

# salvos

magazine

## A timeless message

Christmas - love, hope and light in the darkness



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### MY STORY

Christmas  
in Lismore

### FAITH TALK

Toilet roll  
delight

### FEATURE

Good news  
all year round

“Those little Advent candles  
sure have a lot of darkness  
to overcome this year . . .

Their stubborn flames  
represent the divine promise  
that even the smallest light  
can chase away the shadows  
lurking in this world, that  
even in the darkest places,  
God can't be kept out.”

– *Rachel Held Evans*  
1981-2019





## 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](mailto:publications@salvationarmy.org.au)

**All other Salvation Army enquiries** 13 72 58

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**Food for body and soul**

## Light of the world

Beyond the trees and tinsel, and above the relentless stream of the personal struggles and tragedies many of us are facing, there is so much about the Christmas season that can meet our deepest longings and needs.

The birth of Christ, his perfect life, intentional death and his resurrection give all humanity hope and light in the darkness.

This is a living hope – not warm fuzzy feelings that can lighten our loads temporarily – but a deeply grounded assurance that we are passionately loved, mercifully forgiven, saved for eternity and strengthened for every step of our journey here on earth.

And our gracious God wants everyone to have this deep, living hope.

In this edition, we look at the hope and light Christmas brings. Jesus is the light of the world and the peace and joy that flow from him give us strength and comfort, regardless of our circumstances.

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

Simone Worthing **Editor**

# A timeless message

Christmas is a celebration of love, hope and joy

By Julia Hosking

This year has been filled with all sorts of challenges on both a widespread and personal level. The good news of Christmas is that, even when the world or our circumstances change, the message is timeless because Christmas is about the birth of Jesus, God's Son, and how he came to give us love, hope and joy.

In a display of the importance of women, the angel Gabriel first appeared to a young woman named Mary.

He told her that she was chosen to be the mother of Jesus – that is, she would give birth to the Son of God.

"Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus," the angel said (Luke chapter 1, verses 30-31).

Mary had every reason to be afraid. She was unmarried but engaged to Joseph, and to be pregnant out of wedlock would have been scandalous, but the

angel assured Mary of God's love and his plans for her.

It is doubtful that all her family and friends believed her story, but thankfully Joseph did, as an angel had visited him too. Through all the challenges and difficult situations she would have faced from that moment on, Mary held onto the promises of God.

## GOOD NEWS FOR ALL

When the time came for Mary to give

birth to Jesus, she

had to travel to

Bethlehem for

a census. The

census meant

the town

was very

busy and

there were

no guest

rooms avail-

able for Mary

and Joseph. So

she gave birth

in a stable or barn,

and lay Jesus down

in a manger (an animal

feeding trough).

There was no royal welcome in a palace for Jesus, the Son of God. Instead, on the night of his birth he was sleeping rough. As he grew, Jesus experienced persecution, loneliness, grief, hunger,



anger and more. He came into the world to experience life as a human – to live among people and understand their struggles.

Immanuel, which means ‘God with us’ (Matthew chapter 1, verse 23), is another name for Jesus. His birth and life is a message of good news for us because it means we are never alone. It doesn’t matter how hard or hopeless our situation may appear to be, God is there for us.

### COMFORT AND JOY

It is this message that gives us comfort and great joy to celebrate at Christmas.

As the angel said to a group of shepherds on the night Jesus was born, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people” (Luke chapter 2, verse 10).

Celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ is more than a Christian holiday or Christian festival. It is an opportunity to pause and give thanks for the love, hope and joy found in Jesus, our Saviour and friend. As we exchange gifts with loved ones, it is out of remembrance of the gift God gave us in Jesus – the gift that we are loved, are

never alone and can have hope for the future.

Your Christmas this year might look different to previous years. It may not match up to the commercial images you see or the hopes you have. But the true meaning of

Christmas doesn’t depend on the number of gifts under a tree. The message of Christmas doesn’t change if you are surrounded by family, missing loved ones for the first time or on your own.

