



# 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)

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## St. Louis' Tree of Lights illuminates 75 years

by Nicholas White

Major Olin Brigman started Tree of Lights in St. Louis all the way back in 1947. WHO Radio TV sponsored the event, according to a sign

outside. It read: "Your contribution will bring light and joy to others."

Each light on the tree was lit when \$100 was donated. It was a modest start to the tradition, with annual donation goals now reaching into the millions.

Over the years, fireworks burst in the background for the Tree of Lights' illumination which takes place every November when weather has turned into coat-and-hat cold. Canteens serve hot chocolate and snacks. Sports mascots clown around. Local TV hosts have counted down the tree-lighting for large audiences.

Fast forward to 2022, and 75 trees around the St. Louis region mark

the 75th anniversary of the Tree of Lights at one of the Salvation Army's oldest U.S. works which was founded in 1881. The biggest tree is in Kiener Plaza, stories high, lit densely with lights by longtime Salvation Army ally, Ameren Corporation, annually. The 75 trees scattered throughout the region this season have QR codes with a list of locations for all of the trees.

"The symbolism of Tree of Lights demonstrates the community's commitment of helping others for the past 75 years," said Lt. Colonel Robert Webster, Midland divisional commander. "It also represents The Salvation Army's commitment of meeting human need in the name of Jesus Christ. This partnership is what makes serving others a blessing for everyone during the Christmas season."

Trees of Lights are used in nearby communities, such as St. Charles County, which has several municipal trees. The common link of the Tree of Lights campaigns is that they mark the progress of the red kettle campaign toward a donation goal.

Donations fund programs through-

out the year, including vital social services for people in need such as housing and utility assistance, emergency aid and veterans' housing.

Red kettles now are just one way of raising funds during Tree of Lights, which runs from October 1 through January 31. QR codes, crypto pay, mail campaigns, and on-line pay—which has exploded in recent years—are just a few ways Tree of Lights giving has changed with the times.

Reimagine 75: Fashion with a Cause, while paying tribute to the past with a retro concept, heralds the future of Tree of Lights in St. Louis, with the Reimagine idea projecting Tree of Lights into the next 75 years.

Presented by the Ameren Corporation, this 1970s-era fashion show assembled 12 independent designers and 16 models which exhibited uniquely designed looks for an audience of several hundred tastemakers, charitable professionals, devoted followers of Jesus Christ, and community leaders.

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Photos by Bill Greenblatt

## Jesus, the Light of the World

by General Brian Peddle

When I consider the star that was a significant part of the Christmas story, I'm reminded that scientists view the stars in the sky very differently. They use light years to measure the distance of the stars from us on earth. A light year is the distance light travels in one earth year, so about 5.88 trillion miles (or 9.46 trillion kilometres).

The sun is our closest star and is some 93 million miles away. So, the sun's light takes about 8 minutes and 20 seconds to reach us, meaning we see the sun as it was more than 8 minutes ago. The next closest star to us—Alpha Centauri—is some 4.3 light years away, so when we view this star today, we see it as it was 4.3 years ago. It's as if we are looking back in time.

This means that the Magi written about in Matthew 2:1-2 would have seen a star whose light was beaming before they could even see it. And yet, God used that star to lead them to Jesus:

"Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him" (Matthew 2:2 *New Living Translation*).

Jesus came to be the Light of the World. He came to shine His light in darkness—our darkness, the darkness of this world. We read in Isaiah 9:2 (*New International Version*): "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned." This was prophesied long before Jesus was born.



Are we talking about light years when it comes to Jesus? No, I don't think so, because the Bible tells us He is the alpha and omega—the beginning and the end. He is as much a bright light today as He was at the beginning of time, or when He came to the earth to take up residence and "move into the neighborhood" (John 1:14 *The Message*).

Jesus is not constrained by time. He is the "light of the world" (John 8:12) and shines light into the darkest places of our troubled world, bringing change. The Light has come! There are no light years that can separate us from this Light. He is here, He knows us, and we can walk and talk with Him now. His purpose in coming was to be with us, but He has been, and always will be, with us.

If you do not know Him already, you too can know this Light of the World. His name is Jesus, and He came to the world to bring about transformation. If you are seeking change, seek Jesus. If you are living in a dark place in life, seek Him who is the Light of the World.

For those who already know Jesus, He reminds us that we are light in the world. In Matthew 5:14 (*The Message*) we read: "You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill."

May you be a source of light in your corner of the world this Christmas, as you bring the Light of the World to others!

May God richly bless you throughout this Christmas season!

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# Pathway of Hope expands in Eastern Europe

The Pathway of Hope (POH) initiative is expanding in Eastern Europe. To facilitate this expansion, Dr. Maribeth Swanson, Dr. Michael Smith and Linda Brinker of the Central territorial social services department were invited to lead presentations at a POH conference organized by The Salvation Army in Norway.

the importance of pastoral care and how to leverage opportunities to engage families in corps' programs.

