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all year round

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for struggling kids

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From addiction  
to freedom

# Home for Christmas

Making up for lost time as borders come down



# SALVOS

MAGAZINE

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“The birth of Christ is the central event  
in the history of Earth – the very thing  
the whole story has been about.”

- *C.S. Lewis*



## The Salvation Army is about giving hope where it's needed most.

### 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

# Salvos Magazine

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## Hope for the weary

At the end of another tumultuous year, we are again about to celebrate Christmas. For many, especially this year, the season will be one of family togetherness, reunions with friends, and celebration. For others, it will be a tough time emotionally, financially, and spiritually as they face job losses, family breakdowns, sickness, and natural disasters.

In the middle of it all, Christmas is a season that helps restore hope, joy, and purpose to many in a world weary from suffering and struggling with a sense of hopelessness in the face of personal tragedies and global disasters.

The birth of Jesus – the greatest gift to all humanity – brings grace, freedom, strength, life, and hope. His life and death restore brokenness and make us whole. They assure us that we are not alone in whatever circumstances we are facing, and they empower us to help change the lives of others.

This is definitely worth celebrating!

The Salvos Magazine team wishes you, and those whose lives you touch, a Christmas full of hope, peace, acceptance, compassion, love, and laughter.

Simone Worthing **Assistant Editor**

# Home for Christmas

Making up for lost time as borders come down

**WORDS** Paul Hateley

The world was gripped by war in 1943 when Bing Crosby released the song, *I'll be Home for Christmas*. The lyrics resonated with soldiers serving away from their families who longed to be home, "if only in my dreams".

Over the past two years, our world has fought the COVID-19 battle. This has brought government-imposed restrictions across the planet, often referred to as Public Health Orders. These restrictions have slowed the spread of the virus and, in so doing, kept people safe and, in many cases, alive.

“

**The message of Christmas has not changed from that very first Christmas morning until now ...**

”

There have been more than five million deaths worldwide, and while Australia has largely avoided the huge tolls seen elsewhere, every death here has been a tragic experience for loved ones and friends.

Every Australian has paid the price in minimising the spread of COVID-19. Some have

endured extended lockdowns, curfews, not being able to travel beyond five kilometres from home, and one-hour limits on exercise. For those fortunate enough to have remained employed, working from home became a reality for many. Places offering the gift of community – such as pubs, clubs, gymnasiums, shopping centres, and places of worship – have been closed or off-limits.

## DIGITAL CONNECTION

How grateful we have been for digital technology that helped us remain connected to loved ones. FaceTime, Zoom, Teams and the like have been such a blessing because we could see their faces as we spoke with them. But such technology still couldn't 'beam' us physically into the same room to hug someone.

Some of us have been robbed of the opportunity to say goodbye to a dying parent, unable to hold their hand in those last moments and tell them how much we love them. Others have been unable to walk their daughter down the aisle or hold their newborn grandchild. Many have a story that is heartbreaking and steeped in sacrifice.

As borders open and we begin to venture out again, this will create opportunities for families to reunite. Many are making plans to 'be home' this Christmas, to be around the table with family and friends. If this is you, can I encourage you to not take that moment for granted? Even if you aren't a hugger,



embrace your family and friends; show them your love. There is a lot of lost time to make up. Laugh as you have never laughed before, even if the Christmas cracker jokes are a bit ordinary. If you are a person who prays, thank God for the gift of family and friends and cherish that moment. And no doubt there will be a time to reflect upon the reality that some special people are missing from the table.

About 2000 years ago, a young couple waiting to be married were under government orders to take a journey to Bethlehem for a census. Their names were Mary and Joseph. Mary was advanced in her pregnancy and was separated from her family. She would remain so for several more years. As she gave birth to her son Jesus, people came to honour and worship him. Even though the young couple were on their own with a newborn, God sent strangers to be a blessing.

Whether you are 'home' for Christmas and seated around the table with family and friends or are connecting with just a few, I encourage you to consider the blessings that God has given – perhaps some of those you took for granted pre-COVID. Think about the love, joy, hope, and peace available to you through a relationship with Jesus. You might even want to embrace these virtues.

I'm looking forward to going home for Christmas. I hope you get the opportunity to do likewise.

*Major Paul Hateley is Head of Government Relations for The Salvation Army Australia.*



Scan here for more on finding meaning.

