



# Central Connection

The Salvation Army / USA Central Territory  
News and Views from the Midwest

"We are all one body, we have the same Spirit, and we have all been called to the same glorious future." Eph. 4:3,4 (NLT)

Volume 49, Number 12

December 2019

## The Hallmark of a blessed Christmas

Hallmark ornaments hang on millions of Christmas trees across the country and around the world. However, each holiday season, the "elves" at Hallmark make a bigger impact by the gifts that land under the tree for hundreds of children through the Kansas and Western Missouri (KWM) Division's Prison Toy Lift Ministry.

With an assembly line process that would be the envy of any factory, 500 Hallmark employees have donated

their time for the last 10 years wrapping gifts destined for the children of incarcerated parents.

The process starts long before the workers ever set eyes on the toys and wrapping paper. The Salvation Army and a Hallmark employee committee meet in June to select gifts to create the Prison Toy Lift catalog. The catalogs are taken to correctional facilities in July and August. After inmates select their gifts, The Salvation Army orders the items and has them shipped to Hallmark Corporation. Pallets of dolls, dinosaurs, games and other toys are delivered to Hallmark's corporate office in Kansas City, Mo., shortly before Thanksgiving. Hallmark then provides the manpower and giftwrap for a massive round of "giving back" on Giving Tuesday.

Hallmark also provides a household gift, beautiful gift wrap, shiny bows, a signed greeting card, and the boxes to ship each family's gifts together.

UPS sets up stations so Salvation Army staff can use scanners to create labels. Then the boxes are palletized and shrink wrapped. Labels do not indicate that the gifts are from Hallmark or The Salvation Army so the children feel like the gift is coming from their parents.

"The Salvation Army Toy Lift program has been a highly rewarding and popular volunteer event that Hallmarkers love and look forward to each year," said Gladys Brown of Hallmark. "Our employees are able to show up, spend an hour wrapping or packing gifts and have the satisfac-



tion of knowing that they are helping to make the holidays a little brighter for lots of children. Hallmark's vision is to be the company that creates a more emotionally connected world by making a genuine difference in every life, every day."

"We couldn't do the toy lift program without the wonderful people at and the support of Hallmark," said Major Darlene Harvey, who leads KWM with her husband, Major David Harvey. "By their caring and loving touches, they make a difference in this program in a way that only Hallmark can."

The partnership with Hallmark symbolizes two great organizations coming together to make Christmas brighter for those who are incarcerated as well as children who are separated from their parents.

"We want every child to feel like their parent loves them and is thinking of them during this most special season," indicated Major Darlene. "It is also important that inmates know they aren't forgotten and that The Salvation Army cares for them."



## Good News needs to be shared

When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child (Luke 2:17, NIV)

by General Brian Peddle

When you experience something good you just can't help talking about it. That may be a memorable meal, a good book, an enjoyable film, stirring music, dramatic theater or beautiful countryside. Whatever the experience, it leaves such an impression on us that we want to share it with others. We *have* to share it! Good news needs to be shared.

These days, when people discover they are expecting a baby, many find creative ways to share the news; some hold parties to reveal the gender of the unborn baby; some have parties and—when the child is finally born—they announce it loud and clear.

Jesus' birth was announced through a new, bright star that appeared in the sky. An angelic choir burst into song to communicate the great news.

Unsuspecting shepherds were looking after their sheep, like any other night, when the sky lit up and they heard the most astonishing news in a most spectacular way. An angel



appeared to personally deliver a message to the shepherds (Luke 2:9-12). This was a *detailed* message—the angel clearly described who Jesus was (v 11) and how they would find him (v 12). So the shepherds journeyed to the manger and found Jesus "just as they had been told" (v 20).

Such was the impact of their experience on the hillside and in the stable, they just had to tell other people about it. The news was so joyous and tremendous that they couldn't keep it to themselves. The news about Jesus brought light into the darkness of a shattered world. Like the shepherds, we need to realize that this good news is not just ours—it needs to be shared.

In my message to Salvationists and friends, employees and supporters this Christmas, I'm calling us to have a



renewed confidence in the gospel. John the Baptist preached a message of repentance and prepared the way for Jesus. God sent his one and only Son into this world to save it. Jesus then sent out his disciples to preach the good news, perform miracles and make disciples. At Pentecost the Holy Spirit enabled the disciples to share the gospel in a myriad of languages and empowered the Early Church to spread the story of the Saviour to new lands and new people.

