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Where will you be this Christmas?

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Reflections on the Advent season

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Care comes full circle

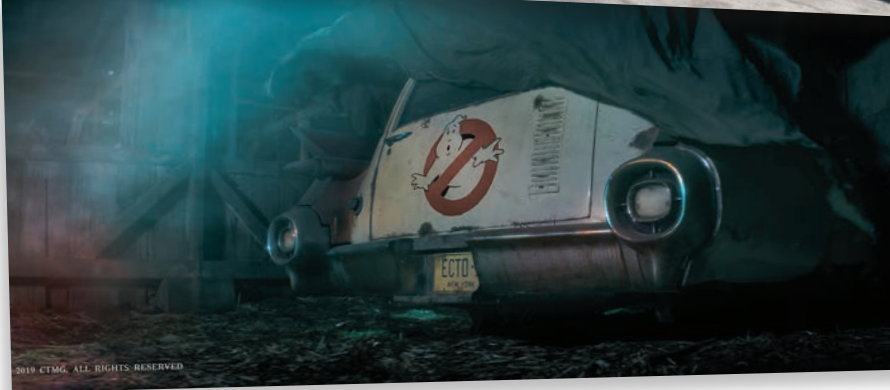
# Dancing, dangling, desperate measures, and days of the Apocalypse

All the latest movies to see this summer



# SALVOS

MAGAZINE



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*“The Earth laughs in flowers.”*

*- Ralph Waldo Emerson*



## 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

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## Time together

As Christmas approaches and reunions with family and friends around the country become a reality, many of us are planning events, outings, and fun times together.

For some, going to the movies is a priority. In this edition, Mark Hadley looks at a few of the latest titles due to be released, beginning 16 December. Mark reflects on their entertainment value, storylines, and some of the deeper lessons viewers can take from them.

Anthony Hunt also talks about togetherness, sharing a personal story of a special Christmas with his family, memorable not because of the food or gifts, but because they spent it together. Importantly, Anthony shows that the Christmas story is the story of a God who chose to be present in the story of humanity, and is present with us today – regardless of our circumstances.

In Christmas movies and in life, many things don't always go according to plan but, in the end, the love, joy, peace, and hope of Christmas remain. And that is what this season, and what it means for the future, is all about.

Simone Worthing **Assistant Editor**

# Dancing, dangling, desperate measures, and days of the Apocalypse

All the latest movies to see this summer

**WORDS** Mark Hadley



## **SPIDER-MAN: NO WAY HOME – RELEASED 16 DECEMBER**

“The problem is you – trying to live two different lives!”

At the end of *Spider-Man: Far From Home*, our likeable hero Peter Parker (Tom Holland) had his secret identity revealed to the world by dying villain, Mysterio. Now, Spidey finds himself in a sea of unwanted attention. Driven to desperation, Parker enlists the help of the master of the mystic arts, Dr Strange (Benedict Cumberbatch), to erase from everyone’s memory that he is the world-famous webslinger. Unfortunately, the spell goes wrong, leading to a fracture in the multiverse that allows the emergence of alternate supervillains like Doc Oc, Electro and The Green Goblin.

The heart of *No Way Home*’s storyline is an existential crisis. Parker cannot come to terms with his identity as a superhero as easily as his mentor, Tony Stark. His failure to embrace both the good with the bad, being known and unknown, is what skews Dr Strange’s spell. Spidey’s struggle will serve as a perfect parallel for audience members who also happen to be Christians. Like Peter (in the Bible), believers soon discover that there is no way to be known as a believer to just one group of people.

### **SING 2 – RELEASED 26 DECEMBER**

“There’s always a choice. ‘Just never had the guts to make the right one’.”

In *Sing 2*, Buster (Matthew McConaughey) convinces his troupe to travel to Redshore City and pitch their latest show to entertainment mogul Jimmy Crystal. They only capture Jimmy’s attention, though, by pretending they have legendary rock lion Clay Calloway on board. Now it’s up to the team to bring Clay out of retirement before they’re thrown off the stage.

