

December 2013

THE SPICE

A taste of what's happening for women.

With Us: The Light in the Dark

"Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.'" —Matthew 1:23

It was a dark night, the night Jesus was born. Shepherds in the fields outside Bethlehem were guarding their flocks from predators who sought to slaughter and thieves who sought to steal. The shepherds knew they were always nearby, hidden under the cover of darkness.

It was a normal night, just like the thousands of nights that had come before—darkness and dangerous—for the sheep in the fields and for God's own flock—his people. They had been trapped in a world of fear and danger and prayed for years upon years for their own shepherd, for their Savior, the One who would finally give them a safe place to live, laugh, and prosper under his protective care.

Suddenly... "Look!" The darkness was replaced by a glorious light. It terrified the shepherds. "Don't be afraid! A Liberator has been born for you!" God's messenger proclaimed. A liberator born for them—for us. Born as light into a world that had only known darkness.

Immanuel, which means "God is with us," had come to the world—and pierced the darkness with light. Until this night, until this birth, the light had never been *with us*. We were no longer trapped in a world of darkness. The Light was here, and hope came alive on earth. The Shepherd had arrived, so we need not fear the darkness of night again.

The hope of the world was *alive*. With Us. Overcoming the darkness we had no power to overcome on our own. The darkness of the world would never truly be dark again.

Jesus, born on Christmas Day. The Light alive. Our hope became real. We never need to walk alone or in the dark again—God is with us.

May we join the shepherds and angels singing in thanksgiving and joy this Christmas season!

 **HILLCREST**
MINISTERING GOD'S LOVE TO A HURTING WORLD



THE WORD

"I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer remain in the dark."

— John 12:46

CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Lord, may your light shine in the dark places in our lives and revive our hope and joy this Christmas season. Fill our hearts with the abundance of your love and may we have the courage to let your light shine from our hearts to the dark places in our world.

Thank You, Jesus

Jesus came to give us joy and abundance—to give us gifts. This year, after giving gifts to family and friends, wouldn't it be fitting to write a thank-you card to Jesus? For all the gifts you have received from him?



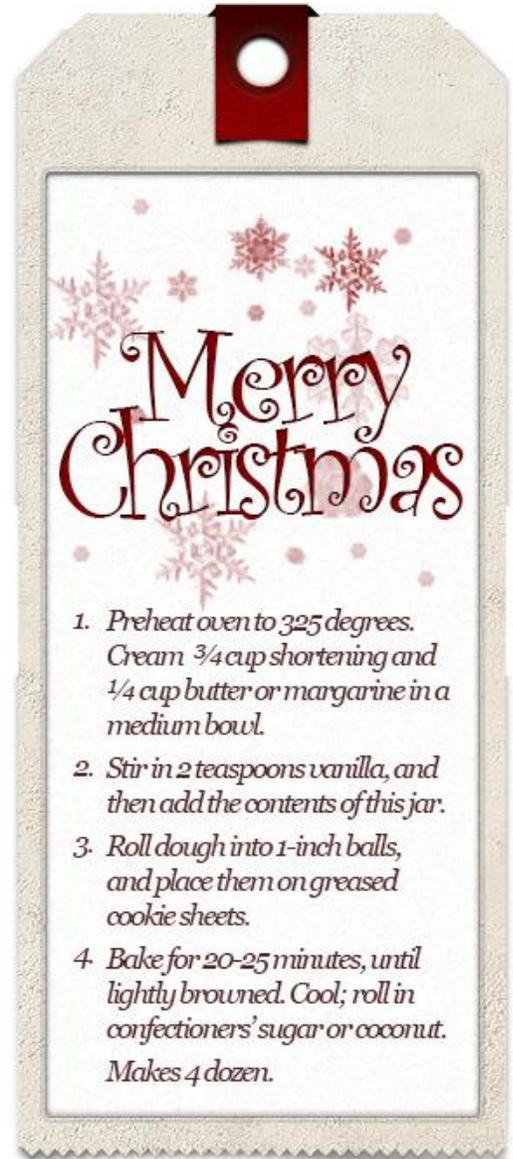
White Christmas in a Jar

No matter what climate you live in, you can enjoy a white Christmas this year with this recipe for “snowballs.” Give as a gift, or make a batch to share a white Christmas with family and friends—but no snowball fights allowed! ☺

Snowballs

½ cup confectioners' sugar
2 cups flour
1 cup chopped pecans

Combine sugar and flour in a bowl. Pour half of the mixture into a 1-quart jar, add pecans, then pour in rest of mixture. Decorate the lid to the jar, and then attach a tag with the following directions:



