

# AoH Holiday Homemaking 2021\_Ep3\_Sandi\_Jenn\_Karen S\_Hollie - ...

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

christmas, wrapping, year, gifts, stockings, holidays, people, traditions, tree, dressing, family, girls, recipe, ornaments, corn casserole, friends, kids, table, put, house

## SPEAKERS

Allison, Karen, Sandi Goforth, Hollie Carnahan, Jenn Darnold

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### A Allison 00:03

Merry Christmas, homemakers. Welcome to the Art of home podcast, holiday home making 2021 where we are exploring how homemakers cultivate a place to belong in a way that says Joy to the world. The Lord is calm. I'm your host Allison weeks. I'm a wife. I'm a mom of four grown kids. And I've been practicing the art of home for nearly 30 years. Christmas is supposed to be a time of joy and good cheer. Are you feeling the joy yet? Or are the cares of this world threatening to steal your joy? This is the third week of Advent, and we are focusing on the joy of the Lord. No matter what is happening in your life. This week. We encourage you to find your joy in the one who will never leave or forsake you. We have some very simple Advent devotions on our Instagram page each day. This week there is a truth about the joy of the Lord along with related scripture readings and a worship song or hymn. And you can access full playlist for each week of Advent on our page as well. We will link all of that in the show notes below. We have another great show for you today. Sandi Goforth walks us through a typical Christmas at her house to which she gives the title glorious pandemonium. Jenn Darnold discusses overnight sticky buns and Christmas Eve brother gifts. And you'll hear about themed stockings from Karen Sheppard. And the importance of under scheduling your December from Hollie Carnahan, all of that and so many more fun stories, Ideas and Recipes. Speaking of recipes, we have a special companion e-magazine for this Holiday Mini season featuring most of the recipes shared by our guests, as well as sweet photos of them from Christmases past. You can get your Free copy at the [artofhomepodcast.com/freegift](http://artofhomepodcast.com/freegift), or just click the link in the show notes. So whether you are addressing Christmas cards or making those adorable paper bag snowflakes all over the internet, we know you will enjoy these holiday stories of home. Okay, I am back here with my friend Sandi Goforth and we are going to talk about Christmas. Yay. Yes. All right, Sandi. So what does a typical Christmas day look like at your house?

### S Sandi Goforth 02:11

Well, because we've been married so many years and had so many Christmases, we're up to 45 Christmases, we have changed a lot because of children leaving the nest and all kinds of fiancés coming and grandchildren coming. It's just been a very much evolving thing. There are

nance's coming, and grandmothers coming. It's just been a very much evolving thing. There are a few constants. Usually in the morning, my husband will wake everybody up with some big Jingle Bells. And the jingle bells are the kind that honestly Oh fine, you know, the big sleigh bells, and everybody will get up and then they'll come and eat breakfast. And then whoever's in the house that year, will eat breakfast first. And then we'll do the stockings together because everybody wants to do their stockings together. And then we will do the presents after that. Breakfast usually consists of pastries, which is not a normal thing. But doughnuts, Danish, that type of thing. Some of the hearty eaters will say no, I think I want an egg. So we'll have some eggs. But it's simple. And then we do the presents. And then it's a very relaxed day until the onslaught is what everybody comes. And we have the big meal of Turkey. We'll put the turkey on right about nine in the morning. So it's done for later that afternoon. Then we'll just have the most incredible, wild, raucous evening that you can imagine.

A

Allison 03:54

Well do tell please. You've got to give us some more than that.

S

Sandi Goforth 03:57

Well, if there were if there were games, then people will divide up if there were games given. They'll play games in different parts of the house. And we have any anywhere from 12 on a very low year to 18-19. But the the main thing is, after the meal, we have music and performance music. Okay. So people are know that Christmas is coming. And it's going to be everybody's decision do they want to perform and what will they perform? Will they give a poem? Will they do something classical or something whimsical? The children recite poetry they've learned in school because a lot of them attend to classical school. So they will recite Shakespeare or something. And a lot of times the older girls who are my daughters are so talented. We'll grab a few of the older teenagers and they will sing in beautiful harmony. Nice. And it's always so wonderful.

A

Allison 05:03

Does anybody do like a play or a puppet show or anything like that? Or is it mostly music? Performance?

S

Sandi Goforth 05:10

It's kind of like age family in their own home puts it together. So it's generally either music or recitation or something, something they've written. I would love to see more of the puppet show type thing, but I think everybody is pretty busy. And they don't quite get that elaborate.

A

Allison 05:30

Yeah, I was just wondering, because I know you you like drama. And that's something that that you'd like to do. So I thought maybe that might be in there.

S

Sandi Goforth 05:39

Yes. But I get to really sit back and enjoy and I'm never performing.

A

Allison 05:45

You don't perform?

S

Sandi Goforth 05:46

No. Oh, not last. I'm exhausted from cooking. I'm just so happy to have them do it. Yeah. That's what we do. And then everybody kind of drops off to their homes or to bed.

A

Allison 06:04

So is there a special recipe that must be made every Christmas? Or, you know, everybody will be very upset if it doesn't show up on the table?

S

Sandi Goforth 06:15

Actually, no, I mean, there's a very basic Christmas recipe of Turkey. Somebody will make roasted vegetables we have mashed potatoes or sweet potato casserole with the marshmallows on top. It's pretty normal. Yeah, but we do the crackers, the Christmas crackers, and we all wear the hats. It's a rule that you wear the little hat that's in the Christmas cracker from Britain. Oh, okay.

