

**FEATURE**

Who is this baby?

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A heart full  
of hope

**MY STORY**

Why Christmas  
matters

# *Jesus. Christmas lights. Joy. Wonder.*

Isn't that what Christmas is all about?



# SALVOS

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After a challenging, confronting and often heart-breaking year both in Australia and internationally, may the Christmas season fill your home with joy and celebration, your heart with peace and encouragement and your life with love, laughter and hope.

From the *Salvos Magazine* team.



## 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



The Salvation Army Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet and work and pay our respect to Elders, past, present, and future. We value and include people of all cultures, languages, abilities, sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, and intersex status. We are committed to providing programs that are fully inclusive. We are committed to the safety and well-being of people of all ages, particularly children.

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A heart full of hope

## The ultimate love story

Christmas is a highlight of the Christian year and a season that helps restore hope, assurance and purpose to many in a world weary and struggling in the face of relentless personal tragedies and global disasters.

Christmas, though, is not just for Christians. Jesus came to earth in challenging and life-threatening circumstances to make a new and eternal life possible for all humanity. He came to restore brokenness, bring freedom and make us whole.

From the time of his birth, Jesus suffered rejection, hurt and loneliness, just as we do. He understands our need for deep relationship and connection and promises to always be with us and to fill every emotional and spiritual need we could imagine.

This is the hope of Christmas, for all of us, that God is with us. Christmas reflects the hope of a living relationship with a powerful and personal God. Christmas reaches far beyond the miracle of the baby in the manger – it's all about unconditional love.

On behalf of the *Salvos Magazine* team, I wish you all an encouraging, meaningful and hope-filled Christmas.

Simone Worthing **Assistant Editor**



# Who is this baby?

Why Christmas is a cause for celebration

**WORDS** Jo-anne Brown

The birth of a baby is often celebrated with great joy and delight. The birth of this baby, however, born over 2000 years ago, was celebrated with over-the-top joy! Angels were singing in loud voices, declaring 'good news of great joy' and 'peace on earth'. Brilliant stars blazed in the sky, and extravagant gifts were presented.

This must have been some baby – yet he was born in a stable among the animals, and his first cradle was a feeding trough!

Each Christmas, the Christian world celebrates the joy and peace that the birth of Jesus promises. And just three or four months later, Christians commemorate the execution of this same person, a condemned criminal, who three days later is restored to life.

What happened in the 33 years or so between the birth of the baby and the death of the man on the cross, between Christmas and Easter? What about the promised joy and peace?

How did the baby end up executed as a criminal? If the Christian world still so enthusiastically celebrates his birth, does that mean the promised joy and peace is still valid now?

## COMPASSIONATE CONNECTION

We find some answers in the stories of his life. Born at a time when his country was occupied, rather brutally, by the Roman Empire, Jesus managed to live his life with joy, peace and freedom. Everything he did, everything he said, reflected deep joy and peace. The way he treated others showed true inner freedom and compassion.

We desperately need these qualities today; joy and peace during the most difficult circumstances; freedom and compassion in brokenness and suffering.

Jesus had a way of connecting compassionately with people considered by others to be insignificant, even unwanted, rather than the important and influential people. He dared to enjoy the company of those who lived outside the norms and conventions of society – the rule-breakers, those not interested in religion or excluded by the religious people of the day.

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**Jesus had a way of connecting compassionately with people considered by others to be insignificant.**

”

Jesus reached out to all people (even the influential and important) and connected most meaningfully with those who were open to his teaching and how he lived his life.

It was also through his words that Jesus empowered people to live joyfully and peacefully (Matthew chapters 5-7). He taught people to focus on what was important, to let go of chasing material possessions and the need to get our way at any cost. He encouraged his listeners to pursue justice and



goodness, show mercy to others, and not be dismayed when people were cruel to them.

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**The way he treated others showed true inner freedom and compassion.**

”

His words echo through two millennia, and still, we hear the truth of them today. It's not just our actions that impact others around us, but how we even think about them – murder is clearly wrong but being angry at others is also destructive. Jesus calls us to love those around us – and not in a clichéd way. He calls us to real, tough love toward those who think

or behave differently to us, who are unkind to us and not very lovable at all. Such love means being patient and kind, even when we don't feel like it. It calls for a generosity of spirit and a willingness to let go of past hurts.

