



Advent Calendar 2021



Window to BGST (WTB) will end its run in December 2021. So as a farewell of WTB, let us present to you the many windows into the lives of the people who make up BGST and let us, in Advent fashion, reminisce with and pray for each other.



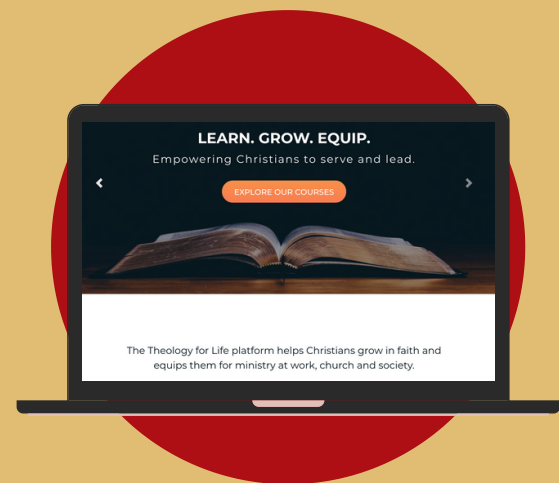
1 How did Advent Calendars come about?

Early versions of this tradition, started in Germany in 1903 by publisher Gerhard Land, offered a way for children to count down to Christmas by opening one "door" or "window" a day to reveal a Bible passage, poem or small gift. Since gaining mass popularity by 1920, the calendars have evolved to secular calendars that include daily gifts from mini bottles of wine to nail polish to chocolates to action figures.

READ MORE AT
www.history.com/news/christmas-traditions-history

2 Theology for Life

In line with our mission to be Biblically Faithful, Boldly Relevant, and to be the marketplace institute for the people, we have specially curated a variety of courses that we've put up onto our Theology for Life (TFL) platform for you. We encourage you to look up the selection of courses catered to problem-focus learning. Find a course where you can learn at your own pace and in your own space. If there are topics that you wish us to offer, please send us your request and we will review it for inclusion.



3 Sharing from Rev Aung Win, BGST Alumni, Part 1



An uncontrolled third wave of COVID-19 in July-August 2021 swept across our country where state hospitals have been shut for months. Many people lost their lives due to the collapse of Myanmar's healthcare system in recent months. Sad to say that more than 150 Christian workers from my native place, Chin State, lost their lives due to the pandemic. Thank God COVID-19 infections are decreasing in Myanmar recently. Yet, all the government schools and some of the government offices are still closed. Because of the pandemic, our bible school is still closed and we are not able to worship in church.

John 16:33 "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

4

Luke 2:13-14

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

*"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor
rests."*

Though we will not see the fullness of His glory until we see Him face to face, we will nonetheless come to a fuller appreciation of this glory as we study His Word and communicate with our Lord. Pray that we will exercise these disciplines in faith.



5

Please pray along with us as BGST Faculty works towards our vision "That all Christians grow in Christ-likeness and live out their calling to fulfill God's creative and redemptive purposes in the Church and the marketplace" in their programme planning and teaching.

6

Nora Hughes, a BGST student shares

I have such fond memories of Singapore at Christmas—the lights on Orchard Road, the "snow" for the kids at Tanglin Mall. Those were wonderful times with good friends. Back in Los Angeles we don't have "real" snow either, but enjoy family at Christmas. My mother, the oldest at 100 years of age, is looking forward to seeing family, even though she has forgotten who they all are. We gather together on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day to Celebrate Jesus' birth with food and fun. The youngest are four little boys under 5, so it's a noisy gathering!

May God bless BGST in 2022 as we continue to love Him and seek to serve Him.



7

"This is a recipe from a BGST ex-colleague who baked for us during Christmas and I always looked forward to eating it. It has become my family favourite now!"

RECIPE FROM STAFF MEMBER, DAISY SIM

Potato Pie



Ingredients:

Part A

- 1kg Russett potato (boiled until soft & skinned)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon white pepper
- 50gm butter
- 100ml fresh milk

Part B

- 200gm large onions cut into cubes
- 250gm mixed frozen vegetables
- 1+1/2 tablespoon cooking oil
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon white pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon coarse black pepper
- 1/2 can of corned beef
- 1/2 egg beaten

Directions:

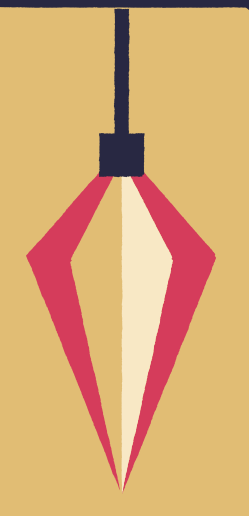
Part A

1. Mash hot boiled potatoes until smooth
2. Add milk & butter, mix well
3. Add salt & pepper to taste
4. Divide mixture into 2 portions.

