doesn't

live up to its promises. Many people face Christmas struggling with deep sadness, illness, financial fears or other stressors. There may well be significantly more suffering than celebrating during this season.

That very first Christmas was also more than it appeared on the surface. Yes, joy at the birth of a baby. And ... homelessness, threats against the life of that baby, and the need to flee for safety to another country far away from any family support.

So, when “good news of great joy” is far away, and hope seems impossible to grasp, when we feel alone, anxious, sad or stressed, how can we approach Christmas without feeling even worse?

## **ACKNOWLEDGE GRIEF**

Firstly, it is helpful to acknowledge our grief and mourn our losses. Yes, our experience of Christmas may not be ideal; yes, there may be many things in our lives that fill us with sadness, anger, or anxiety. We need to acknowledge these and find a way to express how we feel about them. It is also important to acknowledge that there is more to life than our sadness, anxiety and so on. We are more than our sadness and anxiety.

Next, stop and pay attention to the good around us – the beauty in the created world, the kindness of people we may not even know. It is easy to get stuck in the rhythm of our own thoughts and emotions. When we choose to stop and breathe deeply, we are also giving our thoughts and feelings the opportunity to



slow down, rest, and see what else is going on around us. In among sorrow and stress, there will always be something of beauty.

When we give ourselves this gift, we see things that make us smile and give us a reason to hope. Jacaranda season, for example, leads into the Christmas season. For 10 months of the year, the jacaranda trees are bare or draped in vibrant green – but we know that violet flowers are coming! They always do. When I look at the beauty of nature, even when it is being endangered, I see signs of hope and promise – and the reminder that each season is not the final one.

By now, most jacarandas are green again, and the poinciana trees are dressed in beautiful red for their season of flourishing. We can draw hope from knowing that each season will pass, each season has something to let go of and something to give.

### **GRATITUDE**

More and more, gratitude is being recognised as a pathway to mental and emotional well-being. A great deal of

research shows that simply being thankful for the good things we have or see can make a huge difference in how we live our lives. Such gratitude opens a doorway to hope, or maybe just a window, but at least an opening.

Being thankful for small things around us won't change the big things in our lives that are difficult to live with. Gratitude is not a magic cure for the suffering and sorrow we might be living with. It does, however, change how we perceive that suffering – and perhaps gives us a glimpse of hope.

And so, I wish you not a happy Christmas but a Christmas that is hope-filled and leads you just a bit closer to great joy.

*Major Jo-anne Brown is a retired Salvos officer (pastor) in Queensland.*



Scan here for more information on mental health.

# Tomahawks, trees, and God's perfect timing

Jesus the culmination of a divine plan for the world

**WORDS** Kelvin Alley

I spent my early days growing up on a dairy farm. Life was relatively simple. We went without many things, but somehow my parents always ensured that Christmas was a special time.

It wasn't just because of presents on Christmas Day. It was the lead-up, the preparations, that perhaps I remember more than the day itself.

As farm kids, my dad had entrusted my brother and me with small tomahawks – something I still cherish more than 60 years later. In preparation for Christmas each year, there came a time when my dad would call us boys and say, "It's time." We knew what that meant.

We rushed to find our tomahawks and would follow Dad to the river where the pine trees grew wild. We would find the right tree, chop it down, drag it back to the house, and erect it in the corner, held firmly in a bucket of sand. This was the time for Christmas to begin.

Christmas, however, is more than gifts, trees, and decorations. It is more than carols and exchanges of love and goodwill. It is more than family gatherings and end-of-year celebrations in workplaces. It is more than Christmas lunches, pretty bonbons, and backyard cricket.

## **DIVINE PLAN**

Christmas is about God at work according to his divine agenda for the world. In the Bible, Paul, one of the leaders of the first generation of Christians, wrote in his letter to the Christians at Galatia a profound

statement that mostly goes unnoticed: "But when the fulness of the time had come, God sent forth his Son born of a woman ..." (Galatians chapter 4, verse 4).