#### **CALLED TO FORGIVE**

Perhaps one of the most challenging things that Jesus calls us to is forgiveness. This forgiveness is not something to be taken lightly, and it is certainly not glossing over or denying evil and cruelty. The real gift of forgiveness is the freedom and peace it brings us as we forgive and let go of what we hold against others.

The way that Jesus lived his life, connected with others, and taught his followers, opened the way then for people to discover inner freedom and to live joyfully and peacefully. This remains the same today – if we model our lives on Jesus' life and his teachings, we ▶



“

It’s not just our actions  
that impact others around  
us, but how we even  
think about them ...

”



too will discover the deep joy, peace and freedom promised at this birth.

This way of living, however, is counter-cultural and can be threatening to those in authority and to established political, even religious, systems. Jesus knew that the things he taught and how he lived his life would eventually threaten the religious and political systems of his day – and he was right. He was executed as a criminal, with the approval of both the religious and political systems of the time.

**NOT THE FINAL WORD**

The good news, however, the astounding and practically unbelievable good news, is that this death was not the final word in Jesus’ life. After three days, Jesus was restored to life – and again, astoundingly good news, his restored life is a promise that, for us too, death is not the end.

There is more – and all the goodness and joy we experience in this life is available for us in all eternity.

So, at Christmas, when Christians sing about the birth of the baby that brings joy and peace, we are singing of Jesus, of his life and his teaching, of his willingness to face death, and the new and full life he experienced and made available to us all.

Jesus himself said he came to bring us abundant life and that our joy would be overflowing.\* This is how he lived – and what he holds out to us. This is cause for celebration!

*\*John chapter 10, verse 10; John chapter 15, verse 11.*

*Jo-anne Brown is a spiritual director, Salvation Army officer and retreat facilitator.*



Scan here for more  
on finding meaning.





# The best angel for the job

When kindness and acceptance is the top selection criteria

**WORDS** Belinda Cassie

Our nativity scene angel has a broken wing. And I needed someone to write the children's segment about how God chose this angel to play a part in the Christmas story, not because of or despite her broken wing, but simply because she was the best angel for the job.



Some of the other angels were jealous, of course – it was a super important job after all. They whispered behind their wings that God only picked her because of the new heavenly AR (Angel Resources) policy around diversity and inclusivity.

The angel heard their whisperings, and she too began to doubt. Why would God choose her? She was sure there was a better-equipped angel amongst her peers, someone who didn't have a story involving a broken wing.

She asked God's personal assistant for a meeting so she could officially decline the

position, but God's diary was pretty full considering Jesus' impending trip to earth. So, she sent God an email explaining why her broken wing meant she could not do the job he was asking of her. She signed off, feeling pretty deflated and sure that God would never speak to her again after this. But at least the other angels wouldn't be jealous anymore because some broken-winged angel got the biggest job for millennia.

Then she felt her phone buzzing in her robe pocket, and when she checked it, there was an email notification. The Wi-Fi is pretty good in heaven, so the emails fly pretty quickly.

*Dear Angel,*

*Hadn't really thought much about your wing, to be honest. I know it causes you a bit of grief sometimes. I know you wish it had never been broken. I do too. But, for this job, your wings are neither here nor there – I needed someone with a strong voice. A kind voice. A bold voice. A voice that could share good news with the least expected crowd of all. I wanted your voice. I still want your voice. I haven't notified AR about your decision, so the job is still yours if you want it.*

– God

And that's the story of how a broken-winged angel did her job that first Christmas.



Scan here for more on finding meaning.

# Jesus. Christmas lights. Joy. Wonder.

Isn't that what Christmas is all about?

**WORDS** Dean Clarke

I love the lights of Christmas. At home, with our Christmas tree and tinsel all up, the lights must be turned on. In winter, I like to sit in front of a wood fire and watch the flames. In summer, the Christmas lights get my attention. But it is not just lights on trees – the lights are everywhere.

Legend says Martin Luther first placed candles on a tree in the 16th century. Thomas Edison made the first electric-lit Christmas tree in 1882 with red, white and blue blinking lights. The tree also spun around. As electricity became more available, homes and businesses expanded their Christmas displays with an increasing number of outdoor Christmas lights

and decorations. Today there are competitions and tours of Christmas lights in the city and suburbs. And I love them all!