God’s love is for everyone. You are not alone.

You are loved, and you can feel hopeful and joyful.

That is the true meaning of Christmas.

**Where in the Bible can I read the Christmas story?**

You can read the full Christmas message in the Bible, in Matthew chapters 1 and 2, and Luke chapters 1 and 2.



Scan here for more stories of hope.

# All the good under the sun

The birth of Jesus heralded a bright new dawn for the world

By Peter McGuigan

As far as spectacular goes, nothing beats an ocean sunrise on a cloudless morning. Orange, pink and yellow hues in the sky herald a new day and it's not long before the sun peeks above the horizon, lighting up the Earth.

As I write I'm in the South Asian nation of Sri Lanka. For three consecutive mornings I have watched the sun rise over the Bay of Bengal from Trincomalee on the country's north-east coast.

I made a point of being on the beach half an hour before sunrise to catch the early glow and first hints of colour.

## THE DARKNESS AND US

There's a saying that goes, "It's always darkest before the dawn", first penned by English theologian Thomas Fuller in 1650. The saying is actually not true in the natural world. Often it is darkest much earlier in the night when the sun is furthest from the horizon.

The saying, like most, is a metaphor for life. It refers to dark times in our

experience as human beings. Often, our deepest darknesses occur just before a flicker of light penetrates the darkness and fresh hope dawns.

For Thomas Fuller, I have no doubt it was about the God who watches over us and loves us, never failing to come through just at the right time. The first Christmas was a classic case and, as a believer in Jesus, I take heart from how the prophet Isaiah and Gospel writers have written about it amid dark times on planet Earth.

At the time of Jesus' birth, ancient Rome had annexed most of the known world for its own empire-expanding purposes. Nations' freedoms, their right to self-government and autonomy had been curtailed. Their wealth had been pillaged and their cultures and religions challenged by colonisation.

Yet 700 years prior, the prophet Isaiah, himself living amid dark times, announced, "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; to those living in the land of deep darkness a light has

dawned... For to us a child is born, to us a son is given... And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah chapter 9, verses 2, 6).

### LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

The Gospels record the finer details of Jesus' birth, each focusing on light bursting through darkness:

- "We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him," says Matthew's account of the wise men from the east. They followed the star and it stopped over the place where Jesus was born. "When they saw the star they were overjoyed" (Matthew chapter 2, verses 1-12).
- "An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them," says Luke's account of shepherds in the field. "Do not be afraid," the angel said to them. "I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people" (Luke chapter 2, verses 9-12).

- "In him was life, and that life was the light of all humankind," says the Gospel of John. "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it... The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world" (John chapter 1, verses 4, 5, 9).

We need 'the light' – something to believe in, something that far transcends our human myopia and distractedness and vulnerability to the darkness. Something with power to hold our focus, reach us deep within, and draw out from us all the good under the sun.

*Major Peter McGuigan is Head of Government Relations for The Salvation Army Australia.*



Scan here for more information on Salvation Army services.

# Christmas connection

Celebrating good news and unchanging truth all year round

By Jo-anne Brown

It's Boxing Day, and some people are out already, purchasing gifts for next Christmas! Hot cross buns appear on supermarket shelves and Easter eggs will soon follow.

And in July, some stores generously stock Christmas goodies for all those who choose to celebrate a winter Christmas.

“

**When we look at Christmas ...  
there really are good reasons  
to celebrate all year round.**

”

There are those who adamantly refuse to consume hot cross buns before Good Friday, and others who eagerly tuck in at any time. Just as there are those who cannot even start thinking about Christmas trees, gifts or decorations until December, while some people have been preparing all year.

Are seasons such as Easter and Christmas as mixed up as our climatic seasons are? Or is there something in these spiritually inspired seasons that does indeed invite us to celebrate, or at least remember and rejoice, all year round?

What is the underlying meaning of Christmas? What is it about an event that happened over 2000 years ago that

still calls us to celebrate in the myriad ways we do?