If we can look beyond the Christmas trees and the decorations, we get a glimpse of the invisible divine hand at work to bring to fruition the very purpose and plan that God has always had from the beginning of time.

The birth of Jesus Christ was no afterthought of the creator. If we stand far enough back from these immediate events, we get a glimpse of the divine hand at work in history in preparation for the birth of Christ.

For example, during the 'silent years' between the last book of the Old Testament, Malachi, and the first book of the New Testament, Matthew, two significant things impacted the world.

Firstly, Alexander the Great conquered the known world at the time, some three centuries before the birth of Jesus. This included the lands of Israel and Judea, which, in centuries yet to come, would see the Christ Child born in Bethlehem. Alexander and his conquering armies brought the Greek language to these lands. This became the common language, the language by which the Good News of Christ and his saving and transforming power would be communicated across the vast expanses influenced by Alexander's Greek culture.

Secondly, some 60 years before the angels sang of the birth of the Christ Child, the



Romans had spread their power, influence, and ingenuity for civil works to the four corners of the known world, including roads that stretched to all corners of the Roman Empire.

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**Christmas is more than gifts,  
trees, and decorations.**

”

It was by these roads that the message of the gospel was carried both near and far, which led to the foundations and growth of the Christian church. Is it possible that these significant events taking centuries to take their shape and making such deep and impacting influence on worlds and cultures

were merely like putty in the hands of the Divine Master?

According to Paul, there is no question that the coming forth of Christ, born of a woman, was not just at a good time; it was according to the time that God had chosen from at least the beginning of time.

Christmas is good news! It is the strongest of all messages that God is intentionally at work in the world and is in control. It is a time where we can have hope that God is vitally interested in our affairs and is active and intentionally at work in our lives.

*Colonel Kelvin Alley is a retired Salvation Army officer (pastor) in Queensland.*



Scan here for more on finding meaning.

# Bringing Christmas kindness to others

Danny gives hope and dignity to others after overcoming his own battles

**WORDS** Naomi Singlehurst



As a Salvos worker and volunteer, Danny's passion for helping others comes from personal experience.

"For me, life is all about trying to give a little bit of connection and hope to others in need."

So says Danny, a Salvation Army worker and volunteer supporting others this Christmas. Danny has experienced many of the challenges faced by those he now supports – homelessness, physical and mental health issues, poverty, and isolation – and understands the importance of kindness and care.

Danny leads a team of volunteers at the Salvos' Sydney Congress Hall, supporting many who are experiencing homelessness or who live in boarding houses in Sydney's inner

city. Many in the community also struggle with unemployment, physical and mental health issues, poverty, and isolation.

The Salvos team, under Danny's leadership, has adapted to operate safely within COVID-19 guidelines. Their service includes meals, referrals to specialist services, pick-up and distribution of donated goods, 'Hope Dinner' outreach, and more.

"One evening [recently], I went out with four of our team to give a meal to homeless people sleeping rough," he shares. "As well as the meal, we were able to give sleeping bags and warm jackets to people in desperate need of these items."



Over the past two years, lockdowns and restrictions have severely impacted small businesses and casual workers in the inner city, creating even more need in the local community.

“Whether it be through a Christmas dinner or picking up gifts from donors and distributing them, we try to make Christmas really special,” Danny says.

In one of many moments that have left a lasting impression on him, Danny tells the story of a parent who came in by bus for Christmas food and gifts for her children and could not carry much.

“

**The more I serve others,  
the more my faith grows.**

”

“She was crying and emotional [as] she was picking out some small gifts, so we arranged for her to be driven home so that she could take more than she could carry. Upon hearing this, she burst into tears again – but they were happy tears.”

### LIFE LESSONS

Danny’s passion for helping others springs from personal experience.

He hit rock bottom many times during a long battle with drugs. There were times when he experienced homelessness and was alone and frightened. His lowest moment came when his addiction left him unable to walk his beloved daughter down the aisle on her wedding day.