As a child, I would come into the city of Sydney and line up to see the decorated shop windows and Christmas lights. With my teenage friends, we made our way into the city Christmas tree and sang carols before attending a Christmas Eve candle service. In Brisbane, I played carols in the mall with the Salvos at the lighting of the Christmas tree, always staying longer to see the light display on city hall. One December, I was in London. Rugged up with a beanie, scarf and gloves, I wandered the city at night to enjoy the lights and displays.



The 'Llamacorn' takes pride of place in the backyard Christmas display.



When my children were young, and now with grandchildren, we must have a night or two to see Christmas displays. Whole streets with houses lit up and, unlike in London, people walking around in shorts and thongs as they point, laugh and enjoy the Christmas spirit.

After many years of saying I didn't have the time, I finally joined in. With grandchildren coming to visit, I researched and planned my display. Solar lights to save money. Drop lights from the roof, fairy lights in the front yard tree and reindeer along the path to guide my young visitors to our home. Using a wooden pallet, I hand-nailed a string of lights so that they formed the shape of a Christmas tree. As a special buy, I purchased a reindeer, which looked more like a moose, and it grazed upon the grass in the front yard while a 'Llamacorn' stood in the flowers out the back with the Christmas tree pallet. (My granddaughter loves unicorns – someone decided to mix them with a llama, which is pink. The obvious Christmas animal!)

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**I find that Christmas lights are often linked with singing, wonder and joy ...**

”

My display was simple but sure to please these young eyes. However, in Adelaide, the summer days are long, and the kids are young. So, while the sun had not yet set, their eyes were firmly shut before my lights turned on. One night, I took a video of the lights so that they could see what they were missing out on. I also showed it to my other grandkids and loved seeing their joy and wonder, especially at the pink Llamacorn.



I am not sure why we started using lights at Christmas. It may have been practical, with the short days of winter in the Northern Hemisphere benefiting from light. Or maybe the candle was used to shine hope in a world of darkness? I find that Christmas lights are often linked with singing, wonder and joy, and I easily think of the first Christmas light shining brightly in Bethlehem at the time of Jesus' birth. An event captured by the carol, 'O holy night! The stars are brightly shining; it is the night of our dear Saviour's birth'.

As I set up my lights this Christmas, I'll be singing carols about Jesus; my kids will look with wonder and together we will share the joy. Isn't that what Christmas is all about?

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



Scan here for more on finding meaning.





# Why Christmas matters

Jesus really is the hope of the world

**WORDS** Sandra Pawar

It's the middle of August as I write this, and I am sitting at my kitchen table in Atlanta, USA. Summer holidays for students have just finished, and decorations for the next major holiday – Halloween – are already filling the supermarket shelves.

Christmas seems very far away, yet strangely enough, it is Christmas I am thinking about. It's not so much the season of Christmas, though I do love sparkly Christmas lights, beautifully decorated trees and wrapped presents under the tree. I'm thinking about the reason we celebrate Christmas.

I am thinking about why any of us take the time to celebrate Christmas, why this event should matter to me, or matter to my neighbour down the road, or why it should matter to my daughter's teacher at the local primary school or the clerk that serves me at the bank. I am even thinking about why Christmas should matter to me in the middle of a hot day in Atlanta, a city halfway across the world from where you are probably reading this right now.

## LIFE-CHANGING HOPE

If we think of Christmas as just a celebration on 25 December, it should not matter to any of us because it is just an annual event with no life-changing or transforming significance. Yet if we see Christmas as the birth of a Saviour who changed the world forever, then it matters. It matters on 25 December, 26 December and 26 January, and it even matters on a hot day in August.

The significance of Christmas is not found in the day but in the person that day celebrates.

I look at it this way – with the birth of Jesus came the birth of hope. It's hope we all need these days, whether we live in Australia, Japan, India or anywhere in the world. The event that occurred more than 2000 years ago changed the world forever.

## LIGHT IN DARK TIMES

I don't know how the past year has been for you, but for me, it has been the hardest I have ever experienced. The first nine months were some of the darkest months of my life. I felt desperately sad and incredibly lost. There were days I didn't want to get up, days I couldn't function normally. Can you relate to these feelings at all? I am sure some of you are nodding your head in agreement. You know these feelings; you may even feel like this right now. Know that I see you, I hear you.

