



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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The world's tallest kettle

Super-sized kettle stands as a symbol of hope in Detroit

by Justin Grajek

The world's tallest red kettle stands 56 feet tall and 24 feet wide. Its 26,000 LED lights wait to be illuminated as thousands of people stand ready in Detroit's Cadillac Square. After a short introduction, the switch is flipped, and it lights up the night. Christmas music swells. The crowd cheers. The Christmas season is ushered in.

The Salvation Army of Metro Detroit's annual Red Kettle Kickoff takes place in mid-November as part of the City of Detroit Tree Lighting Ceremony. With a plethora of activities like ice skating and carriage rides, hot chocolate giveaways and live entertainment, the festivities have become a tradition for many families.

During the kettle kickoff, performances have ranged from the Southeast, Mich., Adult Rehabilitation Center Gospel Singers, to the electro pop sensation Nuclassica to R & B artist Kem. Last year featured Live Band Karaoke Detroit and WRIF radio DJ Screamin' Scott. A Salvation Army brass ensemble plays carols each year in the kettle's vicinity.

For a second year in a row, Scott Wolffis, president and CEO of Commercial Alliance, is the Metro Detroit Red Kettle Christmas Chairman, and has the honor of announcing the campaign (which this year has a goal of \$7.9 million) and flipping the switch



John Hale, Great Lakes Division executive director of development, chats with Scott Wolffis, Red Kettle Christmas Chairman, at the kickoff.

for the world's tallest red kettle.

"It is my pleasure to partner with The Salvation Army again this year and do my part in helping my neighbors in need. I look forward to the continued partnership between Commercial Alliance and The Salvation Army," said Wolffis.

The super-sized kettle stands as a symbol of hope and beckons community members to join The Salvation Army in making a merrier Christmas for their neighbors in need. Annually, more than 2,000 volunteers ring bells at 1,000 kettle sites in metro Detroit. This year at kettles people will have another way to give as the Army in Metro Detroit rolls out a process called tiptap where people simply tap their credit or debit cards or scan their phones to donate \$5, \$10 or \$20.

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The quiet heart of Christmas

by General Lyndon Buckingham

The scene was a familiar one. A street filled with festive lights and decorations, music playing and crowds of people moving along, taking note of all the Christmas details. Right at the end was a house that was in relative darkness, with just a small box containing a nativity scene set up on the front lawn. Most people did not even bother to check it out. Most simply considered the Christmas display was over before they reached that house. But right there was a visual representation of the quiet heart of Christmas. Not a flashy display. Not a lot of lights and sounds. Just a quiet focus on the one who is born to be our Saviour.

I sometimes wonder whether it is easy for us to miss the quiet heart of Christmas. Even when we are looking at some of the Christmas story we may miss the central message of it all. Each of the gospel writers presents Christmas in a different way. Some might say that only Matthew and Luke include the Christmas story. But I want to suggest to you that each of the gospels brings its own special emphasis.

Mark—possibly the oldest of the gospel—does not have any birth or infancy stories. Instead, Mark's "Christmas" is embedded in the opening words, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mark 1:1 *New King James Version*). Jesus is shown to be Son of God from the very beginning. That's the good news.

John also does not contain birth or infancy stories, but shows the centre of Christmas originating in the heart of God. The word made flesh dwells among us—full of grace and truth.

Matthew opens with a long list of names in Jesus' family tree. It's easy to skip over this and miss its significance. Included in it are five women who all showed remarkable faith, despite that society may have judged them harshly. Tamar—who tricked her father-in-law into pregnancy; Rahab—a prostitute who helped the Israelite spies; Ruth—a despised for-



eigner; Bathsheba—an adulteress; and Mary—an unmarried mother. Each were part of Jesus' family history. If Jesus will later be shown to identify with sinners, it's because it's "in his genes". Jesus is connected with people like us who—despite sinfulness and frail humanity—show faith. Matthew then makes the connection

with Jesus being Immanuel—God with us, in our humanness. All of this happens *before* the traditional Christmas characters—the Wise Men—even appear. They come to find the one born to be King.

Luke has the angels announcing that Jesus is the Saviour, Christ the Lord. This is not given to the people who you would expect, but rather to shepherds—often considered to be religious outcasts because of the nature of their work. For such as these, living on the margins of society, Jesus comes as Saviour.

Each of the gospels presents a different view of Christmas. It's easy

for us to become so engaged with the trappings of the Christmas story. That may include things that we have become accustomed to, that are not even mentioned in any of the gospels. Instead we can sometimes miss the quiet heart of Christmas as related in Scripture.

This year, perhaps we can focus again on what the gospels actually tell us about the coming of Jesus. One who comes for those who are sinners and outcasts. One who comes to be King. One who comes to be Immanuel—God with us. One who comes to be our Saviour. One who has existed from all eternity.

With all the other things that happen at this time of the year, may we focus our hearts and minds on the quiet heart of Christmas: the reality of who Jesus is. The Son of God. The eternal Word made flesh. Our King. Immanuel. Our Saviour. Christ the Lord.