A

Allison 06:42

So English Christmas, the English Christmas cracker. Okay, right.

S

Sandi Goforth 06:46

Because we are a British family.

A

Allison 06:47

I was gonna say we if you heard the episode that we did where we interviewed you we talked a lot about Ireland and in the UK and so that's very interesting. So everybody has to wear their the it's a little cracker you pull them apart apart and there's a little hat in there?



S

Sandi Goforth 07:10

right so everybody has a cracker but you cross your arms so that your crackers getting pulled and other person's is. So you can cross your arms to pull everybody has a cracker and then it's full of little toys, tiny little things and, and in there as a folded up hat made of tissue paper. And you put your tissue paper hat on

A

Allison 07:26

So I'm sure that make for some nice photo opportunities. Oh, yeah. With everybody with their tissue paper hats.

S

Sandi Goforth 07:32

Little crowns. They're like the crown that a king would wear?

A

Allison 07:35

Oh, that's really fun. Okay, so how about traditions? Do you have particular family traditions that you guys do during the holiday season? For some people that's going to a soup kitchen and serving some people? That's caroling? What is what is Is there something that your family

👤

07:55

Our family really enjoys reading the best Christmas Pageant Ever? And it's a book that can be read in around two hours, I think it can be read. It's the way that we get in touch with the Christ child. And what Christmas is really all about.

A

Allison 08:19

Cool. Is it a children's book?

S

Sandi Goforth 08:21

We're all crying by the end. They made a movie out of it. It's not a children's book. It's a family book.

A

Allison 08:30

And it's a short it's a novella like a little short story,

S

Sandi Goforth 08:34

Sandi Goforth 10:07

right? It's a little novella. I don't know that I would call it a children's book. It might be considered a young adult book. But it's definitely a family book. And the story is about the Herdmans who commandeered, wrecked the Christmas pageant at this little church. Because they found out that at church there was food. Oh, somebody told a little fib and said that you can steal because they were terrible, terrible bunch of kids and it is literally sidesplittingly funny how terrible they were. And they stole people's lunches at school. And one little boy whose mother directed the Christmas pageant, said it's okay you could have my lunch I get all the treat I want at Sunday school, because the Herdmans never went to Sunday school. Never. Well, that Sunday they came and from then on it was Who is Jesus? What are the wise men? What in the world was she doing riding a donkey nine months pregnant? And they they were the wise men. They were the shepherds and they demand To be Joseph and Mary. Oh, and it was the best Christmas Pageant Ever, because of the wonder of the discovery of what it's all about.

A

Allison 10:11

That's really cool.

S

Sandi Goforth 10:12

We tried to read that every year. That's great. Other than that, there's not very many traditions. It's wild and crazy. And simple.

A

Allison 10:22

Every every year is different. You never know what you're going to get. Right.

S

Sandi Goforth 10:26

Well, as far as there's always the basics. Yeah. There's always the basics.

A

Allison 10:32

So you read the story, which obviously helps keep your focus on the main thing. But it can be really hectic during the season leading up to the actual event of Christmas. So how do you sort of keep some margin in that time and keep yourself sane?

S

Sandi Goforth 10:49

I try to keep the gift giving simple. From year to year, it is different how stressed I feel. But I think that the holiday season, my main goal is to stay away from the stores as much as possible. And yet I'm not an online shopper either. So throughout the year, I gather a certain

closet in my house for gifts. I'll gather gifts all year long. And by Thanksgiving, I'm trying to figure out how I'm going to do this. I have so many children, so many grandchildren.

A Allison 11:29

Yes. How many? Let's remind our audience Okay, so

S Sandi Goforth 11:31

we have 14 grandchildren. 14. Yes, that is a lot, though. Okay. Chaos is really right on Christmas Day. And it's wonderful. I mentioned this to my daughter this morning, the one who sings so beautifully and gathers her sisters to sing in harmony with her. What she thought about my word using the word chaotic and glorious let's see what did she say it was warm and cozy and cuddly. As soon as the noise died down so she said it was let's see. I think we both thought glorious pandemonium.

A Allison 12:17

Glorious pandemonium there. I like that. Perfectly descriptive of Christmas morning.

S Sandi Goforth 12:23

Yeah, actually night because this morning is quiet.

A Allison 12:27

So you you do this on Christmas Eve or Christmas night?

S Sandi Goforth 12:30

Christmas morning wrapping unwrapping gifts is very, very quiet because it's whoever spent the night to Gotcha. Okay. And over the years it's it's not pandemonium in the morning. Oh my goodness, we just luxuriate over the eyes. Yeah, it is the when I call the onslaught. And that happens later in the day. Okay, three o'clock, four o'clock, it starts.

A Allison 12:54

And that's when you have your big meal.

S Sandi Goforth 12:55

And everybody brings their shows their gifts, and they had games, they crack out the games

and play them. And we have the meal. And then we have the concert. Okay, the program. So that's when the pandemonium is. And so I was telling Jessica, would you call it chaotic? And she said Not really. She's out. I think it's really quite orderly, albeit loud.

A Allison 13:19

Well, let me say anytime you get that many people in one place, it's going to be loud, loud.

S Sandi Goforth 13:23

Yeah. But then she said, It calms down after the music and the singing is all over and people kind of just cuddle up on the couch and they'll go get a snack or something.

A Allison 13:33

Yeah. That's great. Do you have any other thoughts about Christmas that you'd like to share?

