

salvos

magazine



Christmas expectations

Celebrating what really matters



Vol. 005 | No. 47
14 December 2024
PRINT POST APPROVED
PP100001474

salvosonline.org.au

FEATURE

Christmas traditions

MY STORY

Finding joy in dark times

REVIEW

Holiday movies

“For God so loves the world ...’

– yes, I changed the tense.

The verse actually reads,

‘For God so loved the world that
he gave his one and only Son’

(John chapter 3, verse 16

New International Version).

Yet God’s love is as real, true
and deep today as it was on
that first Christmas Day.

This remains the greatest evidence
of God’s love and his plan for all people

– the gift of his Son, the gift of our
salvation – not just in the past,
but for the present as well.

This is the good news we
celebrate at Christmas.”

General Lyndon Buckingham
World Leader, The Salvation Army

For the full version of this article, go to
salvosonline.org.au/post/what-a-testimony





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

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

Press date 29 November 2024

Printed and published for The Salvation Army by Commissioner Miriam Gluyas at Focus Print Group, South Granville, NSW, Darling Nation lands.

 salvosonline.org.au

	<p>Feature [4] Celebrating what really matters</p>
<p>My Story [8] Finding joy in dark times</p>	
	<p>TV Special [11] Christmas With the Salvos returns to Channel 7</p>

Simply Christmas

Despite wars, natural disasters, the cost-of-living crisis, social upheaval and personal crises, Christmas is coming. For some, it's a season that brings welcome relief from everyday challenges and a reminder that hope and joy do exist. For others, it means more stress, reminders of painful situations and unfulfilled expectations.

Christmas does not take away our struggles, but the birth of Jesus brings grace, freedom, assurance and hope into the world, regardless of circumstances. His life and death restore brokenness and shine light into the darkness. They assure us that we are never alone, and they bring hope for now and eternity.

This is definitely something to celebrate, regardless of how simple the celebration. As the saying goes, 'The first Christmas was pretty simple. It's okay if yours is too.'

And please, nobody should spend Christmas alone. Reach out to the Salvos if you would like to join us to celebrate the day (salvos.org.au).

After a tumultuous year around the world, may the Christmas season bring you peace, encouragement, love and hope.

The Salvos Magazine team

CELEBRATING WHAT REALLY MATTERS

Adjusting our expectations at Christmas time

By Faye Michelson

All through that winter I had a video playing at the back of my mind. It centred around the view from the back window of our caravan. It looked out onto a narrow verge of grass that disappeared down a slight hill onto a sweep of sand to the vast, magnificent ocean. There was barely a horizon line to separate the cloudless sky and the calm sea shimmering under the sun. My mind video showed the children running and splashing into shallows, the adults following in a more leisurely way into the cool, refreshing waters.

And later that year, when we finally arrived at the northern NSW beach of my winter dreaming, it rained. And rained. And rained.

Anticipation can be a great thing. It can give us something to lift our mood, something to look forward to - such as a sunny beach in the middle of a Melbourne winter.

Of course, anticipation can work the other way around too. Our mind videos can go into an anxiety-filled, fast-forward reel of 'what ifs' when we're preparing ourselves for an event ... like Christmas.

Often our expectations are unrealistic - like holidays. Despite the perfect pictures in my mind, surely I knew it was going to rain for at least some of our time away. It had for the past several years. Yet I still set myself up for a measure of disappointment.



CHRISTMAS DREAMS

Christmas celebrations can be similar. Does your mind picture an impossibly beautifully decorated table with platters laden with festive food, with the family's happy conversation overlaying the soft background Christmas music?

“

ANTICIPATION. IT CAN FORM OUR EXPECTATIONS OF WHAT OUR CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS SHOULD/ COULD/WILL NEVER BE.

”

Or does your mind show a bleaker picture - worrying about food not being up to standard, or there not being enough of it for everyone there; who may end up arguing with each other or be unpleasant or worse?

Anticipation. It can form our expectations of what our Christmas celebrations should/could/will never be.