With the songwriter, we say "O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel."

May God bless you at this Christmastime and throughout the coming year.

The sound of faith

by Trevor Darago

Bill Youman, 82, has become almost as iconic as the red kettle he mans in his hometown of Terre Haute, Ind. He's been volunteering for more than a decade. In 2022, his eleventh year, he hit the incredible milestone of having raised \$122,000, surpassing his goal by more than \$20,000.

He says he simply wants to do as much good as he can and that as a man of faith bellringing is part of his ministry.

"There are two principles of Christianity: faith and service," Bill said. "In the book of James, the Bible tells us, 'Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead,' and there is no action simpler than just ringing that bell."

He has trained to ring more than 360 hours in 10-hour shifts.

"I don't take any breaks while I'm at the kettle," he explained. "Though I get tired, and get kind of achy at times, I try to remember the experiences of people in need around the world. Their tragedies seem unreal, beyond anything we could imagine."

Bill says he's been blessed to hear people's stories. Many he'll never forget.

"One woman told me of her grandfather, a doughboy from WWI," he recalled. "His first sighting as he stepped foot on the shores of America was The Salvation Army with cof-



Bill Youman, an icon

fee, donuts, and the warmest of welcomes."

One of the most moving stories was shared by an elderly woman whose father died when she was young. His death left the family in shambles, but in their time of need The Salvation Army provided clothes and toys on Christmas morning. "Though she was just a child at the time," he said, "she still remembers."

Captain Jeremy Fingar, Terre Haute, Ind., corps officer said, "Bill is an excellent example of what dedication can do for a community."

Long kettle commute

by Craig Dirkes

Mark W. Dreyer is an over-the-road truck driver from North Dakota who raises thousands of dollars each year for The Salvation Army by ringing bells at kettles in the Twin Cities.

Mark, 67, lives in the Badlands of North Dakota in the historic town of Watford City, near the Montana border. Every Christmas season, he schedules his truck routes to go through the Twin Cities so he can ring bells for The Salvation Army.

"I love helping," he said. "It gets in your blood when you see the effect you're having on people."

Originally from the Twin Cities area, Mark moved to North Dakota in 2011 to work in the oil fields. He first started being a bellringer about 12 years ago while he was living in Spring Park, Minn., and working as a paid on-call firefighter for the nearby Long Lake Fire Department.

He became passionate about ringing bells about 10 years ago after taking a tour of the Minneapolis Harbor Light Shelter which provides food, emergency shelter and care for hundreds of people every day.

"My heart melted during the tour,"

Mark said. "That place is the real deal. My interest in bell ringing grew from there."

Since then, he has volunteered hundreds of hours at kettles and has single-handedly recruited dozens of other bellringers to join him, many of them firefighters. Last season he rang bells at three Minnesota Vikings games and at a Vikings holiday event at TCO Performance Center. He plans to ring eight times this season.

He is excited to ring again this Christmas because "you see the good [The Salvation Army] is doing and you meet wonderful people," he said. "They're giving out clothing and food, and getting people off the streets. It's inspiring."

"One thing I always do is schedule a shift for the last day of bellringing, on Christmas Eve," Mark said. "People really open up their pocketbooks."

In addition to helping The Salvation Army, Mark is heavily involved with raising funds for many other charities including the Children's Cancer Research Fund, Walk to End Alzheimer's, American Cancer Society, and the Susan G. Komen Organization.



Mark Dreyer ringing in the Twin Cities

World's tallest kettle

Continued from page 1

The Army is blessed to have many generous partners supporting its fundraising campaign and service.

For instance, Commercial Alliance encourages its employees to "adopt" a kettle location and ring bells or to set up virtual red kettles to raise funds. Commercial Alliance and their partner credit unions throughout Michigan also signed on this year as the Great Lakes Division Giving Tuesday sponsor.

As part of its "Bountiful Boxes" program, Bank of America donates \$50,000 to provide food boxes offering ingredients for diverse holiday meal options to individuals and families who are affected by food insecurity. The holiday meal boxes are

distributed at the 13 area corps which all also hosts seasonal toy shops where families can select toys and gifts for their children.

Last year, more than 56,000 toys and gifts were provided for children and shut-in seniors, and more than 20,000 gift cards were distributed for Christmas meals and gifts.

Chillbox Convenience Stores gives patrons the opportunity to donate to The Salvation Army while accruing points on their app and helps collect coats for the Coats for Kids event which supplies outerwear, gloves and hats to thousands of children, keeping them warm during Detroit's brutal, snowy winter.

Buddy's Pizza now boasts the title "Official Red Kettle Pizza Partner." They not only supply pizza for participants at the Red Kettle Kickoff and other holiday events such as toy distributions, they feature a Red Kettle pizza topping during the season with proceeds from sales going to The Salvation Army. Throughout the year they also frequently provide free pizza for kids at camp and shelter residents.