*Sing 2* is in many respects a ‘rinse and repeat’ of *Sing*, lining up a staggering ensemble cast – Scarlett Johansson, Reese Witherspoon, Bono – to sing crowd-pleasing songs.

What accompanies them is a storyline that’s just as well known. Key characters find themselves facing crucial choices that stand between them and happiness. They can allow their past, lack of qualifications, or ability to cast them down, or they can embrace their potential for greatness. It’s a sad moral because it suggests success is always up to us. And, just as sadly, it’s sweet to the taste and sticks like the fairy floss it is.



### **HOUSE OF GUCCI – RELEASED 26 DECEMBER**

“Father, Son and House of Gucci.”

This thriller film concerns the rise and fall of the legendary fashion brand of the same name. Lady Gaga stars as Patrizia Reggiani, a penniless social climber who marries Maurizio Gucci (Adam Driver), a third-generation member of the Gucci empire. The House of Gucci is controlled by Maurizio’s father Rodolpho (Jeremy Irons) and his uncle Aldo (Al Pacino). Under Patrizia’s influence, Maurizio edges his uncle out of the business to become chairman of the Gucci Group. However, Maurizio comes to resent his wife’s influence and eventually leaves her for another woman. When Patrizia learns her husband intends to marry his lover, and that it will seriously impact her fortunes, she hires a hit man to solve her problems.

*House of Gucci* is directed by Ridley Scott and based on a true story, with a real-life lesson to absorb. It’s a cautionary tale about the idols we set up in our lives.

The social level at which the story operates could leave us thinking we are just observers of this sordid struggle. However, everyone is in danger of coming under the thrall of an idol. For Patrizia it was power. For us it might be something as wholesome as family or as fleeting as health. Either way, idols are cruel masters that discover depths in us we never thought possible.



**WEST SIDE STORY – RELEASED  
26 DECEMBER**

“If you go with him, no-one will ever forgive you.”

Director Stephen Spielberg has recreated the legendary musical *West Side Story*. Loosely based on William Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, *West Side Story* introduces us to 1950s teenagers Tony (Ansel Elgort) and Maria (Rachel Zegler) who find themselves on either side of a bitter gang dispute. Yet their affiliations don’t prevent them from falling in love and hoping to find ‘a place for us’.

*West Side Story* went from hit Broadway musical to the big screen in 1961. It won an incredible 10 Oscars, and the update’s release has ensured it will be in contention for the 2022 Academy Awards.

Spielberg will stay close to a storyline that is saturated in the right kind of love: one that sacrifices itself for its beloved.

*West Side Story* is not a Christian tale, but it provides strong parallels for someone hoping to explain the colour-blind, status-ignorant love of Christ that transformed the ancient world and holds true today.



**GHOSTBUSTERS: AFTERLIFE –  
RELEASED 1 JANUARY**

Mr Grooberson: “Somehow a town with no fault lines is shaking on a daily basis.”

Phoebe: “Maybe it’s the apocalypse.”

*Ghostbusters: Afterlife* is a direct sequel to the original *Ghostbusters* (1984) and *Ghostbusters II* (1989) films. The plot unfolds in a small town in Oklahoma where a family has relocated because of money troubles. Callie and her two children, Finn and Phoebe, move into a rickety old farmhouse left to them by their grandfather. There, Finn and Phoebe discover laboratory equipment and the legendary station wagon ‘Ecto 1’ that leads them to realise their grandfather was one of the original Ghostbusters. The world has largely forgotten the paranormal investigators; however, unexplained phenomena soon bring them to mind as this new generation of ghostbusters sets out to avert a whole new apocalypse.

*Ghostbusters: Afterlife* is literally a resurrection of a franchise. It is directed by Jason Reitman, son of original director Ivan Reitman, and reunites cast members Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd, Sigourney Weaver, and Ernie Hudson. It is also liberally sprinkled with nostalgic references.

Another thing back from the grave, though, is a way of seeing the spiritual world as something either laughable or threatening. *Ghostbusters* represents the triumph of science over that scary theology, so don’t go looking for any faith in an afterlife here.

## Multicultural Engagement Campaign launches



Lucky Lartey Group from West Africa perform at the Gala.