Presenters from Norway discussed their vocational services and other aspects of their POH implementation unique to Norway. Additionally, there were small group discussions between the Central Territory team and representatives from Romania and Slovakia on strategies for implementation of POH given the challenges of working with certain indigenous minority populations in those two countries.

Norway's interest in POH began in 2018 after participating in a POH educational session in Dublin, Ireland. Inspired by the success of POH in the Central Territory, The Salvation Army in Norway moved forward with implementation shortly thereafter. First implemented in a few sites, the Norway Salvation Army POH initiative has expanded across the country to include the city of Bergen and other locations. Over the past two years, several virtual consultation calls have been held between Norway POH leaders and the Central Territory POH team. In turn, Norway POH leadership has been consulting closely with Romania and Slovakia to expand services with immigrant populations, focusing on job development.

As part of the activities for the week, the Central team also met



Conference delegates embrace Fit Circle concepts and case management best-practices presented by Dr. Michael Smith.

with Norwegian territorial leaders to give an overview of the POH approach and offer keys to successful implementation. The presenters noted the common rationale for The Salvation Army's utilization of the approach (breaking cycles of poverty) along with the identification of differences in how the respective governments support social service programs in the U.S. and Norway.

Comments from conference attendees indicated they endorsed the efficacy of strength-based case management approach, and they voiced a commitment to further develop strategies to expand implementation within their countries. Also encouraging, was an announce-



Key leaders, representing several Eastern European countries supporting expansion of the approach, network during the conference.

ment during the conference of a \$400,000 award by a private foundation to pay for additional dedicated POH case managers in Norway.



The Central Territory team celebrates the conclusion of a successful Pathway of Hope Conference in Moss, Norway, with Elin Herikstad and Kristin Stordal.

Held in Moss, Norway, the conference brought together more than 60 leaders and case managers working in Norway, Romania and Slovakia and highlighted best practices in part specific to immigrant populations.

The Central Territory team presented workshops on the use of the Herth Hope Index, hope enhancement strategies, motivational interviewing, strengths-based case management, measuring outcomes,

## St. Louis Tree of Lights Continued from page 1

On the strength of network TV coverage and a robust social media campaign,



Model Jahmia Collins

Photos by Adrian Tatum Photography



Midland divisional leaders Lt. Colonels Robert and Collette Webster (on ends), St. Louis Metropolitan Area Commander Major Kjell Steinsland, donated Louis Vuitton bag winner Sarah Mangapora, Greater St. Louis Development Director Daron Hendrix and Director of Special Events Karla Radford

Reimagine 75: Fashion with a Cause became a must-attend event of the

fall, hosted by "Studio STL" host Chelsea Haynes and featuring KMOV meteorologist Leah Hill walking in the fashion show. DJ Joaquin Musick provided the music, and jazz and R&B vocalist Sya performed. Sage Gallon painted a piece live throughout the show that became available for auction, and one attendee of the pre-show fashion insider's reception took home a donated Louis Vuitton bag.

Tucked in the fashion show's events was the announcement of this year's Tree of Lights Co-Chairs, who are regional business leaders and recognizable figures from the St. Louis community.

Ameren Corporation President Marty Lyons, Jr., and St. Louis Cardinals broadcaster and former pitcher Rick Horton serve as 2022's Tree of Lights Co-Chairs, a bold and capable duo for this milestone year in Tree of Lights history.

## She's golden

by Justin Grajek

Over the last 50 years, Shirley Merchant, or "Merch" as she's known by her friends, has lovingly welcomed thousands of people experiencing homelessness into the Detroit, Mich., Harbor Light shelter with her warm smile and comforting voice.

Shirley's passion to serve the marginalized people of Detroit as a support specialist began on her very first day of work, September 25, 1972, when she became aware of their plight. She recalls going home and telling her husband about the "chaos and sadness" she had witnessed. He asked if she was going back to which she replied, "Of course, these people need me."

For instance, a woman who approached the shelter one cold December evening after being thrown out of the house by her husband. She had a baby who was wearing only a sweater and was shivering.

"I gave them some hot chocolate and got them all warmed up," Shirley said. "They stayed for a while until they got on public assistance and things sort of straightened out."

Despite witnessing such sad situations, Shirley adamantly insisted, "I wouldn't want to do anything else."

Shirley says the highlight of her career was working in the nursery/childcare center for the Evangelical Program, a shelter for mothers



Pictured with Shirley Merchant (front, left) are (back) Robert Mailloux, Rene Shaw and Danielle Smith, (front) April Brooks

and children which is closed but whose services are now part of the Detroit Harbor Light as the Booth Women and Children's Shelter. It gave her a sense of purpose and an awareness of how her role played an important part in the children's lives and futures.