“

**Hope is what we all  
need these days.**

”

The one thing that kept me going when I wanted to give up was this incredible man named Jesus, the hope of us all. His birth all those years ago brought hope into a dark and helpless world, and that hope remains today.

We have hope in a promise that is still to come, of eternal life for those that believe, and we have hope that this world is not all there is. We



have hope because Jesus came as a man, lived, died and rose again. He is our literal hope.

The Bible speaks of this hope in the books of Titus and Timothy: "This living hope is the hope and promise of eternal life" (Titus chapter 1, verse 2) through Jesus Christ, "our hope" (1 Timothy chapter 1, verse 1).

In a world that doesn't seem to offer much hope these days, we can find our hope in Jesus. If you don't know Jesus just yet, I encourage you to get to know him. Your life will never be the same again.

### **TRUSTING IN HIM**

As someone who has struggled this past year, I know that having a relationship with Jesus doesn't take away pain or grief or make things easier. Knowing Jesus, though, helps me to find hope in the dark places and to know that eventually, I will find the light at the end of that dark tunnel.

Sitting here at my kitchen table in Atlanta, I can honestly say Christmas matters. It matters to me and matters to my neighbour down the road, to the teacher at my daughter's primary school, the clerk at the bank and to you too. It matters because with the birth of Jesus came the birth of hope and hope is what will keep us going.

My prayer for you this Christmas season is that "The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope ..." (Romans chapter 15, verse 13).

*Captain Sandra Pawar is an Australian Salvation Army officer (pastor) in the United States.*



Scan here for more on the need for community.





# Festive disasters

A message of profound hope in a troubled world

**WORDS** Simon Smart

I have a friend who was involved in a punch-up at his family's Christmas lunch. A few too many beers in the sun, and tensions had boiled over. His brother-in-law rounded out the afternoon with five stitches above his eye. "More pudding anyone?"

It doesn't always work out the way we anticipate, but at what point did Christmas come to be something to be endured? How has the season to be jolly morphed into a jolly joyless ritual? The weeks leading up to it don't help – cramming work functions and end-of-year school concerts into the final weeks; dragging your feet to overcrowded shopping temples for panic-buying of mass-produced tosh that will become landfill by New Year.

None of this is conducive to inner peace. Nor are we helped, probably, by clinging to incongruous traditions like roast dinners in 40-degree heat. A few years ago, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents in the United Kingdom reported that more than 6000 people usually end up in hospital on 25 December, all from the perils of the day – opening packages with box cutters, turkey carving under the influence and burns from candles lighting up Christmas trees are standard fare at emergency departments, as are injuries from heavy gifts falling on heads from cupboards.

We can laugh at that, but of course Christmas has a more seriously troubling side. For many, it's a reminder of how things might have been; of disappointment and loss. Perhaps it brings into sharp relief the strained or shattered relationships that are part of life for so many.

## **GOD'S RESCUE PLAN**

Associate Professor Michael Baigent, Clinical Adviser to Beyond Blue, the national depression initiative, says Christmas can also be a time of increased stress, disappointment or loneliness. "It's a time when many people focus on their losses, for example, family separation because of distance, divorce or bereavement. Christmas can bring back painful memories or evoke strong emotions."

But the original Christmas story, now so obscured by clamouring consumerism, gaudy lights and sentimentalised nativity scenes, ought to be a message of profound hope, and it remains so for many people today.

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**We can give gifts any time of the year ... but Christmas has a special focus. Why?**

”

American theologian Stanley Hauerwas says that the task of the Christian community is to witness to the world that "God has not abandoned us". It's a message that resonates with Gary Raymond APM, OAM, a retired Chief Inspector of the NSW Police Force and long-time member of The Salvation Army.

Having been involved in the aftermath of the Hilton Hotel bombing, the Granville train disaster and the Thredbo landslide, Gary



says his Christian faith and frontline experiences are completely interconnected with caring for others.

Now in retirement, Gary has spoken nationally and internationally about trauma and suicide prevention. He serves as chaplain to NSW Police post-trauma support groups, chaplain to NSW Ambulance Services and welfare officer for the Retired and Former Police Association NSW, among others.

