

December is also the month during which Christians around the world celebrates the birth of Jesus. It's the time when we celebrate with family, friends, and coworkers. Certain health benefits are associated with the joy that Christmas brings. Medical physicist Bryan Haddock suggests that the visualization of familiar holiday decorations triggers activation in the brain that can be comforting, such as seeing, smelling and feeling things that are associated with Christmas.

Cynthia Cerrato, a family therapist, finds the yearly celebration very calming. "Decorating is ritualistic, she says. "I intentionally create that ambience to have those pleasant joyful moments, at least for a few hours. Rituals are very soothing. Especially because we're in a pandemic, which has significantly altered the way that we interact."

She also suggests that "outside of decorating, there are other things individuals can do to de-stress during the holiday season. It's a good time to make

those phone calls and to connect with friends and family virtually. Making handmade holiday decorations can be a relaxing activity to help us escape from stress, at least for a little while. Decorating our homes . . . really does create an ambience of warmth; the act of creating is extremely healing and soothing."

What will be your story as you move forward with new commitments? Let's be determined to fix what needs to be fixed and to improve what needs improvement. Our outlook on health will determine our attitude toward our health.

\*Ellen G. White, *Healthful Living*, ch. 10, p. 47.

FOR FURTHER READINGS REFER TO:

Los Angeles Times. <https://www.latimes.com/lifestyle/story/2020-11-18/christmas-decorations-before-thanksgiving>.



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