What does all this anticipation, whether unrealistically positive or negative, tell us? It tells us that all our worries and hopes about an event are unlikely to change what will happen. It tells us to try to stop the make-believe and enjoy the reality instead. It tells us to celebrate what we have when we have it.

It tells us that even small things are worth celebrating, even things that don't even appear on our 'best of Christmas' mind video. It tells us to gather those we care about around us this Christmas and if, for whatever reason, there is no one around, to reach out and celebrate anyway. There are people, like the Salvos, who will welcome you into their circle this Christmas.



Scan here to connect with the Salvos this Christmas.

Family Christmas traditions

Choosing simple joys

By Claire Hill

When you have a new baby, there are lots of exciting firsts – first smile, first steps, first words. There’s also the first Christmas – a chance to set new traditions.

I remember my husband and I discussing what our family traditions would be. There was a buzz of excitement in the air. One of the decisions we faced was, “What type of Santa stocking will our children use and where will they put it?”

My husband grew up in northern England where his Santa stocking was a football sock. He would lay it on top of the sofa, and Father Christmas would fill it with goodies – including a mandarin, a sugar mouse and a gold coin.



By contrast, I grew up in the inner west of Sydney, where we put empty pillowcases on the ends of our beds. When we went to sleep the pillowcases were flat, but when we woke up, they were plump – full of presents.

After some pleasant negotiations, my husband and I decided our children would place small, red Santa sacks on the back of the sofa.

NEW TRADITIONS

Over the years, our family has set up a variety of Christmas traditions. They have bonded us, focused us on Jesus, passed on values and brought us deep joy.

I don’t know about you, but sometimes when I hear about other people’s Christmas activities, I get tempted to do those too! In December, pictures of happy families pour into my Facebook feed.

I see photos of one friend making gingerbread houses with her children. There is flour everywhere, but the smiles are giant. What a precious memory for the children!

As I scroll on, I see a family visiting the Christmas exhibition at Sydney’s Queen Victoria Building. The children marvel at the magnificent centrepiece – a 20-metre-tall tree that covers three floors. Their little faces are lit up by the lights and it looks magical.

So many wonderful ideas. Part of me wants to do them all! Christmas is such a special time, and I want my kids to enjoy



it to the full. I want them to build up memories they will treasure forever.

But I know that trying to tick off every Christmas activity under the sun would be super stressful. Not to mention unaffordable! And, if I'm honest, I have found that when it comes to Christmas activities, it's about quality rather than quantity.

I recently sat down with my kids and asked them which of our Christmas traditions they love. Miss 8 loves "the night when we visit the Christmas lights and get Macca's ice creams on the way home." Master 11 loves "decorating the tree while the carols play." When I think about these annual moments, my whole heart smiles. They are times when the four of us are together, relaxed and undistracted. Quality time.

Parenting expert Maggie Dent says family traditions are very important. They "have a secret capacity to bond and strengthen loving connections." But Maggie stresses that "it's not about what we do – it is about how we be."

This is such a helpful reminder as Christmas rushes closer. We can create priceless memories by spending time with those we care about – and it doesn't need to cost anything. Looking at shop windows together, strolling down the street saying 'Happy Christmas' to those we see, lounging on a picnic rug at a carols event, sitting side by side in church – no matter what traditions we choose, slowing down and connecting with each other is key.

So, this Christmas, I will resist the urge to do more. Instead, I will savour the traditions we have – keeping the focus on Jesus and connecting with family.

And I will relax, knowing that that is enough.



Scan here for more Stories of Hope.

Finding joy in dark times

Maya's Christmas story

By Naomi Singlehurst

It had been an exhausting interstate move for Maya and her extended family. It was almost Christmas, and despite the move, they felt reasonably organised. Maya's younger siblings were excited about the Christmas gifts sitting wrapped under the Christmas tree.

Having moved into a big intergenerational house, the family of 10 had gone out for the day. When they returned together in the evening, they discovered their furniture, every family Christmas gift, all their food for Christmas and even the Christmas tree had been stolen. To this day, Maya thinks it was the previous tenants who still had a copy of the keys.