## REFLECTION OF LOVE

There really are good reasons to celebrate all year round. The primary focus of Christmas is the reality of God's love for us, shown in the physical birth of Jesus, who is God's son.

This birth, promised for millennia, was God's way of showing his desire to be known, to be seen, and to be present in a very tangible way. Before Jesus was born as a human baby, it was difficult for people to really grasp who God was, and to understand what God says about love, justice and grace.

It's relatively easy to be cynical about the commercialism of Christmas, yet underneath everything, love draws together all our ways of celebrating it.

Whatever our sense of the spiritual or our faith experiences, a season that focuses on love, connection with others and giving seems to fulfil a deep need.

But the very heart of Christmas, however it is celebrated, is a reminder that God loves us and wants to be in relationship with us. This truth doesn't change whether it is snowing or storming, or whether Easter eggs or Christmas puddings are on the shelves.

This truth doesn't change, even when there is more conflict than a sense of loving connection in our families. Even when we feel alone and disconnected







from people who care about us, the fundamental truth of Christmas is that we are loved, and God is with us.

“

**The primary focus of Christmas is the reality of God’s love for us ...**

”

### **LOVING CONNECTION**

Whether our celebrations are huge or minimal, in December or July, with lavish gifts or no gifts, our deepest need is to know we are loved. And God’s deepest desire has always been for each of us to know God is with us and loves us.

Perhaps the heart of the season (when-ever it is) is not the ways we celebrate Christmas with tangible things, but how we celebrate love. How do we live our ordinary everyday lives with love? How do we seek connections and build relationships with others? How do we choose to be generous and giving, especially when we ourselves may be struggling with having enough?

Choosing to celebrate Christmas throughout the year invites us to live lives of loving connection and giving – all year round!



Scan here for more stories of hope.

# Treasured nativity scenes

Simple craft captures the story of the Saviour's birth

By Faye Michelson

Glass baubles break and plastic ornaments crack, but toilet roll nativity scenes last forever – well, for 22 years so far.

We know Christmas is coming in our household when our daughter Samantha's nativity scene is laid out on the side table. Samantha made it as a present for me when she was eight years old, an elaborate nativity crafted from foam balls, empty toilet paper rolls, scraps of material and felt-tipped pens, with a sequin or two added for a touch of glitter.

“

**It's amazing how a few empty toilet paper rolls and foam balls can bring such enduring delight ...**

”

Baby Jesus has a pompom head and a paper body wrapped in swaddling clothes of sticky tape. All the characters – Mary, Joseph, the three kings, a shepherd, two angels and two cotton wool-covered sheep – are arranged around him, their felt-tipped pen eyes gazing at the little tube of paper lying in its cupcake case.

It's cute, it has sentimental value, but it also does what a Christmas decoration is designed to do. It encapsulates the reason for the season – the birth of Jesus.

Does an angel sit on top of your Christmas tree? It's a reminder of the multitude of celestial beings that proclaimed the coming of the Saviour to the shepherds. Does a star glitter there, to represent the one that thousands of years ago was followed by the wise men to find the new king?

## SYMBOLS OF CHRISTMAS

There are many explanations of how the tradition of the Christmas tree evolved, with Martin Luther being credited in the 1500s with linking the evergreen with the birth of Jesus. One cold winter's night, so the story goes, he was walking through a pine forest near his home in Wittenberg, Germany, and looked up to see thousands of stars glistening through the branches of the trees.





Samantha's original foam and cardboard creation – capturing the story of the birth of Jesus from a child's perspective.

The beauty of this scene inspired him to bring a tree into his house to delight his family. In the dark, barren (northern) winter, the evergreen was a reminder of God's eternal and steadfast love.

Luther is said to have wired candles to its branches to twinkle as symbols of the star that led the wise men to Bethlehem. (Warning: Do not try this at home; I'm not convinced that candle flames and pine needles are a good mix!)

When you're decorating your tree this year, pause a moment to think about some of those pretty decorations you're hanging on its branches. Candy canes symbolise the shepherds' crooks, lights represent the star of Bethlehem and

remind us that Jesus is our guiding light, and bells proclaim the angels' message – "Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth peace, goodwill toward men" (Luke chapter 2, verse 14).

