

# salvos

*magazine*

## Decluttering Christmas

Working towards a  
simpler celebration



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### FEATURE

Hope for  
homeless  
men

### FAITH TALK

Which is the  
real Bible?

### MY STORY

Knowing  
someone  
is there

*“Laughter is an instant vacation.”*  
*- Milton Berle*





## 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.

# Salvos Magazine

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## A simpler approach

December is less than a week away – are you already taking a few deep breaths to prepare yourself for the festive season? Are you wondering how you are going to afford the added expense, manage the expectations of family and friends, or cope with the loneliness this time of year amplifies?

It can be a stressful season, made complicated by the many competing demands on our time, energy and finances. In this week's magazine, Jo-anne Brown encourages us to think about 'decluttering' Christmas and suggests some practical ideas on how to embrace the joy of simplicity in our celebrations.

There's also the heart-warming story of how students in schools around Australia are helping families in need by providing Christmas Hampers of Hope. And at the House of Hope, a Salvos drop-in centre in Caloundra, Carly tells us how she feels like a different woman after being part of the Positive Lifestyle Program.

For more stories of hope, go to [salvosonline.org.au](http://salvosonline.org.au)

Faye Michelson **Salvos Writer**



# Decluttering Christmas



The joy of simplicity

By Jo-anne Brown

I pull the boxes out from the bottom of my cupboard and push them into the lounge room. I do this every year, dusting off the boxes and pulling everything out of them. Every year, as I place the Christmas decorations on the floor around me, I think, "I need to sort these out." And every January, I pack them all away again, just as they were before Christmas!

“

**Sometimes life is simply too full and needs some decluttering.**

”

I have some beautiful Christmas decorations, gathered over the years, many of them associated with special memories. I also have handmade Christmas decorations, made with love by grandchildren and other family members. Some decorations have sentimental value but are falling apart and cannot be used anymore. Some seem to have just appeared in my Christmas boxes and I have no idea of where they came from or why I would have chosen them. And some, quite frankly, are really unattractive. Still, they somehow end up back in the box at the end of each Christmas season.

This year will be different. This year I do want to work out what I want to keep

and what I no longer want to use. It seems to be a season of decluttering for me, as I sort out cupboards and bookshelves, and work out what objects no longer serve a purpose and therefore can be let go.

I've also been thinking about the way I live my life and if there are habits or practices that are no longer useful or helpful for me. Sometimes life is simply too full and needs some decluttering.

Which brings me to Christmas. How do I want to celebrate Christmas this year? Given all that is going on politically, economically, and environmentally in the world around us, what traditions do I most value, and which ones bring hope and joy to me and my family? What adds enjoyment and fun, and what causes stress or anxiety?





The very first Christmas, that night over 2000 years ago when Jesus was born, couldn't have been much more simple or basic. The weary parents had travelled a long way and couldn't find anywhere to sleep other than a stable. When Jesus was born, he was placed in an animal feed trough to sleep.

His first visitors were strangers who didn't even come with gifts for the newborn. They were shepherds, living in the fields with their sheep, and came straight in from the sheep paddock. They came just as they were – probably just in their work clothes. These first visitors brought nothing with them – only joy-filled hearts and an openness to embrace wonder and mystery.

The treasured gifts and exotic visitors came later (despite popular images of everyone gathered together around the baby in nativity scenes!).

The shepherds who responded out of simple joy and wonder, bringing just themselves, remind me of the real heart of Christmas. The central meaning of Christmas, God's Son being born as a human baby to human parents, brings a message of hope and peace for the world. God coming to earth in human form was a real expression of love ... nothing else was needed. The first Christmas gathering was a group of people coming together to share a message of joy and hope – a message to transform the world.

Yet today there seems so much expectation about how we celebrate Christmas, and pressure from the media and the business world about what a 'Happy Christmas' should look like. Many people also face pressure from family about food, presents, and so on.

If the heart of Christmas is celebrating God's love for humanity, how can we ►

incorporate this amazing love into the way we celebrate?

If this love, shown through the birth of Jesus, is meant to bring us hope, joy and peace, how can we express that in our celebrations?

For many people, the Christmas season is a time of busyness, stress, or loneliness, rather than peace, hope and love. The expectations people have can add to financial burdens and even family conflict. Often, by the time we get to Christmas Day, we are so frazzled that hope and peace are the last things we are likely to experience.

