

December Edition: Christmas, America, and You



Merry Christmas! We are excited to present a very special edition of Unite the USA in honor of Christmas. Christmas in America is unlike anywhere else in the world. We celebrate the fact we live in peace thanks to our veterans and current servicemen and women. In this edition, you will find a tribute to our nation's heroes and information about our Christmas outreach to them called Operation Military Christmas.

Take note of a special quote about Christmas from President Ronald Reagan, a video tour of the White House decorated for Christmas, and a video by Karen Pence sharing about the Christmas tree dedicated to our military. We also have special festive recipes by five of our First Ladies. Try one with your family this Christmas and New Year's. Lastly, enjoy some interesting trivia about our National Christmas Tree.

Instead of sharing a featured article this month, we wanted to feature the Christmas story as shared in Matthew 1:18-2:12 and in Luke 2. No matter who you are or what you are going through, we all have much to celebrate at Christmas because Christ came to us. (And if you need extra prayer, visit www.PrayingPals.org.)

Stop and think about it: His coming as a baby is powerful. He came so that we may live. He came to redeem us from our sins. He came so that we may receive the gift of salvation. Jesus' tremendous love and sacrifice for us is truly worthy to be praised. Jesus' birth changed the world. He came, and He's coming again! Now, that is a lot to celebrate!

Merry Christmas and God bless you,
Carrie Stoelting and Stacie Stoelting
Sisters and Founders of Unite the USA

Jesus Came to Us



We encourage you to read Matthew 1:18-2:12 and also Luke 2 to learn about His birth.

Matthew 1:18-2:12 **The Birth of Jesus Christ**

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a

dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Immanuel"

(which means, God with us).

When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

The Visit of the Wise Men

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

"And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel."

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Luke 2:1-20

The Birth of Jesus Christ

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

The Shepherds and the Angels

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Featured Quote

"In this holiday season, we celebrate the birthday of One Who, for almost 2,000 years, has been a greater influence on humankind than all the rulers, all the scholars, all the armies and all the navies that ever marched or sailed, all put together. He brought to the world the simple message of peace on Earth, good will to all mankind. Some celebrate the day as marking the birth of a great and good man, a wise teacher and prophet, and they do so sincerely. But for many of us it's also a holy day, the birthday of the Prince of Peace, a day when "God so loved the world" that He sent us His only begotten Son to assure forgiveness of our sins."

-President Ronald Reagan, December 16th, 1982



This Month's Bible Verse

"She will bear a son, and you shall call his name **Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins." **Matthew 1:21**

A White House Christmas

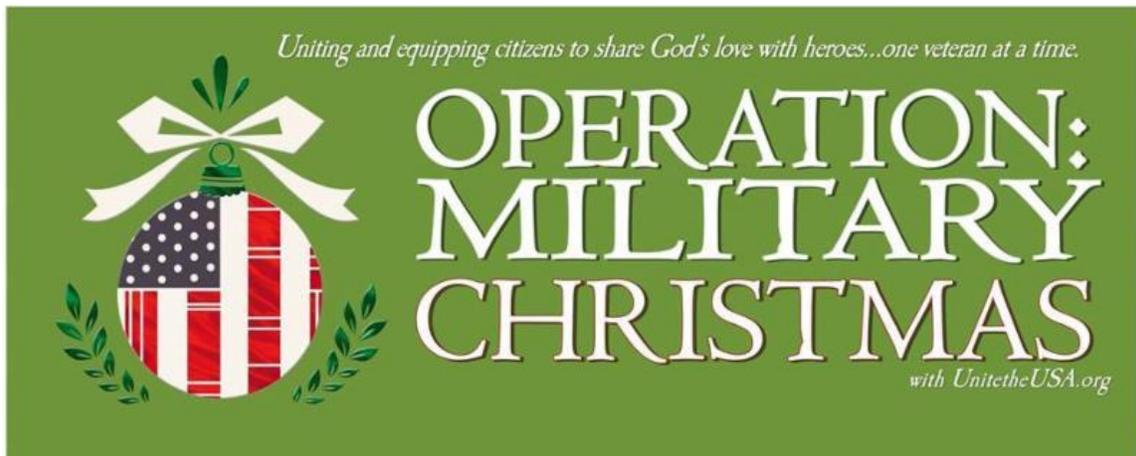


Here's a brief tour of the White House decorated for Christmas.



Karen Pence explains the importance of the military tree at the Vice President's residence.

Remember Our Heroes This Christmas



Add veterans to your Christmas list and reach out to at least one this season. No honorable veteran should ever feel forgotten! We make it easy for you with tips. Join our online event called [Operation Military Christmas](#) or [Operation Military ChristmasUnitetheUSA.org](#) to learn easy yet effective ways you can reach out to veterans and military families this Christmas.