S Sandi Goforth 13:40

Christmas is a stressful, delightful challenge that I am always mitigating with the Lord, how Lord, show me this year, how can I elevate you and bring down the stress? It's a growth. It's a growing ever great work and work in my life of walking with the Lord during the holidays. People have a tendency to focus on the gifts and what they're going to get and the whole wrapping and being fancy about wrapping and this doesn't fall into my wheelhouse of great giftings. You know, my gift is hospitality. And it's about the people. So I'm all about the people that wanting them to gather around, wanting to be together and not wanting to be burdened by all of the trappings of the holiday.

A Allison 14:38

Yeah, so

S Sandi Goforth 14:41

that's my best answer.

A Allison 14:43

Good answer. Well, thank you. Thank you for sharing with us about Christmas. Welcome. Merry Christmas.



S

Sandi Goforth 14:50

Merry Christmas.

A

Allison 14:53

Late lies the wintery sun a-bed, a frosty fiery sleepy head blinks, but an hour or two and then blood red orange sets again before the stars have left the skies at morning in the dark I rise and shivering in my nakedness by the cold candle bathe and dress close by the jolly fire. I sit to warm my frozen bones a bit, or with the reindeer sled, explore the colder countries round the door. When to go out. My nurse doth wrap me in my comforter and cap, the cold when burns my face and blows, it's frosty pepper up my nose. Black are my steps on silver sod. Thick blows my Frosty breath abroad, and tree and house and Hill and a lake or frosted like a wedding cake. Robert Louis Stevenson 1913. All right, I am back with my friend Jenn Darnold. And we're going to talk about Christmas. So tell me, what does a typical Christmas day look like at your house?

J

Jenn Darnold 15:52

We love Christmas. And in this season of life, Christmas is often just our little family of four because we've moved away from were extended family as in say we have some traditions the night before. We have a sticky bun recipe that we make that we got from a dear friend from our young married days and was passed down from her mom. And so we always may be certain sticky buns that rise overnight, like on the counter. They're so good. So we wake up we have theirs. We do the story of Christmas from Luke two. And then it's about the gifts no at that point. And the boys will do stockings and open gifts. And we'll have a simple lunch. Like usually it's kind of the same like ham and sides. And we might have had one of our pie making contest like to make dessert sometimes we'll have like a birthday cake for for Jesus. But we've enjoyed we've enjoyed those Christmases, just the four of us. Yeah, some some years we're traveling, and we'll be at the grandparents in their area. And so it'll look a little different. We want to have like our special traditions. But it's also fun to get to see family.

A

Allison 17:21

Absolutely. So is the sticky bond recipe like a guarded family secret?

J

Jenn Darnold 17:27

Well, I don't think so. It was passed down for my friend and I bet she would love

A

Allison 17:33

it. Share it. Okay, wonderful. Well, we will make sure that we get that up on the website so people can try their own hand and it's sticky button.





**J** Jenn Darnold 17:41

Yeah, it's really good. When our kids were younger, we definitely had other traditions. Sure we did reindeer food, we'd make reindeer food and scatter it on the yard or cookies for Santa and one tradition that's held even from the younger days is that we do brother gifts on Christmas Eve and so the boys will get to open their gift from their brother Oh at night and say there's been some special times that's a serious change their gifts.

**A** Allison 18:14

I love that. That is really sweet. And when you do your reindeer when you would do your reindeer food so it was like oats and did you put glitter

**J** Jenn Darnold 18:23

in your it was just oatmeal and glitter for young kid like that was magical. Actually make super fun to make and we also do like we have certain decorations that have we always use through the years and so I have a candle holder that supposed to symbolize like there's a little donkey thing goes along and say it's like a Christmas countdown Yeah, where you put another candle in the whole day. So the boys since they were younger, you know we have that out. We have an advent calendar that my one of my sister in law's made that's really special that always has its prominent place. And Sarah, we have some traditions through decoration.

**A** Allison 19:14

Do you have a particular thing that your family likes to do at Christmas? Do you go serve at a soup kitchen? Or do you go Christmas caroling or something like that that you guys do?

**J** Jenn Darnold 19:23

Yes, I think I think more of our traditions are just within our home. Probably I think usually that time of year they're they've had finals or they're right or off school and so they're they're kind of ready to rest. And we will do gingerbread houses and we just get the simple kits from the grocery store but we'll have some sort of contest. Yeah, putting that together. And we will do a lot of the decorating together like they enjoy seeing their cars missed ornaments from years past again, my mom always gifts them an ornament each year based on activities or interest for a year. And so they have great fun seeing those. And I don't collect anything, except for Christmas ornaments. And I, when we travel, oh, you know, we'll get an ornament for the place that we went. And so that's fun as we're decorating, to remember all the places, yeah,

**A** Allison 20:28

that's really that we've gone, that's really cool. We have a few of those two, holidays can be hectic, and crazy. And we can sort of lose our focus and all of that. So what are some of the things that you do to keep the main thing the main thing and keep your eyes fixed where they need to be? Yeah,

**J** Jenn Darnold 20:45

that's a really good thing to think about. And I think I had to learn over the years with that. And my personality wants to do doo doo and say yes to every invitation, right? How we could host this kind of party and host this thing. And so I had to really be back off and be intentional about what we said yes to you. And realize that I didn't want to look back at December where we really want our focus to be celebrating the birth of Jesus and not how many parties or how many events that we went to, and had to, to really put a lot of thought into what we would do or say yes to that year. And so we might accept one party invitation or go to one type of concert, but not try to go to three or four. There's just so many options of things to jump in and do. We had to kind of decide as a family, what we wanted to say yes to you. And as I started realizing that we didn't need to go go go that month, December has been a great like we love it, because we're not trying to do so much and just be here together and focusing and preparing our hearts for the celebration.