# Christmas songs all year round

Good news, joy and peace can mix  
with struggles, difficulties and concerns

**WORDS** Dean Clarke

How soon after Christmas must you stop singing carols and when is it too early to start? Christmas carols, and movies, were matters of dissension in my home.

Our 'Grinch' (does every family have one?) believed Christmas should be enjoyed in a short time frame with minimal music and movies. We also had to wait to put up the tree and decorations until after a December birthday. However, in my car, the carols could begin much earlier.

Each year I created multiple playlists of Christmas music. Traditional. Jazz. Acoustic. Orchestra. Choirs. Contemporary artists. New releases. Favourites. I would go for long drives just to get through all the music.

Now, don't confuse me with those fanatics who wear Christmas shirts, socks and suits, although I may own a few socks, pyjamas, and a pug Christmas T-shirt. I enjoy the season without being fanatical. But why?

What is it that I enjoy about Christmas music? It is not just the traditional carols, but all the different styles of music with a Christmas theme. The theme of Christmas can be found in the lyrics of the first Christmas song. The song story and lyrics are recorded by Luke (in the Bible) as he recalls the birth of Jesus.

Luke tells of the choirmaster introducing the song by sharing how the song is a celebration of "good news that will cause great joy for all the people", before conducting the

choir who sing "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests" (Luke chapter 2, verses 10-14).

There is good news which prompts a song of joy, for all people, because peace is coming. Good news, joy, and peace. For all people.

Life is hard. And over these last few years, life has been harder. It is easy only to hear bad news, because there is so much talk about it. For too many of us, joy is not an emotion we readily connect with. Joy and bad news don't go together. Nor does peace very often mix with struggles, difficulties and concerns. Life doesn't always lead to a happy song.

Christmas music began with good news. God cares. God cares so much that Jesus comes to the neighbourhood to walk with us, sharing in life, challenges, and anxieties. My worries become his concerns. He gives courage for the circumstances with the hope of a better tomorrow. Jesus is the good news. He is with us. He understands us. He is for us.

Good news can often lead to a song of joy – a song for all. In days past, I have sung a hymn in church that lists the different types of people who can come and sing this song of joy. The song sums up the list in one line – "Whosoever will may come." Who can benefit from the good news of Jesus? Whosoever!

Like Sandra Bullock in *Miss Congeniality*, every Christmas has the repeated hope of



world peace. Except the Christmas theme of peace focuses upon the person, who then influences their world. Peace in my heart. My life. My family. My community. My world.

I do love my Christmas music. Music that is not defined by style, lyrics, or tunes but takes hold of the meaning of Christmas – there is good news resulting in great joy for all the people. Peace is yours.

I may not sing *Silent Night* in March next year, but I will sing songs of good news, joy

and peace. I hope that you get a similar song in your heart.

Merry Christmas.

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



Scan here for more on finding meaning.

## Celebrating Christmas South Sudanese style

The Berwick (Vic.) Salvos, like many others around the country, is home to a large South Sudanese community. Christmas is a special time for this multi-generational and growing community, with celebrations taking place over several days and involving worship, singing, dancing, family, and food.



The Salvos play an active part in the Nuer Christian Church.

In the Berwick area of south-east Melbourne, the Salvos are part of – and also host – the Christmas celebrations of the Nuer\* Christian United Church. This group also includes Lutheran, Anglican, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Nazarene Christians.

“Like in South Sudan, we start our celebrations around 2pm on 24 December,” explains Salvo Elizabeth Dak, chairperson of the Nuer Christian United Church.

“We celebrate the birth of the King [Jesus] until around midnight, when we acknowledge and welcome in the day of his birth.

“Christmas morning is also huge as we gather as a congregation to continue to celebrate and praise God together. We generally spend the majority of the day at church, with services ending by late evening. There is singing, preaching, Bible reading, the choir.”

Preparations for the songs begin in late October. Each church practises their hymns and carols, with different groups coming in different uniforms to represent their church.

The women’s group and youth group also sing, commemorating the birth of Christ.

“We surprise each other with the special Christmas songs we sing,” says Salvo Nyakuma Kulang.

“We proudly wear our Salvos uniform. The children all receive new clothes to wear on these days. The different women’s groups bring different dishes for everyone to eat over both days. It’s mostly the kids who eat, as the rest of us are all busy in church.”