Recipes from Our First Ladies



Dolley Madison's Soft Gingerbread ...

Preserved in White House files, the recipe has been used by many another First Lady, right up to our day.

Ingredients:

Molasses
Beef drippings (or lard)
Baking soda
Hot water
Flour
Ground ginger
Ground cinnamon
Powdered sugar.

Instructions:

Mix 1 cup molasses (Dolley's "receipt" specified New Orleans molasses) with 2/3 cup fresh beef drippings. Add 1 1/4 teaspoons baking soda dissolved in 1/4 cup hot water. Sift your dry ingredients: 2 1/4 cups flour, 4 teaspoons ginger, and 1 tablespoon cinnamon. Next pour 3/4 cup hot water which has almost reached the boiling point into the molasses mixture alternately with the flour mixture. Beat thoroughly with a rotary or electric beater. The dough should be soft enough to pour. Bake in a shallow, well-breaded baking dish in a preheated medium (350 degrees F.) oven 25 to 30 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean. Delicious served warm, sprinkled with powdered sugar." --- Presidents' Cookbook (p. 90)

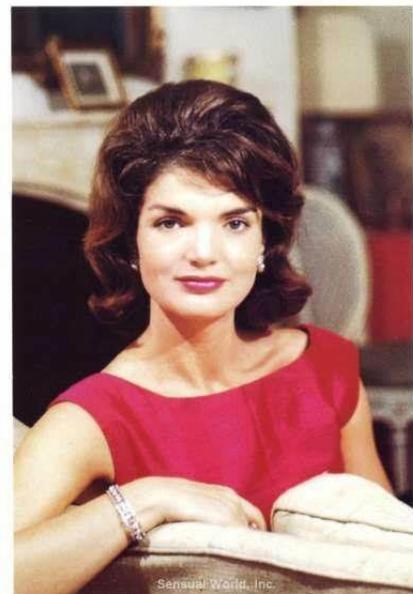
Jaqueline Kennedy's White House Hot Fruit Dessert

Ingredients:

1 orange
1 lemon
1/2 cup light brown sugar, packed
1/4teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 (8 3/4 ounce) can pineapple tidbits
1 (8 ounce) can apricots
1 (8 3/4 ounce) can peaches
1 (17 ounce) canpitted bing cherries
jarred prune (can be added, to taste)
16 ounces sour cream

Instructions:

Grate the rind of the lemon and orange and add to light brown sugar. Cut orange and lemon into very thin slices. Drain and combine fruits. Butter a 1-quart



casserole and arrange in layers of drained canned fruits, lemon and orange slices, sprinkled with light brown sugar; repeat. Bake at 350 for 30 minutes. Serve warm with a dollop of sour cream on top.



Mamie Eisenhower's Sugar Cookies

Makes 3 dozen cookies

Ingredients:

1 1/2 cups flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup butter (1 stick)
1 cup sugar
2 egg yolks, well-beaten
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 tablespoon cream
Sugar for dusting

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a small bowl, mix flour, baking powder and salt. In a large bowl, cream butter, adding sugar slowly. Mix until fluffy. Stir in well-beaten egg yolks and vanilla. Add sifted dry ingredients alternately with the cream. Chill cookie dough 1 hour. Roll out on a floured surface and cut in any desired shape. Sprinkle with sugar before baking. Place cookies on an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake 10-12 minutes.

From Mrs. Bush's Kitchen: Hot Chocolate

Ingredients:

6 T. Unsweetened cocoa
6 T. Sugar
Pinch of Salt
2 1/2 cup Milk
2 1/2 cup Light Cream
1/2 t. Vanilla (or more)
Pinch of Cinnamon Powder
(optional)
Whipped Cream
Orange Zest

Instructions:

Mix cocoa, salt, and sugar.



Add milk. Heat to dissolve.

Add light cream, cinnamon, vanilla. Heat to just under boiling.

Mix very well and pour into warm mug.

Top with whipped cream, cocoa powder, and fine orange zest.



Melania Trump's Apple Napoleons with Vanilla Ice Cream

Ingredients:

4 small apples peeled, cored, cut into wedges
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
5 tablespoons sugar
1 sheet frozen puff pastry (I just made a pie crust recipe)
2 tablespoons butter
Vanilla ice cream

Instructions:

Place pastry on a lightly-floured work surface.