The Salvos Diversity and Inclusion team recently launched a Multicultural Engagement Campaign, starting in Western Sydney, with plans to expand across Australia.

The campaign was launched at the first annual Multicultural Gala last month.

Adrian Kistan, General Manager of the team, says that the Salvos “need to create a new narrative so that people from culturally diverse communities can have a better understanding of who we are. This is not about

raising funds. [We want people to know that] the Salvos want to welcome you and connect with you so we can be more effective!”

The campaign will also see a combination of digital, social, and event opportunities pop up across Western Sydney to increase dialogue between communities, and to empower local Salvo churches and centres.

The launch of a Salvos Multicultural Ambassador Program is another step in the campaign, allowing the Salvos to partner with six prominent representatives from communities with varying backgrounds and beliefs.

Adrian and his team believe that the campaign will lead to “greater collaboration and partnerships with local Salvos and their multicultural communities so that we can transform Australia one life at a time with the love of Jesus”.

Visit [multiculturalgala.com.au](http://multiculturalgala.com.au).

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# Where will you be this Christmas?

Christmas – the story of a God who chooses to be present

**WORDS** Anthony Hunt

As I recently reflected on Christmas celebrations over the years, what stood out was not the gifts, not the food (which in my family is a big deal!), but the time spent together as family.

My favourite Christmas memory started a few days before Christmas, sometime in the mid-'90s. My brother Christopher had become quite ill, and my parents took him to the local hospital emergency department. An inflamed appendix was discovered, and he had an emergency appendectomy on Christmas Eve.

Christmas morning was much more sombre in my house that year because Christopher was in hospital, and I think perhaps Mum had spent the night there. The day was stinking hot, and this was before the advent of widespread air-conditioning in the house, so that just added to the general downbeat tone of the day.

## **TIME TOGETHER**

Eventually, we got a phone call saying Christopher could come home. We picked him up as a family and we celebrated Christmas as a family in my parents' room – the one room of the house that had air-conditioning. Christmas lunch was eaten in there, presents were opened there – I am even sure the dog got to eat her food there, too. I do not

remember the presents, or the particular food, but I remember that we were together and present as a family.

I understand that, for some people, Christmas and family can be a highly tense affair. Perhaps there is someone else in your life who needs you to be present for them this Christmas? Try to find that person and be present for them. Your company may be the thing they need to know that they are loved and cared for.

“

**I remember that we were together and present as a family.**

”

I know a lot of parents feel the pressure to fill that endless Christmas list given to them by their children. Some parents fill it out of genuine affection, others out of not wanting their kids to go without as they may have done, or perhaps others who, for any number of reasons are absent throughout the year.





PHOTO: STOCK/GETTY IMAGES

May I suggest that, while the disappointment your child may feel if you don't get them the latest and greatest will subside, the disappointment of not having you present with them can last a lifetime.

### **GOD IS PRESENT**

The Christmas story is the story of a God who chose to be present in the story of humanity. Around the world at Christmastime, Christians will gather to celebrate the great mystery of the birth of Jesus – that the eternally divine chose to come in the form of a helpless infant to be present in the story of his people.

The stories of the gospels [in the Bible] tell us of Jesus who was present with people in their suffering, with those whose lives had been torn asunder by illness, war, and death itself, and with those trying to live their best life.

If you'd like to learn more about Jesus, find a local Salvos church this Christmas season (see link below). And in the meantime, I challenge you to read the first two chapters of the Bible's Gospel of Luke to begin to discover the good news of great joy that is for all people.

For more information on the Salvos' Christmas services, events, stories, and messages, go to [salvos.org.au/christmas](https://salvos.org.au/christmas)

*Lieutenant Anthony Hunt is a Salvation Army officer (pastor) in Queensland.*



Scan here for more on the need for community.

# Waiting expectantly

**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 third 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.

I don't know if you've ever noticed, but it seems to me that there are times when it doesn't seem to matter how much 'prepping' and planning you do for an event, something will always go wrong.