Our Christmas trees don't have to be elaborate, or decorations fancy, to highlight the joy of Christmas. In fact, it's amazing how a few empty toilet paper rolls and foam balls can bring such enduring delight as they simply capture the story of the Saviour's birth.



Scan here for more stories of hope.

# When Christmas comes with a sting

Celebrating the God who sees us, grieves with us, and brings hope and restoration beyond the fairy lights

By Kirralee Nicolle

Christmas is a time of anticipation. As soon as the festive displays begin to roll out, children begin quivering with excitement at the thought of gifts to unwrap. Family WhatsApp chats fill with food ideas and discussion of logistics. Who has the best air-conditioning or pool to best host? Who will fly or drive in summer heat this year? And, in my opinion, perhaps the most important question of all – who is in charge of the ham?

For Christians, we look forward to the candles and nativity displays that remind us of Jesus, who entered a world of pain and risk as a vulnerable child to bring ultimate restoration.

## JOY-STEALERS

However, events with great anticipation surrounding them are not always joyful. How would you feel if treatment options were running out and you suspected this Christmas may be your last? What about if your bank account was running low, and you felt a need to retreat from your excited children to grieve about what you could have given them if circumstances were different?

One pain I know all too well is the gaps at the table left by family dysfunction. When each year you eat extravagant food with a lump in your throat, wishing things were different. Christmas is a reminder that not every wound can be healed with

a sprig of mistletoe, and not every heart can be warmed with a particularly good eggnog. Sometimes Christmas just hurts.

As anyone who has been pregnant will know, anticipating the birth of a child is not always happy either. Many parents harbour fears – about their child's well-being, about their capacity to care for an infant, about the state of the world or the community into which they are bringing their child.

“

**Jesus ... entered a world of pain and risk as a vulnerable child to bring ultimate restoration.**

”

For Mary, mother of Jesus, her fears may have been difficult to fully quantify. She was a teenager, bearing a child with a man who was not the biological father. The government was unsafe, to say the least. In the end, she didn't have a soft bed to birth in, or a warm inflatable pool to soothe her labour pains. Medical attention was not readily available in a stable in Bethlehem – it was likely just her, Joseph





and some noisy animals. Talk about the makings of a traumatic birth story!

### DEEP HOPE

And yet, in her moment of deep need, she managed to birth the greatest source of hope the world has ever known. God's plan is somehow providential, mysterious and confusing at the same time.

I sometimes wonder if our hurting souls spent more time at Christmas thinking on the circumstances of Jesus' birth and the struggles of his mother, we might feel less alone in our own pain.

I love *The Message* Bible translation of Romans chapter 8, verses 22-25, which describes how, as we anticipate Jesus' restoration of his creation, we may feel pains like Mary did:

"All around us we observe a pregnant creation. The difficult times of pain throughout the world are simply birth pangs. But it's not only around us; it's

within us. The Spirit of God is arousing us within. We're also feeling the birth pangs.

"These sterile and barren bodies of ours are yearning for full deliverance. That is why waiting does not diminish us, any more than waiting diminishes a pregnant mother. We are enlarged in the waiting. We, of course, don't see what is enlarging us. But the longer we wait, the larger we become, and the more joyful our expectancy."

This Christmas, I pray you can reflect on the God who sees, and the God who grieves alongside you. The God who is deeper than twinkling fairy lights, carols and perfectly wrapped gifts. The God of hope.



Scan here for more stories of hope.

# A weary world rejoices?

Finding hope in an available God

By Phil Inglis

Every year I am a little cautious about throwing around the words “Merry Christmas”! Or “Happy Christmas”, or “Happy Holidays”, or whatever!

This year has been a tough one on a global scale. We were still recovering from the economic effects of the pandemic when Russia invaded Ukraine, with the resulting economic conditions causing widespread hardship. Climate has also contributed to the pain, with increasing temperatures giving rise to extreme weather events, leaving death and destruction across the world.

