“Building Hope” and breaking ground in Omaha

by Susan Eustice

The “Building Hope” capital campaign is making possible the replacement of the aged Lied Renaissance Center in Omaha, Neb., with a smaller and more efficient building. The new building will be part of the existing campus at 36th and Cuming Streets, which will be renamed Renaissance Village.

Remaining on the newly named campus are the Omaha Citadel Corps, the Dora Bingel Senior Center and Durham Booth Manor, and the Lyle Apartments for people experiencing behavioral health disabilities, including veterans.

At the groundbreaking on June 18, Omaha Advisory Board Chairman Fred Hunzeker thanked those who supported the “Building Hope” capital campaign which reached its fundraising goal of $23.6 million. National leaders are “impressed with the support from the Omaha community,” he said.

Hunzeker noted that work toward replacing the building has been underway for about five years. He said, “It’s a well thought-out project. A project with a future.”

Omaha and National Advisory Board Member Mike Cassling, part of the capital campaign leadership team, also addressed the crowd.

The new, 70,000-square-foot building will have 33 units of transitional housing for homeless families and 16 units of mental health housing for the poor. In the past year, nearly 700 people have been served in the transitional housing programs that primarily serve single women with children who are homeless, 30 percent of whom come from domestic violence situations. Ninety percent of residents move into safe and affordable housing afterward.

Continued on page 3

Boundless inspires Salvationists worldwide

Approximately 15,000 Salvationists gathered July 1–5 in London, England, for the Boundless—the Whole World Redeeming International Congress. Held at the modern entertainment complex O2, just a short distance from the Army’s birthplace in the city’s East End, the congress celebrated The Salvation Army’s 150th anniversary and God’s continuing work, re-energizing Salvationists’ faith for the future.

“Boundless is a great word; it reminds us that our God has no limits—his love is boundless, his grace is boundless, his forgiveness is boundless, his power is boundless,” wrote General André Cox in his welcome to delegates.

Continued on page 4
Igniting creativity only takes a spark

by LL Colonel Susan Buklewicz
Territorial Officer Resource and Development Secretary

I am a child of the ‘70s. Back then we had great music, especially Christian music. My sisters and I sang together and participated in every Salvation Army youth chorus we could. The song, “Pass it On,” was in each group’s repertoire. The first line said, “It only takes a spark to get a fire going…” I loved this image. I could see one tiny spark lighting a Fourth of July sparkler and that light being passed on until the whole place was filled with light. But I always wondered where the spark came from. The musings of a 15 year old. One little thing—a spark, a look, an idea—can result in unimagined creativity. Chester Greenwood was only 15 when he invented earmuffs. His ears were cold. Perhaps you’re thinking you aren’t creative enough to invent something worthwhile. You are wrong.

What is the source of your spark? What causes creativity to be ignited in you? God spoke a word, and our world came into existence. For His greatest creation ever, you and me, He didn’t even speak; He breathed. I believe God’s breath came with endless capacity to be creative. How can we be created in God’s image and not reflect His creative power?

Most examples of creativity are ignited because of a need. Chester Greenwood thought his ears would freeze and fall off. We make the mistake of thinking our creativity should result in something spectacular. I wouldn’t call Chester’s creative spark spectacular—though I may take that back in January—but God’s sure was. Look right in front of you at the ministries you are doing in your community. You know, the ones that need to be rejuvenated, reinvented, refreshed or even resurrected. What do those ministries need?

Our partnership with God for the salvation of the world means we take risks, we “think out the box,” as my grandson says. Maybe we should say, “outthink the box” or even better yet “think without the box.” Chester had to have help with his spark of creativity. He made a wire frame, and his grandmother sewed beaver skin pads to it. Voida? Maybe you need help, too.

What spark of creativity does God want to ignite in you? Look in front of you. Acknowledge the need and see your part in creating something better. Take risks. Be brave. Let God ignite His creativity in you!

