

salvos

magazine

The Christmas parrot

A life lesson in peace and patience



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FEATURE

10 ways to budget at Christmas

FAITH TALK

The quiet heart of Christmas

MY STORY

Hampers for women in prison



"Christmas is the renewed invitation not to be afraid and to let him – whose love is greater than our own hearts and minds can comprehend – be our companion."

- Henri Nouwen



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 wellbeing of people of all ages, particularly children.

Salvos Magazine

Founders William and Catherine Booth

Salvation Army World Leaders

General Lyndon and Commissioner Bronwyn Buckingham

Territorial Leader Commissioner Miriam Gluyas

Secretary for Communications and Editor-In-Chief

Colonel Rodney Walters

Publications Manager Cheryl Tinker

Editor Simone Worthing

Graphic Designer Ryan Harrison

Enquiry email publications@salvationarmy.org.au

All other Salvation Army enquiries 13 72 58

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The first Christmas gift ever

Hope restored

As another challenging and often overwhelming year draws to a close, we are about to celebrate Christmas. For some, family gatherings, parties, gifts and celebration will fill the day. Many others though, will face the ongoing effects of family breakdowns, illness and spiralling living costs.

In the midst of all this, Christmas is a season that helps restore deep hope and lasting joy, as we celebrate the birth of Jesus and all that his life, death and resurrection mean for all humanity.

Christmas does not take away our challenges, pain and struggles, but the birth of Jesus brings grace, freedom, assurance and hope. His life and death restore brokenness and shine light into the darkness. They assure us that we are not alone in whatever life circumstances we are walking through, and they bring salvation and hope for now and eternity.

After a tumultuous year around the world, may the Christmas season be a time of joy, and fill your heart with peace and encouragement and your life with love and hope.

The Salvos Magazine team

The Christmas parrot

A life lesson in peace and patience

By Dean Simpson

It's 7am, and a familiar squawk is heard from the back door. It's Sebastian. He wants breakfast.

Sebastian is a wild red and green king parrot, and over the past three years, he has become a persistent yet entertaining member of our family.

It all started on Christmas Day 2020, when my teenage son, Jayden, noticed a young king parrot sitting on the fence while we ate Christmas lunch on our back deck.

Jayden breeds birds – mainly budgies, finches and quails – and has several aviaries in our backyard, so it was no surprise that he noticed the parrot.

The next day, Boxing Day, the parrot was there again. And the next. A ritual began, with the parrot arriving each

morning to sit on the fence and watch Jayden tend to his aviaries. Jayden, an extremely patient lad, was determined to befriend this inquisitive parrot and started calling him Sebastian.

BUILDING TRUST

I was sceptical at first because Sebastian, although curious, was very timid and flew off if anyone walked towards him. But my son persisted. He would gently talk to Sebastian and began offering him sunflower seeds out of the palm of his hand. It was common to see Jayden standing near the fence for up to 30 minutes with his arms outstretched.

Over time, Sebastian got braver and would inch closer until, one day, it happened. Sebastian bravely shuffled close enough to strain his neck and grab a few seeds from Jayden before flying off.



It was around Christmas time two years ago that Sebastian started flying straight down to Jayden, sitting on his hand and devouring the seeds. Jayden's patience over those first 12 months had been rewarded.

Fast forward to this Christmas season, and Sebastian now trusts every member of our family. We look forward to his morning visits at the back door when he announces himself with a hearty "Raaawk!" or a shrill whistle. And sometimes, at other times of the day, he'll 'drop by' for a chat – even sitting on my laptop while I work on the back deck.

SIMPLE PLEASURES

Until recently, I thought Sebastian was getting the best deal with his daily handful of sunflower seeds. But it dawned on me that Sebastian has also impacted our family in a positive way.

“

Sebastian ... has taught us a lesson in slowing down and enjoying the simple things in life.

”

In the hurly-burly of daily life and its busyness, especially at this time of year with all the distractions and challenges of the festive season, Sebastian, one of God's beautiful creations, has taught us a lesson in slowing down and enjoying the simple things in life as we spend time with him, feed him seed and enjoy his quirky mannerisms.