The apostle Paul declared: "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16, NIV). We are a *Salvation Army*—the gospel is the saving message we preach in words

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## The best Christmas gift

by Colonel Janice Howard  
Territorial Secretary for Leader Development

The list of names and budget had been charted for months. There were a few specific gifts in the next column, but most of that column was empty. What gifts could be purchased? One person didn't have any special interests, another hadn't used any of the gifts I'd given over the last few years. Who would know what to buy?

Then it occurred to me to go a different direction. Using the list, I began to create personalized gift cards. Person A would get a tea and conversation at a local coffee/bakery shop; person B would receive free babysitting for six hours. I'd help person C with painting their dining room, and I'd cook dinner at my house for per-

son D. Surely Person E would be happy to receive assistance with next year's Trunk or Treat outreach.

Yes, that's it. Gifts from my heart to strengthen relationships would be on this year's Christmas list. It reminds me of one of my favorite songs, "The best gift" written by Lan O'Kun and recorded by Barbara Streisand:

*The best gift  
That I ever got  
Didn't really weigh a lot  
It didn't have a ribbon 'round  
And it sometimes made the terrible  
sound  
The best of all it seems to me*



*It wasn't 'neath the Christmas tree  
And yet, I guess I'd have to say  
That it made all the other presents  
twice as gay  
The best gift that I've ever known  
I'd always wanted most to own*

*Yet in my dreams of sugar and spice  
I never thought it could be so nice  
The best gift that I ever get  
Was sometimes dry and sometimes  
wet*

*Was usually pink but oftentimes  
red  
As it lay so innocently in its bed  
The best gift of the year to me  
The one I hold most dear to me  
A gift that simply drove me wild  
Was a tiny new born child...*

© BJS MUSIC CORP

Yes, the best gift ever given to me, you and humankind was a tiny newborn child named Jesus. Jesus, divine and human, is a gift from the heart of God that provides salvation for each person in the world who receives Him. "God gives us the free gift of life forever in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23b, ICB)

## A donkey makes a difference

"If you just ring the bell once, you'll be hooked on it," said Denny Kay, who along with his wife Yvonne volunteers to ring bells at kettles for the Pittsburg, Kan., Corps.

To the delight of shoppers, they bring along Jack the Bible Donkey, a miniature donkey who loves to show off his tricks and doesn't mind a friendly pat or a child sitting on his back.

"People love taking photos with him and put generous donations in the kettle," said Yvonne. "It's really a lot of fun."

Jack the Bible Donkey makes regular visits to nursing homes, vacation Bible schools and churches to help share the message of salvation. The Kays also use their platform to encourage others to donate their time and resources to The Salvation Army through collecting change in a little box and putting the money into a kettle or by volunteering to ring the bell.



"It's a real blessing to me," said Lt. Mylie Hadden, corps officer. "We're able to run our kettle campaign almost entirely on volunteer power thanks to people like the Kays."



Photo by Stephanie Potter, The Morning Sun

The Kays' soft spot for The Salvation Army is the result of their own positive experiences. For Denny, it started with a care package he received while serving in Vietnam. For Yvonne, a fondness her father, a World War II veteran, held for The Salvation Army was passed on to her.

"My dad always encouraged me to support The Salvation Army," she said. "When I got my first job, I cashed part of my check for silver dollars and put one in every kettle I passed. Now it's paper dollars, but I still never pass a kettle without putting one in."

## A ministry of presence



by Michelle DeRusha

"Our people are hurting right now," said Dayla Picotte, a member of the Yankton Sioux Tribe (also known as the Ihanktonwan). Severe flooding in the spring, compounded by storms and more flooding in the fall, resulted in dire conditions in the reservation town of Lake Andes which borders a lake by the same name.

"Homes are underwater, foundations have crumbled, and there's only one accessible road in and out of the reservation. There's mud and mold everywhere, and mushrooms are literally growing out of damp walls," said A/Captain Debbi Middendorp, Mitchell, S.D., corps officer with her husband, Bill. "Most of the kids we've seen on the reservation are barefoot because they are trying to keep their one pair of shoes clean for school, and many are being bullied by classmates because their clothes smell like mold."

According to A/Captain Debbi, a history of negative experiences and lack of assistance from the government and other agencies have left tribal leaders suspicious of outside intervention and promises of help. The Middendorps, who were appointed to Mitchell in July, are working to build trust with the Ihanktonwan. They drove a two-hour circuitous route from the corps to the reservation, detouring around closed roads and highways, to deliver hot meals to those impacted by the flooding. They

also brought soap, detergent, shampoo, cots, blankets and pillows for the shelter that has been set up in the community center.

"We want to do this right," said A/Captain Bill. "The people here feel overlooked and ignored. There's a long history of disappointment and frustration." In addition to providing food and flood-relief supplies, the officers helped residents with sandbagging to protect homes and property from encroaching water and entertained children while their parents were busy with clean-up efforts.