The Royal Park Hotel is another business for which raising funds for The Salvation Army has become a tradition for 15 years. A ribbon cutting launches the season of giving in



Sharon Tatom Garcia, Great Lakes Division senior director of communications with Franco agency team members Lucas Polack, Christina Quirk and Tracy Wolf

the hotel's festively decorated lobby filled with Christmas trees, snow reindeer, twinkling lights and sparkling ornaments. The David W. Elliott Memorial Foundation has donated a generous \$5,000 match.

"Everyone has their own unique Christmas tradition. This is ours," said Michael Zorn, general manager at the Royal Park Hotel. "The Royal Park Hotel is honored to do its part to support our neighbors in need by partnering with The Salvation Army."

The Army also benefits from huge media support. From the Celebrity Bell Ring Weekend where 50 local TV and radio personalities man kettles live to the Rock the Red Kettle concert presented by 94.7 WCSX and 101 WRIF.

In an interview with WWJ Newsradio 950 at the beginning of the season, Major Toni Dorrell, Metro Detroit area commander, explained the Red Kettle Cam-

paign's reach.

"It's not just at the Christmas season. It's really year-round. Our people are on duty every day of the week, serving the vulnerable of Metro Detroit," she said, citing the more than 2.4 million meals and 530,000 nights of shelter provided last year. "That doesn't happen without volunteers, without donors, without these red kettles and the quarters, dollars and checks people put in them."



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Celebrity Bell Ring Weekend

The challenge is on the first weekend of December as Detroit-area media personalities compete to raise funds for The Salvation Army Metro Detroit Red Kettle Campaign during the annual Celebrity Bell Ring Weekend. The immensely popular event gives personalities three days to raise as much as they can through virtual red kettles and during a two-hour slot on Saturday when they ring the bell live. Last year, more than \$20,000 was raised.

Over the past decade, news anchors from every television station and a myriad of radio personalities such as WCSX's "Big Jim" and WOMC's JoAnne Purtan have been part of the event. Last year's winner was Big Jim, thanks in part to dona-



Detroit radio personality Shannon Renee with Lt. Audrey Sutter



Sunny Love from the Mix 92.3

tions from Michigan rock-n-roll legend Bob Seger and Chairman of Emagine Theaters, Paul Glanz.

Originally consisting of a two-hour live ring on the first Saturday of December, the challenge was taken virtual and expanded to three days when the pandemic made a live event impossible. The celebrities were more than happy to campaign for online donations in support of The Salvation Army and have continued to raise funds both online and in person for the past two years.

For several weeks leading up to the competition, more than 50 participants post pictures, videos and other engaging content to encourage mem-

bers of the community to donate to their virtual or physical red kettles. Good-natured banter between them regarding who will bring in the most helps engage the public.

Year after year fans flock to the locations where their favorite personalities are ringing for a chance to meet them, take selfies, get autographs, and to support The Salvation Army's Christmas campaign. The event also raises awareness of the work the Army is doing in the Detroit area during the holiday season and throughout the year.

"It has been an honor to do this the past few years," said WXYZ Morning Anchor Alicia Smith in a Facebook LIVE post. "It's so much fun...and it's great to meet all of you."

Lt. Audrey Sutter, who leads the Downriver, Mich., Corps with her husband Lt. Shawn Sutter, said the Bell Ring Weekend often brings local celebrities back to their hometowns. Lt. Audrey recalled working with Shannon Renee of 105.1 The Bounce radio station in Detroit, who returned to her hometown in the Downriver area in 2021 to work at kettles.

"It was a great way for her to come out and support her old community," Lt. Audrey said.

Seeing local celebrities is also fun for area residents, she added.

"You get to see the faces of those



Dave Spencer and Randy Wimbley from FOX2 News

voices you hear on the radio, and the faces you see on TV in-person," Lt. Audrey said. "And you see that these celebrities really care about their communities. It is awesome."

When the final amounts are counted, the top three earners are announced on social media and receive a visit from the Detroit area commander who presents a personalized trophy in recognition and gratitude of their support.



Erin Vee from WWJ with a Christmas campaign supporter

Bellringing 2.0

New bell for next generation

The sound of merrily ringing bells has become synonymous with Christmastime. For more than 100 years, The Salvation Army has used the bell to draw attention to its red kettles and encourage the public to donate in support of its services to the community year-round.

Now, for the first time since the tradition of bellringing began, a new kind of bell has been developed to engage more of the senses. The Brite Bell, created by Major Alan Wurtz, incorporates lights, sounds and other features to bring the bell into the 21st century.

"It's for the next generation," Major Alan said. "You don't just hear it—you see it!"

The Brite Bell has versatile features which allow the ringer to adjust the settings for sound, white light flashing, alternating colors flashing or a combination. It can be programmed to function as needed and appropriate for various settings—lights only, for example, in a contained space where ringing might echo and become too loud. It also has safety features including a wrist strap and has been drop-tested for durability.

Major Alan says the idea came to him as he chatted with a customer service representative while waiting for an issue to be resolved on his PayPal account.