We can choose how to celebrate Christmas ... how much money to spend on it and how much effort to put into it. When we consider that the essence of Christmas is love, joy and peace, we can choose to celebrate in ways that reflect that.

“

**The first Christmas gathering was a group of people coming together to share a message of joy and hope ...**

”

Clearly, there are some things we might not have much choice over – such as how much money is available to spend, or where and with whom we celebrate. Family dynamics can make such choices difficult, so we might need to negotiate with others so that Christmas can become more of a season of love, hope and joy – in other words, balm for our souls.



As we think about how we celebrate Christmas, we might ask:

“Is this ... (custom, tradition, food, etc.) essential to our celebration?”

“Will doing this (or buying this, or eating this) increase my joy, hope and peace, or cause more stress?”

“How can I best express love for my friends and family during this season?”

Perhaps it’s about knowing what we really need to celebrate, the gift of joy and love, that is the real heart of Christmas. And knowing what we don’t need.

May your Christmas be filled with love, joy and peace.



Scan here for more stories of hope.

# Hampers of hope

School students helping families at Christmas

School students throughout Australia are turning knowledge into action by creating Christmas hampers for struggling families.

Hamper of Hope is a special Christmas initiative facilitated by Salvos Schools, the dedicated Schools Engagement team that aims to equip, empower and engage school communities with social justice and the mission of The Salvation Army.

“Schools are hungry for community connection, and we find they are really engaging with the Hamper of Hope initiative as it asks students to think very consciously about who they are giving to as they put together a hamper for someone in need,” said Grace Davidson, National Schools Engagement Coordinator.

Students are invited to fill a bag with eight or more non-perishable food items to form a complete hamper for someone doing it tough. Salvos Schools supply a suggested ‘shopping list’ to help decide on appropriate items. An individual student, or class, family, or small group can work together to create the Christmas hampers.

“Schools are a powerful force when they come together and get involved in an initiative like this,” said Grace. “The food donations go a long way to making sure people have access to some Christmas joy and practical support.”

Boroondara Park Primary School in Victoria has been a supporter of Hamper of Hope since it was established. In 2022, the school donated more than 350



filled hampers. Principal Susanne Lowe reflected, “Each year the Christmas tree is in place in the foyer, the posters are up around the school and information is shared with the community. As the number of items under the tree increases students are amazed each day when they walk past. They are able to see the generosity of our community growing before their eyes.”

Last year, the Hamper of Hope initiative saw more than 3100 hampers donated by schools across the country. In 2023, Salvos Schools hopes to significantly increase donations.

“The Hamper of Hope initiative means more people can feel some festive joy and hope in the holiday period,” Grace said. “It is such a practical way for students to take social justice action and support their community at this time of year.” – **Cliff Worthing**

*For more information, go to [bit.ly/hampersofhope](https://bit.ly/hampersofhope)*

# Hope for homeless men

Removing the barriers to independent living

**The Salvation Army's Flagstaff accommodation service in Melbourne provides support to men over the age of 18 experiencing homelessness. Amanda Stokes, Residential Services Manager, says that everyone is welcomed with "unconditional positive regard ... whatever their support needs". It is the staff's hope that with ongoing support, each person will be able to overcome life's barriers to live independently.**

"Our residents are homeless men, or people who identify as male, over the age of 18," explains Amanda. "Everybody that comes to stay here, we welcome with unconditional positive regard. We don't judge anybody. There are no barriers to anyone moving in here. Whatever their support needs, we're willing to support them.

“

**It's just great to have a shower and a bedroom, and obviously three meals a day, a good feed.**

”

"Every resident who moves in has a case manager who works with them, primarily on housing, but we also have my team which responds to daily needs such as assistance to get to appointments or reporting to Centrelink. We've got a nurse on site as well. We've also got our drug and alcohol team."

## KEVIN'S STORY

Kevin, a resident at Flagstaff, says, "Over the past five years, I've been homeless. I didn't want to go back

into share accommodation, so I was appointed through the Salvos to come into the crisis centre here. At Flagstaff, it's just great to have a shower and a bedroom, and obviously three meals a day, a good feed, and there's a lot of recreation. We've got the basketball court, we've got the pool table, table tennis. There's the TV and the rec room there to watch movies. They're caring. There's a lot of empathy."