In the Bible, the Psalmist says, "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him" (Psalm 37 verse 7). Our God is a patient God and wants to produce patience in us to slow us down and show us how to trust in him.

It's amazing how a little bird has epitomised that Bible verse. Patience and stillness were required to form a trusting bond with Sebastian, and the rewards came. We call him the 'Christmas gift' that keeps on giving. When he turns up, we are forced to stop what we're doing and spend some time with him before he flies off again.

This Christmas season, let me encourage you to take time to be still, breathe and dwell on the simple things in life. And in these moments, may there be time to dwell on God's 'Christmas gift' to humanity – Jesus.

Dean Simpson is a member of The Salvation Army's publications team.



Scan here for more information on Salvation Army services.



10 ways to budget at Christmas



Christmas is just around the corner! Check out these 10 tips to help navigate the Christmas season without busting the budget!

TIP 1: GIVE THOUGHTFULLY

Christmas is all about giving, but it doesn't have to be about extravagant spending. Consider: creating personalised cards and messages for your loved ones; crafting homemade gifts like bookmarks; baking treats using ingredients you may already have at home; creating vouchers for jobs or activities around the house.

TIP 2: GIFT GIVING WITH A PLAN

Start your Christmas shopping early to find the best deals and compare prices to avoid last-minute, panic-induced overspending.

TIP 3: LIMIT SPENDING

Set a Christmas budget and stick to it.

TIP 4: MAKE CHRISTMAS MEMORIES THROUGH EXPERIENCES

Experiences don't have to break the bank. Go to church to celebrate the birth of Jesus with others in your community; plan a family walk to see the local Christmas lights; invite your family and friends to a community carols event.

TIP 5: GIVE YOUR TIME

Spending quality time with your loved ones can be the most meaningful gift of all. Make decorations or bake Christmas treats together. Volunteer individually or as a family or friendship group.

TIP 6: TAKE A BREAK

The Christmas season can be stressful, so some self-care is crucial. Take time to read, go for a walk or listen to music – activities that don't cost a cent.

TIP 7: BUDGET-FRIENDLY FEASTS

Look for free or low-cost community events and meals. Check out some of our low-cost festive recipes (see QR code).

TIP 8: NEW YEAR AND SCHOOL HOLIDAY PLANNING

Consider alternative ways to connect with friends and family during the year-end celebrations, such as a walk, a coffee date or a potluck dinner. Identify affordable school holiday activities at the local library or through local churches. Look out for second-hand school uniforms and books at the end of the year, too!

TIP 9: PLAN FOR NEXT CHRISTMAS

Lay-by rather than use a credit card or buy now pay later loan. If possible, put a few dollars away each week in a separate account or even a jar. It will make Christmas 2024 so much easier!

TIP 10: BE INTENTIONAL WITH YOUR MONEY ALL YEAR 'ROUND!

For tips to help you formulate a money plan, download The Salvation Army Moneycare free eBook, *You're the Boss: Money Wisdom for Life* (bit.ly/financialassistanceytb).

If you find yourself struggling financially, contact The Salvation Army's Moneycare services (bit.ly/financialassistancecounselling), on 1800 722 363.



Scan here for details on budgeting, recipes, Christmas assistance and Salvos events.



Journey to Bethlehem

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Journey to Bethlehem is an adaption of the biblical nativity story, depicting the birth of Jesus with all the festive fun of a Christmas musical.

Directed by Adam Anders in his feature-length directorial debut, *Journey to Bethlehem* stars Milo Manheim and Fiona Palomo as Joseph and Mary, with Lecrae as Gabriel and Antonio Banderas as King Herod.

A young man torn between love and honour. A jealous king who will stop at nothing to keep his crown. This live-action Christmas musical celebration for the entire family weaves classic Christmas melodies into new pop songs in a music-infused retelling of the timeless story of Mary and Joseph and the birth of Jesus.

For those seeking the meaning of Christmas and a fun family time during the holiday season, *Journey to Bethlehem* opened in cinemas in Australia on 30 November.