"She told me her son rings bells at the mall every year for The Salvation Army, but that he is deaf," he said. "That got me thinking we could do better, but I wasn't sure what that would mean."



Major Alan Wurtz, Brite Bell's creator, gives a demonstration.

The process of bringing the concept of the Brite Bell to life took six years. From developing a prototype to engaging a manufacturer and marketing the product, it was a long haul. However, Major Alan says each step went smoothly as God opened doors and provided what was needed to make the Brite Bell a reality.

"The debut of the Brite Bell at the Better Together conference in Dallas this spring was amazing," said the major. "It was very well received and everyone seemed to love the idea."

The Brite Bell isn't only for ringing at red kettles. A more advanced model containing an RFID chip is also available which allows for remote programming from a computer or smart device.

"You're only limited by your imagination," Major Alan concluded. "It can be used as a centerpiece or favor at community events, sponsor logos can be printed on the sides, hundreds of the RFID bells can be programmed to create a kind of show. The uses are endless."

Ringin' in the season

Pam Callan's family knows it is the Christmas season when the holiday music begins playing at their suburban Detroit home—in July.

"I am the Christmas nut in my house," Pam acknowledged. "I start my Christmas shopping in July. I play Christmas music, and we watch Christmas movies."

She has brought that holiday spirit to kettles during the last five seasons. And she's thrilled to be back at the kettle again this year.

Armed with a variety of bells, her own speakers to play music and a big smile, Pam has become a well-known bellringer outside of her local Kroger grocery story.

"I have had people tell me they walked into the store in a bad mood but walked out singing a Christmas carol I had been singing," she recalled. "I know how important it is to have that enthusiasm. I am full of the Holy Spirit."

Pam often dances to the holiday tunes she plays and shakes the bells along to the beat. Her enthusiasm has brought about a few "incidents."

She has cracked a brass bell, blown out a speaker and has gotten "bell-ringer elbow, just like a tennis player," she said through laughter.

But nothing stops her from her kettle shifts.

It all began when her husband Tom joined The Salvation Army's Metro Detroit Advisory Board.

"He said to me 'I think this bell-ringing thing is your gig,'" Pam recalled.



Bell Ringing Ambassador Pam Callan

During her first kettle season she signed up for 12 hours, and regretted not signing up for more.

The following year, she signed up for 20-25 hours and now is at 40 hours each season. She is sometimes joined by her 24-year-old daughter Grace, one of her four children.

"Grace understands what the mission is and how important the job of volunteering at a kettle is," Pam said. "She loves to come and sing with me."

Pam isn't shy to encourage others to experience the joy of bell ringing. In fact, last year, The Salvation Army in Detroit named her Bell Ringing Ambassador.

At the beginning of this holiday season, Pam appeared on the local TV show "Live in the D" with Metro Detroit Area Commander Major Toni Dorrell. The two of them were recruiting kettle volunteers.

"It's so easy to sign up. And the impact of just a two-hour shift—what The Salvation Army can do with that money—is astronomical," Pam said.

A beautiful gathering of people, a place of prayer and joyful worship

by Joy Caro

"This must be what Heaven is like." Saturday evening worship at the One Conference was so powerful that this is what I heard over and over, and this is what I felt.

Joining with other Salvationists who long to hear what God has to say, worshipping Him together, and growing in knowledge, faith and unity is why I try never to miss this conference. Though I've attended this biennial event four times, I've never heard the same thing twice. After each, I've gone home with a new perspective and awareness of cultural ministries. This year was no different.



Lt. Kenesa Debela moderates a panel.



Carla LaFayette

during the weekend spent in praise, led by the band Of Dust, and in learning from a variety of speakers.

Friday night we heard from Rasool Berry, teaching pastor at The Bridge Church in Brooklyn, N.Y. "What does it mean to be Kingdom citizens?" he asked, walking us through Acts 6 and showing the steps we need to take when there are injustices to people who are different from us. He said that the disciples did three things: listened to complaints, admitted there was a problem and lamented, and supported those who were given the responsibility to solve it. This led to the gospel spreading and God's Kingdom growing. It was a great start to the weekend.

Saturday morning, we heard from a panel of speakers, who each

brought different perspectives to the weekend's theme. Their presentation was followed by a discussion where they answered questions posed by the moderator, Lt. Kenesa Debela. They shared both personal and professional experiences in ministry as it related to cultural differences.

The rest of the morning delegates chose from a wide range of workshops. I attended Culturally Intelligent Leadership, led by Dr. Michelle Ami Reyes. One of my big takeaways from this session was the importance of communication and being aware of differences between the way I do or perceive things as opposed to someone else who is different from me. I also attended

Trauma Informed Strategies taught by Elyse Dobney and Peggy McGee. This workshop focused on how trauma may look in different people and how we can support someone experiencing it without re-traumatizing him or her.

Saturday evening's dinner and program was my favorite part of the conference. The flavorful dinner was followed



Michelle Loyd-Paige and Michelle Williams sign books.