Gifts for family and friends, and food, also play a big role in the celebrations, although not until 26 December. The festivities can then last two to three days.

“We set the table for the family and serve chicken, meat, okra, fish, green vegetables, and leaves,” says Nyakuma. “We drink tea with lots of sugar, and also have fried donuts that we make ourselves, light bread with egg and milk, and cous cous.



Elizabeth, left, and Nyakuma, are an integral part of the Sudanese celebrations.

“There is dancing, games, presents, competitions, and music. It’s a time full of joy and happiness and we are thankful to God for his grace and getting us through the year.”

*\*The largest ethnic group in South Sudan.*



## Alannah brings Christmas smiles to struggling kids

"I wanted to help kids and make sure they felt that someone loves them," said Alannah, age 11. "I was sad about lockdowns but I have a mum and grandma who love me, and I wanted to help make other kids smile. So I thought of toys."

Alannah, who with her grandma Elaine is part of Victoria's Greensborough Salvos, was determined to make sure kids doing it tough had something special to open on Christmas Day. She decorated a big box with the help of her mum Briohny, and with great energy and enthusiasm told the local community about what she was doing and why. Alannah also made paper hearts to give to anyone who donated toys.



"My goal was 500 toys, but I ended up with more than 700," she said, with a big smile. "Grandma's lounge room was filled with toys; it wasn't her lounge room anymore!"

Alannah gave the huge range of toys, which included LEGO, bikes, scooters, play kitchens, and teddy bears, to the Salvos to distribute through their networks.



Left: Alannah asked the local community to donate toys for children this Christmas. Above: Alannah's toy tally quickly reached more than 700.

"This is one of the most remarkable contributions I've experienced and is testament to the creativity, passion, and enthusiasm of young people," said Captain Kris Halliday, Salvos officer (pastor) in Richmond, Victoria.

"These quality toys, packaged in sets and beautifully wrapped, will be given to kids from the Richmond housing estate, as well as others in Brunswick and Reservoir through Salvos teams there. After a most challenging two years for children, one young girl's work and care for others will bring much-needed hope and joy to so many kids who are struggling."

Alannah is looking forward to Christmas Day, knowing that disadvantaged kids will have a happier Christmas.

"To all children everywhere, have a merry Christmas. I love you, God loves you, and there will always be someone who cares."

# Just wait!

Reflections on the season of Advent

**WORDS** Amanda Hart

Most of us are familiar with Advent calendars - the calendars of all shapes, sizes, and materials that involve opening a little drawer, box, cardboard window, or envelope, with a surprise treat inside.

In the Christian Church calendar, Advent is the period of four Sundays and weeks preceding Christmas. Advent means 'coming' in Latin and is a time of preparation and expectation - for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ at Christmas, and the Second Coming of Christ.

In the final of her four-part series, Amanda Hart shares her thoughts on the Advent season and how we can use this time to prepare for, and focus on, this special season of the year and the real meaning behind it.

As a kid I remember the words, "Are we there yet?" coming out of my mouth on numerous occasions. More often than not it was met with the response, "Not yet, just wait!" Waiting can be tough, especially if you're an impatient soul like me. Over the past 18 months or so, we've all done a lot of waiting

- to see family and friends, for lockdowns to end, to return to work, for restrictions to lift, for test results - the list could go on and on.

During this time, I've heard a lot of people say, "I can't wait!" Let me just say, I totally get it; I get the feeling of frustration when it comes to waiting, but I've discovered that what's important is what we do in that waiting, and whether we use the time wisely to prepare for the coming event, or whether we sit around and complain about how long things are taking.

Here's the thing though - I've also discovered that the event or food, or whatever it is we've been getting ready for, takes a lot less time than preparing for it. After all the preparation and planning I put into my disastrous first attempt at making a pavlova, I decided to give it another go the next day. Everything I had done the first time I did again, so the amount of time spent getting ready and making it was doubled. Then, of course, you need to add the extra cooking time (in a different oven) on the second day when my pavlova was actually successful.

When the time came to eat dessert on Christmas Day, that pavlova was demolished within a couple of minutes! However, I would



argue that the time spent in preparing, planning, and making it was time well spent – learning the importance of mixture consistency, oven temperatures, timing and more, while I hoped for a beautiful dessert as the outcome.