A couple of Christmases ago, my job was to bring dessert and bonbons for our family lunch. I decided to make my first ever 'pav' for dessert, so I prepped to the max - recipe, ingredients, with all the utensils and appliances required set and ready to go. Within 10 minutes in my oven, the outside of the pavlova was burnt, and the inside was pretty much liquid. As for the bonbons, I bought the most beautiful packs with amazing gifts and top-notch jokes. Upon arriving at my brother and sister-in-law's house, I had to admit that I'd accidentally left the bonbons at home - an hour and a half away. The reality is that things don't always turn out as expected - we might have an idea, but often the end result doesn't quite look like we thought it would.

So it was with the first Christmas. God shattered human expectations with the birth of Jesus - it was expected and planned for, but at the same time, completely unexpected. He was certainly not the kind of Messiah everyone was waiting for. The Saviour of the world was born to a young couple who were fleeing persecution after his birth. He was born in a barn, not in a palace, and his parents were far from royalty. The people were expecting a warrior king born into nobility, but what they got was a child born into a humble family.

Throughout Jesus' life he continued to go beyond expectations, even in allowing himself to be crucified. This was the furthest thing expected from a Messiah who would triumphantly wipe out his enemies.

God has an amazing way of going beyond our expectations. He wants us to prepare and to anticipate his moving in our lives, but he will do things his way.

Advent is about preparing to receive God's good gifts. That receiving might not always look the way we think it should. Just as Jesus went beyond the limited messianic expectations of the time, God can go beyond our



own. The Bible's book of Ephesians, chapter 3, verse 20, says God "is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine".

We can align our expectations with God's through prayer. And as we build our relationship with him, we begin to anticipate that God will do things in his own way; we begin to expect the unexpected. We can have faith that he will answer prayer and his plans will be carried out, just maybe not in the way we would like.

I love Christmas movies; there seems to be a bit of a theme with them. The main character usually goes over the top when planning and prepping for the perfect Christmas, or even the perfect life. The focus is on what seems to be important, but then things along the way go incredibly and unbelievably wrong. And there's always a moral at the end of the movie: even though things that seemed important went wrong, the most important things still remain – the love, joy, and peace of God that comes through Christmas.

Let's wait expectantly for those things this Christmas season.

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

**“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory ...”**

- Ephesians chapter 3, verses 20-21  
*New International Version*



Scan here for more on finding meaning.

# Care and stability come full circle

Ongoing support opens  
new doors for Carley\*.

**WORDS** Holly Reed, Pallavi Singhal,  
and Naomi Singlehurst

When the Salvos first began supporting Carley\*, she was living in highly insecure housing with her three children.

"Carley and the children all slept in one room," says Belinda, Salvation Army Housing case manager in regional Victoria. "They didn't have access to the lounge room, and another woman was also boarding there. They were treated very poorly and the living conditions were unsafe. This was having a significant impact on the children's health and wellbeing.

"[Her] son Mark\* has autism, epilepsy, and a heart condition and receives treatment for his heart through the children's hospital one hour away. Mark also needed local support services set up, including paediatrician, physio, speech therapy, and more."

## **FAMILY STABILITY**

Belinda and the team first placed the family into a motel before moving them into short-term crisis accommodation. The Salvos team supplied toys, games, clothing, food, and vouchers.

To provide respite for Carley and social stimulation for Mark, the team also enrolled Mark in childcare and offered advocacy and support for Carley to apply for, and gain, a private rental close to the local school, shops, and public transport.

For Belinda, the passion for supporting others grew directly out of her own experience.

"I was homeless from the age of about 15 and lived in transitional housing for about two years before going into public housing," she shares. "I had support from a number of areas, including the Salvos. They helped with food and the occasional bill. They also helped with furniture to set up my first home in public housing."

Belinda was inspired to go on to help others and says: "I had a really good rapport with my youth worker at the time and admired what she did. I did my Certificate IV in Youth Work and then eventually moved on to my Diploma in Social Work. I wouldn't have been able to manage that without the external support."



PHOTO: STOCKY / GETTY IMAGES

Today she loves to be able to offer Christmas gifts and food to the community members she works with, remembering her first few Christmases years ago, as a teen, all alone, caring for her baby daughter.

"I've now been in my current role with The Salvation Army for 11 years and love being in a position to support others and make a difference in their lives and their children's lives. I feel privileged."