This has meant that, for many of us, 2023 has been a difficult year. The cost of electricity, groceries and housing is going up like a rocket. Many have been unable to pay rent or afford the basics of existence. The demand for Salvation Army services has grown dramatically, and we expect this to continue as the economy continues to struggle. Christmas is going to be very different for people this year.

People are weary. Not tired, like we need an afternoon nap, but weary like we need a six-month holiday.

So, you can see that this year, I am even more cautious about saying “Merry Christmas”.

And yet, my favourite Christmas carol is *O Holy Night*, and it has the line “The weary world rejoices.” What the heck? Why is it worth getting out a tree? Why is it worth putting on lights (that

use expensive electricity)? Why is it worth going shopping for loved ones? Why is it worth gathering with family? Why is it worth going to church? There’s just so much going on right now, so much is hard right now, why don’t I just fade into the weariness and forget Christmas this year? Why, in heaven’s name, would a weary world rejoice?

“

**People are weary. Not tired, like we need an afternoon nap, but weary like we need a six-month holiday.**

”

## ONE OF US

The unique spiritual truth of the Christmas story is that God, however we understand God, came to be one of us. Came and lived among us.

This is not a particularly strange story. Ancient mythology has lots of stories of gods like Zeus, Apollo and Thor coming to earth and having dealings with humanity. They fight battles for, with or against humanity, they lead, teach, build and do all sorts of things. They were ancient superheroes; they came alongside humanity ... but they were different. They still stood apart and above humanity.





Christmas says something different about Jesus. Jesus, the one we believe to be the one true God, was not like Thor – a superhero with a hammer and wrapped in a cape. Instead, he was a baby in a manger, wrapped in a cloth ... fully and completely immersed in human existence and experience – not standing separate and apart.

“

### Why would a weary world rejoice?

”

The Bible says, “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel’ which is translated, ‘God with us’,” (Matthew chapter 1, verse 23).

This truth should slowly transform our understanding of ourselves, God and the universe. Even when times are rough, hard, hurtful and frustrating – even when times are incredibly weary – God is present. God is not distant, unfeeling, unable to relate – God is down-to-earth, understanding and available.

At Christmas, we don’t rejoice **IN SPITE** of our weariness, we rejoice **BECAUSE** God is with us **IN** our weariness and walks with us in empathy and understanding. We look forward with a little more hope, a little less anxiety and a little more joy.

*Major Phil Inglis is a Salvation Army officer (pastor) in Victoria.*



Scan here for more stories of hope.

# Christmas in Lismore

Following devastating floods in 2022, the community was embraced with generosity and love

**On 28 February 2022, Lismore and other communities in the NSW Northern Rivers region experienced a flood that was recorded as Australia's costliest natural disaster, following catastrophic floods impacting the region since 2017. Helping people celebrate Christmas last year was no easy task and will continue to be a challenge this year.**

By Naomi Singlehurst

Lismore-based Salvos officers (pastors) Captains Phil and Donna Sutcliffe are surprised when people from out of town assume everything is now fine in Lismore.

"The media moves on to the next disaster, but last Christmas there were probably more than 1000 people in Lismore alone still without housing, bunking with family and friends, in motel rooms or caravans, or in shells or sections of houses," Phil says.

While the Sutcliffes expect Christmas 2023 to be somewhat better, they say that frustrations around bureaucracy, insurance, lack of trades, and costs and availability of materials will mean another tough Christmas for many locals.

## DISASTER TRAUMA

"A lot of people who were flood-affected were physically rescued from their rooftops, so there's ongoing emotional fallout from that," Donna explains.

"That's compounded with the trauma of having no home, having to wait to figure out insurance and other stuff, and not being allowed to do anything on your place while you wait. Plus having to explain your circumstances to every government organisation and charity

and then learning you might not be eligible for help or insurance after all.

"Many have been left completely stranded again in a sense," she shares.