Amanda Stokes with Colonel Kelvin Merrett, who oversees the Salvos in Victoria. They are holding a folded piece of material whose dots represent the number of clients who have stayed at Flagstaff over 25 years - just under 10,000.





Activities on site are important for engaging the men in meaningful ways. “That can be anything from a coffee drop-in, very casual – just trying to engage and get to know people when they first move in,” says Amanda. “Or we run art classes. We have lots of artwork up on the walls.

“

**They’re caring.  
There’s lots of empathy.**

”

“We try and celebrate certain events throughout the year, like NAIDOC Week, and obviously Homelessness Week, and get our residents very much involved in those types of activities. The work that we do is to support our residents to identify what the barriers are in

their lives and try to work through those and remove them so they’re able to move on from here, live independently, and ideally, not need support.”

Amanda’s hope for the future for Flagstaff is that funding will continue to allow the service to do its work. “I think there will always be a need for somewhere like Flagstaff for people who actually do need support,” she shares. “Not all of us can live independently. Ideally, there would be no need for any crisis accommodation, and everyone would have their own home, but we haven’t reached that point yet. We need places like Flagstaff to do the amazing work that we do.”

To view the video, go to [bit.ly/flagstaffvideo](https://bit.ly/flagstaffvideo)



Scan here for more information on Salvation Army Homelessness services.

# Bible or Bibles?

Which is the real one?

By Mal Davies

You wander into a bookshop and, as you browse, you see the section of religious books. You pause and think of your days in Sunday school, perhaps many years ago, and you look specifically at the Bibles.

Then you notice something odd: one Bible has the letters KJV on it, another has NIV, another has RSV, one says Good News and one says The Message. You know – from memory at least – that there’s only one Bible, but here they seem to be selling five different versions. Which is the real one?

The Bible is the world’s best-selling book. However, it’s not the work of one writer, and it was written over a period of more than 1500 years.

The Bible is not so much a book as a library. It contains 66 books, divided into an Old Testament (37 books) and a New Testament (29 books) written by more than 40 authors and in ancient Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic. Yes, that’s right: the Bible was not written in English.

When the Christian Church began – around 2000 years ago, based on the teachings and life of Christ – it was recognised that some ‘sacred’ writings were circulating among believers. Some of these had been available for many years (like the Psalms and the earliest books in the Bible, such as Exodus and Deuteronomy), while some were brand new (such as the biographies of Jesus by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John).

So, over several centuries, Church councils would meet to discuss which books should be collected together to form one holy book for Christians. Some were rejected (often because they seemed inconsistent with the other books), while some were accepted as they seemed accurate, helpful, consistent and even divinely inspired.

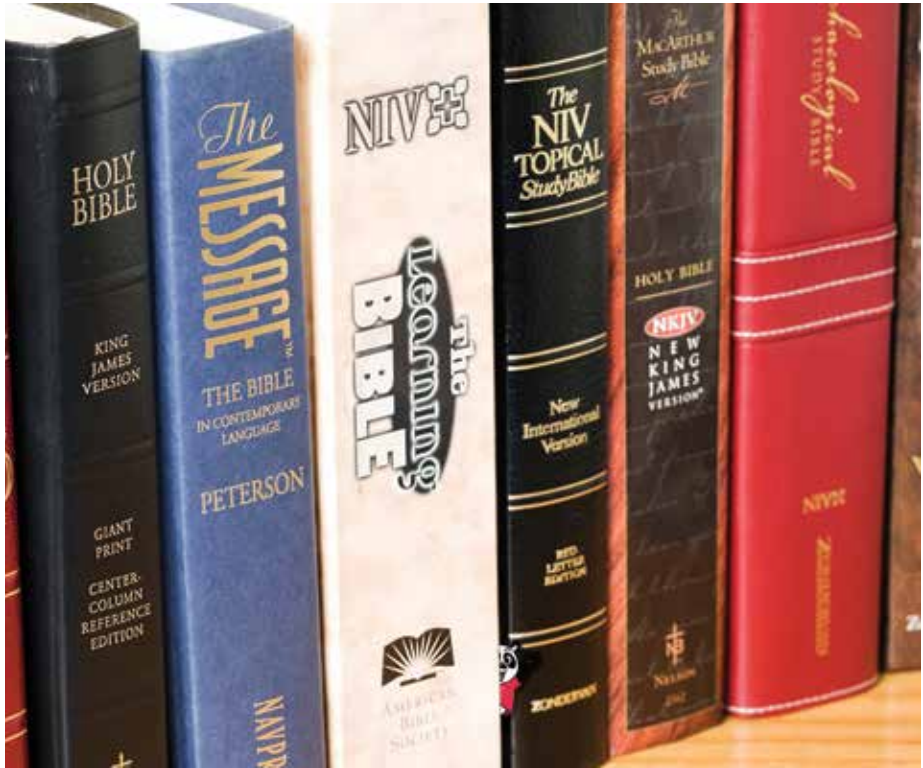
In 405CE, Pope Damasus I released a Bible that became known as the Vulgate (from the same word that gives us ‘vulgar’, meaning popular or commonly used), a complete Bible of approved books for Christians to read.