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PM and Salvos unveil Kmart Wishing Tree Appeal



Colonel Rodney Walters and Commissioner Miriam Gluyas with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles and Kmart Managing Director Ian Bailey at Parliament House.

Commissioner Miriam Gluyas, the leader of The Salvation Army in Australia, and Colonel Rodney Walters represented the Salvos at Parliament House in Canberra for the official launch of the Kmart Wishing Tree Appeal on 28 November.

“It was a wonderful day in Canberra celebrating our partnership with Kmart at the launch of the Christmas tree,” Miriam said. “We are grateful ... Aussies are good when times are tough. Thank you! The PM made a great statement about what Christmas is about ... Jesus. I love that he said that.”

CHRISTMAS FOR KIDS

The Kmart Wishing Tree Appeal is Australia’s largest and longest-running gift collection drive, raising over \$5.6 million in funding and providing 10 million gifts to those in need at Christmas. In 2023, Kmart aims to raise over half a million dollars for the appeal and collect 300,000 gifts to help those in need.

The Prime Minister said the Kmart Wishing Tree Appeal was a reminder of

the true spirit of Christmas, bringing joy into the lives of others.

“The enduring strength and remarkable success of this appeal has always spoken for the generosity of the Australian people. I’m sure that this year, Australians will once again dig deep to support families who are doing it tough.”

As part of the launch, a Wishing Tree was placed in Parliament House, a ritual used for the past 11 years. All Parliament House visitors, Parliamentarians and staff can leave an unwrapped gift under the tree.

Kmart Group Managing Director Ian Bailey also attended the launch.

“Through our partnership with The Salvation Army, this appeal has been able to help more Australian families have the Christmas they deserve.”

The Wishing Tree Appeal will run until Sunday 24 December. For more information, go to bit.ly/wishing-tree-2023

Some information in this article courtesy of Mirage News

Salvos cookbook wins major award



Project 614 Chef Adam Thomson and his award-winning book.

The Salvos Melbourne Project 614 free cookbook, *Meals to make ends meet*, has been successful at the Gourmand World Cookbook Awards.

The cookbook, compiled by Project 614 Hospitality Coordinator Adam Thomson, won the major award in the 'Fundraising – Charity' category for the Pacific region.

"I'm super excited for our humble little book to officially be given the title 'Best in the World' at the Gourmand awards in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia!" Adam said.

"Massive thanks to Pressroom Partners and the entire team at Salvos 614. What a great result for the small army that helped get this book together."

Meals to make ends meet, launched in March, focuses on recipes based on everyday kitchen supplies but with additional tips to make the food budget go further. It includes suggestions on

creating many variants from one basic recipe, simple chopping techniques, growing your own herbs, substituting ingredients if you don't have something available, and minimising food waste.

"I think the cookbook was very timely in regard to the economic climate that we're currently living in," said Adam.

The initial press run of 50,000 has now been distributed to Salvation Army centres around Australia, but a digital copy of the cookbook can be downloaded at bit.ly/mealstomakeendsmeet

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

If you need help at any time, especially over the holidays, contact:

- For emergency assistance if your life, or that of someone else, is in danger: 000
- Salvation Army general enquiries: 13 SALVOS (13 72 58)
- National Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Helpline (24 hours): 1800 737 732 (1800 Respect)
- Lifeline: 131 114
- Kids helpline: 1800 55 1800
- Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636
- Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467
- MensLine Australia: 1300 78 99 78

The quiet heart of Christmas

Focusing on the reality of Jesus

By General Lyndon Buckingham

The scene was a familiar one. A street filled with festive lights and decorations, music playing and crowds of people moving along, taking note of all the Christmas details. Right at the end was a house that was in relative darkness, with just a small box containing a nativity scene set up on the front lawn. Most people did not even bother to check it out. Most simply considered the Christmas display was over before they reached that house. But right there was a visual representation of the quiet heart of Christmas. Not a flashy display. Not a lot of lights and sounds. Just a quiet focus on the one who is born to be our Saviour.

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It's easy for us to become so engaged with the trappings of the Christmas story.