## PLANNING FOR CHRISTMAS

Last Christmas, 10 months after the first catastrophic floods hit the area, the Sutcliffes wanted to do something special for the community for Christmas.

“

**So many people were generous so that we could be generous. And love was everywhere ...**

”

While the Salvos were already playing a role in recovery support, including allocation of grants and flood outreach workers, the Sutcliffes and their small team knew that local families would need special care at Christmas time.

"We started planning for last Christmas very early on," says Donna. "I have to say, God's provision was so apparent







The Sutcliffes with the generous Christmas donations.



The Sutcliffe family continue to serve the Lismore community.



The Wiggles brought much joy to flood-affected families.

from the very moment we thought about Christmas and his provision was so real every single step of the way.”

**A MARATHON EFFORT**

The Salvos team talked with local, national and international agencies, including Good360, OzHarvest, Kmart Wishing Tree, the local Kmart and Big W, and a range of other businesses.

Phil says goods and gifts included a truckload of toys from the Salvos Streetlevel service in Sydney, 13 pallets of chocolates that had been due to go to the local Kmart, vouchers for groceries from OzHarvest, goods through Good360, toys and other items from large and small businesses and locals. A local church gave the team space as a Christmas warehouse and for sorting, and a large rug manufacturer donated hundreds of rugs.

The logistics of sorting and distributing goods and caring for so many families was “a marathon effort”, but Phil and Donna say it was completely worthwhile.

**CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS**

As Christians, Donna and Phil love and celebrate Christmas as a special and precious season, celebrating the birth of Jesus.

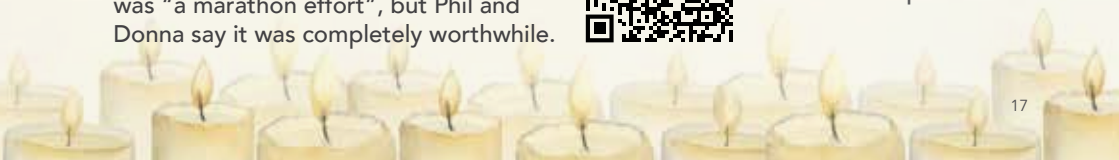
“Christmas is such a beautiful time for families, and in our family we love to spend time together, to enjoy each other’s company, and to focus again on the birth of Jesus and the hope that provides our world and us,” Donna says.

“Last Christmas there was sadness in our community, but also joy. They were just so overwhelmed with the thought that others would bless them in this way to have a proper Christmas.

“So many people were generous so that we could be generous. And love was everywhere – it really was!”



Scan here for more stories of hope.



# Food for body and soul

Renowned chef, Dominique Rizzo, shares her life experience, personal ethos and Christmas recipes.

By Dominique Rizzo

My dad is Italian, and migrated to Australia when he was 18 years old. When Dad often took us back to his homeland of Sicily, his relatives had farms and were amazing cooks, and I think that's where my love of food started.

When I finished school, I went overseas, stayed with members of my family in Sicily and worked in a little bar. Eventually I went to stay with my grandmother, my nonna.

Back in Australia I completed a diploma in business hospitality and an apprenticeship as a chef. All these years later, I love what I do and it doesn't seem like work because my life and my work are so intertwined.

## READY STEADY COOK

My first restaurant was Mondo Organics. That's when I got into Ready Steady Cook, a cookery competition that aired on Network Ten from 2005 until 2013.

There came a time when I was in a bit of a quandary as to where I was going in life. When I helped with a Christmas dinner for 400 to 500 people at The Salvation Army's Streetlevel Mission in Brisbane, that fulfilled me so much, and I have continued my association with the Salvos.

The Salvos had so many volunteers! People volunteer because not only is it giving to somebody else, it's also receiving the enjoyment, the fulfilment, the connection, the love and the spirituality. It's this wonderful, two-way energy.

I've been running overseas tours for



Dominique Rizzo – sharing food, life and love.

about 11 years now. It's pure enjoyment for me to be eating and drinking with people and showcasing what I love about the regions we're visiting.