Passing the baton

How do you replace Bill Himes? Well, you can’t really. He’s irreplaceable. And perhaps that’s the point, finding someone not to replace him but to build on his legacy. After an extensive process and much prayer, a search committee and territorial leadership believe they have found that person in Dr. Harold Burgmayer, who joins the territorial music and gospel arts department this month.

Harold comes from the Eastern Pennsylvania and Delaware Division, where he’s led the music program for 34 years. During that time he not only has established strong instrumental and vocal music but other worship arts such as drama and dance.

With a doctorate of musical arts in music composition, he has arranged and composed more than 325 works, developed music arts proficiency curriculum for piano, voice, brass and percussion, and designed a comprehensive Salvation Army music leadership educational resource called, The Beat Goes On. In large part due to Harold’s vision and leadership, the Philadelphia Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center is one of the best in the country in the area of fine arts.

Sure, but what’s he like, you ask? Harold has a reputation for excellent conducting skills, high energy and creativity. But more importantly he’s respected for his spirituality—seems a good fit for the Chicago Staff Band known throughout the world as the “band with the sacred mes- sage.” He’s been a music leader in his corps since 1975, and has led music and mission tours to Argentina, Bolivia, South Africa, the Caribbean and Scandinavia.

“Over the years I have admired his spiritual and musical growth and incredible track record as a divisional music director in proba- bly the largest program in the East,” said Bandmaster William Himes. “Harold and his wife, Priscilla, are red, yellow and blue, mission-mind- ed Salvationists who will resonate with the practical and inspirational music and gospel arts ministries in the Central Territory. We are in good hands!”

Garden of plenty

Where most people saw an empty lot, one man saw a lush, community-supported vegetable garden brimming with produce to benefit the Sturgis, Mich., Corps’ meal program and food pantry. The garden was the brainchild of St. Joseph County Commissioner Don Eaton who noticed some vacant land behind the corps, reported Envoy DeWayne and Pam Duskin, corps administrators. Don asked the Sturgis city commissioners to get involved in the project, and the group determined they’d cover the entire cost and labor if volunteers and corps staff committed to maintain the garden.

The commission- ers prepared the land and planted tomatoes, string beans, squash, peppers, onions, celery, cucumbers, Brussel sprouts and pumpkins.

“Altogether about 20 people have been involved in the garden project, which has been the talk of the town and admired by many in our small community,” said Envoy DeWayne. “Summer is always the time of year our food pantry is dangerously low. The garden, now in its second year, supple- ments our food boxes and meal pro- gram.”

Don not only spearheaded this initiative, he decided to redirect his county commissioner compensation into a special Community Foundation account for The Salvation Army.
The difference capital campaigns can make

There’s a dissonance in conducting modern-day programs in outdated facilities. The aging structures not only limit what we can do but how the community and our members perceive The Salvation Army, says Major Alan Wurtz, territorial capital campaign consultant. According to the major, most Salvation Army structures in the Central Territory are more than 50 years old, and many undergo a sort of patchwork process to stay operational. He says it’s not always the wisest stewardship.

“It’s at a point where we really need to assess what we’re doing,” said Major Alan. “Maybe a better option is to consider a capital campaign.”

Three recent developments will help local units in their fundraising efforts. First, territorial leadership has introduced a capital campaign initiative, which provides for matching levels of financial resources from Central Territorial Headquarters (THQ). These incentives for two projects in each division each year through September 2019 are intended to boost the momentum of campaigns.

Second, the process for capital campaigns has been streamlined, with the goals of clearer guidance, a smoother process, and shortened timeline from the planning study to the actual conclusion of a campaign. New written guidelines, on a Notes database and as a booklet, help facilitate the process step by step.

Lastly, the territory has embarked on a relationship with the Fund Raising School at Indiana University. Corps officers and advisory board members from locations which are considering a campaign may attend a three-day course with a divisional headquarters representative.

Underwritten by THQ, the seminar covers essentials for success from readiness for capital fundraising to volunteer leadership to the Army’s procedures. Forty-seven delegates, representing all divisions, attended the first seminar in the spring.