"Even eight years on, I still cry when I think about it," says Maya (who today is a Salvation Army volunteer, a mum and a part-time foster mum).

"We had just moved everything into the house, and I was pregnant with my first child. They took literally everything that we owned, even our TVs – all just gone."

"We had just moved interstate for my dad to help on a social justice project working with migrants like us who were being robbed of their wages, and now we were the ones who had nothing."

IMMEDIATE HELP

The police were unable to find evidence and the landlord was unwilling to compensate, so a friend suggested the distraught family call the local Salvation Army.

"It was two days before Christmas and

the anxiety that we had as a family was just really high," Maya says.

The local Salvos centre had already finished giving out all the 'Christmas Cheer' gifts and food for the year and were about to close up and store leftover gifts for future needs, but something told the corps officer (leader) Josie* to stay open a little later that last day. That's when the family contacted the Salvos.

"As a family, we had always donated gifts for things like a toy drive at Christmas," Maya explains. "We had never asked for help before. It was humbling. They sorted out vouchers for food – and food hampers to last over the Christmas period. They also came out with bags full of gifts."

Maya says the experience helped her realise just how much a helping hand means in dark times.

ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE

Maya is now a Salvation Army volunteer, but in recent times, has become a single mum. She is now struggling with the cost of living and had to ask for additional help from the Salvos.

"Food runs out so quickly. What I used to spend on a fortnightly shop doesn't even last us a week. I can't save anything because all my money goes to other bills.

"The kids are always crying, saying they're hungry and we have also had big issues with mould in our housing. It is hard!"



The Salvos can help families like Maya's with a range of services over Christmas and all year round.

Maya says support through the Salvos helps in their struggles.

“

I kind of feel like it's a big family that just helps one another.

”

“I'm not used to receiving help – it's a foreign feeling. I really love being involved with the Salvos. Helping out takes my mind off worrying. I kind of feel like it's a big family that just helps one another. It's good!”

** Names and some details have been changed.*



Scan here for more information on Salvation Army services.

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

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

For emergency assistance if your life, or someone else's, 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**

Holiday movies – real issues, hopeful outcomes

The Hallmark Channel is known for its feel-good Christmas movies. While some are typical love stories, some real-life situations and characters have been showing up in recent years. After all, Christmas can be wonderful – but it's definitely not perfect. And many of these G/PG-rated films have just enough reality to be encouraging, without losing the magic of the season.

Here are a couple of films we think you might enjoy this season.



FIVE MORE MINUTES © HALLMARK CHANNEL 2024

FIVE MORE MINUTES

While this film, based on Scotty McCreery's song *Five More Minutes*, does involve magic, the realism comes with the grief, hope and courage of the main characters.

Widowed Kaitlyn and her son Adam return home four years after the death of her husband, and Kaitlyn must decide if she will sell their old house. Meanwhile, she meets her husband's old football buddy, and her son is opening up, giving her plenty of reasons to stay.

These characters portray the lifelong journey through grief, showing how local locations and topics can be triggering

as Kaitlyn wrestles with love for her late husband, feelings for a new flame and doing what is best for her son.

Five More Minutes is available on Watch on Seven Plus and Prime Video.



HOLIDAY ROAD © HALLMARK CHANNEL 2024

HOLIDAY ROAD

Based on a true story, this quirky film is about a road trip taken by strangers after their flight to Denver is cancelled. Each person on the road trip has a unique story – from the single mum trying to win the trust of her daughter and the women experiencing panic attacks on board, to the bilingual couple who are estranged from their son and wrestle with cultural differences.

This is a charming, funny and heart-warming watch.

Holiday Road is available on Seven Plus, Apple TV and Amazon Prime.

– Jessica Morris



Scan here to access the movies at 7Plus.

Christmas With the Salvos returns to Channel 7



Christmas With the Salvos – The Salvation Army's Christmas television special that aims to bring much-needed hope, joy and entertainment to Aussies around the country during the festive season, can now be streamed on 7Plus.