“When I was about 17, I started smoking

marijuana, and then it moved to ecstasy and a bit of cocaine and ice,” he explains. “I held my first job as a locksmith for 19 years, but I lost it in the end. I was in a 14-year-relationship with my partner and my kids, and I lost that, too.”

Danny entered the Salvos’ William Booth House recovery services centre, completed the 10-month recovery program, but relapsed. He then went through the Salvos’ Dooralong Transformation Centre and has been free from drug use for many years.

“I really am so lucky,” he says. “I meet a lot of people who say, ‘My family don’t want to know me’, because, in addition, people put their family through the wringer and push them away. I am so lucky that my girls, my sisters, my brothers – my family – have been very supportive the whole time.

“I [also] have seven beautiful grandchildren and am so privileged to be able to be a part of their lives, too.”

Danny’s partner Kylie also works with the Salvos. They are both passionate about serving people in the community and are a vital part of the Sydney Congress Hall ‘family’.

“I come from a pretty big, extended, blended family and, for me, Christmas is about the birth of Jesus and being with loved ones – family and friends,” Danny says. “I’ve been so lucky with the examples I’ve had around me, showing me that the more I serve people, the more my faith grows.

“For me, my life and faith are all about giving back, helping others and loving others. What is so great is that you get back so much more than you give anyway!”



Scan here for more information on Salvos Alcohol and Other Drugs services.

# The benefits of baking 'bark'

Sharing a few fun hours in the kitchen to make budget-friendly Christmas treats

**WORDS** Simone Worthing

Majors Cathryn and Mark Williamson are Salvo officers (pastors) and award-winning bakers. They make mouth-watering cakes, biscuits, and slices – as well as a range of healthy and budget-friendly family meals. Cathryn has also developed the Salvos Kids in the Kitchen program, a 10-week course for children in grades three to six that teaches them to cook 10 different dishes in a clean, safe, and family-friendly kitchen.

As Christmas approaches after a challenging year for most, the Williamsons chat with *Salvos Magazine* about Christmas cooking with the kids and how to both enjoy the goodies and prepare some as extra-thoughtful homemade gifts.

**Salvos Magazine:** What makes baking a good Christmas season activity?

**Cathryn and Mark:** Christmas is a special time of the year, and it's exciting to do something special to celebrate. It may be preparing a special meal together. Maybe it's baking something to package as gifts. Maybe there's something your family has as a Christmas tradition, and so you're continuing that tradition.

**SM:** What are some of the benefits of families cooking together?

**CM:** Christmas is often the time that extended family and friends come together and connect with each other. If this is not possible, cooking together allows for family connection in the home. Cooking together also enables everyone to be involved. Kids can help with choosing the recipe, reading the instructions, helping with preparation, and cooking. Even younger kids can be given tasks to do!

**SM:** With the tough couple of years we've had financially, are there some home-made baking goodies people can make as gifts that are budget-friendly?

**CM:** There are so many great ideas for home-made gifts, and they don't need to cost a lot. A quick search on the internet will result in hundreds of recipes. Start with simple recipes or tried-and-tested favourites.

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**Children can be involved in making these gifts at any age.**

”

One simple idea that can be packaged as gifts is 'Christmas bark'. It's just melted chocolate spread thinly on some baking paper and decorated with Christmas-themed extras like crushed candy canes, red and green M&Ms, sprinkles, or pieces of gingerbread. Once it is set, break it up into pieces and package as gifts.

Decorated gingerbread shapes are another simple, cost-effective gift.

A little bit of creativity and some melted chocolate can transform baked Christmas goodies. For example, drizzle chocolate over biscuits or dip truffles in chocolate before sprinkling with nuts.

There are also many cost-effective packaging ideas out there – second-hand shops have an

amazing variety of items such as jars, coffee mugs, baskets, gift bags, and boxes. Fill these with your goodies, wrap in cellophane, and add a festive ribbon!

**SM:** What makes these homemade gifts extra special?

**CM:** Homemade gifts let the receiver know they are loved. Rather than choosing something store-bought, the giver chose to put time into creating something special just for them.