Officers from Rapid City, Huron and Western Divisional Headquarters in Omaha traveled to Mitchell to assist with flood-relief efforts. In addition to serving 125 meals a day on the reservation, they also helped residents impacted by flooding in the towns of Mitchell, Mount Vernon, Spencer and Paulson, as well as members of the Hutterite colony near Mitchell. During the first week of disaster relief, officers, staff and volunteers served more than 1,200 meals and 2,500 drinks and distributed 330 flood clean-up kits.

Although the 14-hour days were exhausting, A/Captains Bill and Debbi are grateful for a silver lining. "Without the flood, we would not have gotten to know any of the Ihanktonwan people," said Captain Debbi. "It's a ministry of presence. We're glad to be able to be there."

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## Christmas blessings in unlikely places

by William Himes

Nearly every December over the past four decades I've been part of one of The Salvation Army groups that visits Cook County Jail, a massive institution in Chicago housing as many as 10,000 inmates—a population larger than some towns.

We visit Division 11, three stories with four cell blocks on each floor, which means we'll share Christmas songs and carols, a scripture reading and devotional thought, then distribute bags of candy and copies of the Christmas *War Cry* 12 times that day.

Year after year this repetitive experience makes me think of the movie classic, "Groundhog Day" where the main character finds himself living the same day over and over again. Perhaps not as entertaining, our experience is far more inspiring as the same thing seems to happen year after year in every cell block or "pod."

As we enter, our brass ensemble forms near to 30 to 40 inmates typically seated at stainless steel tables and benches bolted to the floor. While men play cards, draw, read or converse at a bank of pay phones, a television 10 feet up on a wall noisily blares a daytime talk show.



## Vikings team up with Pathway for happy Christmas

For the third year in a row, Minnesota Vikings wide receiver Adam Thielen and his wife, Caitlin, are hosting a Christmas party for Twin Cities-area Pathway of Hope (POH) families.

"We really wanted to reach out to some families at Christmastime," Adam said. "It's so rewarding to see the smiles on the kids' faces."

The party includes the opportunity to watch the Vikings practice followed by a holiday meal with the Thielens, then piles of beautifully wrapped Christmas presents for each family to open. Along with toys and clothes for the children, parents receive household essentials and grocery gift cards. Throughout the day, each family spends time interacting with Adam and Caitlin, who listen to their stories and encourage them to keep reaching for their goals.

Adam Thielen isn't the only Vikings player to support POH. For instance, last year the team hosted Shavonne and her three children for a day at the TCO Performance Center in Eagan, Minn., where they watched the team practice, enjoyed a tour of the facility and met with several players who signed autographs and gave the family Vikings jerseys



Photos by Craig Dirkes

and tickets to a game. After a year of working diligently to meet her POH goals and successfully accomplishing them, Shavonne was overwhelmed by the surprise.

"The family was blown away by this special opportunity," said POH case manager Tracy Privratsky. "Shavonne is thankful to the Vikings and The Salvation Army for recognizing how hard she and her kids have worked."



Vikings player Adam Thielen and Captain Bersabe Vera-Hernandez, Northern divisional secretary, talk with a mother.

We are an intrusion, even an annoyance. Our brass ensemble opens with a jolly tune such as "Jingle Bells" or "Deck the Halls." It's a study in a collision of cultures.

But then something amazing happens—every time.

The men realize our purpose is to bring them a little bit of Christmas. That understanding evolves into appreciation as an inmate gets a broomstick and shuts off the TV. We play a couple of song requests.

Then a member of our group announces, "Gentlemen, please listen as I read a bit of the Christmas story from the Bible in Luke chapter 2." Regardless of religious affiliation, a respectful silence falls on the room, even phone conversations tail off. Following a brief prayer, everyone joins in singing "Silent Night."

At this point an incredible thing happens—every time.

The cell block becomes a scene as spiritual and holy as any Christmas Eve service I've attended. Even hardened gang members are touched to the point of tears singing this unlikely, culturally irrelevant old German carol. God's incarnation is experienced afresh.

As the carol concludes with the final "sleep in heavenly peace," our group infiltrates the entire pod, we shake hands, even with those confined behind cell doors, and look every inmate in the eye, wishing them God's blessing and a merry Christmas.

It might not be movie material, but it's well worth the experience again and again.

Photo by Carol Shoultis

## Maxwells appointed to Eastern Territory

Lt. Colonels Philip and Deslea Maxwell, currently serving respectively as Secretary for Program and Assistant Program Secretary, have been appointed Chief Secretary and Territorial Secretary for Women's Ministries in the USA Eastern Territory. Effective February 1, they will assume their new appointments with the rank of Colonel.