**A** Allison 22:07

Right? That's a good word. Anything else you'd like to share about Christmas?

**J** Jenn Darnold 22:12

I think I I think that again, for me what's worked is not trying to overdo at that time. And I love my friends who are gifted in decorating each room of the house differently, or you know, a tree for each room. Or each year, they have a theme for their wrapping and their bows. And I so admire that. But that stresses me out. And it takes away from me just being with my family. And so I kind of knew I can appreciate that in others. But I can't go there. And so our decorations we have one tree like we're kind of contained and my gift dropping is not going to look glamorous, either or Pinterest worthy. But again with boys, I'm not sure like they don't care. It'd be fine if it wasn't wrapped. So I had to learn that was a place I could give. Yeah, you know, iron is not trying to make that. So beautiful. But again, I love seeing my friends that do.

**A** Allison 23:17

Yeah, I'm one of those crazy people that has seven treats.

**J** Jenn Darnold 23:21

See, yeah, that would push me over the edge.

**A** Allison 23:24

Well, I always have to say, just because people look at me like I'm insane. They're not all big. There's one big one and the rest are kind of small. And I have a walk in attic space. So I don't take my trees apart every year and take all the lights off. I leave all the lights on I take the

take my trees apart every year and take all the lights off. I leave all the lights on I take the ornaments off. And each tree has its own box. But I just put like a big garbage bag over the tree with the lights still on it. And I can walk it right into the attic. And there's a special place for all of them. I would not do this. If I had to assemble and put lights on all of those trees every year that

**J** Jenn Darnold 23:58

would make a difference. Yes, it's a little easier a difference. Yeah. So maybe in another season of life, I will or not branch out or stick with our say, even even within our tree. Our tree is kind of like a scrapbook in that it has the boys ornaments or when they were little It has our trip ornaments. It has ones my mom's made. It's very meaningful to us. But I remember some friends along the way who had their very much like determined theme for their tree. They're like I'm not putting my kids craft on my tree. Because it messes up this beautiful theme and I thought, oh my goodness, like and so I'm sure people come see our tree. Yeah, they're like, Oh, it's just kind of thrown together. But again, for our family. That's what worked but I love seeing pictures of the trees that yeah, the years that are like, well cut off color coordination.

**A** Allison 24:54

I have to say that actually this whole obsession with all the trees grew out of a similar thing. Our big tree our main tree is like, it's like a scrapbook. It has all of the kids ornaments. My mom has always bought them Hallmark ornaments every year. Nice. So now I've been giving them to them as they've moved into their own places. But all this the popsicle stick ornaments that they made when they were three. And those are our favorites when we pull them out. And we see like this, because a lot of them have their preschool picture or whatever, you know, at that age, and they are hilarious. And so that tree is that and I always kind of wanted a tree to just be my tree. And so for many, many years, I had a little bitty tabletop tree with special mom only can touch these ornaments on them. That was my tree. So my all my multiple trees kind of grew out of that. But yeah, we also have a scrapbook tree for our main tree and I wouldn't do it any other way. I love

**J** Jenn Darnold 25:48

it. Yeah, it means it means a lot to me to

**A** Allison 25:52

Well, thank you for sharing your memories and your ideas and Merry Christmas share

**J** Jenn Darnold 25:56

Merry Christmas to you.



A

Allison 26:05

Alright, I am back with my friend Karen Sheppard, and we're going to talk about Christmas. So what does a typical Christmas day look like? In your home? It's either now or when your kids were still at home or both?

K

Karen 26:18

Okay. i It's hard to say typical, it's been pretty non typical. It seems like every year is different, especially now. But when it when when our kids were little we would just all kids would come down the stairs, you know, typical. We were up we'd stay up the night before putting everything together just like everybody else. And we would open presents and we taped we did cassette taping and we have all these cassette tapes and I was just listening to them the other day and they're so fun to listen to.

A

Allison 26:50

What do you mean you take we we taped

K

Karen 26:53

the cuz you know the voices everybody talking and opening their prayers. Instead of videoing? We didn't have video you would

A

Allison 27:01

do that recording? Yes. Of like the soundtrack of Christmas morning?

K

Karen 27:05

Yes. That's all we had. And so I play it every now and then. But it's really fun. But so that that's how it was then. But you know, in recent years, we've had our grandkids say, we all love music. And so music is usually a part of our Christmas every year. We we have one that plays cello. We have a piano we have french horn, we have guitar, we have flute. And so and then we have a lot of voices. And so we we sing and play Christmas songs and oh my goodness, it's just I I have to do it every year. It's me. I have to do it. Yes. Just I just enjoy it so much. I think everybody does. You know, they make it sound like oh, don't have to do that again. But I think humor daydreamer Nana on Christmas Day and Christmas Eve we do it on usually Christmas Day because Christmas Eve is Greg's birthday.

A

Allison 28:05

Oh yeah.