She explained, "With me watching the kids, it allowed their mothers time to work on their recovery, which would, in turn, lead to a better life for the child."

Her heart to help less fortunate people has never wavered and is evident in her nearly perfect attendance and reluctance to even take vacation.

In a touching tribute, Jamie Winkler, executive director of the Great Lakes Harbor Light System said, "We have been truly blessed to have such a selfless, caring individual on our staff for the last 50 years. Her grace and love for the people served by Harbor Light's programs exemplifies the mission of The Salvation Army."



THE SALVATION ARMY  
5550 Prairie Stone Pkwy • Hoffman Estates, IL 60192  
847-294-2000

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Editorial Director

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Writer/Editor

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# Chiefs drum up support

by Doug Donahoo

The two shades of red complement each other. The drums beat in time with the bells. In a city known for passionate support in the fall and winter, The Salvation Army is putting that passion to work when it comes to red kettles with an official partnership with the Kansas City Chiefs.

The partnership is putting the mission and message of The Salvation Army in front of a captive audience during the height of the NFL season which just so happens to coincide with The Salvation Army's primary fundraising season.

The Salvation Army of Greater Kansas City is leveraging its partnership with the Kansas City Chiefs through a variety of fundraising priorities, auctions and team events. It started with training camp where The Salvation Army handed out 10,000 coin cups to encourage fans to collect their spare change and later donate it in a Salvation Army red kettle.

The biggest of all are the two regular season games where The Salvation Army is on hand during the Chiefs' world-famous tailgating scenes outside of GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium. Fans have an opportunity to interact with The

Salvation Army, find out more about its services, and drop a donation in the red kettle before kick-off.

This spring, the Chiefs were a major part of The Salvation Army's Civic Lunch which included appearances by the team mascot, KC Wolf, and members of the official team drumline, the Chiefs Rumble. The event included the auction of a Chiefs' road trip package to any 2022 away game for four.

The Chiefs also stepped up to donate to The Salvation Army after the Andover, Kan., tornado in partnership with Kansas City's three other professional sports franchises. Following the landfall of Hurricane Ian on Florida's west coast, the Chiefs partnered with The Salvation Army to launch a campaign dedicated to disaster relief for survivors. The team encouraged fans to donate via

A Chiefs fan drops a donation in the Red Kettle before heading in for the game.



Ed Roberts of the Kansas/Western Missouri development team rings the bell in front of GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium for The Salvation Army's Red Kettle game.

# The best gift is giving back



by Craig Dirkes

Few people understand the importance of bell ringing better than Wesley Daniels. At 55, Wesley is a longtime bellringer whose life was transformed thanks to donations made to red kettle.

His transformation began in 2009 when he arrived at The Salvation Army Harbor Light Center in Minneapolis, Minn.—a homeless outreach facility that is heavily funded by kettle donations.

"I'd recently had a heart attack from doing drugs," said Wesley, while ringing bells outside a Cub grocery store in Brooklyn Park. "I'd lost my job and my home. I didn't have anywhere to go."

While he stayed at the Harbor Light Center, loving Salvation Army staff members gave Wesley food, shelter, addiction counseling and spiritual care. The facility is one of the largest homeless outreach centers in Minnesota, providing a warm bed for about 250 men and women every night.

Wesley spent a year at the Harbor Light Center, learning how to live a

clean life filled with meaning and purpose. He went on to secure his own apartment, graduate from college and be gainfully employed.

"I never went back to drugs either," Wesley said. "No more hanging around on the street or going to bars and clubs. Those days are gone."

Now, Wesley spends his free time praying, working on his car and reaching out to men who are struggling with addiction as he once did.

"I do a lot of check-ins on other guys," Wesley said. "It's good to be a support to them."

Wesley is proud of the man he has become. When people stuff cash into his red kettle, he takes comfort in knowing the money will help others like him.

"Why am I standing here ringing?" asked Wesley, bundled in his warmest winter clothes, standing next to a red kettle on a frigid winter day. "I've been hungry and homeless before. I know how that feels. And I appreciate The Salvation Army for helping me get myself back together."

# A dog and pony show

by Deann Davidson

Tinker the miniature horse knows lots of tricks that make people smile. His owner, Carol Tackas, has trained him well over the past 22 years. Most of the time Tinker enjoys a quiet life, but when Christmastime rolls around he puts his skills to work ringing bells at red kettles.

"I believe in The Salvation Army with all my heart," said Carol, who came up with the idea to teach Tinker to ring a bell after putting money into a red kettle several years ago. She spent the next couple years training him and helping him get used to large groups of people so that she could volunteer with him.