Australian officers, the Maxwells have served in the Central Territory since November 2016 when they became leaders of the Kansas and Western Missouri Division.

In the Central Territory, the Maxwells took Ephesians 3:20-21 as verses for their ministry: "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen." They commented they have come to realize, "the verse

was more for us than for those who we have come to minister with."

"It is difficult for us to leave as we have felt so accepted and supported throughout our time in the territory," said Colonel Philip. "Yet, we are excited to see what God has in store for the future."



# Come to Bethlehem brings

*Approaching 25 years, Norridge outreach event shares the hope of Christmas*

by Anne Urban

**K**athy Gonzalez's first exposure to The Salvation Army came two decades ago when she brought her granddaughter to see Come to Bethlehem at the Norridge Citadel, Ill., Corps, a suburb bordering northwest Chicago. Amazed by the live-action retelling of the nativity story—from prophecies of Jesus' birth to the hope available through the resurrected Christ still today—Kathy began attending the corps and has been part this production ever since.



One year while she manned the prayer tent in the bustling Bethlehem marketplace, a couple entered to ask for prayer. "They'd been trying to have a baby," said Kathy, who after praying



offered the couple the opportunity to fill out a prayer request card so others in the corps could pray for them.

"A year later, the couple came back with their new baby boy to thank us! What a surprise and joy it was," Kathy continued. "People are hurting



out there and need to know there's a loving God who cares so much for them."

Since the production began almost 25 years ago, Come to Bethlehem has been visited by more than 30,000 people. The looks of wonder on guests' faces and their responses to the gospel message motivates corps members to continue this ministry, which features more than 100 costumed actors, musicians, dramatic scenery and lighting, plus live camels, sheep and a donkey.

Offering three performances on an early December weekend, the free event has become so popular reservations are required to ensure seating for the concert, which features members of the Norridge Citadel Band and Songsters interspersed with short dramas and videos followed by an inspiring message and invitation to accept Jesus

from the corps officers, currently Captains Michael and Kristina Sjogren.

Since the event's inception, Peggy Thomas has been the driving force behind the musical con-



tent and evangelistic emphasis of the concert. Utilizing gospel art techniques, Peggy keeps the concerts fresh and meaningful. But the grand finale has remained the same due to popular demand. To the majestic strains of "King of

kings, Lord of lords" (an excerpt from Kirkland's *God with us*), Mary enters the chapel carrying Baby Jesus, trailed by Joseph with the donkey, then a stately parade of magi with their gifts for the Christ-child.

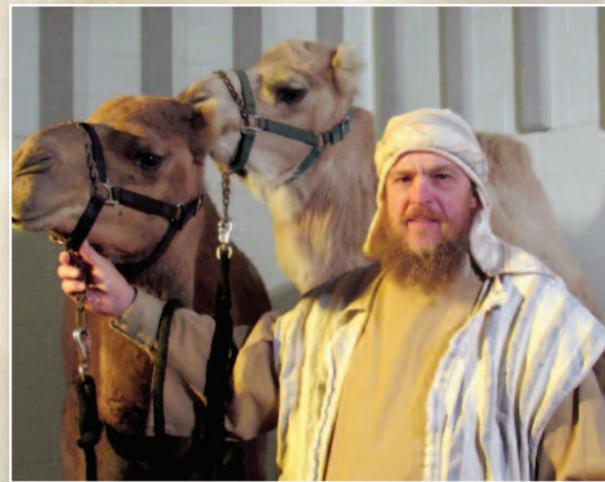
"Three aspects of Come to Bethlehem stand out to me," said Captain Mike. "First is the number of entire families who come, which I find beautiful and inspirational. Second is the fairly equal percentage of families attending it as their tradition and those attending it for the first time. And, third is the true blessing of seeing our congregation coming together with a unified purpose, doing whatever is

needed to make this ministry effective and glorifying to God."

"I love that people are willing to share their prayer concerns," said Captain Kristina. "That to me speaks volumes as to how the community values this faith body." Contact forms collected after guests hear Caesar issue his census proclamation are used for follow up to let neighbors know of other events and ongoing corps programs.



# nativity to life



groups are guided through darkened rooms and hallways to view short dramas, from the angel's visit to Mary to the Magi's decision to follow the Eastern Star. Groups then are let loose into the busy, music-filled marketplace where they can buy trinkets and refreshments, enjoy educational and craft activities and pose for pictures with camels before visiting the nativity family in a quiet stable.