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I sometimes wonder whether it is easy for us to miss the quiet heart of Christmas. Even when we are looking at some of the Christmas story we may miss the central message of it all. Each of the (Bible's) gospel writers presents Christmas in a different way. Some might say that only Matthew and Luke include the Christmas story. But I want to suggest to you that each of the gospels brings its own special emphasis.

Mark – possibly the oldest of the gospels – does not have any birth or infancy stories. Instead, Mark's 'Christmas' is embedded in the opening words, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God' (Mark chapter 1, verse 1 New King James Version). Jesus is shown to be Son of God from the very beginning. That's the good news.

John also does not contain birth or infancy stories, but shows the centre of Christmas originating in the heart of God. The word made flesh dwells among us – full of grace and truth.

Matthew opens with a long list of names in Jesus' family tree. It's easy to skip over this and miss its significance. Included in it are five women who all showed remarkable faith, despite that society may have judged them harshly. Tamar – who tricked her father-in-law into pregnancy; Rahab – a prostitute who helped the Israelite spies; Ruth – a despised foreigner; Bathsheba – an adulteress; and Mary – an unmarried mother. Each were part of Jesus' family history. If Jesus will later be shown to identify with sinners, it's because it's 'in his genes'. Jesus is connected with people like us who – despite sinfulness and frail humanity – show faith. Matthew then makes the connection with Jesus being Immanuel – God with us, in our humanness. All of this happens before the traditional Christmas characters – the Wise Men – even appear. They come to find the one born to be King.



Luke has the angels announcing that Jesus is the Saviour, Christ the Lord. This is not given to the people who you would expect, but rather to shepherds – often considered to be religious outcasts because of the nature of their work. For such as these, living on the margins of society, Jesus comes as Saviour.

FOCUS ON MEANING

Each of the gospels presents a different view of Christmas. It's easy for us to become so engaged with the trappings of the Christmas story. That may include things that we have become accustomed to, that are not even mentioned in any of the gospels. Instead, we can sometimes miss the quiet heart of Christmas as related in Scripture.

This year, perhaps we can focus again on what the gospels actually tell us about the coming of Jesus. One who comes for those who are sinners and outcasts. One who comes to be King. One who

comes to be Immanuel – God with us. One who comes to be our Saviour. One who has existed from all eternity.

With all the other things that happen at this time of the year, may we focus our hearts and minds on the quiet heart of Christmas: the reality of who Jesus is. The Son of God. The eternal Word made flesh. Our King. Immanuel. Our Saviour. Christ the Lord.

With the songwriter, we say "O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel."

May God bless you at this Christmas time and throughout the coming year.

General Lyndon Buckingham is the world leader of The Salvation Army.



Scan here to read more stories of hope.

The first Christmas present ever

Special hampers for women in prison

Salvation Army prison chaplains around Australia regularly visit men's and women's prisons to talk with inmates, run multi-faith chapel services and provide encouragement, support and a listening ear. They also regularly deliver copies of *Salvos Magazine* and, at special times of the year such as Christmas, give out gift hampers, toiletry packs and small gifts.



Major Alison Platt is a Salvation Army officer (pastor) and prison chaplain based in Victoria. Her role includes running Positive Lifestyle Programs in three settings, assisting women preparing for release from prison with vouchers and wraparound support for housing and rehabilitation, sitting with women to watch online funerals of their loved ones, comforting women who miss their children and posting birthday gifts to these children. After chapel services, Alison also sits with the women to play board games, bead necklaces and have deep discussions. They also drink the popular caramel coffee together. "It is a

space away from the harshness of jail," she says.

"I find this ministry very rewarding as I can meet women at times when they really need compassion and care," Alison shares. "It's a privilege to listen and to do what I can to help. It's an opportunity to find a safe space and show the women that they are worthy of love. To help them forgive themselves. To share Jesus' love with them in a real way."

Alison recently received the letter on the next page from a woman who received a Salvos Christmas gift hamper while she was in prison.

Life in jail is harder than you think. It's not just the lack of freedom, but so much more. Trauma goes on, even when you are an inmate. With so many people there are bound to be issues.