In the Bible's book of Isaiah, we hear about the Israelites being exiled and the lack of hope they were feeling. But the prophet Isaiah spoke into their hopelessness and told them how to wait in preparedness for the coming Messiah: "But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint" (Isaiah chapter 40, verse 31).

But what does it mean to wait on God? It means recognising that God has all things under control; it means depending on God and aligning ourselves with his will and timing; it means having hope, confidence, and an expectation that he will act; it means trusting in him.

How have you used this time of waiting during the Advent season? Have you spent the time wishing away the days until Christmas Day, or have you taken the opportunity to stop, reflect, and learn how God is working in your life and the lives of those around you?

Trust in God. He's got it all under control.

*Captain Amanda Hart is a Salvation Army officer (pastor) in Victoria.*

**"But those who trust in the  
Lord will find new strength.  
They will soar high on  
wings like eagles. They will  
run and not grow weary.  
They will walk and not faint"**

(Isaiah chapter 40, verse 31).



Scan here for more  
on finding meaning.

# A message of hope

Jose's journey from addiction to freedom

**WORDS** Naomi Singlehurst

As Christmas 2021 approaches, Jose shares his journey – from his struggle with addiction, to a passionate commitment to show kindness and care to others. At one stage he says, "I had no hope. Nothing mattered. Nothing made sense." Today, Jose volunteers in prisons, with The Salvation Army and the Australian Anti Ice Campaign.

Several years ago, in the grip of 'ice' (crystal methamphetamine) addiction and on his way to mandatory rehabilitation, Jose looked down at the garbage bag he was carrying through an airport. It was in that moment, with no home, wearing donated clothes and shoes three sizes too big for him, and with only a garbage bag as a suitcase, that Jose began to look at other happy travellers and realise something was wrong with his life.

He says: "Looking back now, I see that as a spiritual awakening where God really showed me my life as it was. Not the delusion [that had been] in my head."

## SLIDE INTO ADDICTION

Jose's mother migrated to Australia from the Philippines, single-handedly bringing up her three children.

As an adult, Jose went to university, had a successful career in banking, and up to the age of 33 had never used drugs. But then the death of someone close deeply impacted him.

Around the same time, a workmate – another professional – invited Jose to visit and encouraged him to try 'ice'. Jose says: "Life deteriorated pretty quickly. I lost everything – it climaxed with the loss of my family."

At the time of Jose's garbage bag incident, he had been released from prison, then rearrested four weeks later. This time though, instead of going back to prison, he was ordered by a drug court judge to go to a recovery centre in Coffs Harbour (associated with the Salvos).

“

**My message to others about recovery is also really the message of Christmas.**

”

At the centre, Jose began attending a Bible study run by the local Salvos. Here he began to understand there was a caring God, though he could still not see any meaning or point to his own life.

## FINDING MEANING

"Then, one morning," Jose says, "I got up to open the door for a puppy we had at the rehab farm. As I was opening the door, I tripped over my Bible, which opened at the book of Ecclesiastes and I read the words, 'Meaningless, meaningless, everything is meaningless.' I was just stunned.

"I realised that righteousness, foolishness, none of it matters, unless we are anchored firmly to God. I realised also that I didn't have to look for God, because God came for us through Jesus. That was really the beginning



Jose has found hope and meaning in life and is now dedicated to caring for others.

of the journey. I became a Salvos soldier [member] a couple of years later, and I'm now studying for a Diploma in Ministry."

As well as working, Jose volunteers at church and is active in community outreach to vulnerable people.

He says: "I got involved, then started the Coffs Harbour community team of the Australian Anti Ice Campaign. We share our stories at schools and our message to kids about ice is – 'Not even once'. Once a month we have a Facebook show called 'Let's talk about ice' and we run it from our Salvos church."

### MESSAGE OF HOPE

"My message to others about recovery is also really the message of Christmas," Jose says. "That message is hope. There is hope through

Jesus; hope in someone greater than yourself; hope when you surrender yourself to God; and hope that you can really find yourself.

"Addiction cost me a lot ... but [also] recovery is not cheap, or easy. It needs a lot of raw honesty and a lot of surrender ... God's grace is not cheap either. It is free, but it's not cheap. It is about dying to yourself, surrendering to God and handing your life to Jesus.