Come to Bethlehem was introduced to the corps by Major Elaine Becker, who as a corps officer in Winnipeg staged her nativity event outside. The Norridge version started small



Wes Carter, who's been managing the production for more than a decade, said, "Virtually everyone who attends the corps is involved in Come to

Bethlehem in some way."

Those who've been involved from the start are particularly gratified to see how the event has evolved.

Marjorie Homer, whose husband Ed directed it for many years before his promotion to Glory, said, "It's rewarding to know the pleasure and joy this event has brought to so many." Marjorie and her grandsons, Nick and Dylan, are Come to Bethlehem veterans, as are multiple generations of corps families. Children from the community who came each year with their families now as adults bring children of their own, as do former portrayers of Baby Jesus (played by girls some years out of necessity).

Bill and Susan Nash made Come to Bethlehem a family event soon after they married more than 15 years ago and started their family. The couple and their children Kathleen, Liam and Ann-Marie have all held costumed roles, from angels and shepherds to tour guides and Roman guards.

"It's made the Christmas story real in a way few things could for our children," said Susan. "The concert finale is so powerful, it brings me to tears every time. I want everyone to be able to experience it."

After guests enter the corps building, small



under her direction; participants wore bathrobes, sheets and tablecloths and scenery was drawn with crayons, but God honored their efforts. The event grew in popularity and sophistication. Some years saw a bit of drama behind the scenes with sheep escaping into the marketplace or half the cast catching the flu, but God always provided.

"It fills my heart to overflowing to realize the idea I shared so many years ago is still going strong and that so many people have been touched by the gospel message," said Major Elaine. "The congregation has shown courage and perseverance for the sake of the true Christmas message."



# ISB whirlwind visit packs a punch

The world renowned International Staff Band (ISB) from London, England, visited the Central Territory this fall to minister in the Wisconsin and Upper Michigan Division (WUM) and to perform with the territory's own Chicago Staff Band (CSB). On the whirlwind trip packed with educational and performance opportunities, the ISB met with enthusiastic crowds at every turn.

They started the four-day tour at a top academic institution, Rufus King International Baccalaureate High School in Milwaukee, Wis., where ISB Bandmaster Dr. Stephen Cobb and members of the ISB presented a master class, including an introduction to the different sections of the brass band. The audience of nearly 300 music students especially appreciated the *William Tell Overture* (Rossini, arr. Goffin), played at breakneck speed, and *All Creatures Praise* (Steven Ponsford) with its introductory animal utterances. Later that morn-

ing, a 10-piece ISB ensemble shared a mini-concert to a surprised, yet pleased, audience in the lobby of the new Saint Kate's Art Hotel.

Following dinner with the National Advisory Board, the band presented a concert to more than 1,100 attendees at the Marcus Center for the Performing Arts.

The evening featured flugelhorn soloist Richard Woodrow playing the *The Seal Lullaby* (Eric Whitacre); cornet soloist Carl Nielsen with *Compelled* (Paul Sharman) and Jonathan Evans performing *Euphony* (Robert Redhead). The second half of the program found ISB members in red polo shirts and big band formation, playing a number of lighter swing items and finishing in bravura style with *Fire in the Blood* (Paul Lovett-Cooper).

The next day the ISB traveled to Madison, Wis., where they played an outdoor concert on the grounds of the Wisconsin State Capitol. Later that evening at the beautiful new Sun Prairie Center for the Arts, more than 600 patrons enjoyed

a concert by the ISB where Bandmaster Cobb recognized American Salvationist composer James Curnow, and the band presented his festival march *Faith is the Victory* to the crowd's delight. Another highlight was a stunning performance of *Song of Courage* (Eric Ball).

On Saturday the ISB joined with the CSB, led by Bandmaster Dr. Harold Burgmayer, at the Elmhurst Christian Reformed Church in Illinois for a dinner honoring the ministry of Peggy Thomas as assistant territorial music secretary and her ground-breaking legacy as the first woman admitted into a staff band. In response to many tributes, Peggy acknowledged the critical role of the ISB in faithfully setting the musical standard for the Salvation Army world. Peggy will continue to sit on the solo cornet bench of the CSB and serve as deputy bandmaster.

A brass spectacular followed, beginning with each band performing separate solo sets. Incidentally, each band featured a major work by up-and-

coming Salvationist composer Andrew Wainwright, the CSB with *Fearless* and the ISB with *Variations on Was Lebet*. For the final third of the program, they joined forces to perform some of The Salvation Army's enduring classics, including *Fanfare of Praise* (Robert Redhead); *Procession to Covenant* (William Himes); a magnificent rendering of *The Kingdom Triumphant* (Eric Ball); and the march *Praise* (Wilfred Heaton).