The theme, "Gathering: God's House of Prayer for All Nations," set the tone for a deep and meaningful weekend. In the keynote session, Captain Bersabe Vera, who leads the territorial intercultural ministries department which puts on the conference, shared their two goals: that each delegate would leave a better leader, and that each delegate would be better equipped to build God's Kingdom. These goals were met



Major Xavier Montenegro and Rasool Berry



Emanuel Padilla



Michelle Ami Reyes



Captain Bersabe Vera



Susie Gamez

My ministry takeaway

Delegates share their One experience and how it enriches their lives and ministries.



by a beautiful worship experience. Delegates were encouraged to wear clothing representing their own cultures, and the room was filled with stunning outfits and cultural pride. Of Dust led worship, and scripture was shared in eight languages. We were ministered to by a group from an Ethiopian Church who sang in their native language. While I didn't understand the words, I sensed their connection to God. Throughout the evening we were led in worship by young people. Set the Atmosphere, a young people's mime group from the Decatur, Ill., Corps, poured their heart into their performance and praised God who has given them talent and equipped them for service.



Major Marc Johnson

Susie Gamez, teaching pastor from Midtown Church, addressed hard and discouraging times in our lives when we want to give up. She encouraged us to be grounded in scripture and the knowledge of God and to be guided by the Holy Spirit. Susie taught from Genesis 22, the story of Abraham and the sacrifice God asked him to make. Aligned with God, Abraham was able to be obedient and surrender everything to God, knowing He would provide. We were challenged as well to align ourselves with God, surrender our all to Him and be obedient in what He asks.

The weekend concluded Sunday morning with a worship service that again incorporated different languages and forms of worship. Territorial Commander Commissioner Evie Diaz spoke from the Beatitudes, walking us through each verse and encouraging us to live in unity and peace. A time of prayer followed where delegates brought their needs to the Lord, sought strength for their ministry and responded to what He is calling them to do. What a beautiful gathering of people, a place of prayer and joyful worship. It was God's house of prayer for all people, of all nations.



Eugene and Marsha Ware with Major Marlys Anderson

It's critical to listen, to learn from others and to love people as they are because God loves us all. When loving others through Christ, there may be differences, and we need to be OK with these differences.

—Major Marlys Anderson, Corps Officer, Sioux Falls, S.D.



Lt. Mario Bledsoe (center) with Envoy Tyrone and Carmen Staggers

Transformational ministry takes time. We need to get to know each other intentionally, and there needs to be a shift in our thinking when it comes to other cultures. In responding to people who are different than us, there needs to be a level of cultural self-awareness. When we welcome other cultures and people who are different than us, we are welcoming Jesus.

—Lt. Mario Bledsoe, Corps Officer, Benton Harbor, Mich.



Cadets Kassleen Velasquez and Allison Rodriguez

One of the things I will carry with me was introduced on Friday night by Rasool Berry. He spoke about moving from a pseudo-community into chaos, emptiness and finally into a true community. This development makes space for things to get messy as the Body of Christ moves toward a deeper sense of unity.

—Cadet Allison Rodriguez, College for Officer Training



Major Steve Kounthapanya and Alfredo Martinez

Attending the ONE Conference this year has been a joy and true blessing. Commissioner Evie Diaz challenged all of us boldly during the final session regarding our Christian living. We must live in unity, and we must live out the fruit of the Holy Spirit daily.

—Major Steve Kounthapanya, Corps Officer, St. Paul, Minn.



Major Patrick Holness and Captain Jessica Martinez

One of the speakers gave a detailed explanation of the concept of hospitality as described in the Bible. It emphasized the importance of being gracious and welcoming to guests, strangers and those in need. They mentioned the New Testament uses the word Philoxenia to refer to hospitality, (Philos: love for a friend, Xenos: stranger) which translates to "love of strangers." This reminded me, and I hope will remind others, of the importance of opening our hearts to migrants and refugees who come to the United States, just as Christ would.

—Captain Jessica Martinez, Divisional Secretary, North & Central Illinois Division.



Majors Joaquin and Gabriela Rangel, Major Monica Orbe and Joy Caro

We need to have the eyes, the mind, and the ears "matched up" to what God is doing. If not, it will create confusion. Commissioner Evie Diaz spoke to everybody's heart and challenged us: Live in unity starting today. Live out the fruit of the Spirit... My prayer is to become a better leader and get the mission accomplished better.

—Major Joaquin Rangel, Corps Officer, Aurora, Ill.

New life for Western Division's EDS

Maria Moreno, the Western Division's new Emergency Disaster Services director, is a self-proclaimed "nerd."

She lives and breathes anything involved with EDS.

"I am a big EDS 'nerd,'" Maria said with a chuckle. "I am happy with that title because I do have a passion for it. I just have a passion for learning it and building on it and making our division better."

Hired as EDS manager in September 2021, Maria has been in charge of training and recruitment and many seasonal efforts like the summer feeding program for children and Winter Night Watch, which distributes food and warm accessories to people experiencing homelessness. In July she was promoted to director.