After 10 years of service, Tinker

has become a tradition that families in Southeast Wisconsin look for when doing their holiday shopping. His friend Ta'lu'la, a small, adorable pup, joins in as well, riding on Tinker's back and helping to spread the Christmas cheer.

Tinker loves the attention he gets from his fans, especially the children who give him hugs and pats on their way in and out of the shops. No matter what kind of day someone is having, Tinker ringing the bell with Ta'lu'la sitting atop him always brings a smile.

"It's just automatic smiles. It's truly a dog and pony show," said Carol. "Having people come up and say, 'Thank you so much for doing this' and giving to The Salvation Army is just a thrill."



# And he will be called...

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.—Isaiah 9:6 (NIV)*

## Wonderful Counselor

by Captain Lorna Cossey

**A**re you there, God? It's me, Margaret. by Judy Blume. My mother gave this book to my sister and me at age 11. It's about a young girl learning the facts of life in middle school. This story not only gave funny details about life at 11, but it led me to the Wonderful Counselor.

The book was more than just a young girl coming of age. It was also about a young girl searching for God. The storyline introduced me to talking to God on a personal level. Though we were a Christian family and attended church regularly, God felt so far away.

I started talking to God by writing in a secret notebook. I would begin my entries like the title, "Are you there, God?"

One day I wrote an entry to God motivated by a stern conversation I'd had with my mom about having a good Christmas break based on my behavior in school. I wrote, "Are you there, God? It's me. How can I behave in class when the urge to clown around pulls me in?"

As I began to write and invite God into my world, He opened my heart to true salvation. After I accepted Jesus as my Savior, slowly my behavior

began to change. God created in me a hunger for reading His Word. I would read the King James version in a quiet place in our basement, and the Wonderful Counselor would give me insight into His Word. Wow! Imagine that! The King James version.

I can practically hear your thoughts...*Captain Lorna, a Judy Blume fictional story led you to the Wonderful Counselor?*

It might seem impossible. But let us look briefly at what Wonderful Counselor means. Biblically, His title as Counselor means the Revealer, Light, Helper, Truth, Guide, and in John 16:13, He is the Spirit of Truth.

Also, the ascribed adjective "wonderful" relates to His majestic role. Wonderful is in relationship to miracles that only God can do.

In the Jewish Bible it reads, "Wonder of a Counselor," implying His way of counsel is beyond understanding. So, yes. He can perform this miracle of stepping into an ordinary 11-year-old girl's life to make Himself known to her even through the unorthodox way of a fictional story.

He is, indeed, the Wonderful Counselor.



## Mighty God



by Major Joaquin Rangel

I believe we serve a Mighty God. There have been times in my life I have cried out to God for help, and I have experienced His power, His presence and His victory.

When I think about "mighty" what comes to my mind immediately is strong. It could be described as how a young child sees his or her father—my daddy is strong, he has big muscles, he can lift heavy things. However, in this context, the prophet Isaiah is referring to a particular kind of strength.

I learned that in the original Hebrew text, this word refers to strength as a military exercise. Isaiah is saying that God is a God who fights for us. It's a type of strength that means when there is a battle, God will fight it; and not only will He fight the battle, but He will be victorious.

As Isaiah prophesied, Jesus embodies the qualities of our Mighty God. When Isaiah was looking forward to the birth of Jesus, he was not looking at a fragile, vulnerable, weak child who was born in a manger. He saw a victorious God who would conquer death, the grave

and hell!

In my first appointment, there was a tornado that destroyed much of a nearby town. It was a time to cry out to God for help. As we served, I started each day with my team doing devotions and praying in Jesus' name for the victory, not only to rebuild the town for the future, but for spiritual revival in the present.

I saw Jesus working in every single volunteer as we served the community. In a small town everyone comes to help, but the atmosphere changes when you serve in the name of Jesus. Every day was a joy and a victory. Even though it was a tragedy, God brought a revival.

In Isaiah 40:28, we see that God "gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak." Knowing that our Mighty God fights for me and empowers me changes the way I approach things. I can with certainty claim His victory in my own life. I have eternal hope of victory for myself, and I can share that with others.

This season may you see the Mighty God who fights for us and strengthens us, and may you know that He is victorious!

## Everlasting Father

by Captain Kristina Sjögren

The word "father" can evoke a variety of emotions. Maybe you're like me and you have a positive response because it brings up wonderful memories of a father who loved and cared for you.

The earliest memory I have of feeling loved by my dad was when I was a preschooler and my dad sat me in his lap to read one of my favorite books. I remember feeling safe in his arms as he read to me.

As I got older, my dad expressed love by doing some of our favorite things together like playing our horns, throwing a baseball, playing tennis, and sitting around the kitchen table with all of us for Friday game night.