This year's special is hosted by TV host, gardener and author Jamie Durie. Jamie is joined by singer Samantha Jade and chef Jason Roberts as they head to the Northern Rivers of New South Wales to cook some special meals, sing Christmas carols and make over some community gardens.

In Lismore and Tweed Heads, they met Salvos who bring hope and joy to Aussies in need by providing gifts and toys for children, festive Christmas hampers, special Christmas meals and events, and safe places for community and connection.

Christmas with the Salvos brings attention to The Salvation Army's annual Christmas Appeal, which aims to raise \$27 million to ensure that Aussies doing it tough can have a special Christmas.

Across Australia at Christmas, the Salvos provide more than 184,000 meals to people experiencing homelessness and receive more than 330,000 gifts and toys to distribute to families who might otherwise go without.

Christmas With the Salvos premiered on 1 December on Channel 7 and is now available to stream on 7Plus. Don't miss it!

Christmas with the Salvos will air encore screenings on Channel 7 on Sunday 22 December at noon AEDT and Christmas Day (Wednesday 25 December) at 1.30pm AEDT.

Scan here to
livestream Christmas
with the Salvos



Scan here to
donate to The
Salvation Army's
Christmas Appeal.



An occasional column on all things books and reading



All booked up for summer

By Mal Davies

With summer comes sunshine – to state the obvious – and this means not only watching cricket or eating watermelon, but also days at the beach or by the pool, holidays and days so hot that we stay indoors with the air-con on.

Each of these options also equates to book-reading time! Holidays, in particular, are the only time of the year some people get their noses stuck in a book.

Have you thought about a summer reading list? For some, the plan consists entirely of walking into a bookshop and seeing what grabs your attention. Others like to keep a tab on what books they will look out for when they finally get an opportunity to go book shopping.

Let this seasoned book reader offer a few hints for those of you wanting to prepare for summer.

HELPFUL HINTS

First – and I need to say this – watch your budget. It's easy to walk into a bookshop and walk out with \$200 less in your bank account and an armful of books that have interesting covers, but you may not ever get to read them. So, either set yourself a limit ('Right, I have \$50 to spend in this bookshop and that's it') or prioritise a list ('I want 10 books; I'll buy three for now').

Second, and following on from that point, consider buying second-hand books. For those of us who love books, there is simply nothing like a large, cheap, well-curated, second-hand bookshop. They're heaven.

If there's a book that I know I'm going to love and will want to keep for ever, I'll buy it new. However, if it's a light holiday read or just some pulp fiction that will probably end up at Salvos Stores anyway, I'll just buy it second-hand.

Third, in relation to genre, decide if you're going with a theme or want a mixed list. I've been on holidays where I've taken three biographies with me and that's it, or three classic English literature novels, or three collections of short stories (I like Sherlock Holmes especially). Alternatively, I can go on holidays and take a play by Shakespeare, a Batman comic, a book of Monty Python scripts and a John Steinbeck novel.

“

Challenge yourself with something that might just change your life.

”

Fourth, stretch yourself. I recall a holiday where all I took was a book with the collected poems of John Donne. It had sat on my shelf for a few years and I thought the only way I was going to read it was to take it and nothing else. So I did ... and I loved it.

PERSONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Here are a few books* that might stretch you, and I encourage you to rise to the challenge.

The Case for Christ by Lee Strobel is an investigation into the existence and claims of Jesus. Strobel was an experienced Chicago journalist and avowed



atheist when he started this investigation to disprove what his Christian wife believed. By the end of the book – he had to admit he was wrong and that Jesus was someone worthy of further attention.

Who is This Man? by John Ortberg, Christian pastor and writer. Ortberg considers the amazing impact Jesus has had on the world for the past 2000 years and says he has influenced human progress more than anyone who ever lived. Who is this man?

Making Sense of God by Timothy Keller, the late US teacher, writer and pastor. Keller writes for those who are sceptical about the relevance of faith and religion and Jesus to modern thinking.