In the fall, she organized and oversaw the division's first EDS summit in more than six years at Western Plains

Camp in Sioux City, Neb. Eighty-two people attended, representing Nebraska, Iowa and South Dakota. The three-day event was attended by corps officers, service extension personnel and EDS volunteers.

When not attending classes, guests stayed in cabins, ate together and had a camp-like experience.

"It was great fellowship," Maria recalled.

Workshops focused on everything from public information officer duties and food safety guidelines to Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network and emotional and spiritual care.

"It was absolutely wonderful. It was a fantastic experience, meeting everyone. You can send someone an email, but it's not the same as putting a face to that email," Maria said.

Workshops for beginners and more advanced students were offered.

"We looked and discovered our division was lacking in basic training," Maria said. "But we also had officers who were advanced and wanted to take specialized classes to develop their EDS skills. We had wonderful instructors and offered the crème de la crème."

All trainers came from outside of the Western Division—but that will soon change, Maria said. She plans to have a number of Western Division representatives trained and ready to teach



Maria Moreno, the Western Division's new director of emergency disaster services

at the next summit.

The delay between summits was due in large part to the pandemic, Maria said.

"Now we are aiming to have a

summit every two years," she explained. "Our down year will be a year to explore and offer training at different corps—to see how the corps want to grow with EDS."



Kristy Garcia, emergency disaster services administrative assistant, confers with Maria.

A heart for children

The Columbia, Mo., Corps, is helping to ease the financial strain for parents of babies by providing resources and support through their new Baby Pantry.

"Babies are expensive," said Captain Amy Cedervall, who leads the corps with her husband, Major Kevin. "Our goal was to create a resource for families who are struggling with the additional costs associated with having a baby in the home."

The program came from Captain Amy's heart for children in the community. According to Major Kevin, there aren't many community resources available for new parents, and the Baby Pantry provides an opportunity to come alongside people and share God's love.

In addition to receiving material support, visitors to the pantry are invited to attend Sunday services and corps activities. During the holiday season, parents are encouraged to sign up for the Angel Tree program to receive additional resources for their baby as well as older children in the home. They also are referred to the Pathway of Hope (POH) initiative and connected with Captain Amy for pastoral care year-round. Since the pantry opened, two families have completed POH.

The Cedarvalls began the program trusting God would provide. "There was no extra money in the budget to purchase supplies to fully stock the pantry," said Captain Amy. "But we decided we weren't going to wait until we had it. We were going to start with what we had and trust that the community would support us with what we needed to replenish and grow."

After a few months of preparation, advertising on Facebook and sending out press releases, the corps and members of the Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon-cutting cere-



Volunteer Betsy Dawkins restocks shelves with items to be distributed to families in need through the Baby Pantry.

mony. That day 10 families received diapers, wipes and clothing and provided valuable feedback about new parents' greatest needs.

Volunteer Betsy Dawkins has since taken the lead, recruiting, training and supervising additional volunteers who spend hours each month sorting, washing and hanging baby clothes, counting out hundreds of diapers, and processing other donations. The Baby Pantry has partnered with the community Women, Infants and Children Board which provides formula monthly so even if store shelves are low, the Baby Pantry can almost always help ensure babies are fed.

"When Betsy tells me we're short on something, one of us will put out a Facebook post and sometimes a press release asking the community to help," said Captain Amy. "It's been amazing to see how people respond."

Congratulations!

We thank the following officers, who retired in 2023, for their dedicated service.

Commissioners Brad and Heidi Bailey
Lt. Colonels Paul and Renea Smith
Lt. Colonels John and Theresa Turner
Majors Jon and Kris Augenstein
Major Nancy Azuaje
Majors Ho Yoon and Kehyoung Chang
Majors Wesley and Susan Dalberg
Major Thea Gay (formerly Brockway)
Major Miriam Gorton
Majors Norman and Claire Grainger
Major Cherri Hobbins
Major Sandra Hunt
Majors Jim and Pat Irvine
Major Jo Langham
Major Lori Meyer
Majors Michael and Cynthia Parker
Major Kjell Steinsland