Although not a fire chaplain, after the Black Summer fires of 2019-20 that burned during the Christmas season, Gary was invited to visit several rural fire service stations, as many involved in fighting the fires suffered serious trauma.

“God has used me so many times to save the lives of potentially suicidal people,” he says. “As I negotiated, I was able to tell them God loved them and had a plan for their life.

“Christmas for me means the beginning of God’s amazing rescue plan for humanity,” he adds. “God offers hope in even the most

hopeless of situations. Jesus came, he ministered, and he rose from the dead to show us that he was God the Son.

“Christmas means a celebration of God commencing that rescue plan, for me and for all mankind. I just break into joy. I really do!”

### FIRST CHRISTMAS

The first Christmas can’t have been easy for the mother and father of the baby born in a stable among animals and straw. A pregnant teenager a long way from home. Her confused husband trying to come up with a plan. Fleeing to Egypt as refugees from a tyrant intent on murder. No doubt life wasn’t panning out the way they had intended either.

Yet, wrapped up in that strange and ancient story lies a promise of something better that still resonates today. The infant born in obscurity who, so the story goes, came from God and was a light for the world in its darkness. It’s a narrative that claims to provide a window into a possibility of redemption and reconciliation, not only between humans but also between God and us; a source of hope.

It has been and will continue to be that for countless people, from those who’ve found themselves living in the park to others estranged from those they once lived with and loved. And even the bloke who wants to land a headbutt on the forehead of his brother-in-law over the annual family dinner.

*Simon Smart is a director of the Centre for Public Christianity.*

*This article first appeared at ABC News under the title ‘A source of hope’. Salvation Army content provided by Dawn Volz.*



Scan here for more on the need for community.







Christmas:  
Mini-  
budget:

# Saving for something specific

**This mini-budget is designed to help you plan and save for specific major events or items. For example, it may help you have a successful summer holiday or purchase your next car.**

## CHICKEN OR EGG?

One of the many tricky things about doing a budget is knowing which question to begin with:

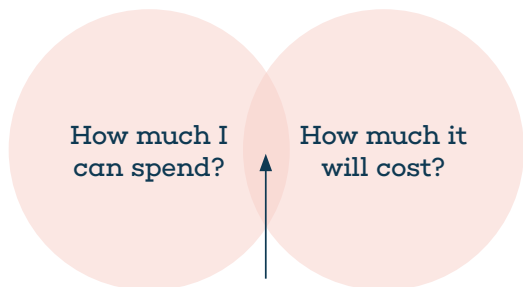
- How much is **X** going to cost?
- OR**
- How much money do I have to spend on **X**?

For a budget to work, we need to know the answer to both of these!

## WHAT'S YOUR SPENDING LIMIT?

Let's start here. This part is easy if you only ever spend what you have saved up and don't borrow. You need to know three things to work this out:

1. **How much do I already have saved?** \$ \_\_\_\_\_
2. **How much can I save each week/fortnight/month?**  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ per \_\_\_\_\_
3. **How many weeks/fortnights/months until my major event/purchase?**  
\_\_\_\_\_



*The budget 'sweet spot'*





E.g. Lee has \$3000 already saved up for a new car. She works out she can save \$100 per week. She wants to buy a car by the Easter holidays, which are 15 weeks away.

$\$3000 + (\$100 \times 15 \text{ weeks}) = \$4500$ . Lee knows she can spend up to \$4500 on a car.

### HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

You already know your spending limit, so this part is just listing all the costs. A spending plan helps break the costs into sections, so you don't miss anything.

#### Here's an example of a Christmas plan (right).

Put your spending limit at the top and check that your total at the bottom is the same or less than what you have available.

CHRISTMAS SPENDING PLAN	
<b>Spending limit</b>	
<b>Gifts</b>	
Family	
Relatives	
Friends	
Workmates	
Teachers	
<i>Total</i>	
<b>Food</b>	
Christmas Day	
Other functions	
Extras	
<i>Total</i>	
<b>Other</b>	
Christmas tree	
Wrapping paper	
Cards and postage	
<i>Total</i>	
<b>Grand Total</b> (make sure this is less than your spending limit)	

### FOLLOWING THROUGH

This content is taken from The Salvation Army's free, downloadable book, *You're the Boss: Money wisdom for life*. To download this book, go to [salvationarmy.org.au/need-help/financial-assistance/youre-the-boss](https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/need-help/financial-assistance/youre-the-boss)



Click here for more information on Salvation Army Financial Services.