My dad has exemplified Christ-like love by offering his time and talents to the worship community and beyond. Some of my favorite memories of this involve visiting shut-ins, bringing joy to their faces as we played familiar tunes on our horns and then having coffee/snacks together.

He has taught me how to live like Christ and continues to be a wonderful example. Together with my mom, he showed me how to nurture a personal relationship with Christ as I witnessed them spending time in

scripture and prayer each day. My parents still pray over my family every day.

I realize as you reflect on "Everlasting Father," your heart may feel torn because you miss your father, or you might even grieve the relationship with your father since it didn't meet your expectations and what you longed for.

One of the greatest challenges understanding Everlasting Father is the idea of "father" we carry from our own experiences. But regardless of your view of an earthly father, I have good news for you.

In whatever way you remember the relationship you had/have with your earthly father, your Heavenly Father cares deeply for you and is always near to you, and nothing can separate you from His love! He is engaged, caring, dependable, loving, and perfect. We can trust Him to be fully present in everything we do and experience.

This Christmas, as you reflect on our Savior Jesus Christ, I hope you find peace in your heart knowing He, the Everlasting Father, is there for you. Jesus came to this earth to heal our brokenness and replace it with hope. Trust in Him and know He is faithful and present when you need Him most.



## Prince of Peace



by Major Mike McKee

One of my favorite names for Jesus is "Prince of Peace." But according to the Council on Foreign Relations, there are currently 27 ongoing (armed) conflicts worldwide. This seems to beg the question, "Where in the world is this 'Prince of Peace' that Isaiah has prophesied in Isaiah Chapter 9?" We can find the answer by turning to the New Testament and reading what Jesus had to say about "peace."

In John Chapter 14, we see Jesus promising the disciples that after He returns to the Father, the Holy Spirit will come to teach them "all things" and to remind them (and us) of everything He has said. "My peace I leave with you, My peace I give you," Jesus said. Anyone who has welcomed Christ into their hearts can testify to this special form of "peace that surpasses understanding."

This is the peace that comforts and encourages us. It's the peace that grants us an overwhelming sense of wellbeing and of God's unconditional love, even when the world around us is anything but peaceful. It's difficult to explain, but when Christ grants

us His peace, our hearts focus on Him, and He grants us an enduring peace that defies our present circumstances. This peace even follows His servants into some very unlikely places.

During well over 23 years of responding to international emergencies, I've found myself serving refugees and survivors from various wars around the world. From wars in Kosovo and Mozambique, and in civil wars in northern Uganda and Sri Lanka, I've witnessed this peace. I've seen this peace during the Second Gulf War in Iraq, and, most recently, during the current conflict in Ukraine. And it's always been the same.

In every one of these, our teams can witness to the power of Christ's presence to bring a sense of peace and the beginning moments of healing to people who experienced unthinkable hardship and abuse. In places as remote as a refugee tent in Albania or even recently on a crowded bus in Romania, I've seen Christ's Spirit bring this "peace that surpasses understanding" to people with every reason to give up or despair.

Prince of Peace? Even in a world that's constantly at war? Yes, He is!

# Ancient ruins bring Word to life

by Major Valerie Carr

The territory's Biblical Education Tour to Greece and Türkiye (Turkey), which had been related for March 2022 and then postponed again due to a fourth wave of COVID-19 that closed travel to much of the world, finally was able to take place this fall.

Twenty-four soldiers and officers, led by Lt. Colonel Darlene Harvey and Dr. Rob DeGeorge of the territorial officer resource and development department, toured the ancient sites from the Apostle Paul's ministry



Colonel Jeff Smith teaches in Corinth, Greece.

in Greece to the Seven Churches of Revelation in Türkiye. At each, local tour guides shared historical and cultural information, and Colonels Dorothy and Jeff Smith shared teaching and devotions each day.

The group's whirlwind tour covered multiple sites in the two countries which share a biblical and historical significance for their relation to the writings and cultural context of much of the New Testament.

Starting in Thessaloniki then traveling through various places of Paul's experiences in the book of Acts, the tour in Greece ended at the Acropolis and Mars Hill in Athens. The group enjoyed fellowship with Salvation Army officers from both Thessaloniki and Athens.

Their trek through Türkiye took them to the site of all seven churches found in Revelations, as well as several locations of Paul's ministry and life in Asia Minor of the New Testament.