Combine cinnamon and sugar in a small bowl. Sprinkle apples evenly with two tablespoons cinnamon mixture. Cut pastry into eight 3-inch squares and place on greased baking sheet. Chill in freezer for 15 minutes, until firm. Bake 30 minutes at 400 degrees, until lightly brown. Melt butter over medium-high heat until foam subsides. Add apples, cook about 7 minutes, stirring occasionally, until golden brown. Add remaining cinnamon mixture. Cook until apples are tender. Cool completely. Top with vanilla ice cream, then apples, repeat with another layer of each. Serve immediately.

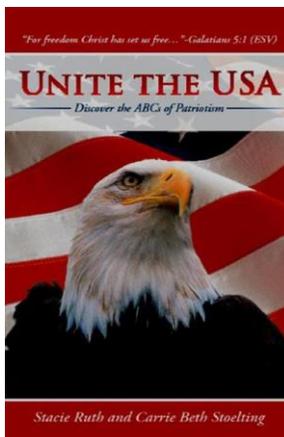
White House Tree History Christmas Tree Trivia



- In 1889, the tradition of placing an indoor decorated tree in the White House began on Christmas morning during the Presidency of Benjamin Harrison.
- In 1895, First Lady Frances Cleveland created a "technology savvy" tree when she hung electric lights on the White House tree (electricity was introduced into the White House in 1891).
- 1901-1909, Teddy Roosevelt banned the Christmas tree from the White House for environmental reasons.
- In 1923, President Calvin Coolidge started the National Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony now held every year on the White House lawn.
- In 1929, First Lady Lou Henry Hoover established the custom of decorating an official (and not just a personal) tree in the White House - a tradition that has remained with the First Ladies.
- In 1953, the Eisenhowers sought out Hallmark Cards to assist them in creating a presidential Christmas card - the beginning of the official White House Christmas card.
- In 1954, the annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony is named the Pageant of Peace. It is held each year in early December to light the National Christmas Tree and includes performances by popular entertainers before the lighting of the National Christmas Tree by the President. The National Christmas Tree remains lit through January 1.
- In 1961, First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy began the tradition of Christmas Tree themes when she decorated the Christmas tree in toy trimmings from the Nutcracker Suite ballet by Tchaikovsky.
- In 1963, the first Christmas card to include an explicitly religious element was the Kennedy card featuring a photo of a Nativity Scene set up in the East Room of the White House. Jack and Jacqueline had signed 30 cards before their final trip to Dallas. None was ever mailed. The National Christmas Tree that year was not lit until December 22nd because of a national 30-day period of mourning following President Kennedy's assassination.

- In 1969, the Pageant of Peace was embroiled in legal controversy over the use of religious symbols, and in 1973, the nativity scene that had always been part of the pageant was no longer allowed.
- In 1979, the National Christmas Tree was not lighted except for the top ornament. This was done in honor of the American hostages in Iran....
- In 1981, President Ronald Reagan authorized the first official White House ornament, copies of which were made available for purchase.
- In 1981, Barbara Bush took the first of twelve rides in a cherry-picker to hang the star at the top of the National Christmas Tree.
- In 1984, the Nativity Scene was allowed to return to the Pageant of Peace, and when the National Christmas Tree was lit on December 13th, temperatures were in the 70s, making it one of the warmest tree lightings in history.
- In 2001, the first White House Christmas card to contain a Scripture was chosen by Laura Bush. Quoting from Psalm 27, it said "Thy face, Lord, do I seek. I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the Land of the Living," which is what Laura Bush believed would happen after the tragedy of September 11. She chose that Scripture on September 16 (only 5 days after 9/11) based on a sermon the chaplain had preached at Camp David. The Bushes regularly used Scriptures on their Christmas cards.

Order Now



Unite the USA: Discover the ABCs of Patriotism is a new book by **Stacie Ruth and Carrie Beth Stoelting**. It's a book that empowers patriots to make a big difference in the land we love. With 100+ ways to make a positive difference in America, *Unite the USA* is a must-have tool for patriots. *Unite the USA* will inspire and educate Americans to defend faith and freedom. (Important Note: All proceeds go to fund the mission of UnitetheUSA.org.) [Order it here today!](#)

In God We Still Trust
 an inspiring album dedicated to God and veterans
 by Stacie and Carrie Stoelting



Per request from veterans who love patriotic and inspiring music sung by Stacie and Carrie, [In God We Still Trust](#) was recorded. From the National Anthem to "God Bless America" you will be inspired and uplifted about our God-given freedoms. All proceeds go to Unite the USA. Help promote faith and freedom in America. Your support is important and appreciated. [Buy or download a copy today.](#) God bless you as you celebrate the red, white, and blue!

In God We Still Trust Video

Our country needs to turn to Jesus. Listen to "In God We Still Trust" for inspiration to keep "fighting the good fight". For hope and encouragement, listen to Stacie Ruth and Carrie Beth sing "In God We Still Trust".



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