“I needed this training for 10 years ago,” said Major Matt Grindle, Petosky, Mich., corps officer. “Now I feel I have been equipped with the tools and knowledge needed for a successful campaign.”

A skilled consensus builder, Joanne Bemis is the embodiment of Booth’s directive to focus on “Others.” As the divisional director of community relations and development since 1997 until recently, Joanne says her passion for helping those in need emanates from her Midwestern farm roots and parents who were always ready to help someone else. She attributes her success in building and maintaining productive donor relationships to the Army’s strong results which bring much satisfaction to donors.

“At the capital campaign seminar, Fund Raising School faculty Ben Kelley and Ernie Vargo (on ends) with Major Alan Wurtz, territorial capital campaign consultant, and Doug McDaniel, territorial executive director of development

Joanne Bemis with her husband, Jim, and Major Greg Thompson, Western divisional commander

Continued from page 1

Omaha groundbreaking

The current building, which was built 110 years ago and was bought in 1990 from Methodist Hospital for $1, will be demolished after construction of the new building is finished. This will preclude the necessity of relocating residents prematurely from the Renaissance Center.

“Renovation of the existing structure would have cost more than constructing the new building,” said Western Divisional Commander Major Greg Thompson.

The Salvation Army looked at two options: building a new facility compliant with current safety and health codes, or ceasing to provide many social services in Omaha.

“The second choice was unacceptable to everyone, both officers and community members dedicated to serving the needy and helpless in the community,” said Major Thompson.

Speakers at the groundbreaking, which was covered by local media, had to raise their voices to be heard above the traffic zooming by on Cuming Street. Cuming, a major corridor, is developing into a major arts and entertainment area east of the Salvation Army campus, adding stability and good neighbors nearby.

God smiled upon the event even when the weather did not. The groundbreaking began with the sweet sounds of a brass ensemble but ended with the noisy sounds of pouring rain that sent guests running for shelter.

Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert, who was present at the groundbreaking, later posted on her Facebook page that she was proud to serve on The Salvation Army Omaha Advisory Board. She said, “The Salvation Army addresses needs in our community in ways many of us will never see or need.”

The new facility is expected to be completed by June 2017.
Worship, prayer and fellowship were vital facets of the congress. Music also played an important part with groups and soloists representing the vast expanse of Salvation Army ministry around the globe, including the Angola National Band, the Korean Fan Dancers, the Vasa Gospel Choir, the Angola National Band, the Angola National Band, the Seoul Samulnori Percussion, the India Central Youth Singers, the Ghana Band and Folk Dance Troupe, the London Citadel Timbrels, the Indonesia Bamboo Orchestra, and many more.

"It was great to see and hear the various styles of worship in other cultures," recounted Chicago Staff Band trombonist Erik Olson, who was chosen with several other CSB members to perform a fanfare during the keynote session. "Although I could not always understand what they were saying, it was apparent that they were genuinely worshiping the same Lord that I worship."

Main meetings followed the points of the General’s dream for the Army, revolving around the themes of joy, unity, service, compassion, cultural diversity, youth and integrity. Marked with pageantry, video and live action, sessions were filled with powerful messages and soul-stirring testimonies. Many of the life-giving and community-changing projects throughout the world also were highlighted.

"The meetings were explosive and thrilling. Every meeting encouraged soldiers and officers to get out into the world and share Jesus with the whosoever. I felt so proud to be an officer in The Salvation Army as I saw the massive amount of Salvationists from all over the world coming together for a common cause," said Major Marlys Anderson, Farmington Hills, Mich., corps officer who attended the congress with seven soldiers from her corps.

For many, the fellowship—meeting Salvationists from all over the world and instantly feeling a connection as brothers and sisters in Christ—was the most exciting and cherished part of the congress. Of course, the favorite pastime of trading pins went hand in hand; soon lanyards, badges and bags were covered.

Multiple social media and web platforms were used to engage Salvationists worldwide during the congress, connecting them to the happenings in London and to share photos, tweets and Facebook messages from their locations. Main meetings were streamed live and are still available to view online, as well as the daily newspapers that were distributed during the event.