# A heart full of hope



After some tough times, Tahlia and Abbie now work to bring that hope to others

**WORDS** Tahlia

**After a relationship breakdown, Tahlia\* was supported by a Salvation Army case manager and a range of services to help her get back on her feet. Tahlia and her daughter Abbie\* started reaching out to help others, especially at Christmas. With enthusiastic support from Abbie's small school, this grew into a busload of gifts collected each year to help those in need through the Salvos' Doorways [emergency relief] service.**

## Tahlia explains:

Several years ago, Abbie and I had to leave a frightening situation, and I found myself as a single mum. It was an extremely stressful time, navigating solo parenting and living on a very reduced budget. The kind support The Salvation Army gave us was life-changing.

A case manager supported me, and they linked me to a range of other Salvos services, including Moneycare [a free financial counselling service].

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**Christmas shows that there's nothing we can do that's going to separate us from God's love.**

”

I'm generally very organised and capable, but when you're going through trauma, your brain's trying to recover, and you're not at your normal capacity.

Having the case worker 'standing beside' me (and us) in that time, pointing me in the right

direction and supporting me, was just invaluable. It allowed me to heal, find my footing and support my daughter.

## CHRISTMAS HOPE

I knew our first Christmas would be tough. I tried to look for the positives and be thankful for what we did have, even the small things.

One of the lovely things that happened was our Salvos case manager recommending us for a Myer family day out, and Abbie got to be a 'little VIP' for the event.

This gave us so much hope. It helped us both to know that there were still good people in the world and that we would be okay.

After that first year, we always tried to put a present under the tree at [Salvos] Doorways for someone else or to buy a gift online for a Salvos hamper.

## FAITH AND FAMILY

With a heart for social justice, I applied for a job with the Salvos. Abbie and I also ended up connecting with a Salvos church. It's a great church community, and they're really wonderful, accepting and just very 'real'.

For us, Christmas is very, very important because it's all about Jesus. He died on the



cross for us, and no matter what we've done, he's paid the price for that.

It's a beautiful reminder that no matter how far away we get from God or what we've done, we can always come back to the cross and lay it down and say, 'I'm sorry'. There's always a place for us with God. Christmas shows that there's nothing we can do that's going to separate us from God's love. I love that!

For me, Christmas is about faith in Jesus and love for your family and community, which all flow together.

### SPREADING HOPE

I was privileged to eventually work closely with a Doorways team and thought it would be great if we could get even more presents for the Salvos' team to give out. I approached Abbie's school, and they were really excited.

The whole school got on board to provide presents for the toy program two years ago and again last Christmas. We are planning to do the same this year.

Abbie is really excited about making someone else hopeful and happy. It's instilled some great values in her.

I know from my life that ... it only takes a relationship breakdown, a loss of job, or an illness, to throw life upside down, and that can happen to anyone, no matter how well you plan.

We have learned so much over the last few years. We have learned to be thankful for what we have and to remember many people are doing it really tough. We have learned that if we have the capacity to help others get to a stronger position, then we should try because we know how much hope that help can create.

“

**We have learned that if we have the capacity to help others get to a stronger position then we should try.**

”

What a privilege it is to be part of an organisation that shows the love and grace of God and provides hope to people in some of their most vulnerable moments.

*\*Names changed to protect family privacy.*



Scan here for more on the need for community.



# The proof is in the pudding ... with a modern twist

Simple and budget-friendly holiday treats to eat or give away

**WORDS** Simone Worthing

"I don't think I've known a Christmas where chocolate melts aren't on sale," said Major Cathryn Williamson, Salvation Army officer (pastor) and award-winning cook and author of several cookbooks.

Cathryn was talking about the two "modern-day" Christmas pudding recipes presented here and their appeal as budget-friendly, easy-to-make and impressive-looking alternatives to the traditional fruit puddings and cakes.

"They also make nice, fun and homemade gifts for family and friends," she said. "People will appreciate the love, time and effort that has gone into making something special.

## **HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

Christmas puddings have an interesting history.