I'm also opening a new cooking school called Urban Feast.

## SHARING THE LOVE

The Salvos have inspired me. They've been such a catalyst in helping people see their demons and overcome them – to have this light come into their life.

With the events that the Salvos and I did together, I think how important that bridge is for communication, connection and support. It might just be a cup of tea and a biscuit offered to someone, but it can lead to so much more.

Through the sharing of food, we share life and we are never lonely or hungry. And that's what I live by.

# Roast chicken with Mediterranean roast vegetables

The flavours of the Mediterranean add some fresh tastes and colours to a traditional family favourite roast.

## Ingredients

### Roast chicken:

1.6 kilo chicken; salt and pepper;  
½ bunch thyme; 1 lemon cut in half;  
2 cloves garlic, peeled and sliced;  
2 tbsp melted butter

### Mediterranean roast vegetables:

1 red and 1 yellow capsicum, seeded and cut into 4cm pieces; 2 red onions, peeled and each cut into 8 wedges; 4 medium zucchini, trimmed and cut into 3 cm rounds; 1 medium sized eggplant, diced; 1 tsp balsamic vinegar

## Method

- Preheat oven to 200°C.
- Rinse chicken inside and out, removing any excess fat and patting chicken dry with paper towel. Season inside with salt and pepper and fill with thyme, lemon halves and garlic.
- Place chicken in large baking tray, brush with melted butter, season with salt and pepper. Tuck wing tips under body of chicken and roast for 50 minutes.
- Add vegetables and roast for a further 40 minutes, turning them after 15 minutes. Remove chicken and vegetables to a platter and cover chicken with foil for about 15 minutes. Drizzle balsamic vinegar on vegetables. Slice chicken, serving alongside vegetables.



## Tips

Bring chicken out of the refrigerator 15–20 minutes before cooking so it comes to room temperature for even cooking.

Always put chicken into a preheated oven and cook to correct temperature.

Chicken is best left to rest after cooking, covered in foil, for about 10–15 minutes before eating.

For a warm salad, toss the vegetables with baby spinach and crumbled feta. ▶

# Sponge French toast with caramelised fruit salad

Shake up your breakfast menu at Christmas and try this quick and healthy twist on French toast, with fresh peaches, sweet juicy cherries and toasted almonds.

## Ingredients

¼ cup flaked almonds; 2 eggs; ½ cup milk; ¼ cup thick Greek yogurt; ¼ tsp cinnamon; 1 tbsp butter; 1 plain vanilla sponge, cut into 4 x 2.5 cm thick slices; 400g mixed tinned fruit, drained, or same amount of fresh fruit, sliced – apples, pears, peaches, cherries; 2 tbsp honey; 1 cup extra thick Greek yogurt; mint leaves for garnish

## Method

- Heat large pan over moderate temperature and toast almond flakes for 4-5 minutes until golden.
- In large bowl, whisk eggs with milk and yogurt and add cinnamon.
- Using the same frypan, add butter and melt over moderate temperature.
- Soak slices of sponge in egg and yogurt mix and toast each side in pan for 3-4 minutes until golden. Set aside on plates.
- Add extra butter to pan, turn up heat a little and toss in drained tinned or fresh fruit, cook for 4 minutes, add honey and simmer for a couple of minutes, then spoon onto toasted sponge.
- Dollop extra yogurt onto fruit and top with toasted almonds and mint leaves.



## Substitute Ingredients

Maple syrup, golden syrup or agave syrup are great substitutes instead of honey.

Top yogurt with granola, toasted seeds or your favourite topping.

## Tips

Straining yogurt overnight in the fridge, using a fine strainer, produces a thicker consistency.

Try serving toasted sponge with thick custard and a dollop of cream for a quick dinner dessert.

# Cinnamon spiced tea punch

This take-anywhere fruit punch is a perfect party starter, picnic or barbecue accompaniment and only takes minutes to prepare.