## TRANSLATIONS

The Vulgate was a direct translation from the original languages; that is, the translators had translated ancient Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic into Latin.

The first English Bible was released in 1384 by John Wycliffe, and it was a translation from the Latin Vulgate. In 1525, William Tyndale produced the first English New Testament translated directly from ancient Greek, and in 1535, Myles Coverdale produced the first whole Bible, in English, translated from the original languages.

Several other translations were then produced before King James I released the King James Version (KJV) in 1611. It also became known as the Authorised Version as the official, royally authorised translation of the Bible.



It dominated the Church for the next 270 years until it was revised and re-released in the 1880s as – surprise, surprise – the Revised Version. Many other translations have followed as the skill and understanding of translators have improved and to keep up to date with modern English.

**PARAPHRASES**

Distinct from these are Bible versions known as ‘paraphrases’. This is when the editors don’t translate from the original text but, instead, say: “Hmm, how would I say that?”. So, whereas a translator might put Psalm 23 verse one as, “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want” (KJV), a paraphrase such as the Living Bible says, “Because the Lord is my shepherd, I have everything I need.”

Is one of them wrong? No, they’re saying the same thing, just in a slightly different way.

So, when you see different Bibles, feel free to look at the language they’re using – maybe one is easier to read for you than another, but don’t then conclude that one is wrong. They all tell the same truth – God loves you!

*Major Mal Davies is a Salvation Army officer (pastor) in South Australia.*



Scan here for more information on Salvation Army services.

## Knowing someone is there

Carly finds friendship, community and life skills at the Salvos

"I separated from my husband, and it was a big shock to the system. I went from not being able to work, relying on his wage and having the kids full-time to thinking, now what? Mentally I wasn't coping. I very much struggled after the breakup, to the point where I went and stayed with my mum for eight weeks because I just couldn't look after myself. I was in a very dark, bad place.

"Through the community centre in Caloundra, I found out that the Salvos do a meal every Tuesday and I thought, oh, that sounds like a bit of fun. Something nice to go and get a nice, cooked meal.

"I wasn't sure what to expect. I was quite nervous. We'd literally just got there and walked through the door, and we were immediately brought in and

made to feel comfortable. It's about a lot more than just dinner really, and we loved it. I've got a nice little friend group now, which I've not had for a while."

“

**It's about a lot more than just dinner really ...**

”

Caloundra Salvos officer (pastor), Major Beth Twivey, said that after that meal, Carly started to come along regularly, and her children then started to engage with the other children who were present at the community meal.





### POSITIVE LIFE CHANGES

Then Carly made her way down to the House for Hope (Salvos drop-in centre in Caloundra) and enquired about doing the Positive Lifestyle Program. “So, I’m in the middle of facilitating that with her at the moment and helping her to unpack, I guess, some of the things that are very much part of life for her now,” says Beth.

“

**I’m a much happier woman than I was.**

”

“The Positive Lifestyle Program”, says Carly, “is affirming for me that there are healthy ways to cope with these things in life, so it’s just basically learning healthy coping mechanisms, learning that these emotions are okay to have, and here’s what we can do to help ourselves in a healthy way. I’m a much happier woman than I was. It’s just been so good to be able to learn all these things and just

now to sort of solidify them and make them part of my normal daily living. Even Beth has just said, it’s like you’re a different woman walking into the room now, so mentally I’m doing so much better. It’s hard to describe.”