Belinda says that providing layers of care, from essential housing to help with furniture, Christmas, and back-to-school care, all help build stability.

### **TAKING CHRISTMAS TO THE COMMUNITY**

Last Christmas, the housing services team had to find solutions to get care to their community members as COVID-19 lockdowns occurred.

"Normally our service hosts a Christmas party," Belinda says. "We couldn't do that in 2020, but still wanted to give as much cheer as possible within the restrictions, so we [delivered] Christmas gifts and hampers to

them in our decked-out minibus. It's a really special time of year and we wanted the kids to have that sense of Christmas wonder."

One of the highlights for Belinda was seeing joy on the faces of community members – especially Carley's four-year-old son, Mark.

"Mark had never seen Santa in a shopping centre or anywhere. His response when 'Santa' arrived at his place in our van was absolute delight. Seeing his little face and the happiness of the other children was so moving," Belinda says.

"Seeing a family get to this point is amazing and, while they still have a long way to go, the family needed that stability to begin to work on the underlying issues. Making sure they had access to schooling, food and medical treatment, plus some help with Christmas and back-to-school, helped set them on a really good path to continue to improve the quality and stability of their lives."

*\* Names and identifying details have been changed.*

## Honey mustard dipping sauce



PHOTO: ANDREA REDFORD

### Ingredients

¼ cup seeded mustard, ¼ cup honey, ¼ cup mayonnaise, 1 tbsp lemon juice, ½ tsp onion powder, ¼ tsp salt, black pepper to taste, snacks for dipping.

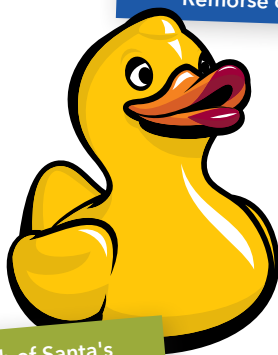
### Method

- Add all ingredients to a mixing bowl.
- Whisk together until well combined and smooth.
- Taste to check if more salt or pepper is needed and add as necessary.
- Enjoy this yummy sauce by dipping chicken nuggets, hot chips, or carrot and celery sticks, or spread it on a cob of corn or a sandwich.
- Store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 3 weeks.

## HAVE A LAUGH

What did the duck say when it bought lipstick?  
"Put it on my bill."

What do you call an apology written in dots and dashes?  
Remorse code.



Which of Santa's reindeer has bad manners?  
Rude-olph!

What Christmas carol is a favourite of parents?  
Silent Night.

## SIGNING IN



# Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

				1			3	
	9				5	6		
						4		
9			4	5			6	
		2				7		
5	7		9	2	8	1		
		5	6		2	9		
8		4						
	2	9			4	5		6

# Tum-Tum

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



# Bible byte

"Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me." – Jesus John chapter 14, verse 1 *New Living Translation*

**Quiz answers:** 1. 30,000. 2. 1000. 3. Wattle. 4. One. 5. Twice. 6. The lily, rose, and camphire. **Tum-Tum:** is hiding on page 9.



PHOTO: STOCK/GETTY IMAGES

# Quick quiz

1. Australia is home to approximately how many plant species?
2. In Australia there are approximately how many Indigenous species of daisies?
3. Acacia is more commonly known in Australia as which species?
4. How many grams of oil are produced from 2000 roses?
5. If well-watered, how many times per year do bottlebrush flower?
6. Which three flowers are mentioned in the Bible?

# DID YOU KNOW?

**Marie Curie is the only person to be awarded a Nobel prize in two different sciences.**

**Iceland is the only country in the world without mosquitoes.**

**Fraser Island will soon revert to its original Indigenous name, K'gari.**

**Australians eat around 12 meat pies per person per year.**

6	4	17	11	12	13	14	15	16	18
5	1	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
4	1	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
3	5	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Have you taken care of your Will?



A gift in your Will can help The Salvation Army create a long-lasting impact in the lives of those experiencing hardship.

Together, we can give hope where it's needed most and you can start or continue your legacy of generosity.

For information or a free a copy of Your Will booklet



Please contact:

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