During the congress three Salvationists were admitted to the Order of the Founder, the Army’s highest honor. Fittingly the first award was given posthumously to former General Eva Burrows, known affectionately as ‘the People’s General’ on the same day that a statue of Catherine Booth was unveiled in London’s East End. The second award was given to William Flinn of the USA Western Territory. Known for his excellent musical leadership in the Army, he is also the executive director of the Tournament of Roses and is the first soldier to be a USA National Advisory Board member. Lastly Divisional Envoy Iris Jones of the United Kingdom was honored for leading a corps sacrificially and almost single-handedly—and without allowance (salary) for 30 years—all the time looking for innovative ways to share the gospel.

Congress days were packed with a plethora of extra events that complemented plenary sessions. A new musical Covenant (by Kevin and Karl Larsson and Commissioner Keith Banks) highlighted eight extraordinary real-life stories of Salvationists in the 20th century. A series of amazing concerts showcased the Army’s eclectic mix, including the four staff bands (International, New York, Boundless inspires Salvationists worldwide
Melbourne and Chicago, the International and Amsterdam Staff Songsters, the Norwegian vocal band Mannesambandet, the Pasadena Youth Chorus, the Waverly Timbrels and others. Delegates also could enjoy the Boundless Film Festival; attend seminars on Salvationist theology for today, faith and social justice and One Army; or visit an impressive historic display or a "Supertrade" with all manner of Army goods and book signings by General Shaw Clifton [Rtd.], General John Larsson [Rtd.] and Commissioner Kay Rader. A special women's gathering called "Bound-Less" featured Commissioner Silvia Cox and applauded the impact of women's contributions to the mission and encouraged their spiritual development.

Major Judy Tekautz, Council Bluffs, Iowa, corps officer, succinctly captured what everyone felt, "I was so blessed to be a delegate."

Boundless Kids enabled children and families to engage in the congress experience together. ALOVE was especially designed for delegates ages 11-16, with a daily afternoon event called NEON where young people could participate in photography, film, dance, reflection, a prayer labyrinth, sharing stories, games, competitions or arts and crafts. Each day began with an intense international prayer meeting and ended with Late Night Alive, an informal chat show crammed with a variety of guests, two music groups each night, and a speedy "150-second" sermon by the main arena speaker that evening. The format proved highly entertaining, with one night even featuring a performance by a Super Staff Band comprised of members of all four staff bands at the congress!

The Central Territory’s two participatory groups added immensely to congress festivities. The Bill Booth Theater Company surely ranked as one of the busiest, giving one magnificent performance after another. Coming off a four-day pre-tour in England that concluded with a performance at Buckingham Palace, the Chicago Staff Band gave two back-to-back concerts and was featured in several sessions, most prominently on Saturday night. For them, surely one of the most meaningful and lasting memories occurred after this meeting while the hall emptied out and Bandmaster William Himes picked up his baton to lead them in an impromptu performance of "All that I am" to close his final season with the band. As they played, many delegates paused, and hundreds surrounded the CSB.

In the final session, the General called Salvationists to a total commitment. He asked, "What has this celebration been all about? What is going to change? What is God calling you to do?" He continued, "We must be totally committed and dedicated to the task assigned to us. If we’re convinced of our call, we will live lives fully surrendered to God. Our worship needs to be more than speaking or listening to God. It must be about total surrender. We need a sense of urgency in a world where there is so much injustice and need."

Following this meeting 2,500 Salvationists, representing all 126 countries where the Army officially works, marched down The Mall from the Horse Guards Parade to Buckingham Palace, cheered on by the public and 10,000 Salvationists and saluted by General André Cox.

"My takeaway is that the Army is still relevant as long as we continue to be grounded in God’s Word, as long as we are reaching out to serve others—especially the marginalized—and to share the gospel," said Chicago Staff Bandsman Marty Thomas.