Beth notes the changes she sees in Carly. “She’s engaging with a whole myriad of things that The Salvation Army brings. She continues to come to the community meal, continues to pop in here – all from that initial contact for a free meal really, and a community space where she could just relax, going out and meeting people and having some fun.”

Carly agrees. “It’s become very much a safe place for me, and it’s just knowing that someone is there that I could just kind of say, I just need help. Please. I know I wouldn’t be doing as well as I am now if it weren’t for the Salvos.”



Scan here for more stories of hope.

# Tropical fruit cake



## Ingredients

375g dried fruit, ½ cup sugar, 1 tsp allspice, 1 cup water, 1 can sliced mangoes (450g, drained of juice), 1 tsp bicarb soda, 3 egg whites (beaten), 2 cups self-raising flour

## Method

- Preheat oven to 180°C.
- Combine the dried fruit, sugar, spice, water and mango and bring to the boil. Boil for 3 minutes before stirring in the bicarb soda. Remove from heat and allow to cool.
- When cool, add the beaten egg whites and flour.
- Coat large loaf tin with cooking spray.
- Pour in the mixture and cook at 180°C for 40 mins.
- Cake is cooked when it springs back when lightly touched in the centre.
- Turn onto wire rack.
- The cake is best kept refrigerated.

# HAVE A LAUGH



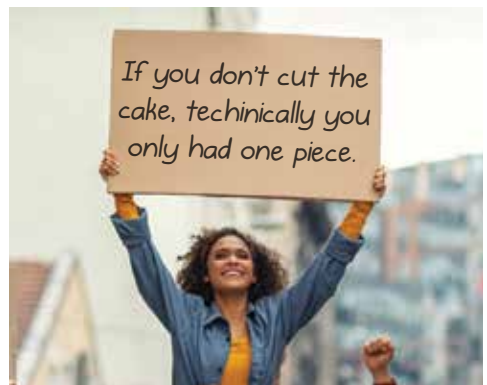
Why was the wedding cake sad?  
Because it was in tiers.

Why did the man put the  
cake in the freezer?  
He was asked to ice it.

How is history like a fruit cake?  
Both are full of dates.

Why was the cake as hard as rock?  
Because it was a marble cake.

# SIGNING IN



*If you don't cut the  
cake, technically you  
only had one piece.*

# Sudoku

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

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



# Quick quiz

1. Which common cake ingredient can be replaced with a mashed banana?
2. Who does history claim said, "Let them eat cake"?
3. What part of a wedding cake do newly-weds traditionally save?
4. What kind of cheese is used in a Tiramisu?
5. What was the first flavour of cake mix produced by Betty Crocker?
6. What cake is traditionally baked at Easter in the UK?

# Tum-Tum

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



# Bible byte

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace."

Romans chapter 15, verse 13a  
*New International Translation*

**Quiz answers:** 1. Eggs 2. Marie Antoinette 3. Top tier 4. Mascarpone 5. Ginger 6. Simnel cake  
Tum-Tum: is hiding between the Bibles on page 11.

**25 November 1952**

**Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap* opens at London's West End.**

The longest running show in history, the play began as a radio play called *Three Blind Mice*. It is based on the death of Dennis O'Neill, who died while in foster care.

**29 November 1972**

**Atari releases *Pong***

One of the first arcade games to hit the market, *Pong* was a one or two player video game similar to tennis, where the goal was to use a paddle to hit a ball. Around 25,000 *Pong* consoles were sold around the world.

**30 November 1982**

**Michael Jackson's *Thriller* album is released.**

Thought to be the best-selling album of all time, *Thriller*, which had nine tracks, won eight Grammy Awards, including the award for Album of the Year in 1984.

ON THIS DAY

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

# YOUR KIND HEART CAN KEEP FAMILIES TOGETHER.

*"I'm so, so happy we have  
a home. It was so great  
knowing people were  
helping mum and me"*  
– Sienna\*

\*Name changed to protect privacy.

The Salvation Army provides struggling families with the friendship, comfort and practical support they desperately need to make it through Christmas and the months ahead. Together as one big, caring Salvos community, you can ensure nobody struggles alone this Christmas.



**DONATE TODAY**

[salvationarmy.org.au/josie](https://salvationarmy.org.au/josie)



**CHRISTMAS  
APPEAL**