The 12-day experience served as a season of biblical learning and spiritual renewal. Time spent worshipping and learning as the group walked the ruins of the ancient past will become a significant memory. Lessons from the past will shape the way God's Living Word is under-



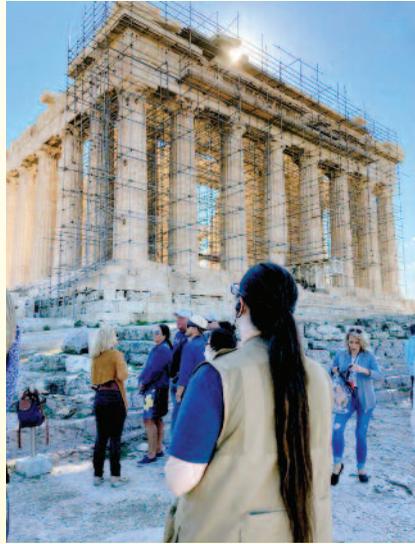
Lt. Colonel David Harvey, Major Keith Graham and Dr. Rob DeGeorge pray at Pergamum, Turkey.



Enjoying the hot springs in Hierapolis, Turkey, are Captain Julie Trapp, Captain Bersabe Vera-Hernandez, Major Valerie Carr, Claudia Simpson, Major Bill Holman and Major Heather Holman



The Biblical Education Tour group at Ephesus, Turkey



Kelsey Shaw is awestruck as she looks at the Parthenon in Athens, Greece.

stood and will renew passion for ministry.

After worshipping at the ruins of St. John's Basilica outside the ancient city of Ephesus, the group ended their tour with singing and testimonies on the bus as it returned them to their hotel for the final time. They shared a renewed sense of boldness on behalf of the Gospel and an expanded contextual understanding for the well-known scripture passages related to their visit.

A large portion of the BET is spent looking at what a

city used to be, where a church used to stand or a marketplace is being uncovered from centuries of dirt and debris. Standing at the unexcavated mound that was the city of Colossae, Colonel Jeff Smith shared: "Though [this] city is in ruins, the scripture is not." Although empires rise *and* fall, the Word of God stands firm and true. As the apostle Paul writes in Philippians: "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever." (Philippians 1:6) The trip serves as a reminder of the fleeting nature of human life and urges us to put our hope and trust in what is everlasting.

The tour of Greece and Türkiye opens the Scripture in a fresh way, reminding the participants the Word of God endures and speaks to each generation anew. Each traveler returns home having encountered a living God among the ancient ruins and with a desire to share what they have learned and seen with those in their ministries.



Walking in Laodicea, Turkey

# Going the distance for ministry

by Major Beth Petrie  
Distance Learning Coordinator

Distance learners spent a week at the College for Officer Training (CFOT) in an intensive Doctrine II course taught by Captain Blake Fewell. Four of the students participated virtually, while the rest enjoyed the on-campus benefits of personal interaction with each other, staff and cadets and the interesting sites of the city surrounding the college. Captain Blake taught the Doctrine I class last spring and will complete the three-course class in spring 2023 with Doctrine III.

Students spent time in the classroom, chapel and other gathering spaces while at the CFOT. On Wednesday, they presented the morning prayers session for the cam-

pus. Time also was made for fellowship and fun both on campus and at a nearby restaurant.

"It was great being on campus for the distance learning program," said A/Captain Marcarius Coakley. "We were able to focus solely on our course work while also being in community with the cadets and the other learners who are on the field. It was good to be surrounded by the other officers who are going through the same thing as me, to be able to catch up and talk about the classes and discuss our ministry on the field, too. It let me know that I have people who I can call on for advice for class work and ministry ideas. I'm looking forward to going back in the spring!"

There are currently 22 participants in the Distance Learning (DL)

program which include 14 auxiliary captains, seven envoys and one corps administrator. Each has an individualized training plan of personal and professional development while they serve in an appointment. Classes are taught through the CFOT, Olivet Nazarene University, Nazarene Bible College and several other venues in both in-person and online formats.

Courses include the areas of doctrine, Bible, leadership, preaching, so-

cial work, pastoral counseling, church and Salvation Army history, and missional living.

Seven auxiliary captains will complete their training in the current academic year and may soon