"What resonated with me as a Salvationist was a call to personal involvement."
Newly accepted candidates

Anil Kandamala
Ypsilanti, Mich., Corps
Eastern Michigan Division

I was born into The Salvation Army. It has been my church my whole life. My parents are officers in the India Central Territory and were my first Bible teachers. They also taught me the doctrines. At age 14, I accepted Jesus as my personal Savior.

As I grew up, I found my goals fluctuating. However, God’s plan for my life has been awesome. Through His provision, I had attended the World Youth Convention, worked at Echo Grove Camp as a counselor, and been active in corps ministries in Ypsilanti, Mich. As I read God’s Word and continued in ministry, I came to understand a life of value only can be found serving Him with my whole heart.

I believe the purpose of my life is to be an officer, sowing God’s love, harnessing the power of the Holy Spirit and extending His Kingdom. Anil’s corps officer is Lt. Jeremy Fongar.

Elizabeth Ayala
Elgin, Ill., Corps
Metropolitan Division

My wife and I were both raised in Buddhism. Donna came to the U.S. when she was only six, and I came at age 13. We each struggled in school because of the language barrier. I eventually learned to overcome our obstacles. My wife accepted Christ when she was 9, and I received Him when I was 17.

I was introduced to The Salvation Army through a job with the Rockford Temple Tabernacle, Ill., Corps and decided to become a Salvationist. Donna and I met there in 2003 when she visited her cousin. Two years later we married, and my wife decided to become a Salvationist. Donna has felt called to officership for several years, but I only became aware of my calling about seven months ago. Convinced my calling is from God, I realized the importance of daily prayer and give God the glory.

Matthew Jenkins
Rockford Temple, Ill., Corps
Metropolitan Division

I was raised in the church and at a young age accepted Christ as my Savior, but I walked away from the Lord as a teenager. By the time I finished school and had a career in healthcare, I was a “ lukewarm” believer. I began using prescription drugs and by 2011 had an addiction I couldn’t conquer. I entered the Rockford, Ill., Adult Rehabilitation Center (ARC) and accepted Christ again.

I finished the program in August 2012 and began working for the ARC with my last position as assistant store supervisor for 10 stores. I knew God was calling me to do more and at a fall retreat realized it was officership. That December I became a soldier at the Rockford Temple Corps. Since then there has been no turning back because I know God has a plan for me. Today I serve as a ministry intern at the Kansas City Northland, Mo., Corps. It has deepened my faith and passion to serve others.

Matthew’s corps officers are Majors Steve and Christine Merritt.

Vatthana and Donna Thammavongska
Rockford Tabernacle, Ill., Corps
Metropolitan Division

Vatthana and Donna’s corps officers are Lts. Mike and Kelly Hanston.

My wife and I were both raised in Buddhism. Donna came to the U.S. when she was only six, and I came at age 13. We each struggled in school because of the language barrier, but eventually learned to overcome our obstacles. My wife accepted Christ when she was 9, and I received Him when I was 17.

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Matthew’s corps officers are Majors Steve and Christine Merritt.

Haleigh Sherven
Elkhart, Ind., Corps
Western Michigan and Northern Indiana Division

When I accepted Christ at the age of five, my passion to be a Salvation Army officer arose. While other girls dreamed of a bedroom resembling a castle, I dreamed of one resembling a chapel. As the years passed, my insecurities were revealed, and I felt driven to fit in. This was so consuming that I mastered the art of living multiple lives. I was one person at the corps and another around my friends and family. But really I was alone and completely separated from my Heavenly Father.

It wasn’t until my first year at college I realized I was missing something in my life, and the only one who could fill the hole was God. This was when I fully surrendered to God’s will, and He changed my direction. Since then I have given my insecurities to Christ and my desire for fitting in has changed to living like Jesus and putting my faith into action.

Haleigh’s corps officers are Majors Nicholas and Jodi Montgomery.