Part B

1. Fry onions with oil until soft. Add frozen vegetables. Add salt & 2 types of pepper to taste
2. Preheat oven 175C. Use baking dish 8-9ins or 20-24 cm
3. Layer one portion of the potato mixture into the baking dish, levelling it flat
4. Mash corned beef a little and spread corned beef on the layered potato in the dish
5. Next add the part B vegetables into dish
6. Add the 2nd portion of the potato mixture into the dish, levelling the top flat
7. Spread 1/2 beaten egg on the top of potato dish
8. Use a fork to draw deep lines across the dish
9. Bake in oven 30-45mins until golden brown.

8 Sharing from Rev Aung Win, BGST Alumni, Part 2



Due to the unstable political situation in the country, many people have lost their jobs and thousands are fleeing from home. Thousands of people have lost their lives and some have been arrested. In some places, phones and the internet had been cut off till today. Many have been displaced to IDP camps and they are in desperate need of support, especially food and medical supplies. In my native place like Chin State, many were shot dead and some villages were burnt down. We are in the darkest time at the moment. We desperately need your prayers.

Romans 8:37-38, "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Pray along with us for the Admin Team.

May they find joy in what they do, knowing that they are contributing to the overall work of BGST especially as we embark on the new strategic thrusts. May Christlikeness be the main branding of all that we do.



10 Christmas in Germany

Germany is credited with starting the Christmas tree tradition as we now know it in the 16th century when devout Christians brought decorated trees into their homes. Some built Christmas pyramids of wood and decorated them with evergreens and candles if wood was scarce. It is a widely held belief that Martin Luther, the 16th-century Protestant reformer, first added lighted candles to a tree. Walking toward his home one winter evening, composing a sermon, he was awed by the brilliance of stars twinkling amidst evergreens. To recapture the scene for his family, he erected a tree in the main room and wired its branches with lighted candles.

READ MORE AT

www.history.com/topics/christmas/history-of-christmas-trees



11 BGST Thanksgiving

Thank you Lord for the unexpected donations in the past year.
May we be good stewards and bring forth a harvest.



12

Hebrews 2:10-13

"In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered. Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters."

It is indeed by amazing grace that our Lord Saviour Jesus Christ calls us His brothers and sisters. Let us reflect upon this, and not be ashamed of Him! How will you find an opportunity to share Christ this season?

Christmas in Philippines

The southeast Asian island nation has the world's longest festive season; it pulls no punches in its celebratory zeal for the period, with lavish light displays, masses, and festivals held throughout the country from September until January.

In addition to the Christmas Eve dinner, scores of delicious, and often highly unusual, dishes are prepared for Filipinos to gorge themselves on. These include *puto bumbong*, glutinous purple rice stuffed into bamboo tubes with butter, sugar and coconut, and *keso de bola*, balls of cheese with red waxy coverings.

READ MORE AT
edition.cnn.com/2012/12/05/world/asia/irpt-xmas-philippines-traditions/index.html

13





14

Sharing from staff members Kristine Komlosy and Janice Tello who are both from Philippines

"Our best memories of Christmas include breakfast snacks that the vendors sold outside the churches. They are called puto bumbong, purple glutinous rice cakes with coconut."

"We also made parol in school, a Christmas decorative lantern."

Kristine hopes to make a parol with her daughter this Christmas to share this tradition.



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Please pray along with us for our alumni and students. May the Lord bless the knowledge and fellowship they have gained through BGST and be salt and light wherever the Lord puts them.



16

How did wreaths come about?

Making wreaths is a handy way to use your Christmas tree trimmings, which is probably how the custom developed in 16th-century Germany. But the symbolism of wreaths goes back to ancient Greece and Rome, when victorious athletes wore leafy branches woven into a crown. The symbol of a never-ending circle made of evergreens also offered the promise of spring's rebirth to pagans celebrating the winter solstice. Later, this Christmas symbol was adapted into Christian celebrations with the advent wreath, which is used to count down the weeks until the birth of Jesus.



READ MORE AT

<https://www.rd.com/list/history-of-christmas-traditions/>

Philip's British Christmas Pudding



This pudding is baked in a water bath in the oven. You may find this more convenient and less time-consuming than boiling your pudding. This recipe makes 1 large pudding (basin with 16- or 18-cm diameter at top), or 2 smaller puddings (basins with 12- or 13-cm diameter). You can also scale this recipe up and bake 3 or 4 puddings all together in the oven.