The Salvation Army

# PRAYER CENTRAL

USA Central Territory

## January Prayer Calendar

My Prayer List	Day	Bible Reading	Pray for The Salvation Army
	1 Sunday	Romans 1-2	HAPPY NEW YEAR
	2 Monday	Genesis 1-3	Russia Command
	3 Tuesday	Joshua 1-5	Chicago, Ill., ARC
	4 Wednesday	Psalms 1-2	Adrian, Mich., Corps
	5 Thursday	Job 1-2	Anderson, Ind., Corps
	6 Friday	Matthew 1-2	Dodge City, Kan., Corps
	7 Saturday	Romans 3-4	Aurora, Ill., Corps
	8 Sunday	Genesis 4-7	Metro Detroit Area Command
	9 Monday	Joshua 6-10	Alton, Ill., Corps
	10 Tuesday	Psalms 3-5	Pakistan Territory
	11 Wednesday	Job 3-4	Albert Lea, Minn., Corps
	12 Thursday	Isaiah 7-11	Aberdeen, S.D., Corps
	13 Friday	Matthew 3-4	Green Bay Citadel, Wis., Corps
	14 Saturday	Romans 5-6	Alma, Mich., Corps
	15 Sunday	Genesis 8-11	Bloomington, Ind., Corps
	16 Monday	Joshua 11-15	El Dorado, Kan., 360 Life Center
	17 Tuesday	Psalms 6-8	Singapore, Malaysia and Myanmar Territory
	18 Wednesday	Job 5-6	Belvidere, Ill., Corps
	19 Thursday	Isaiah 12-17	Branson, Mo., Corps
	20 Friday	Matthew 5-7	Austin, Minn., Corps
	21 Saturday	Romans 7-8	Boone, Iowa, Corps
	22 Sunday	Genesis 12-15	Green Bay, Wis., Kroc Center
	23 Monday	Joshua 16-20	Rwanda and Burundi Command
	24 Tuesday	Psalms 9-11	Owosso, Mich., Corps
	25 Wednesday	Job 7-8	Lafayette, Ind., Corps
	26 Thursday	Isaiah 18-22	Leavenworth, Kan., Corps
	27 Friday	Matthew 8-10	Elgin, Ill., Corps
	28 Saturday	Romans 9-10	Springfield, Mo., Corps
	29 Sunday	Genesis 16-19	Keokuk, Iowa, Corps
	30 Monday	Joshua 21-24	Virginia, Minn., Corps
	31 Tuesday	Psalms 12-14	Superior, Wis., Corps

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

ARC = Adult Rehabilitation Center

A column on holiness  
by Dr. Bill and  
Rev. Diane Ury

## Love is the Way

by Diane Ury  
National Ambassador for Holiness

What is holiness? It's good to refresh our thinking about this so that we don't find ourselves moving down the wrong path in our understanding. One of the greatest dangers we face is the daily deception that entices our minds to move away from what is real; to walk in delusion, all the while thinking we are in truth. "There is a way that seems right to a person, but its end is the way of death." (Proverbs 14:12)

Holiness is not, first of all, our behavior. Morality and ethics are not the essence of holiness. Those are just modern terms for good old-fashioned pietism. Unless intimately tied to Jesus, they've consistently been used throughout history in ways that can harm.

What is holiness? Holiness, first of all, is the triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Holiness is this personal God Who is the relational essence of mutual, self-offering, other-oriented love. Because God is Love (1 John 4:8, 16), He continuously offers His Life to be received by all who will choose Him (John 1:12). Holiness is a reality in our lives only when we live in a continual state of relationship with the Holy One (1 John 5:12, Doctrine Nine). All persons are created with a capacity to be filled with God's Life (Gen. 2:7). We are made for intimacy with Him.

All our desires are symbols that point us to Him.

What is it that keeps us from holiness? Anything that comes between, that separates us from the Holy One. That is called sin. Sin doesn't originate with our behavior either. Holiness is intimate

union with God; Sin is removing ourselves from intimacy with God through distrust. We fall for deceit. We doubt His good character. We turn our backs on Him. We reject His ways and act that out.

Jesus tells us He is the Way (John 14:6). There is no other. During the Christmas season, we remember that Jesus is the restored union of God and humans (Colossians 2:9-10; Doctrine Four). There is no salvation or holiness by any other entrance. Our kindness, our generosity at Christmastime, our compassion, grace, inclusion, social justice—none of that will save us or anyone else. Just being included in The Salvation Army will not save us. "Doing the Most Good" is not holiness. Only surrendering our entire lives to the Kingship of Jesus, turning away from sin and back to God, being filled with His Spirit, obediently living out His Word, is the way of salvation and holiness (Titus 3:5-7; Doctrine Seven).

No person can widen the door that leads to God. Jesus was very clear that we must strive to enter through the narrow way, which is the only way to life. There is a broad way, but it leads to destruction (Matthew 7:13-14). Jesus is the Door (John 10:7-10). He is the Way to get from where we are to where we want to be (John 14:1-6). And He is what our hearts are longing for (Psalm 42:1-2). He is what we are seeking (Luke 11:9-10).

Love is the Door. All our desires to find meaning, to belong, to live in joy are fulfilled within. Love longs for us. Everyone is created for holiness—exclusive devotion to and union with God. Don't miss this.



## Going the distance Continued from page 6

be ready for commissioning and confirmation of their officership and promotion to the substantive rank of captain. Over the years, dozens of officers have entered the ranks through this alternate means of training. Generally, they have been in second, third or fourth careers and bring a wealth of life experience and knowledge to the role.

If you are interested in pursuing officership through such a path, talk to your corps officer and divisional candidates' secretary.