Concluding the weekend, the ISB led Sunday morning worship at one of territory's largest corps, Norridge Citadel, Ill., where they were joined by the Metropolitan Divisional Youth Chorus led by Jonathon Weller and the Norridge Citadel Songsters led by Martyn Thomas. Major Noel Wright, ISB executive officer, led the meeting, sensitively weaving thought-provoking scripture passages with related questions.



Major Steven Merritt, Wisconsin and Upper Michigan divisional commander, presents Dr. Stephen Cobb, bandmaster of the International Staff Band, with a Green Bay Packers jersey.

# TYC shines bright amidst East's Singing Stars

When the 46 members of the Territorial Youth Chorus arrived at Newark Airport in the early morning hours of October 4, they were ready for adventure yet ready for bed, but fatigue was no match for all the Lord had in store for them in the New York City metro area.

After a sightseeing excursion into Manhattan, the TYC joined with the Eastern Territorial Staff Songsters (ETSS) and many talented young singers from the Eastern Territory for its Singing Stars. Held at Star Lake Camp in New Jersey, the event united the musicians for a



retreat aimed at strengthening musicianship, mentorship and ministry.

The massed group of more than 100 was put through its paces by TYC Leader Joe Caddy, Central Territorial Music and Creative Arts Ministries Secretary Dr. Harold Burgmayer and ETSS Leader Gavin Whitehouse. Rehearsals filled Saturday, giving way to an evening performance by the TYC, ETSS, and Bill Booth Theater Company. After Sunday morning worship, the retreat culminated with a gala concert at the Montclair Citadel, N.J., Corps.

Kevin and Sheryl Slous from the Canada and Bermuda Territory challenged the Singing Stars to trust God to keep His promises and to fulfill His purpose through their lives and their talents. Afterward, delegates gathered in small groups with a prayer partner mentor to continue the discussion. "I liked that the groups were able to dive into what was said in the devotionals," said Brianna Kruse, a mentor from the Northern Division.

Many TYC members expressed gratitude for

the sense of community that was strengthened through the weekend. Haley Voss, a five-year TYC veteran from the Western Michigan and Northern Indiana (WMNI) Division, said, "Singing with this group is my favorite way to use the gifts that God has given me."

TYC soprano Isabel Wurtz from the Metropolitan Division commented, "I love how we all connected through the music during rehearsals, so the performance was just filled with praise."

"To me it was like a glimpse of what heaven will be like since we were singing and worshipping God all day," summarized Jose Sanchez, Northern divisional music director. "It was amazing."



# 730... AND BEYOND



## Newly accepted candidate



### Melissa Christiansen

First-generation Salvationist

Marshalltown, Iowa, Corps ♦ Western Division

Captain Pamela Kasten, corps officer

#### Spiritual Gifts

Administration ♦ Mercy ♦ Teaching

#### Ministry Passion or Experience

Children/Youth ♦ Worship

#### Spiritual mentors

Majors Scott and Jolinda Shelbourn

## Servants of a faithful Lord

by Anne Urban

Major Charles and Captain Carol Williams, who most recently served as corps officers at the Acres of Hope Campus in the Detroit, Mich., Harbor Light System, have retired. They had served as corps officers in Chicago, Ill., and Kansas City, Mo., and in appointments at the College for Officer Training and Western Divisional Headquarters, as well as being territorial officer counselors.



Prior to becoming officers, Charles worked at territorial headquarters for 20 years, then became an envoy and served as chaplain at the Chicago Harbor Light. A year after of becoming administrator at the Chicago Brainerd, Ill., Corps, he was joined by Carol as an envoy.

Gifted and passionate about preparing God's people for service, Captain Carol initiated a wellness program at the training college, and as a corps officer in Kansas City involved advisory board members in behind-the-scenes Christmas preparations. Amazed and gratified by this exposure, members invited their families

and friends to join in the mission.

The Williams were pleased to conclude their service in a harbor light setting where fulltime ministry began for Major Charles, who since then earned a master's degree in pastoral counseling from Olivet University, a master's of divinity from McCormick Theological Seminary and a doctorate in ministry from Luther Rice University and Seminary.

He concluded, "We feel God's purpose and plan was fulfilled for us through ministry with The Salvation Army. We loved each and every appointment and our people. Our Lord and Savior has been so faithful to us."

## Good News

Continued from page 1

and express in actions.