K

Karen 28:06

So we have a tradition where our kids that live close by they come over. If parents want to come then they can come to and we do pistolet we do our New Mexico thing we do pistolet and and tamales and and we just have a birthday for him because poor guy you know he never gets a birthday. That's hard. I mean, his birthday presents are usually wrapped in Christmas paper. But oh, well. Yeah. But But I will I want to tell you about year before last. Oh, wait, before I go there. I'll just say that we've we've tried different things on opening presence, because we don't, we don't want this crazy, wild day. Everybody's are opening their presence. And nobody's seeing what anybody's getting. And it's not that big a deal. And so we've tried different things. We sometimes we do stockings, we do themed stockings, and we play a game and we pass them around and then whoever gets you know, after a certain point, whoever gets that they

A

Allison 29:08

keep it so it's not the stocking with a person's name on it. No, it's like you have been assigned a theme. Yes. And you feel a star Yeah. According to that theme. Yes. Yes. And everybody so I like Pat like hot potato wars. Yeah, yeah. Okay.

K

Karen 29:23

Yeah. And so and it doesn't you know, whatever you get, that's what you keep are if you can find somebody to trade with. So then they have to see what other people have you know, I can older person may have like something with a yo yo or toy and toys in it. And you know, they want that and well

A

Allison 29:43

you have a question though. Do they have to? If they want a tray do they have to trade the whole stocking or just Yes. Okay, the whole stock and what kind of themes? Let's

K

Karen 29:53

see we've, we've had bathroom theme or we had like these bathroom books and different things like that. We had for men we've had, like, men shaving stuff and yeah made a lot of it's real practical. Women, we've had kitchen, little kitchen tools and things like that. For the girls, we've had like some jewelry and a little jewelry box or some, you know, just things

A

Allison 30:19

that do set like a price limit. You know, this is what you can say,

K

Karen 30:23

well, what we've done is Greg and I usually do we do we feel the stockings before they get here. Okay. And then yeah, we I kind of all year long. I look for

A

Allison 30:34

successes. Okay, I got it. Yeah, you and Greg, fill the stock? Yes. I was thinking like each person brings Well, no,

K

Karen 30:41

no, no, no, we feel the stockings and we we do it so that we know that there is something as for everybody. So that's a

A

Allison 30:51

really great idea. Yeah, I thought a lot. It's just something different. Yeah, she even could do it. In a like, maybe if you had a girls group or some Yeah. Or I don't know, your Sunday school or your neighborhood group that you could gather together instead of doing a white elephant, right.

K

Karen 31:07

And it's really fun. Because you play it you play a game when you're passing around. Yeah, you know, left, right, left, right. You know, all that stuff. And so, and it gets really confusing. And the older people are piling up, and

A

Allison 31:23

they're like, you're falling behind.

K

Karen 31:26

Anyway, it's fun. It's fun for everybody. But and then we, in some years, we a lot of years lately, we've let older people go first and opening their gifts, and go down to the youngest person. And that teaches the kids a little bit of waiting, and they have to be patient and gotta have something to teach them. Patience. You know, it seems like it's always the young people, they get to go first. Well, so we tried doing the old people. But there was one. There was one time year before last. That was really fun. And it may become a tradition often known. But we picked up our kids in Austin at the airport. And they had these big, big, huge guys, three of three big huge guys. And they eat a lot. And it was Christmas Day. And not only that it was the afternoon of Christmas Day. Nothing was open nothing even in the airport for eating. And the boys, they came down and they said we're reading noon. I said, there's nothing open. We have to go for two hours to get home and we don't have anything to eat. Well, what they didn't know was we

had planned this, this picnic to take to Johnson City and see all the beautiful lights there. And so we had like a tablecloth, we had candles, we had to coterie board, we had just you know, cute little dishes and all this stuff. And so we there was a table right out in front of the courthouse. And we just spread the table and all the food out. And it was so much fun. And then we walked around and looked at the lights and took pictures and then we came home and but the whole way there they thought they were gonna die. Because I usually have snacks for them. And I didn't have any snacks. And

A Allison 33:15

that's really great. Yeah, I love that idea. Yeah. Well, well, before we move on to the next we've kind of talked about traditions. What and you said y'all eat New Mexican food on Christmas Eve for Greg's birthday. What does your typical Christmas Day menu

K Karen 33:32

look like? Well, it's usually the traditional Yeah, turkey or ham. And,

A Allison 33:38

you know, do you dressing or do you do stuffing? We?

K Karen 33:40

We do dressing. Okay, yeah. And we do different kinds of dressing sometimes. But we always go back to our usual corn bread and bread dressing.

A Allison 33:50

And for those listening, if you don't know the distinction between dressing and stuffing stuffing would be you actually put it into the bird. And you cook it in the bird as the bird cooks. And then dressing which is very southern, is made in a separate pan, usually with drippings from that bird or a different bird or something. It's almost like Well, depends on who you are. But our dressing is. It's almost like you're making bread pudding. Yeah, exactly. It's a similar concept, but it saved

K Karen 34:17

lots of pies. And you know, that they just did the usual that way and of course, chives bread, or an orange jello salad. So yeah, I remember we were over living in Vienna that we would have people over for holidays and they would summer movie from different countries and they couldn't wait to come and experience an American holiday. And we would actually buy Turkey

because there was a commissary there and we can get a turkey and they would come with these huge expectations of seeing a whole turkey sitting in the middle of the table waiting to be carved. And we would have already carved it.

A

Allison 34:53

They probably have the Norman Rockwell picture exactly.

K

Karen 34:57

And they were so disappointed.

A

Allison 35:04

But what about keeping the holidays from being totally hectic and frantic? How did you What did you do to sort of?

K

Karen 35:12

Yeah, I say do things ahead of time. Do not wait till the last minute to do all your cooking.