Enjoy your summer reading. Consider my hints above. Challenge yourself with something that might just change your life. Happy reading!

* You can find or order these books at good bookshops or online at **koorong.com**. More good books are also available at **salvosonline.org.au/salvos-publishing**

Ginger cake



Ingredients

225g self-raising flour, 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda, 2 tsp ground ginger, 1 tsp mixed spice, 1 tsp cinnamon, 110g butter, 110g brown sugar, 200g golden syrup, 200ml milk, 1 egg

Method

- Preheat oven to 170°C
- Sift flour, bicarbonate of soda and spices into a large mixing bowl.
- In a small saucepan, place butter, sugar, golden syrup and milk, heating gently until dissolved.
- Pour into flour, mixing well, then beat in the egg.
- Pour mixture into greased cake tin (baking paper on bottom recommended). Place in oven for 35 minutes.
- When cooked, take out and cool on a wire rack.



Quick quiz

1. Which Christmas tree decoration is often at the top of a Christmas tree to symbolise the announcement of Jesus' birth?
2. Which Christmas lollies symbolise the staff of the shepherds who visited baby Jesus?
3. Which Christmas decoration represents the crown of thorns Jesus wore?
4. On which day did rich masters package or box gifts to give to their employees?
5. When was the first Australian Carols by Candlelight?
6. What is the best-selling Christmas song ever?

Bible byte

"Praise God for this incredible, unbelievable, indescribable gift!"

2 Corinthians chapter 9, verse 15
The Voice Bible translation

Tum-Tum

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



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

Wordsearch

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

- Angels
- Baby
- Bethlehem
- Birth
- Carols
- Celebrate
- Decorations
- Frankincense
- Gold
- Holly
- Jesus
- Joseph
- Manger
- Mary
- Mistletoe
- Myrrh
- Santa
- Shepherds
- Stocking
- Tinsel
- Tree
- Summer
- Sunscreen
- Wonder

HAVE A LAUGH



Why does Santa have three gardens?
 So, he can hoe, hoe, hoe.

How much did Santa pay for his sleigh?
 Nothing, it was on the house!

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

ON THIS DAY...

15 December, 1939
Premier of *Gone with the Wind.*
 Regarded as one of the greatest films of all time. In 1989, it became one of 25 inaugural films selected for preservation in US National Film Registry.

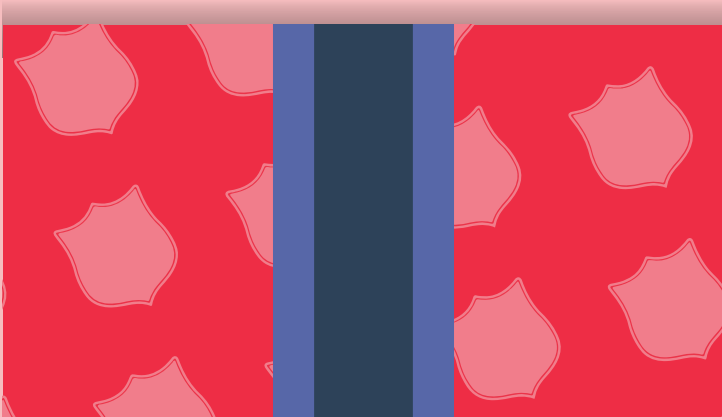
16 December, 1773
Boston Tea Party.
 Considered one of the key events in the American Revolution, protesters dumped heavily taxed British tea into Boston Harbour.

17 December, 1790
Discovery of the Aztec calendar stone.
 The sculpture, known as the Stone of the Five Eras, was excavated in Mexico City.

Quiz answers: 1. The angel. 2. Candy canes. 3. Christmas wreath. 4. Boxing Day. 5. 1937 in Melbourne. 6. Bing Crosby's *White Christmas*.
Turn-Turn: is hiding behind the book on page 13.



**Give a
gift that
means
more**



salvos

STORES