The good news of Jesus brings hope to those who are lost, light to those in darkness, joy to those in despair. It offers real transformation to the person who is caught in addiction, disillusioned by materialism or seeking purpose and direction. We share the gospel because we have experienced its truth and power for ourselves, and we know, personally, the "author and perfecter," so we have confidence in the gospel's transformative power on others.

This Christmastime and beyond, let us follow the example set by the angels and shepherds. Let us use every opportunity and every means possible to spread the word about who Jesus is while showing people where they can find him so that

they too can have a saving, personal relationship with the living Christ. It's not just good news—it's the best news. Let's share it!



The Salvation Army

## PRAYER CENTRAL

USA Central Territory

The more praying there is in the world, the better the world will be.—E.M. Bounds

Prayer is a conversation with our Heavenly Father who is eager and equipped to meet our every need even before we ask. As we begin 2020, make this a year of prayer. Ask God to give you a hunger for it, and believe He is listening and already at work.

### January Prayer Calendar

My Prayer List	Day	Bible Reading	Pray for The Salvation Army
	1 Wednesday	Romans 1-2	Blessings in the New Year!
	2 Thursday	Genesis 1-3	Mankato, Minn., Corps
	3 Friday	Joshua 1-5	Mitchell, S. D., Corps
	4 Saturday	Psalms 1-2	LaPorte, Ind., Corps
	5 Sunday	Job 1-2	Menasha Fox Cities, Wis., Corps
	6 Monday	Matthew 1-2	Nigeria Territory
	7 Tuesday	Romans 3-4	Pittsburg, Kan., Corps
	8 Wednesday	Genesis 4-7	Mt. Clemens, Mich., Corps
	9 Thursday	Joshua 6-10	Moline Heritage Temple, Ill., Corps
	10 Friday	Psalms 3-5	Logansport, Ind., Corps
	11 Saturday	Job 3-4	Carthage, Mo., Corps
	12 Sunday	Isaiah 7-11	Elgin, Ill., Corps
	13 Monday	Matthew 3-4	Eastern Europe Territory
	14 Tuesday	Romans 5-6	Traverse City, Mich., Corps
	15 Wednesday	Genesis 8-11	Minneapolis Central, Minn., Corps
	16 Thursday	Joshua 11-15	Newton, Iowa, Corps
	17 Friday	Psalms 6-8	Ludington, Mich., Corps
	18 Saturday	Job 5-6	NorrIDGE Citadel, Ill., Corps
	19 Sunday	Isaiah 12-17	Milwaukee Citadel, Wis., Corps
	20 Monday	Matthew 5-7	Uganda Territory
	21 Tuesday	Romans 7-8	Grand Rapids Kroc Center, Mich., Corps
	22 Wednesday	Genesis 12-15	St. Louis, Mo., ARC
	23 Thursday	Joshua 16-20	Owosso Citadel, Mich., Corps
	24 Friday	Psalms 9-11	Muscatine, Iowa, Corps
	25 Saturday	Job 7-8	Territorial Youth Chorus
	26 Sunday	Isaiah 18-22	Olathe, Kan., Corps
	27 Monday	Matthew 8-10	Angola Command
	28 Tuesday	Romans 9-10	SAFE-T program in Omaha, Neb.
	29 Wednesday	Genesis 16-19	Evanston, Ill., Corps
	30 Thursday	Joshua 21-24	O'Fallon, Mo., Corps
	31 Friday	Psalms 12-14	Minneapolis Parkview, Minn., Corps

Go to [www.salarmycentral.org](http://www.salarmycentral.org)

If you follow the prayer calendar during the year, you will have read through the Bible!

ARC = Adult Rehabilitation Center

## Exceeding expectations

by Anne Urban

In recognition of The Salvation Army's 125th anniversary in Traverse City, Majors Jeffery and Dawn Russell, corps officers, held an open house and barbecue luncheon attended by more than 275 people representing community businesses, civic and other organizations, a variety of agencies and professionals, as well as advisory board members and friends of The Salvation Army.

"We are deeply honored to be here at this time," said Major Jeffery. "It's incumbent upon all of us to be mindful of our past, yet at the same time be focused on the future and the responsibilities we have to serve our community with hope, compassion and love."

The major referred to the event as a celebration of the generous and compassionate support from generations of individuals, families and businesses who've partnered with The Salvation Army to transform lives.

Highlighting the event were proclamations honoring the Army's milestone from the governor of Michigan and Traverse City's mayor. Advisory Board Member Annette Roman shared,



Skyler Smith, Marlene Ralston and Helen Lake (l-r) provide service with a smile.

"I originally came to The Salvation Army as a single mom who didn't trust [and] didn't have a lot of hope. The Army accepted and loved me and my family for who we were. I get tremendous joy in being able to give back and see the smiles on people's faces [and hearing] stories of how the Army has helped them. Being part of an organization like this is truly rewarding."