Envoys and corps administrators are employed in corps and institutional leadership under the direction of their divisional commander; if this is a better fit, begin talking to your corps officer about it.

It's not too late to answer a

call to ministry in The Salvation Army.

For more information, contact your divisional candidates' secretary.

## --Mustard Seeds--



# 730... AND BEYOND



1,602 days and counting

by Lt. Ken Jones

*I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. (Ephesians 1:17, NIV)*

The purpose of a vessel is how I'd sum up what I've learned from my experience as an officer thus far. Prior to my tenure at the College for Officer Training, I never actually thought about what officership would look like or dream about how I would play a role in my calling.

Of course, I considered the inherent sacrifices and risks, the hours of sermon preparation, executing programs and administrative duties, but I never took the time to consider what impact officership would have on my life. I banked on delivering eloquent messages which would move the masses as big as Moses' Exodus with Israel and sharing compelling dialogues which would move individuals to spiritual commitment like Jesus with the woman at the well. Not that those are unhealthy aspirations, but they certainly had me—not God—at the center of it all.

Early into my first appointment, these aspirations were met with the realities our people faced daily. It didn't take long before I recognized that I can only lead people as far as I've gone and I would need to rely on the Holy Spirit to lead the rest of the



way. But what does that mean? And what does a daily, surrendered life look like? It starts with expectation. I wasn't called to be a hero in anyone's story. I wasn't commissioned to reinvent a grand scheme that would co-chair the Army into prosperous times we haven't seen in years. I was called to simply serve.

The irony is I was doing all that except I was focused on the "what" and not the "way." I haven't arrived, but my desire to serve has grown to what Paul's prayer and thanksgiving was to the church of Ephesus "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better."

All that I say and do should reflect the wisdom and hope of the Gospel. With my mind set on these things, I seek to serve and trust God will see it through.

## Green Bay Kroc hosts the world

by Tim Perlewitz

The Green Bay, Wis., Ray and Joan Kroc Center hosted its first International Community Festival this fall. The free, family-focused event showcased the diversity of Greater Green Bay, bringing together more than 20 community resource partners, service providers, cultural organizations, educational institutions, businesses, nonprofits, families and individuals.

In just five hours, more than 1,300 visitors walked the center's halls, engaged with live performances, storytellers, food and art demonstrations and visited 59 vendor booths from around the world. The festival's goal was to bridge the gap between the perception and reality of diversity in the Greater Green Bay area. For instance, many people were shocked to learn that 27 different languages are spoken in the public school system.



The India booth at the festival

each area. Those who visited all seven areas received day passes to the Kroc Center and along their journey gathered international candies and toys from the exhibitors.

Performances from the Oneida Nation Smoke Dancers, a reading from Caribbean-born picture book author Baptiste Paul, and a live set by the local band Pegasus captivated the crowd.

The Salvation Army had a five-booth footprint including members of territorial and divisional headquarters who showcased its intercultural ministry. The Green Bay Corps and Pathway of Hope initiative helped show families ways The Salvation Army works for them day in and day out. A standout performance

by Salvation Army brass and reggae bands helped close out the evening, leaving everyone in high spirits!

Feedback from the community was overwhelmingly positive, and plans are to expand the event.

"Thank you for giving me the opportunity to volunteer and tell my refugee story," said volunteer and storyteller Shiu Ho. "My audiences were kind enough to hold my hands and tell me that they are so happy I found a home in the U.S. It felt overwhelming."



Green Bay Kroc Center Community Outreach Coordinator Patti Schevers, Corps Volunteer Coordinator Kristine Schmidt and Administrative Assistant Ana Castro

To achieve the festival, the Kroc Center events department utilized a network of personal contacts and relationships with partner organizations to form a planning committee, representing five organizations which helped to shape the event, ensuring its inclusiveness and cultural sensitivity, to disperse translated materials and to cultivate the volunteer pool needed.

Children were given a drawstring travel bag and passport, which served as a program, and they received a stamp when they visited

## Congratulations!

*We congratulate the following officers who have retired this year. Thank you for your years of dedicated service. You've made a difference.*

**Lt. Colonel Doreen Jennings**  
**Majors Glen & Carole Caddy**  
**Majors Jay & Sally Davis**  
**Major Margaret Hill**  
**Major Barbara Logan**  
**Majors Kirk & Carolyn Schuetz**  
**Majors Jose & Annette Tamayo**  
**Majors Kevin & Christie Van Zee**  
**Majors Jonathan & Kim Welch**  
**Major Patricia Welch**  
**Captain Karl Blessing**  
**Captains Jim & Lynnea Brickson**  
**Captains Chuck & Dana Cook**  
**Captains Gordon & Cindy Hoag**  
**Captains Dennis & Antonia Marak**  
**Captains Pedro & Milly Pagan**