Mylie Hadden
Kansas City Northland, Mo., Corps
Kansas and Western Missouri Division

I started volunteering with the Kansas City Northland Corps four years ago. Then, God opened the door for me to work as the corps’ office manager. Whenever I’ve moved I’ve trusted God to direct me to a church where He will get the greatest glory from my service, and so I was obedient to the Holy Spirit’s leading to become a solicitor.

I got involved right away in children’s ministry and started serving as the young people’s sergeant-major. Now I also teach a Sunday school class, an adult Bible study, lead prayer meetings, assist with women’s ministries, serve on the corps and advisory councils, and am the corps’ case manager for Pathway of Hope.

During the holidays, I help with Thanksgiving dinner for the hungry and with Angel Tree and kettle campaigns. I want to share the gospel at every opportunity and give God the glory.

Mylie’s corps officers are Majors Rick and Barbara Carroll.

Natalie Austin
Minneapolis Parkview, Minn., Corps
Northern Division

At age 15 while at Silver Lake Camp, I accepted Jesus as my Savior. Even then I knew my path would not be easy. But fast forward 14 years, and I can say God has never left me through at times I have questioned His role in my life, pushed Him away and felt guilt and shame about my choices. I think of the Israelites’ disobedience and how they wandered for 40 years in the desert, yet God did not abandon them. I feel this describes my journey to officership.

In preparation for my calling, God has placed me in different environments whether a mission trip or a Christian living community. I have experienced fellowship, accountability, how to deal with conflict, and intimate small group Bible study. Also through personal experiences I have realized the importance of daily prayer and devotion. It reminds me God is in control.

Natalie’s corps officers until recently were Majors Noel and Rose Marie Mason. Her current corps officers are Captains Jim and Lynnea Brichetto.
No other power
by Lt. Colonel Daniel Sjögren
Territorial Ambassador for Holiness

When I was by the sea of Tiberias, a wonderful thought came to me. The first thing which greeted the disciples when they came ashore was “a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread” (John 21:9, KJV). Jesus knew the disciples were cold and hungry. I think that what the meal was to those hungry men, the Word of the Lord is to the needy soul—even today.

In my ministry, I have never known the Spirit to fail to meet me when I come prayerfully to His Word. It is the Holy Spirit who brings enlightenment to God’s Word.

In fact, we have no power other than the Holy Spirit’s.

In the song, “Send the Fire,” our Founder William Booth acknowledges our reliance on God’s Spirit. “For strength to ever do the right, for grace to conquer in the fight, for power to walk the world in white, send the fire!”

Indeed, the Holy Spirit is the coals of fire that warms us, and God’s Word is ever a meal to satisfy us.

Today we, too, can say like Isaiah, “Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire” (Isaiah 44:16, ASV).

Go to www.prayercentralusa.org for prayer updates.

If you follow the prayer calendar in the next year, you will have read through the Bible!
**Kincails’ service saluted**

by Kathryn Pahl

Family and friends gathered at The Salvation Army Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center in Green Bay, Wis., to celebrate the retirement of 1986 “Proclaimers of the Gospel” sessionmates Majors Don and Jane Kincaid.

After appointments in Mattoon, Ill.; Jefferson City, Kirksville and Sedalia, Mo., and Minot, N.D., the Kincails ended their officership with Major Don as the Brown County Coordinator and both of them as Green Bay Union Court corps officers.

Major Cherri Hobins, College for Officer Training principal, led the service, while Lt. Colonels Daniel and Rebecca Sjögren officiated the ceremony and presented their retire-ment certificates. Major Dorene Jennings, Wisconsin and Upper Michigan (WUM) divisional director of women’s ministries, read 2 Corinthians 2:14 and prayed. Majors Andrew and Cheryl Miller, who sent the Kincails to training, also participated in the service, as did Majors David and Zandra Luft, who were sent to training by the Kincails. A letter was read from friends Majors Chuck and Jan Hendrickson, and sessionmate Major Mickey Hale sang, “How firm a foundation” accompanied by a brass band led by Major Andrew Miller. Congregational songs includ-ed “Victory in Jesus,” led by Major Dan Jennings, WUM divisional commander.