The Salvation Army provides social services annually to an average 54,000 people. These services include emergency sheltering, food and clothing, assistance for older and house-bound adults, emergency disaster relief, opportunities for underprivileged youth and Pathway of Hope (POH).

Major Jeffery concluded, "As long as there's a need, The Salvation Army will be a consistent beacon of hope in Northwest Michigan."



Lunch guests included advisory board and community business members.

## Empowering the vulnerable

The Salvation Army's Fight to End Trafficking (SAFE-T) program was recently invited to present on labor trafficking at the Consulate of Mexico in Omaha, Neb., for its eleventh annual Labor Rights Week. Bilingual SAFE-T specialist Taylor Hughes spoke at the opening ceremony about labor trafficking in Omaha and greater Nebraska and Iowa.

Taylor and SAFE-T Director Jane Thorson joined other trafficking and labor experts from Nebraska Appleseed, the U.S. Department of Labor, Heartland Workers Center, Catholic Charities, the Immigrant Legal Center and the Office of Latin American Studies at the University of Nebraska Omaha.

Many attendees were Mexican immigrants waiting at the Consulate to meet with an official about their

visa or passport status or other immigration issues. SAFE-T offered critical information about how to get help if they or someone they know needs services.

SAFE-T's mission is to help survivors of all forms of trafficking build their lives in a way that is empowering and meaningful by providing victim-centered services that address the continuum of needs from crisis stabilization to comprehensive case management.

"Immigrants are a particularly vulnerable population, and to be able to connect with them where they are in a nonthreatening way is a great asset," said Jane.

Taylor is visiting the Mexican Consulate monthly to continue to connect with immigrants, establish relationships and provide information and resources in a safe context.



Pictured from left: Tania Sonia Flores Hernandez, Protection Office, Consulate of Mexico in Omaha; Viridiana Miranda, Documentation Department, Consulate of Mexico in Omaha; Andrea Rasmussen, U.S. Department of Labor; Taylor Hughes, SAFE-T specialist; Jane Thorson, SAFE-T director; Cesar Garcia, Nebraska Appleseed; Cristian Dona, director of the Office of Latin American Studies at the University of Nebraska Omaha

# 730... AND BEYOND



7,434 days and counting

by Major Angie Pennington

I find the most compelling aspect of officership is where frontline ministry intersects with evangelistic opportunities, meeting real people facing difficult circumstances and offering help for their situation and hope for their salvation. Since I completed 730 days at the College for Officer Training, I've had the opportunity to walk side-by-side with families through difficult circumstances and see their faith grow. Being ordained and commissioned as an officer, I have found my my days filled with meaning and purpose.

In one of my appointments 12 new children began attending Sunday school. Originally from the South Sudan, they were then living in rural America. I began to talk about Christmas trees and preparing for the coming celebrations when one boy raised his hand, "Do you think Santa will come to my house this year? Every Christmas I hope and hope that I have been nice enough, but I guess I've been naughty because he's never come." That question taught me much about the challenges families face when they immerse themselves in a new culture—and it also gave me the opportunity to bring a Christmas tree, lights, ornaments and a star for the top of a tree to a family. I had the chance to meet with mom, dad and grandma to explain their children think they are "bad" because all of the other kids they know celebrate Christmas differently—and to help the parents pick out and wrap gifts for their children. I will never forget the joy on their faces when "Santa" came to visit them or when they each asked Jesus into their life.

In July their apartment was destroyed by a fire, and I asked how we could help. This was an opportu-



nity to serve and to bring hope, along with a truck and a dozen people to literally help pick up the pieces of their lives. We spent the day hauling charred toys, furniture, smoke-filled clothes, the South Sudan flag and other mementos from their home country out of the apartment—being present during difficult circumstances. The day after the fire, the oldest was scheduled to go to summer camp, but he didn't have the clothes he needed, so people at our corps provided everything down to sunscreen and a beach towel.

The story doesn't end there! The parents became soldiers, the children junior soldiers, corps cadets, and members of the band. Mom and dad brought more families to the corps, and together we learned from each other about service, love and the hope Christ brings even on our most difficult days. They are the reason I choose to serve as a Salvation Army officer.

I have another 8,760 (ish) days of service ahead of me, and I can't wait to see how God uses the opportunities to walk through life with people who are facing difficult circumstances to bring love and peace and hope in Christ!

## New Members

COME JOIN OUR ARMY

July - September, 2019

62 Senior Soldiers  
17 Adherents  
8 Junior Soldiers