Ingredients:

- raisins 75g
- sultanas 75g
- currants 75g
- mixed candied peel 120g
- *brandy 2 tbsp
- *stout 5 tbsp
- lemon 2 tsp each of zest and juice
- orange 2 tsp each of zest and juice
- †black treacle or molasses 75g
- dark brown sugar 150g
- ground almonds 2 tbsp
- egg 1 large
- plain or gluten free flour 2 tbsp, plus 2 tsp
- fine sea salt ½ tsp
- nutmeg a few grates
- cinnamon ½ tsp
- mixed spice ½ tsp
- unsalted butter 75g, cold
- fresh breadcrumbs 75g

Directions:

1. In a large container with a lid, combine the dried fruits, candied peel, brandy, stout, citrus zest and juice, treacle or molasses, dark brown sugar and ground almonds. Stir well and leave for a week or so to plump the dried fruit.
2. On baking day, butter and line your pudding basin(s) with baking paper. Heat oven to 160C/gas mark 3. Prepare a water bath for the basin(s) – something like a deep roasting dish.
3. Turn the fruit mixture into a large bowl and stir in the egg.
4. In another bowl, whisk together all of the dry ingredients. Cut in the cold butter and mix to a coarse meal. Stir in the breadcrumbs then combine with the fruit mixture until fully incorporated.
5. Spoon the mixture into your prepared basin(s) and cut (a) slightly larger circle(s) of parchment to place on the top. It is helpful to put a fold in the parchment so it can expand as the pudding(s) rise(s). Place this parchment over the top of the basin(s) and secure tightly with string. Wrap kitchen foil slightly domed over the top but sealed tightly around the basin edge(s) to avoid water seeping in. Place in the water bath (the water should reach half way up the basin). Cover the entire roasting tray with foil and place carefully in the oven.
6. Bake for 4 hours§, checking from time to time that there is still water in the pan. After baking, take the pudding out of the water bath and cool completely. Once cool, remove all wrapping. Then with a warm clean cloth, wipe away any mess or spillages from the outside of the basin. Re-cover the pudding with a double layer of clingfilm and store in a cool dry place until Christmas.
7. On the day, preheat the oven to 160C/gas mark 3. Remove the clingfilm from the basin, then cover the pudding with parchment and foil, as in the first baking. Place in a water bath and bake for an hour to 90 minutes§ (during Christmas lunch). Turn out onto a serving plate, douse with 2 tablespoons of brandy and set on fire, exercising due care of course.
8. Slice and serve with cream, ice cream, custard or brandy butter (or any combination of these).

*Optional, but note that the alcohol evaporates during cooking.

If you choose not to include the brandy and stout, replace it with an equivalent amount of water.

†For a less intense and dark pudding, replace with golden syrup.

§The cooking and reheating times are for a pudding in a 16-18cm basin.

Smaller puddings will be ready after 2 or 2½ hours, and will take 45-60 minutes to reheat.

"This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God."

What difference does it make to you that Jesus was truly and fully human, even as he was truly and fully God?



A Christmas memory by staff member, Gracie Woo

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When we were growing up, we had two big trees in our front garden which looked a lot like fir trees. Our Pa would cut o a branch about a month before Christmas and place it in a planter in the living room. My siblings and I had the task of decorating it, and no one was more enthusiastic about it than I was. We placed gifts for each other under the tree which were only opened on Christmas morning. I am very thankful for this memory, but most of all, very grateful that my parents took us to church where we studied precious doctrine and grew in our faith. There is no Christmas without Christ!

20 Christmas in Japan

Although Christmas isn't a national holiday in Japan (an estimated one percent of the population is Christian, according to Smithsonian Magazine), its citizens still find an interesting and delicious way to celebrate. Rather than gathering around the table for a turkey dinner, families head out to their local Kentucky Fried Chicken. The tradition began in 1974 after a wildly successful marketing campaign called "Kurisumasu ni wa kentakkii!" or "Kentucky for Christmas!" The fast food chain has maintained its yuletide popularity, causing some people to order their boxes months in advance or stand in two-hour-long lines to get their "finger lickin' good" food.

READ MORE AT

www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20161216-why-japan-celebrates-christmas-with-kfc





21

Sharing from Daniel Lau, BGST alumnus, now working in Japan with OMF.

It is quite amusing to read the words on shirts that the Japanese wear on the streets. Many of them are in English, but the average Japanese person does not know what the words on their clothes mean. Just last week, I met a woman in a park wearing a white sweater with a picture of the three wise men riding their camels. The caption above it reads, 'Wise men still seek him'.