## Ingredients

3 English Breakfast tea bags;  
1 cinnamon stick; 2 ripe but firm mangoes, cheeks cut, peeled and diced into 1 cm cubes; 1 lemon, zested and juiced; handful frozen raspberries; handful fresh mint leaves; 750ml soda water; 1L clear apple juice

## Method

- Cover tea bags and cinnamon stick with 500 ml boiling water and sit for 30 minutes.
- Into a large punch bowl, add diced mango, lemon juice, zest, frozen berries and mint, cover with soda water and apple juice and pour in strained tea, leaving cinnamon stick in.
- Top with ice, stir and serve.

## Substitute Ingredients

Use any other fruits in season.

Change tea flavour, substituting English Breakfast with vanilla, chai, green or your own favourite tea.

Grape juice, cranberry and pineapple juice are also great for this recipe.

## Tips

Make sure you have a big enough bowl or jug to mix the punch. Mix up the glasses for an eclectic look, or use recycled jars and serve with paper straws.

Taste the punch to ensure it is not too sweet or sour. Adding soda water or more ice will soften the sweetness, and fresh lemon or lime juice will add a wonderful refreshing tartness.

## Coffee truffles



### Ingredients

200g good-quality dark chocolate, roughly chopped (over 85% cacao is best); ½ cup thickened cream; 2 tsp instant coffee powder; ½ cup chocolate sprinkles

### Method

- Combine chocolate and cream in a heatproof, microwave-safe bowl.
- Microwave, uncovered, on medium for 2 to 3 minutes, stirring every minute, or until melted and smooth.
- Stir in coffee powder. Cover. Refrigerate for 3 to 4 hours or until firm.
- Line a tray with baking paper.
- Using 2 teaspoons chocolate mixture at a time, form into balls. Roll balls in sprinkles to coat. Place on prepared tray.
- Refrigerate until firm.

## Quick quiz

1. Who is said to be the first person to add lighted candles to a Christmas tree after seeing the brilliance of stars shining through trees?
2. Lauscha in Germany was famous for making what in the 1800s?
3. Who created the first electric Christmas tree lights in 1882?
4. Where was Handel's timeless Christmas classic, 'Messiah', first performed in 1742?
5. The first artificial Christmas trees were made in Germany of what?

## Bible byte

"The angel said to them,  
 'Don't be afraid!  
 I am here with good news  
 for you, which will bring  
 great joy to all the people.  
 This very day in David's town  
 your Saviour was born!'"

Luke chapter 2, verses 10-11  
*Good News Translation*

## Tum-Tum

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



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

# Wordsearch

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

- |             |           |
|-------------|-----------|
| Angel       | Mistletoe |
| Bauble      | Nativity  |
| Bell        | Ornaments |
| Candle      | Pudding   |
| Candy Canes | Ribbons   |
| Decorations | Snowglobe |
| Evergreen   | Star      |
| Gift        | Tinsel    |
| Gingerbread | Topper    |
| Holly       | Tradition |
| Ivy         | Tree      |
| Lights      | Wrapping  |

## HAVE A LAUGH

Why wouldn't the ornament stay on the tree?  
It was afraid of the bark!

What happens if you eat Christmas decorations?  
You get tinsel-itis!

What did the wise men say after they offered up their gifts of gold and frankincense?  
Wait, there's myrrh!



## DID YOU KNOW?

<p><b>The tradition of decorating trees at Christmas-time started in Germany in the 1600s with people using fruit and nuts.</b></p> <p><b>Manufactured ornaments became popular after a photo of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert's decorated Christmas tree was published in <i>The Illustrated London News</i> in 1848.</b></p>	<p><b>Legend has it that candy canes date back to 1670 in Germany when a choirmaster gave sugar sticks to keep the choirboys quiet during services.</b></p>
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**Quiz answers:** 1. Martin Luther 2. Glass baubles 3. Edward Hibberd Johnson 4. Dublin, Ireland 5. Coloured goose feathers  
**Turn-Turn:** is hiding behind the Purple Wiggle on page 17.



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

*From the **Salvos Magazine** team.*