There was only one day that changed the whole mood in the jail. The wave of gratitude, happiness and the ripple of excitement could literally be felt when we received our Christmas hampers!

Every single inmate received a hamper, and the feeling of being thought about by strangers who took time to put the hampers together is priceless. We only have access to limited toiletries which are not the best quality.

“

The feeling of being thought about by strangers who took time to put the hampers together is priceless.

”

Our sense of smell is fine-tuned as we are not allowed perfume. So, when staff wear perfume or aftershave, we notice it more. Getting handmade soaps which were scented is like winning the lottery. Having freshly washed hair or body wash that leaves a trail of flower scents is amazing.

You don't realise how much joy it brings to us having a calendar, new shampoos, a new toothbrush, a comb or brush, skin care, chocolates, hair ties, socks and all the other items in our hampers. Not every person has supportive family and



friends, so getting a Christmas gift such as the hamper is the only thing they get and believe me, it is cherished.

There is a memory I will hold forever of an inmate who cried when she got her hamper. I asked her why she was so upset, and she told me her life had been spent in the foster system, youth justice and now adult corrections. This was the first Christmas present she had received in her 19 years.

So, please remember that what you are doing for inmates is so important to us and we are so grateful for your time and compassion. It makes us feel a little bit more human in a very harsh environment.

So thanks for making us all smile at least for one day.



Scan here for more information on Salvation Army services.

Minted green pea soup



Ingredients

1 onion, finely chopped; 30g butter; 3 cups chicken stock; 2 potatoes, grated; ½ lettuce, shredded; 500g frozen peas; 1tbsp fresh mint, chopped; ⅓ cup sour cream, pepper to taste, decorations if desired

Method

- In a large saucepan, fry onion in butter until soft.
- Add stock and bring to boil.
- Add potatoes, lettuce and peas. Cook for 20 minutes, until soft.
- Allow to cool.
- Add mint and sour cream. Season with pepper if desired. Blend all ingredients until smooth.
- Decorate with seeds, herbs or nuts if desired.
- Serve hot or cold.



Quick quiz

1. What was the name of Scrooge's old partner in *A Christmas Carol*?
2. In *Home Alone*, where does Kevin's family go for Christmas?
3. In *Elf*, Buddy had to travel through which forest?
4. The Grinch's heart is said to be how many sizes too small?
5. Finish this iconic line from *It's a Wonderful Life*: "Every time a bell rings, an angel gets his _____."
6. Who played the British Prime Minister in *Love Actually*?

Bible byte

"The true light that shines on everyone was coming into the world."

John chapter 1, verse 9
Contemporary English Version

Tum-Tum

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



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

Wordsearch

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

- Angels
- Bethlehem
- Celebration
- Christmas
- Donkey
- Elves
- Eternal
- Family
- Gifts
- Hope
- Inn
- Jesus
- Joseph
- Life
- Lights
- Manger
- Mary
- Purpose
- Salvation
- Santa
- Saviour
- Star
- Tinsel
- Worship

HAVE A LAUGH

**Why did the gingerbread man go to the doctor?
 He was feeling crummy.**

**What do you call a snowman party?
 A snowball.**

**What do you get when you cross an apple with a Christmas tree?
 A pineapple.**



**What's Santa's favourite type of music?
 Wrap.**

DID YOU KNOW?

Seafood is Australia's most popular Christmas Day food, especially prawns.

Around 30% of Australians are likely to go to a Christmas church service, if invited by a family member or friend (Australian Community Survey, 2021).

Australians like to purchase their Christmas gifts, with 54.6% admitting that shopping in-store is their preferred method. It beat online shopping (33.2%) and click and collect (4.4%).

Quiz answers: 1. Jacob Marley 2. Paris, France 3. Candy Cane Forest 4. Two 5. Wings 6. Hugh Grant
Turn-Turn: is hiding behind Adam on page 9.



Eva Burrows
College



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collection of books
and digital resources.

Membership is free!

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Eva Burrows Library Opening Hours:
Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 4.30pm
Fridays CLOSED