Traditionally, the Christmas pudding is made five weeks before Christmas, on or after the last Sunday before the first Advent (the last Sunday in the Church Year). Each family member in a household would stir the pudding and make a wish or say a prayer that would bring good to others.

This Sunday was called 'Stir-up Sunday', an informal term in Catholic and Anglican churches. It gets its name from the beginning of the prayer for the day in the Book of Common Prayer, which begins with the words, "Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people."

Every family member was needed to stir the pudding. "It had to be well-stirred and was a stiff mixture, and this was all before

mix-masters and electricity," said Major Mark Williamson, also a Salvos officer and award-winning cook. "It became a real family and community event.

"The traditions of families cooking together at Christmas and doing good things for others are great traditions to carry on.

## Royal puddings



### **Ingredients**

1 packet of choc-coated marshmallow biscuits (Royals), 50g white choc melts, red and green jelly lollies (jubes).

### **Method**

- Place biscuits flat on a baking tray.
- Melt chocolate (either in a heatproof bowl over simmering water or in the microwave). Spoon a small amount onto each 'pudding' and allow it to run down the sides. Top with small pieces of jelly lollies to look like holly and ivy.



Perhaps this is especially true in our modern lifestyle where the leadup to Christmas is really busy and hectic."

### MODERN APPLICATION

The simplicity of the Mars bar and Chocolate Royals Christmas puddings recipes is part of their appeal for kids, as are the ingredients!

"Younger or older kids can help in different stages of both recipes," said Cathryn. "Most kids especially like the red and green lollies on the Royals that are shaped to look like holly. Making these sweet treats can help retain the valuable family time of cooking together without a huge investment of time.

"Tastes have changed too, over time, and many people don't eat the traditional fruit puddings and cakes. These recipes here hold onto the tradition of looking like a pudding but appeal to more modern and diverse tastes.

### GIVING TO OTHERS

To keep the costs down of making these sweet treats, Mark advises keeping an eye on specials as you do your Christmas shopping.

"They also make a nice low-cost gift tied up in cellophane and ribbon, an oven bag as an alternative, or a gift box from a dollar store."

Christmas is also a time not just to give gifts but to focus more than usual on reaching out to others. For many in our communities, Christmas is a lonely, painful, and sad day.

"Stir-up Sunday encouraged people to make a wish or prayer, to do something good for someone else," said Cathryn. "This is a good time to give a gift to someone who may not otherwise receive one, help out in the community, include the lonely in your celebrations and reach out to those struggling."

Mark agrees. "Sometimes families can stir each other up the wrong way at Christmas. How much better to 'stir up' for a really positive outcome!"

## Mars bar puddings



### Ingredients

50g butter, 1 tbs golden syrup, 200g Mars bars, finely chopped, 3 cups Rice Bubbles, 50g white choc melts, red and green jelly lollies (jubes).

### Method

- Line a baking tray with baking paper.
- Combine butter, golden syrup and three-quarters of the Mars bars in a medium saucepan. Stir over low heat until the Mars bars and butter melt and mixture is smooth. Remove from heat.
- Place Rice Bubbles and remaining Mars bars in a large bowl. Add Mars bar mixture and stir until well combined. Roll into balls and place on prepared tray. Refrigerate until firm.
- Melt chocolate (either in a heatproof bowl over simmering water or in the microwave). Spoon a small amount onto each 'pudding' and allow it to run down the sides. Top with small pieces of jelly lollies to look like holly and ivy.





## Christmas Stars



### Ingredients

300g boiled lollies, 200g butter, ¼ cup brown sugar, ¼ cup honey, 2 cups plain flour.

### Method

- Separate lollies into colours, place in separate plastic bags, and crush. Place the butter and sugar in a large bowl and beat until creamy. Add honey and beat well. Add flour and mix until just combined.
- Lift dough onto a well-floured surface and knead lightly. Divide into two equal portions. Place into separate bowls, cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate.
- Roll out one portion of dough until 4mm thick. Use a 9cm star-shaped biscuit cutter to cut stars from the dough. Then use a 4cm star-shaped cutter to cut the centre from each star. Make a small hole in the top corner of each star.
- Bake for 5 minutes at 180°C on lined baking trays. Spread crushed lollies into the star-shaped hole in each biscuit (one colour per biscuit). Bake for a further 5 minutes or until lollies have melted. Cool slightly before moving to a wire rack.
- Thread ribbon through the hole of each cooled biscuit and secure with a knot.