The Kincails are retiring to Carthage, Mo.

**Powell delivers keynote**

by Jackie Rachev

The Metropolitan Division celebrated The Salvation Army’s 150th anniversary with a civic luncheon where former Secretary of State General Colin Powell, USA (Ret.), delivered the keynote address. More than 600 people listened intently as he praised the Army for its impact in Chicago and around the world and encouraged attendees’ support.

At a reception that featured artifacts from the Central Territorial Historical Museum, guests mingled with the likeness of General William Booth and a donut girl! A VIP reception also featured a photo opportunity with General Powell.

General Powell shared how his priorities mirror Salvation Army services from providing a safe place for children to helping individuals and families in crisis. “When I looked at the activities The Salvation Army does in Chicago and around the world, it’s astonishing,” he said. “The Army knows exactly what our young people need…They know what adults need.”

During the luncheon Patricia Hemingsway Hall, president and chief executive officer of Health Care Service Corporation, received the William Booth award for her personal participation and involvement in civic and philanthropic affairs. Jewel-Osco stores was presented with the “Others” award for its longterm support as a corporate partner.

Lt. Colonel Charles H. Smith, Metropolitan divisional commander, reflected: “We are at a crossroads. It is at this crossroads that we once again commit ourselves to continue our investment in the future of our communities’ greatest assets—the lives of our children. We are committed to leading families out of despair and down a pathway of hope. After 150 years, today is not the end of our story; it is only the beginning.”

**Words of Life**

**September – December 2015**

**The Spirit**

After a short opening series on Heaven, we look into the Old Testament, exploring the books of Isaiah, Daniel, Amos, Micah, Zephaniah and Hagga. New Testament readings are from Galatians, Colossians, Titus, Philemon and 1 and 2 Peter. Thoughts for the Christmas season come from guest writer Major Christina Tyson in New Zealand. May the Holy Spirit inspire and illuminate us as we read God’s Word together.

**Mission-minded in Duluth**

With unfailing enthusiasm for impacting their community through evangelistic acts of service, members of the Duluth, Minn., Corps are seeing the fruits of their labors. Of the 100 people who call the corps home, 40 are new to the Army in the last decade and more than half the congregation are soldiers.

“For the second year in a row, our emphasis has been ‘Saving Souls and Growing Saints’ and we’ve held just Walk Across the Room evangelism training based on Bill Hybels’ book twice,” said Major Bill Cox, corps officer with his wife, Betsy. “Our annual corps retreat also has been vital to the congregation gelling both spiritually and in relationships.”

A major focus of the corps’ evangelism efforts has been its annual fall festival with more than half the congregation involved and actively using their spiritual gifts, according to Major Bill. The festival is geared toward reaching the families of the youth involved in the corps’ character-building programs. In the “Rookie Basketball” league alone, almost 200 kids learn basketball fundamentals as well as character-building goals.

This past winter the corps hosted movie afternoons featuring evangeli-cal films for its soup kitchen guests and recently added a new believers class to its roster. In addition to Sunday worship and Sunday school, the corps offers Sunday morning and evening prayer meetings and weekly Bible studies held both in and outside the corps building, including one led by women’s ministries in a local residential high rise.

Women’s ministries also offers strong visitation and nursing home out-reaches, a helping hands ministry, a sewing club and bi-annual craft events. Men’s ministries meet monthly for fellowship and recently completed a weekly study. The men of the corps also are involved in youth night leadership.

The corps’ extensive social services include homeless prevention, transitional housing and rapid rehousing programs, emergency assistance, a soup kitchen, food pantry, medical bank and even periodic mobile dental services.

“Last Christmas we helped over 1,500 families with food and toys, and throughout the year we conduct a large community care ministry outreach to nursing homes,” Major Bill continued.

Not just satisfied with serving the needs of its own community, the congregation raised $1,500 in addition to its World Services/Self-Denial giving toward a fresh-water project for the Papua New Guinea Territory’s House of Hope compound.