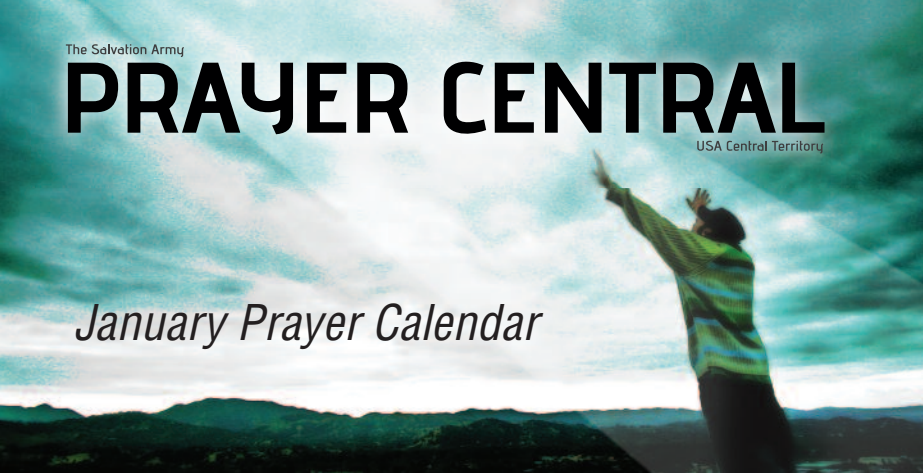
As of October 23, 2023



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My Prayer List	Day	Bible Reading	Pray for The Salvation Army
	1 Monday	Romans 1-2	Blessings in the New Year!
	2 Tuesday	Genesis 1-3	Malawi Territory
	3 Wednesday	Joshua 1-5	Mitchell, S.D., Corps
	4 Thursday	Psalms 1-2	LaPorte, Ind., Corps
	5 Friday	Job 1-2	Fox Cities, Wis., Corps
	6 Saturday	Matthew 1-2	Moline Heritage Temple, Ill., Corps
	7 Sunday	Romans 3-4	Albert Lea, Minn., Corps
	8 Monday	Genesis 4-7	Mt. Clemens, Mich., Corps
	9 Tuesday	Joshua 6-10	Local Officers
	10 Wednesday	Psalms 3-5	Logansport, Ind., 360 Life Center
	11 Thursday	Job 3-4	USA Eastern Territory
	12 Friday	Isaiah 7-11	Elgin, Ill., Corps
	13 Saturday	Matthew 3-4	Kalamazoo, Mich., Corps
	14 Sunday	Romans 5-6	Granite City, Ill., 360 Life Center
	15 Monday	Genesis 8-11	Minneapolis Central, Minn., Corps
	16 Tuesday	Joshua 11-15	Newton, Iowa, Corps
	17 Wednesday	Psalms 6-8	Ludington, Mich., Corps
	18 Thursday	Job 5-6	School Age Children
	19 Friday	Isaiah 12-17	Milwaukee Citadel, Wis., Corps
	20 Saturday	Matthew 5-7	Russia Territory
	21 Sunday	Romans 7-8	Grand Rapids, Mich., Kroc Center
	22 Monday	Genesis 12-15	St. Louis, Mo., ARC
	23 Tuesday	Joshua 16-20	Owosso Citadel, Mich., Corps
	24 Wednesday	Psalms 9-11	Officer Families
	25 Thursday	Job 7-8	Fargo, N.D., Corps
	26 Friday	Isaiah 18-22	Olathe, Kan., Corps
	27 Saturday	Matthew 8-10	Pathway of Hope
	28 Sunday	Romans 9-10	Joliet, Ill., Corps
	29 Monday	Genesis 16-19	Pakistan Territory
	30 Tuesday	Joshua 21-24	O'Fallon, Mo., Corps
	31 Wednesday	Psalms 12-14	Minneapolis Parkview, Minn, Corps
Go to www.salarmycentral.org If you follow the prayer calendar during the year, you will have read through the Bible!			

730... AND BEYOND

7,022 days and counting

by Major Rhonda Harmon

It's said, "Hindsight is 20/20." I agree. As I look back on my years as an officer and ponder both good and difficult times, I can see God's guidance at work.

In all things and all ways, officer-ship is about teamwork; it's not a solitary or solo effort. My husband and I create a team. My session-mates are part of the team. My fellow soldiers, employees, family and friends are all part of the team. Community members and volunteers are also part of the team. We seek to serve God and give Him the glory. As the song says, "We're all in this together." (Insert *High School Musical* dance steps here.)

As our small corps prepared for another busy Christmas of kettles, toys and food, we were approached by a local church looking for help to run their Christmas toy program. In my pride of The Salvation Army Angel Tree program, I said we were just too busy with our own efforts but happily gave them our contact information should they decide to send families in need our way.

In January, the local church approached us again asking for help with their toy program. This time our team agreed to meet with them as they began planning for the next Christmas—in February! What we thought was a request for help with their program turned out to be a request for The Salvation Army to join their growing effort of combining local resources to serve our community more efficiently. Wow! This church wanted our corps' experience in running a successful toy program to join with their vast resources of volunteers and other local services to better reach families in need.

I wasn't prepared for what happened the next Christmas. While we had served 300 children the previous year, the next we served over 2,000 children and even



more the following year. Through the efforts of this church combining services and creating an experienced team, every family who came through the doors was gifted an abundance of toys, free wrapping paper, a cartload of food, a full outdoor festival of games, lunch and a prayer team on hand for those who wanted prayer. No one turned down the prayer, and everyone left the festival blessed. It was surely a time of celebration and praise to God.

Hindsight is 20/20. Say "yes" to the nudging of others and explore the options when God presents you with an opportunity. Discover the joy of teamwork.

--Mustard Seeds--



Planting seeds of goodness

by Craig Dirkes

Gary and Stacie Albertson have spent much of their lives planting seeds at their Christmas tree farm in Fergus Falls, Minn.



The father-daughter team also plants seeds of goodness in their community.