"That is the beautiful hope that I have found and [also] the message of Christmas."



Scan here for more information on Salvation Army Alcohol and Other Drugs Services.

## Chicken and mango salad



PHOTO: STOCK / GETTY IMAGES

### Ingredients

2 tbsp olive oil, 2 tbsp lemon juice, ¼ cup chopped parsley, 1 chopped long red chilli (deseeded), 2½ cups chopped roasted skinless chicken, 2 peeled and cubed mangoes, 100g salad greens of choice, 1 punnet cherry tomatoes.

### Method

- Combine oil, lemon juice, parsley and chilli in a small bowl.
- Combine chicken, mango, salad greens and halved tomatoes in a large bowl.
- Drizzle chilli dressing over the salad.
- Toss lightly to combine. Serve. A tasty addition for Christmas!

## Tum-Tum

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



## Quick quiz

1. What is the first name of Scrooge, the principal character of the novel, *A Christmas Carol*?
2. Who spies on kids and reports back to Santa?
3. Which Australian Christmas song features kangaroos?
4. Which fairy tale inspired gingerbread houses?
5. In which city was Jesus born?
6. Who followed a star to find the baby Jesus?



PHOTO: STOCK / GETTY IMAGES

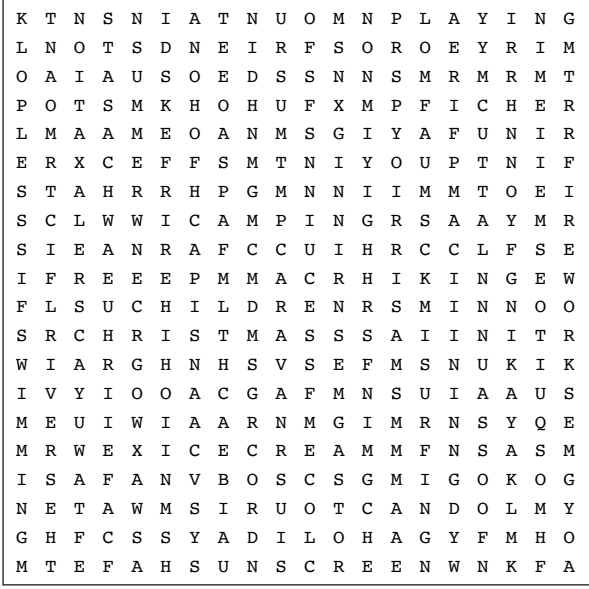
## Bible byte

"Don't be afraid!" he (the angel) said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Saviour – yes, the Messiah, the Lord – has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!"

Luke chapter 2, verses 10-11  
*New Living Translation*

# Wordsearch

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



- Beach
- Campfire
- Camping
- Caravan
- Children
- Christmas
- Family
- Fireworks
- Food
- Friends
- Fun
- Hats
- Hiking
- Holidays
- Ice cream
- Kayaking
- Mosquitoes
- Mountains
- Playing
- Relaxation
- Rivers
- Summer
- Sunscreen
- Sunshine
- Surfing
- Swimming
- Tent
- Tourism

## HAVE A LAUGH

Did you hear about the guy who fell into a Christmas pudding? He was dragged in by a strong currant!

What is Santa's favourite snack food? Crisp Pringles.

Why was the snowman looking through the carrots? He was picking his nose!



## DID YOU KNOW?

**The Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race starts on Boxing Day and covers 630 nautical miles (1170 km).**

**In Ukraine, spiders are considered symbols of good luck at Christmas.**

**Australians eat more than five million turkeys each year, with demand for whole birds peaking at Christmas.**

**The first time a Cricket Test was played on Boxing Day at the Melbourne Cricket Ground was in 1950 between Australia and England.**

**Answers:** 1. Ebenezer, 2. Elf on a shelf, 3. Six White Boomers, 4. Hansel and Gretel, 5. Bethlehem, 6. The wise men.  
**Tum-Tum:** is hiding in the toys on page 9.

# No one should spend Christmas homeless.

Families on the verge of homelessness urgently need your support this Christmas. No child should be without a home, especially at this time of year.



**Donate today**

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



**Christmas  
Appeal**

**LEAVE NO  
ONE IN NEED**