## Christmas Noodle Trees



### Ingredients

Packet-fried noodles, milk chocolate to melt (around 200g), box(es) Tee Vee Snacks, Smarties or M&M's, chocolate stars.

### Method

- Melt chocolate and mix in the packet of fried noodles.
- Drop spoonful of chocolate mix on to baking paper and shape them into a triangle.
- Add the Tee Vee Snacks on the bottom to create the tree base.
- Place Smarties as baubles around the chocolate tree.
- Top the tree with a chocolate star.
- Set in the fridge for 30 minutes. Snack and enjoy!





## Crab Meat Salad

New Zealand summer side salad | Serves 6



### Ingredients

1kg crab meat or seafood highlighter, ½ head broccoli (blanched), 1 large yellow capsicum, 4 large tomatoes, ¾ cup tartare sauce, ¼ cup coconut cream, 1-2 tbsp lemon juice or white vinegar, salt and pepper to taste.

### Method

- Cut crab meat into strips and place in large bowl.
- Cut up broccoli into small florets, blanch in boiling water and drain.
- Dice capsicum and tomatoes and add to bowl. Add broccoli. Add tartare sauce, coconut cream and mix well.
- Add lemon juice or vinegar, 1tbsp at a time. Season with salt and pepper.
- Chill in fridge before serving.

## Apple Cake (Biskvit)

Ukrainian sweet dessert | Serves 6



### Ingredients

Butter, 5 eggs, 200g caster sugar, 200g plain flour, 1tsp cinnamon, 4 green apples, cored and thinly sliced, icing sugar, to serve.

### Method

- Preheat the oven to 180°C. Butter a 22cm cake tin with a removable base.
- Beat the eggs and sugar until very fluffy. There is no raising agent in this cake so the amount of air you beat into it is essential.
- Gently fold in the flour and cinnamon.
- Place the apples at the bottom of the cake tin and pour in the cake batter.
- Place in preheated oven for 35 minutes, or until skewer comes out clean.

*These recipes are part of a collection compiled by Salvation Army staff, personnel and volunteers to celebrate cultural diversity within the Salvos and in our communities.*





# SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

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



Answers: 1. Holly. 2. Star. 3. Belt buckle. 4. Dots on pants. 5. Socks.



PHOTO: STOCK / GETTY IMAGES

## Quick quiz

1. 'The Quest of the Magi' is better known by what song title?
2. For which movie was 'Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas' written?
3. What popular Christmas song was originally written to celebrate Thanksgiving?
4. How many times is 'la' sung after 'fa' in 'Deck the Halls'?
5. In 'The Twelve Days of Christmas', who sends the gifts?
6. How many reindeer pull Santa's sleigh in 'Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer'?





# Wordsearch

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

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

- Angels
- Bethlehem
- Care
- Christmas
- Community
- Compassion
- Decorations
- Family
- Festive
- Gifts
- Goodnews
- Goodwill
- Herod
- Holidays
- Hope
- Humanity
- Jesus
- Joseph
- Joy
- Lights
- Love
- Manger
- Mary
- Nativity
- Peace
- Star

## HAVE A LAUGH



Why was the caroller arrested?  
She was in big treble.

What Christmas song do dogs like?  
Bark, The Herald Angels Sing.



What is Good King Wenceslas' favourite pizza?  
Deep pan crisp and even.



## Tum-Tum

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



## DID YOU KNOW?

'Jingle Bells' was the first song broadcast in space, in December 1965, by the crew of Gemini 5.


In April 1975, the US military played 'White Christmas' over Armed Forces Radio as a covert signal to evacuate soldiers and 6000 at-risk Vietnamese.

'Do You Hear What I Hear?' was written in 1962 as a prayer for peace in response to the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Answers: 1. 'We Three Kings', 2. Meet Me in St Louis, 3. Jingle Bells, 4. 96, 5. The singers' true love, 6. Nine, Tum-Tum: is hiding in the bauble on page 13.







**“Christmas begins what Easter celebrates. The child in the cradle becomes the King on the cross. Because of Bethlehem, we have a Saviour in heaven. These are the heart-shaping promises of Christmas.”**

**- Max Lucado**