A

Allison 35:20

Now, are you would you cook ahead and freeze thing?

K

Karen 35:23

Yes. Okay, yeah. Especially desserts, you know pies and things like that you you would we do we would do that and even cook the turkey the day before? Yeah, there's ways of keeping it moist and you know, good for the next day, right? You can get online and find those ways of doing that. But you just don't leave at all it for me it is total overload to think about getting up on Christmas morning, trying to be relaxed and have you know, everything done, which I never had everything done right. And so just getting things done ahead of time. Don't wait till the last minute to wrap presents and don't even wait to the last minute to by presents. You know what, throughout the year when you see something that you think somebody might like, get it? Yeah, you know, and

A

Allison 36:20

I agree with that. Oh, 100% Yeah, because if you think oh, I'll I'll get it later or I'll find something else later. Yeah, well, just get it done. Yeah. But then write it down or where you put it right where you put it. Here we go. We're back. We're back to the Griswold Christmas. Grace



wall does hide things in the attic and forgets about it and find some 10 years later. Yeah. So we don't want to do that.

**K** Karen 36:45

No, no. And that did happen to me one time years ago, I we bought this special doll for one of the girls and I put it up in the closet and totally forgot about it. But it was after Christmas sales and, and, and totally forgot about it. And a couple years later, I

**A** Allison 37:02

was gonna give this Christmas bonus that's funny. Was there anything else you want to share about holidays?,

**K** Karen 37:11

I just I love holidays. And I hear holidays are really interesting, because you never know what the weather's gonna be like, you might be in shorts and flip flops or you know, you might be bundled up. And so I love the time so we can be out on the back porch with the kids playing games. And that that one game we got that one Christmas that the thing that where you put in your mouth? Yeah, it's hard to talk and to give. Yeah, yeah. Oh, my goodness, we laughed so hard. And we never played that game again. I mean, that was it, you know, but it was it was worth the money. It

**A** Allison 37:48

was. Yeah, game playing is big in our house at Christmas time too. So

**K** Karen 37:53

well. And you know, caroling, too. We really enjoy. We one year we did caroling around with the neighbors, different neighbors and with our family, and they enjoyed listening to the kids saying and so I think just doing things for other people during that time. salutely

**A** Allison 38:12

Absolutely. Yeah. helps to kind of keep your focus on what we're actually celebrating.

**K** Karen 38:16

Exactly. Yes, yes. And it's hard. It's hard for us. You know, we grew up in a church situation where we didn't really celebrate Christmas as Christ's birth. Because I don't know why is that may not be his birth time. I don't know. I don't really understand why we didn't do that. But, but

And so, you know, we've had to learn to folk where the focus really needs to be. And, you know, thank goodness, we have Christmas Eve services and things like that. And I think that's really good, then.

A

Allison 38:52

Great. Well, thank you for sharing about your Christmas traditions and memories fun. When it comes to holiday gift giving many people struggle with the wrapping. Some common pitfalls are waiting until the last minute, not having enough of the right supplies on hand and not having a designated place to wrap. According to a survey conducted by Scotch brand tapes, more than 1/4 of Americans said wrapping presence puts them more in the holiday spirit than shopping does. But nothing will turn us from a jolly elf into the Grinch. Like the frustration of running out of tape, odd shaped gifts, refusing to cooperate with wrapping paper, or a case of the missing scissors. While I cannot force you to wrap your gifts early, I can give you a few pointers to help curb your frustration and maybe retain some of your holiday cheer. Many years ago I decided I was done wrapping Christmas presents on the floor. Possibly because it was getting so much harder to get up off of the floor. Anyway, I carved out a little corner in our bedroom and I set up a card table, gathered up all of my holiday gift wrapping supplies and made a gift wrapping station, I stocked my little Christmas wrapping station with plenty of paper, gift bags, Tissue Tape, a couple of pair of scissors, Sharpies, pins, gift tags, and lots of ribbon. As my kids got older and started buying little gifts for friends and family, our gift wrap station moved out of our bedroom into a more public part of the house. So over the years, it's moved around to different places in the house. But we've always had a table setup. And we include all the supplies, we put a tub each for garbage and for recycling, because there's a lot of paper that gets wasted there, as well as some random small to medium empty shipping boxes, we just store them underneath the table. And if you get those boxes from Amazon rather than throw the boxes away, just put them under the table stacked one inside the other. And that way when you need a box for something that didn't come in a box, you have one available. If your station will be open to public view, you can certainly pretty it up by adding a festive tablecloth, just make sure it covers the supplies that are stored underneath the table. And you can keep all of those odds and ends and pins and name tags and supplies tidy, as well as pretty by organizing them into baskets that you already have in your house. Another culprit that might steal our gift giving joy is shopping for those hard to buy for people. Whether it's because they already have everything. They're picky, or you're just playing out of ideas, shopping for them can quickly become a dreaded chore. So I have a suggestion for unique gifts that also support your local economy. What is your town or your state or your province famous for? Are there unique products being made in your area where I live in the Texas Hill Country, we have wineries, peach orchards, beekeepers, lavender farms, smokehouses, leather workers, and olive groves. And gosh, a lot more. But that's just to name a few all within, I'd say a 50 mile radius of my house. And most of these, if not all of these family owned and operated businesses have gift shops. Ideally, if I'm planning ahead, I'll visit them during the year and I'll make purchases to assemble my own gift baskets. But that doesn't always happen, I will usually visit their website and just see what they have on offer. Often they'll already have a gift basket option that I can just order and ship directly to the recipient. Sometimes if I don't like what's in the gift basket, and it's a small enough operation, I'll just call them and I'll say, Hey, this is what I'd like to put together into a basket. Can you do that for me. And usually they're happy to do that. Now I know that you're going to pay a bit more to order these special baskets and have them shipped directly from the business. But sometimes, you know, you got to look at the value of time over money. And that might be a good option for you. If it's not and you're working on a really tight budget, I just would recommend planning ahead so that you have time to go and visit those