**SM:** How can we encourage children to help bake and prepare these gifts?

**CM:** Children can be involved in making these gifts at any age. Choose appropriate tasks for them to do. Measuring, weighing, and mixing can be shared. Even the washing-up afterwards can be a shared experience!

Encourage creativity. Kids can also be involved in packaging gifts by putting them into bags, jars or boxes. Handmade gift tags will also add a special touch.

**SM:** What do you love about baking?

**CM:** The main thing we love about baking is the end result – there is something to eat! We also enjoy the process of mixing ingredients to create something that looks and tastes completely different to the separate components. And we get to be creative and add our own ideas.

**SM:** Do you have any tips for cooking in general and Christmas cooking in particular?

**CM:** Don't leave it to the last minute. There are things that can be done beforehand. Christmas baking doesn't need to be time-consuming. Don't be too ambitious. Use simple recipes.

Relax and enjoy the season! And, most importantly, don't forget the real meaning of Christmas among all the busyness and celebrations.

## Christmas bark



### Ingredients

1 packet chocolate melts, decorations (for example – red and green M&Ms, crushed candy canes, sprinkles, mini marshmallows, chopped gingerbread).

### Method

- Line an oven tray with baking paper.
- Place chocolate melts in a microwave-safe bowl. Microwave in 20-second increments, stirring in between, until almost melted. Stir until smooth.
- Spread chocolate (as thinly as possible) on prepared tray. Sprinkle with decorations.
- Refrigerate until hard. Break into pieces.
- Package as desired. Store at room temperature.

*\*Note: We have found Nestlé chocolate melts work well for this recipe as they set hard.*

## Christmas nougat lollies



Photos Andrea Redford

### Ingredients

1½ cups chopped red and green jelly lollies (we used lolly snakes), 450g white chocolate, 2 tbsp butter, 500g white mini marshmallows.

### Method

- Line a 20cm x 20cm baking dish with baking paper.
- Chop the lollies into small pieces, around 0.5-1cm. Break up chocolate into pieces. Add chocolate, butter, and marshmallows to a large bowl.
- Microwave at 30-second intervals, stirring in-between, until smooth and melted together. The mixture will be super-sticky! Let cool for 2-3 minutes.
- Stir in red and green lollies and mix well. Pour the mixture into the prepared dish. Spread the sticky mixture into the corners and smooth the top as best you can.
- Refrigerate for at least 3 hours – overnight is best. Cut into bite-sized pieces.
- To store the lollies, use baking paper between the layers so they don't stick together.

## Chocolate bar sleighs

### Ingredients

Two candy canes, sticky tape, a large rectangular chocolate such as a KitKat, several small chocolate bars of similar size, double-sided tape, stickers.

### Method

- Using the sticky tape, attach the candy canes underneath the KitKat.
- Tape the end flaps of the small chocolate bars to make them neat.
- Stick three chocolate bars together to make the first layer on the sleigh. Attach to the KitKat with double-sided tape. Repeat with the next layer.
- Top with one more chocolate bar and decorate.



## Christmas tree fairy bread



### Ingredients

White bread (8-10 slices), margarine or butter, sprinkles, star-shape cookie cutter, hazelnut spread or Vegemite.

### Method

- Spread 8 or 9 slices of bread with margarine or butter.
- Cover generously with the sprinkles.
- Cut all but one slice into 4 triangles. On the remaining slice, use the cookie cutter to create a star shape.
- Cut another slice of bread into a rectangle shape and spread with hazelnut spread or Vegemite. This is the tree trunk.
- Starting with the trunk at the bottom, arrange all the pieces of bread on a tray or chopping board to look like a Christmas tree. Create the tree shape by layering the triangle pieces and then finish with the star on top.

## Christmas jelly cups

### Ingredients

1 pkt green jelly (lime), 1 pkt red jelly (strawberry), 6 clear plastic cups/glasses, 12 spearmint leaves lollies, 12 red mini M&Ms.