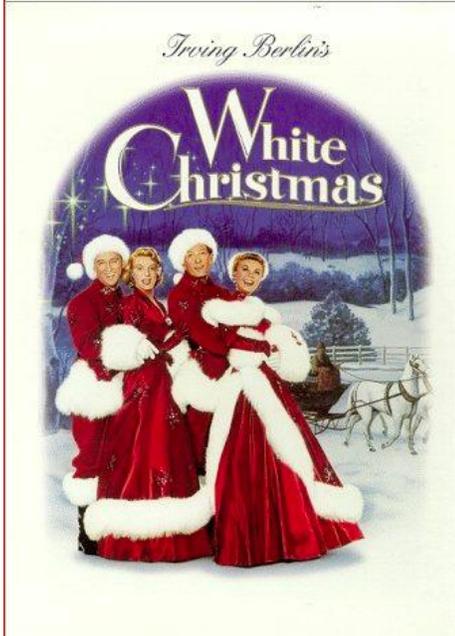
Hiding Your Sweater?

Years ago it was fashionable and looked great on you—everyone said so. Now you know the truth—they lied. It was, and always will be...an ugly Christmas sweater.

It's time to wear it once again! Celebrate the season with an ugly Christmas sweater party. Challenge friends to wear their ugly sweaters out to dinner, or have an ugly sweater day at work. And laugh. It's guaranteed to clothe you with joy this Christmas!

Media Morsels

Movie Review



White Christmas

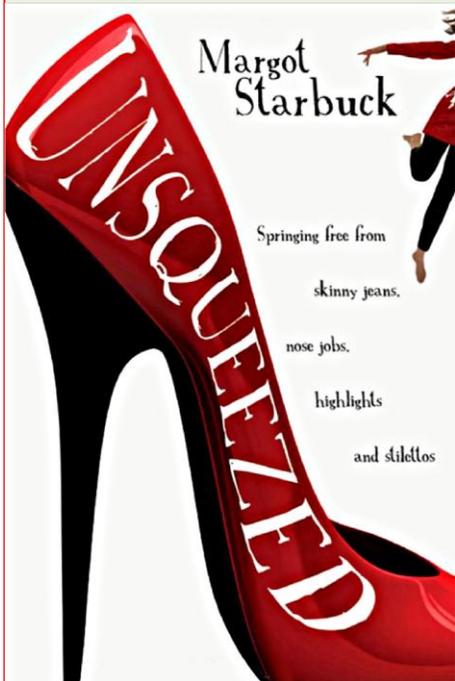
Release Date: 1954

Genres: comedy, musical, romance

Rating: not rated, but appropriate for all audiences

This musical classic has been warming hearts for more than fifty years. Featuring the music of Irving Berlin and the definitive voice of Bing Crosby, it's a must-see holiday movie. Set during and shortly after World War II, the movie stars Crosby and Danny Kaye as two army buddies who form a successful singing and dancing duo. They pair up with a duo of young women for a Christmas Eve show—and enjoy some hilarious adventures, misunderstandings, and holiday romance along the way.

This is a family-friendly show even Grandma will enjoy. It's good, wholesome holiday fun. But if you want to take it a little deeper, consider a discussion of how we often attempt to manufacture the “perfect” holiday. Or challenge your family to identify messages in the film that reinforce or distract from the true meaning of Christmas.



Book Review

Unsqueezed: Springing Free from Skinny Jeans, Nose Jobs, Highlights and Stilettos

Author: Margot Starbuck

Publisher: InterVarsity Press

In all the talk about body image, you won't hear many people asking the important question this book addresses: What are our bodies made for? Beyond just asking the question, this author delivers several answers that will turn your concept of beauty upside down. The book will also equip you with very practical steps you can take to use your body as God intended you to use it—for God's glory and the love of people.

Don't be fooled—as serious as this book is, Starbuck's voice is humorous, delightful, and down to earth. She catches the reader off guard and writes in a relatable style that will have you nodding your head and chuckling as you question many false messages you have believed about female beauty.

December

A Taste of What's Happening for Women

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
						King's Kids 6:30 pm
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
King's Kids 6:30 pm						
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Morning Services 9 & 11 a.m. Last baptisms of 2013		Christmas Eve Services 4:00 pm 5:30 pm 7:00 pm	Merry Christmas!			
29	30	31				
Morning Services 9 & 11 am Classic & Contemporary		New Year's Eve! Out with the old - in with the new...	HAPPY NEW YEAR!		Check out the new Women of Worth groups, starting the week of January 5th, 2014	Visit www.hillcrestchurch.net or see the table in the Connecting Point starting Dec 29th

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