businesses. Purchase what you want, package it and ship it out yourself. Now I know we're getting closer to Christmas. So this might not be an option for you at this point. But if you're looking at giving gifts to people that you're going to hand deliver, maybe you could still do this is a great gift for anyone but especially for those long distance friends and family who you're not going to get to see at Christmas time. It's just a really sweet way to say we wish you were here with us. And so here's a little taste of our town and here's a little holiday cheer from our hometown to you. So I hope you found something useful in these tips that perhaps will help restore some of the joy of giving after all, the Lord loves a cheerful giver. So Holly, what does a typical Christmas day look like in your home?

H

Hollie Carnahan 43:48

Well for us, because we live away from our parents, because we live in San Antonio and our parents live in North Texas, Dallas and actually East Texas. So for us somehow we have continued to go visit our family just about every single year for Christmas. We've just kept that going. And so our girls have grown up usually spending the night at either Nene and grandpa's house or Nan on Paul's house because we will sometimes take turns you know on that. So we are often out of town and that my husband wherever we are, you know when we wake up in the morning he will read the Christmas story so something you know a scripture out of the Bible, the Christmas story and then so we do you know gifts and all that but something our little family of four has done for so so long, is because we know we're traveling so we're with extended family but on Christmas night we will often most every year we would go the movies, so we would just the four of us would get away and all Go see something at the movie theater. Yeah. So we've seen, you know, I don't know what all they've been I can't remember. I mean,

A

Allison 45:06

a lot of that they use that. That's a big blockbuster time is to release something on Christmas day. Yeah,

H

Hollie Carnahan 45:11

that's, that's when we go. Okay. And so, yeah, that's kind of some traditions that we've had. For a typical day Christmas, a

A

Allison 45:21

typical Christmas Day. So you're usually not in your own home on Christmas Day. What about food you're in, you're in your parents or his parents home? What kind of food are you guys eating?

H

Hollie Carnahan 45:30

Yeah. So we usually start out I'd say for the last like, maybe seven or eight years, we've kind of gotten into a rhythm where we spend Christmas Eve, at my husband's family. And then we drive late that night to it was my mom and dad, but my mom passed away. So we drive late at

drive late that night to it was my mom and dad, but my mom passed away. So we drove late at night to my dad's house on Christmas Eve. And then we spend the day at my dad's house. So I say all that to say it at my husband's house on Christmas Eve, it's usually something like we'll do Italian food. So we'll do you know lasagna and garlic, bread salad, things like that. And then that'll be maybe one year but then the next year with his family will do like Mexican food enchiladas, tamales. And so we try to alternate a little bit and not have Mexican food every single day. And then, on Christmas day, we are usually at my dad's house. And we do it usually a traditional like we'll do. We'll do sometimes Turkey and But oftentimes, we'll do a ham. On Christmas day, I'd say the turkeys mostly on Thanksgiving. But yeah, we'll do a ham and then I'll usually make the dressing or stuffing, whatever you want to call it. That I learned from my grandmother. So it's a recipe that was taught to me in my head. And I remember when one of my cousins asked me for it, I literally had to sit down and write things down because my grandmother is gone now and I was thinking well, I usually just throw it together I make it so I make the dressing and then so I have a ham and dressing and then I'll sometimes do like a sweet potato casserole and my brother and sister in law will you know bring like macaroni and cheese and my brother makes really really well my sister in law they make really great desserts. So okay, like the con prevailing cheese K or soak up a cheese cake and you know, wow, so we have you know, really yummy desserts as well. Okay, so but I don't make it all because I'm traveling, remember so it's a little bit more difficult to make a lot of food when you actually weren't even there for those days before. Exactly. Exactly.

A

Allison 47:41

So the dressing recipe is a must. Are there any other must have recipes at Christmas? It not necessarily okay mistake but Christmas season

H

Hollie Carnahan 47:49

corn casserole. My girls are always asking for my corn casserole. Well, it's actually Paula Dean's corn casserole. Okay, yes. So you can find that on Pinterest or wherever. I have a cookbook of I used to be a major Food Network watcher. I would nurse my kids and watch Food Network I learned I think I learned a lot of I did two of my cooking aside from the stuff I learned from my dad and my grandmother when I was very young, but like branching out more it was from Food Network. Oh, absolutely. And then the love of baking I got from buddy on. Oh cake. Is that the Cake Cake Boss? Yeah. Carlo's Bakery. So um, corn cassava corn casserole is polythene. And then my girls also love deviled eggs. So we'll do like deviled eggs. Mm hmm. Cool.

A

Allison 48:40

Are you like a traditional deviled egg recipe person? Or do you get fancy with it and add weird stuff to it?

H

Hollie Carnahan 48:44

I think I'm probably traditional I because I just use like mayo and mustard and like, a little bit of relish. But I prefer dill, like, oh, I don't I don't like the sweet. So we'll use the dill relish. But that's just the way that we like it. And then paprika on top. Salt and pepper in there. Yeah.