'What a wonderful gospel message!' I thought to myself and asked her if she knew the meaning behind it. She didn't even know it was part of the Christmas story. She simply bought it on an online shopping website because it looked nice.

I proceeded to tell her the story of the wise men, and the significance behind the words on her sweater. I am thankful for the opportunity to tell someone about Jesus, yet sorry that the meaning of such a poignant sentence (and for that matter, the true meaning of Christmas) is lost on many Japanese.

May many more Japanese understand the true meaning of Jesus' birth, and that they would seek him like the wise men did two thousand years ago.

22

Why the "12 Days of Christmas"?

One of the most popular, if long and repetitive, Christmas carols is the countdown classic "The 12 Days of Christmas." But the 12 days of Christmas are actually a thing: In the Christian tradition, they are the 12 days between the birth of Jesus on December 25 and Epiphany (sometimes called "Three Kings Day") on January 6, when the three wise men, or magi, visited the baby and presented him with gifts—which is also why we give gifts at Christmastime. Shakespeare's play Twelfth Night was also likely written as entertainment during this period of celebration.

READ MORE AT
www.rd.com/list/history-of-christmas-traditions/



23

May God guide our Council as they lead BGST in the next phase, and bless the members of the functional committees as they serve the Lord through the upcoming programmes.



24

Yap Foon Lyn, BGST's Admin & Ops shares

Christmases had always been a time for family and giving and these made up some of the most special childhood memories for me.

I guess it was East meets West when all my *hong bao* money at Chinese New Year would be put in a little toy safe, complete with dial and numbers to unlock. Nothing from that pile of loot would be spent. Then everything would be cleaned out from 1 December for the Great Christmas Shopping expedition. I remember my grandparents taking us to Robinson's as a Christmas treat complete with live Santa and all! But I didn't get much shopping done there (way too expensive for my budget) so I concentrated on choosing my own gifts and helping my grandma choose gifts for all my cousins.

For my gifts to my cousins and family members, I painstakingly searched in the smaller neighbourhood shops for something special for each of them. It was truly a joyful time filled with excitement and anticipation—seeing the looks on their faces when they unwrapped their gifts and the glee I felt when I opened my own, the singing of Christmas carols and the giant Christmas turkey glistening on the table, these were special memories indeed! (I still have a hippo-shaped stapler from when I was 10 years old.)

Gifts and giving certainly made up a great part of my Christmases growing up, but it wasn't till I turned 13 that I truly understood what Christmas and the Greatest Gift meant. From my toddler years, I knew about Baby Jesus and the shepherds, the wise men (my own mother was a wise man in a Sunday School Christmas play herself, and whenever we sang "We Three Kings" that story would get dredged up all over again!) and the angels. I pray that as we make Christmas memories for our families and for each other, we will not lose sight of the deep Love that caused that Gift to be given!

"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable (inexpressible) gift." (2Cor9:15)



25

How Odd ... by BGST Faculty, Quek Tze-Ming

... that the great turning point of His rescue mission should come with a whiff of scandal. Mary is found pregnant while unmarried, and she claims she is still a virgin. And then her fiancé Joseph, instead of divorcing her, marries her instead. A boy is delivered soon after. Much too soon after.

Matthew's gospel begins with Jesus' lineage. We might have expected more of the "right" sort of respectable people to feature in the bloodline of the great Jewish Messiah, but what we get is a stunning collection of saints, and sinners, and everything in-between. We find good kings, bad kings, heroes, adulterers, Jews and Gentiles. There is no pattern of righteousness or respectability. Wicked king Rehoboam fathers wicked king Abijah, who fathers good king Asa, who fathers good king Jehoshaphat, who fathers wicked king Joram. Five women (Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba, and Mary herself) are included in the genealogy, which is striking because the practice is so rare. And why mention them, of all women? Wouldn't Sarah, or Rebekah, or Rachel, be more appropriate? More ... respectable? Isn't it embarrassing that the first four women mentioned in the genealogy all had unusual marriages, sexual scandals, or suspicions of having had illegitimate children?

And yet God worked in these unexpected people, some through scandalous circumstances, to bring about His plan of salvation. Perhaps God is telling us that no one is too wicked, or scandalous, or undeserving, for him to do his work of salvation.

I find that comforting.

Joyeux Noël

JOY TO THE WORLD, THE LORD IS COME...
AND WILL COME AGAIN!



*The Lord bless you at Christmas and the New Year!
Your support and partnership in His work here at BGST
is a privilege and joy.*

FROM ALL OF US HERE AT