### Method

- Make the green jelly in a jug according to packet directions.
- Pour the green jelly mixture into the plastic cups to about halfway. Leave in the fridge until set (at least 4 hours or overnight).
- Prepre and pour the red jelly mixture on top of the set green jelly. Leave in the fridge until set (at least another 4-5 hours).
- Once the red jelly is set, decorate the jelly cups by arranging two mint leaves and two red M&Ms to look like a sprig of holly.



# SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

There are eight things different between these two pictures. Can you spot them all?



## Quick quiz

1. Which real-life person is Santa Claus based on?
2. Which country started the tradition of putting up a Christmas tree?
3. Where was the baby Jesus born?
4. How many gifts in total were given in 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' song?
5. Which is the highest-grossing Christmas movie to date?
6. Who wrote, "Maybe Christmas, he thought ... doesn't come from a store. Maybe Christmas, perhaps ... means a little bit more!"?

H H R A D G H U G D R A J O S E P H O T  
M S E N R I T J S E T S U H E O A H P H  
I M F F N G A S A T R V N C T E C A E P  
I L N T T S E E V O A J I A I P I E I E  
S L O R A C R L I E P O H Y O G S T I O  
R S Y N N N W G O D S Y A I A A L C E J  
M T T T G N S O U M R T A A M C E S D R  
M R I O E H I O R D I E A T V M I N A T  
E A V N L T E D A S V J S R A R M O E S  
H G I S S N O W M O I I T T U A N I R A  
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L J A F E O L L R H S N O I T I D A R T  
H A N E I S N L C N T R C E W S S R E F  
T R U S S O L M H H H M E R R Y N O G I  
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B O J I Y N H H S N C R A L C D E E I E  
P S E V G L R I S Y J R C V E P E D G G  
D T E E M A R Y S L S V A H M F Y G O R  
E I R F E R E H E D F A M I L Y A Y H A  
E I L Y I H T I S G E S U S E J E A E E

# Wordsearch

Words are hidden horizontally, vertically, diagonally, forwards and backwards. Enjoy!

- |             |          |
|-------------|----------|
| Christmas   | Hope     |
| Angels      | Mary     |
| Tradition   | Joseph   |
| Gingerbread | Wreath   |
| Jesus       | Tinsel   |
| Bethlehem   | Star     |
| Joy         | Family   |
| Love        | Festive  |
| Carols      | Saviour  |
| Merry       | Nativity |
| Church      | Peace    |
| Decorations | Goodwill |
| Manger      | Gifts    |

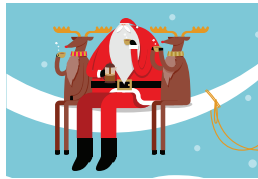
## HAVE A LAUGH



What do Santa's elves listen to as they work?  
 Wrap music!

Why do Dasher and Dancer love coffee?

Because they're Santa's star bucks!



What does Santa Claus use when he goes skiing?  
 The North Pole.



## Tum-Tum

On which page of this week's *Salvos Magazine* is Tum-Tum hiding?



## DID YOU KNOW?

Adelaide holds the record for the hottest Christmas Day in Australia – 42.1°C in 1888.

According to Google searches, pavlova is Australians' favourite Christmas dessert.

Australians spent more throughout the 2020 Christmas trade period than in any other year on record – \$55 billion.

Answers: 1. The Christian bishop, St Nicholas. 2. Germany. 3. Bethlehem. 4. 364. 5. Home Alone. 6. Dr Seuss. Tum-Tum: is hiding with Santa on page 20.



# How many Christmas Wishes will you make come true?

Give a gift to those who really need it. Whether it's a hamper or a hot meal, you can change the lives of families in need this Christmas.

Make wishes come true, by purchasing a Christmas Wish and supporting the Salvos. Together, we can ensure we leave no one in need.



**Donate today**

[salvationarmy.org.au/wisheswc](https://salvationarmy.org.au/wisheswc)  
or scan the QR code



**Christmas Appeal**

**LEAVE NO ONE IN NEED**