A

Allison 49:04

Nice. Well, now would you be willing to share this dressing recipe now that you have it written down? Or is this a family secret?

H

Hollie Carnahan 49:10

Um, I guess I could share it.

A

Allison 49:13

Check with your family.

H

Hollie Carnahan 49:14

I better check

A

Allison 49:15

Because we don't want to be releasing any secrets. So if it's released, ladies and gentlemen, we will have it on the website. Otherwise, we'll give you some links to Paula Deen's corn casserole, and we'll put up a deviled egg recipe. Right. Okay, now, what about specific holiday traditions that you might do? You know?

H

Hollie Carnahan 49:37

Okay, so for holiday traditions, something that we definitely did when the girls were young is an Advent candle reading time, and we would do that usually on Sunday evenings at home. And so I have the four different candles with the appropriate colors and I had a book and then we would just read through that week's you know, reading. So that was definitely a tradition that we would do leading up to Christmas Day. And we also read these books to our girls Jonathan's journey is what it is called. And so it was a really good story. It really keeps the kids you know, interested in the whole journey, before, you know, what we know as Christmas Day. And so Jonathan's journey, if you have young kids check into those books, there's more than one, there's several. Okay, so those are really good. And then a big tradition for us even to this day, and I don't think it's ever going to stop is my girls love, I kind of go really crazy with stocking stuffers. So everybody, like my girls and my son in law, that's where I just, I just love to give good stocking stuffers, because we have, we've always had a pretty set limit for the girls for Christmas. We just didn't want Christmas to be all about having like 36 presents under the tree for a kid or whatever. So, you know, we would they would get maybe a couple of large things, you know, for Christmas or special things. And but with stockings, I can just do whatever, you know. But what are all kinds of neat things in there? Well, they have come to love the stocking stuffers, and sometimes it doesn't all fit in the stocking. It's laying all out on the table

A

Allison 51:25

and forget about hanging the stocking back. Oh, no,

H

Hollie Carnahan 51:27

no, we don't, ain't no, it can't, once it lays down. And, um, but I just like to listen and learn, you know, all through the year, different things that they're into, or what they like, and so my husband, you know, he'll praise me on Christmas morning, because he'll, he'll just be like, your mom knows that. Or she, she just pays attention all year long, you know, and so just trying to see what they're what they're into. And then just putting a lot of like necessities in there and toiletries Bath and Bodyworks or for my son in law, like, you know, nice shaving gel and things like that. Yeah,

A

Allison 52:01

yeah, great.

H

Hollie Carnahan 52:02

Well, they love it. It's big deal.

A

Allison 52:07

Holidays can be crazy. They can be hectic, how do you maintain balance in the holidays and keep the main thing, the main thing?

H

Hollie Carnahan 52:17

For this, I would say definitely under schedule. And when I say that, like trying every year not to schedule too much, just trying to that be the month out of the whole year, that we under schedule. Yeah. Because it can get crazy, it can get busy. And just be really selective on the things that you commit to in the month of December. And I think that that, that helps. And then as far as you know, balance, and and all of that. I just think about keeping you know, keeping the priority where it should be and teaching your kids what the true meaning of Christmas is. So you don't get caught up so much in the busyness of everything. Yeah. And then one more thing that I'm going to I'm going to go back a little bit to kind of the kick off for us is Thanksgiving, and something that that I loved to do when my girls were young. It's I'm laughing because after a few years of this, they were so tired of it. But it was it was just really good. And I learned so much the first few times, the first few years, but Dennis and Barbara Rainey have this CD out about Thanksgiving, and the whole, you know, Mayflower and the travel and all that the Pilgrims went through. And so usually, every year, we're traveling also, on Thanksgiving to go see our family. We're just the traveling family. So I, she it's a two CD pack. One of them is

just beautiful instrumental music for Thanksgiving, and I just love it. And then the other CD, we actually don't do CDs much these days. So, but anyway, that's a side note. But then the other CD, it's the whole story. And it's like a elevated, more mature version of the Charlie Brown Thanksgiving. And it gives, you know, just so much information and it makes you really value. What we're thankful for and all that they did go through and the illnesses and the deaths and all that. So, you know, every year I was okay, we're going to listen to the Thanksgiving story. And the first few years I mean, everything was fine. And then I learned after a while, I don't know remember which year but they were all like Mom, do we have to listen to it again.

A

Allison 54:54

We can recite it for you. Yeah.

H

Hollie Carnahan 54:55

But now it's kind of it's just a funny thing, but I'm so glad that that They know it like, you know, we, we spent a few years and they would hear it every year. And so I just wanted to mention that so we kick off the whole holiday season about being thankful. That's really great. Yeah.

A

Allison 55:12

Thanks for sharing that resource. We'll make sure we link to all the resources that we mentioned in this conversation. Well, thanks for visiting with us and talking to us about Christmas. Merry Christmas.

H

Hollie Carnahan 55:22

Merry Christmas to you too. Thanks for having me.

A

Allison 55:24

That is all for episode three of holiday homemaking 2021 We hope you found some little bit of inspiration from these sweet homemakers Christmas memories, tips and reflections. If you heard a recipe in this episode you would like to try make sure you get your free copy of the companion a magazine, which contains most of the recipes that our friends have shared over these episodes. Just click the link in the show notes or go to the art of home podcast.com/free gift. Thank you so much for listening. We will be back next Wednesday with our fourth and final episode of The Art of home holiday home making 2021 Until then, keep practicing your art of making a home for the holidays.