Together, as adherents, they volunteer at the Fergus Falls Corps, organizing and distributing food donations every week. Gary, 78, has been volunteering for two decades. He started helping out after he began attending the corps in the early 2000s.

"I'd been to a few churches in town—but when I came here, I fell in love with it," he recalled. "The Salvation Army does a lot of good in the community, and I was interested in that."

Over the years, Gary has volunteered his expertise in small engine repair.

"I've fixed The Salvation Army's

snowblowers and worked on their cars and trucks," said Gary, who spent years as the owner/operator of a local auto shop.

Gary also supports the corps' ministry financially, donating two dollars from the sale of every tree at his family's tree farm every holiday season. The proceeds generally add up to about \$200 for the corps.

"I've been doing that for 20 years," he said.

Gary donates five to six Christmas trees each holiday season to families at the corps who might not be able to afford to buy one.

"It's always a good fuzzy feeling to make a family's holiday special," Gary said. "We want to make sure they have a tree for Christmas."

His daughter, Stacie, 52, works at the tree farm and also as a piler operator at a local agriculture company. She got hooked on The Salvation Army because of Gary.

"He raised me on helping others," Stacie said.

In addition to distributing food at the corps, Stacie volunteers at The Salvation Army thrift store in the nearby city of Henning, where she stocks and sorts donations.

"It makes me feel good to help people," she said. "I love to meet people and hear their stories."

With help from Gary and Stacie, the Fergus Falls Corps distributes dozens of food boxes every week and serves about 50 hot meals every weekday.

Lt. Joshua Bowyer, who began leading the corps with his wife Lt. Darby Bowyer in July, said Gary and Stacie have taken over the food-donation process at the corps.

"They are connected to food providers. They know how it works," Lt. Joshua said. "They run it flawlessly."



Gary and Stacie Albertson not only organize and distribute food donations, but they donate Christmas trees from their tree farm to families each year.

Promoted to Glory

Major Maxim Grindle

Major Maxim (Max) Grindle was promoted to Glory on September 19, 2023.

Max was known as a fun-loving person with a great sense of humor. He loved the Lord and was an excellent programmer, preacher and Bible study teacher.



Max was born on July 25, 1946, to then-Captains John and Rachel Grindle. He graduated from Detroit Redford High School in 1964 and later served in the U.S. Army in Vietnam. Honorably discharged, Max attended Oakland Community College and graduated with honors.

While working at the automotive plant in Pontiac, Mich., Max committed his life to Christ. He became active at the Detroit Brightmoor Corps, where he felt the call to become a Salvation Army officer.

In 1975, he entered officer training. After being commissioned in 1977, he married sessionmate Betty Wurtz on January 7, 1978, and together they served in corps and divisional appointments for 35 years. After their retirement in 2012, they were actively involved in the Holland, Mich., Corps, including Max giving leadership as the corps sergeant-major.

Max was preceded in death by his sister Joy (Harold) Shelby. He is survived by his wife; daughters Melissa (David) Houser and Lianne Crouthers; five grandchildren; siblings Darlus (William) Kumpula, Lt. Colonel David (Lt. Colonel Sherry), and John (Linda).

A Moment in Time



THE SALVATION ARMY
CENTRAL TERRITORY
MUSEUM



Photo by HA Atwell Studio

Red Kettle Rodeo

Celebrities often use their influence to direct the attention of their fans toward organizations and initiatives they support. Over the decades, numerous local, regional and national celebrities have steered donations toward The Salvation Army's Red Kettle Campaign.

Spurred on by the enormous popularity of western movies, which peaked during the 1950s, city slickers didn't have to travel far to see an idealized wild west come to life at a traveling rodeo show. Shown here, Helen Sutherland and three cowboys from the Flying X Rodeo drew the attention of passersby and roped in donations for The Salvation Army in Chicago, Ill.

Operating from 1926 to 1946, the Flying X Rodeo was founded in Miles City, Mont., by Colonel A. L. "Cliff" Gatewood. After a flurry of preparations to meet the needs of the animals and riders, the rodeo rolled into the Chicago Coliseum for its very first indoor performances, December 7-15, 1940. An estimated

75,000 spectators viewed the rodeo during its nine-day Chicago run.

The rodeo featured 60 cowboys and 15 cowgirls from Wyoming, Montana, North and South Dakota and Texas. Gatewood's granddaughter has claimed that a young John Wayne worked as a Flying X Rodeo performer for a time. However, by 1940 "the Duke" was far too big a star to participate in the Chicago performances. The 1940 cast included Joe Cody, a descendant of "Buffalo" Bill Cody and Emily Jean Davis, a 12-year-old fancy rope twirler from Texas. The cast and their highly trained horses were some of the best rodeo performers of their day.

The basement of the Coliseum served as the quarters for the rodeo's 350 four-footed performers which included longhorn cattle, wild horses, and buffalo. In addition to events like bronc and trick riding, steer roping, and fancy roping, a special feature of the performance was a "wild" buffalo stampede by a heard brought in from a Wyoming ranch.