



Central Connection

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

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

Volume 55, Number 5

May 2025

Beyond the woods

Faith in action at Northwoods

by Ryan Voeller

Nestled in the heart of nature in Northern Minnesota, Northwoods Camp is more than a summer retreat. It's a place where youth encounter God in a personal and transformative way. Away from screens and the pressures of daily life, campers have a unique opportunity to focus on their spiritual journey. Each day is filled with moments designed to intentionally make faith real, build meaningful relationships, and help campers discover their purpose in Christ.

The theme at Northwoods this year is "Northern Lights," inspired by the natural phenomenon. The goal is to show campers how they are called to shine as a light in the darkness. Elements of this spiritual truth will be woven through every class. Large group worship and teachings taking place during Bible Discovery time—affectionately shortened to "Bible Disco"—will expand on the spiritual thought for the day. During one Bible Disco session, campers will experience "Jesus Theater," a creative arts presentation of the gospel. Nightly devotions and cabin discussions will create opportunities for campers to process what they've learned, to ask questions, and to apply biblical teaching to their lives.

Mentorship also plays a key role in the spiritual journey of campers.

Camp staff—cabin counselors and program aides—are carefully selected and equipped not only to guide campers through the daily schedule but to serve as role models, walk alongside campers in scripture, and pray with them.

New this year, officers coming to Northwoods will be paired with a cabin to act as that cabin's biggest cheerleader and share their unique gifts as ministers to that group of campers. These relationships create

safe spaces for campers to ask tough questions and to explore their faith without fear of judgment.

The spiritual growth that happens at Northwoods doesn't just stay within the camp's borders. Many campers leave with a renewed passion for God. They're better equipped to live out their faith at home, in school and in their communities. Over the years, it has been a

Continued on page 2



Photos by Craig Dirkes

Territory focuses on spiritual development of youth

by Captain Michael Hanton
Territorial Youth Secretary

The territorial youth department is partnering with divisional youth teams, corps and local leaders to focus on the Territorial Youth Priority through investing in leadership development, empowering corps to effectively disciple youth and promoting community outreach.

Throughout His ministry, Jesus recognized that the people He encountered were at different stages of growth and development. He met them where they were but was always at work to develop them. Every person mattered, and Jesus took time to make intentional rela-

tionships. If we are to be successful in reaching youth, as a territory we must emulate Christ and emphasize the need for intentional and relational discipleship with our youth.

Developing strong leaders is paramount to creating an atmosphere which encourages and enables discipleship. This can be accomplished through identifying the needs of the leaders, corps and community and by providing training opportunities; empowering youth to take leadership roles in their corps; and shifting divisional and territorial roles from programming to resourcing corps.

As disciples of Jesus, we have been given the mandate to "Go and make disciples of all the nations..."

(Matt. 28:19) and we have been given the privilege of making Jesus known to our youth, our families, our communities, our world.

By clearly identifying and committing to the lifelong work of discipleship in corps ministry, we will experience long-term growth, consistent leadership, and transformational spiritual depth in our Army.

The last emphasis is on community outreach. Community outreach is about more than just trying to get more people through the doors of our corps. It is also more than just having programs or putting on events. At its heart, community outreach is about creating opportunities to connect with youth and making

spaces where they can experience the love of Christ. We believe that The Salvation Army is uniquely positioned to share the gospel with them. We want to promote community outreach that is a starting point for relationships that offer a place of belonging for each of our neighbors.

Jesus was clear that no barrier should prevent a child from knowing Him (Matt. 19:14). The territorial youth department is committed to building a foundation that leads or redirects youth back to the Creator and creates spaces for belonging.

Meet the territorial youth department on page 5.

Moving? Send the attached label with your correction to:
Circulation Manager, 5550 Prairie Stone Pkwy, Hoffman Estates, IL 60192

THE SALVATION ARMY
5550 Prairie Stone Pkwy
Hoffman Estates, IL 60192

Welcome to the family

by Commissioner Evie Diaz
Territorial Commander

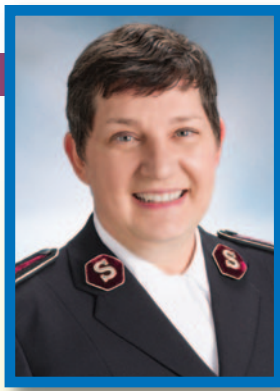
You belong! This is a message we are sending to the territory. Have you noticed? You are invited to the Belonging Congress. We want you to join us in the Belonging Prayer Emphasis. The theme for the recent Regeneration Young Adult Retreat was Belonging. We want you to know that you belong.

First, you belong to God's Kingdom the minute you accept Jesus as your Savior. Welcome to the family! This Kingdom of Heaven that we belong to is precious.

Matthew 13:45-46 (NIV) says: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it."

The Kingdom is a treasure. It cost Jesus His life and is offered freely to us.

We should take our Kingdom life seriously. How? By living by the Spirit and exhibiting the Fruit of the Spirit each day. Jesus uses us to help others join the Kingdom. It's the Kingdom priority to be like Jesus in



our actions and to love like Jesus. To encourage others to come and see Jesus and belong to Him and so to this Kingdom family.

You also belong to The Salvation Army. Whether employee, volunteer, soldier or officer, you belong with us! We want you to feel welcomed, to find a place to serve and to be an influence within our walls and in your community.

We want to hear your voice. What is God saying to you about our mis-

sion? Where is God leading you to serve? How does the Spirit want to speak through you?

Here is a word for those of us in leadership roles. Please make space for other voices and help others find their belonging place. Encourage conversations, true fellowship, intergenerational engagement, ministry opportunities within the corps and community, all to ensure people of all ages and backgrounds feel welcomed and that there is a place for them in the Army.

Treasure your membership in the Kingdom of Heaven. Invite others to meet Jesus and belong. And find your place in The Salvation Army. You belong!

Someone to look up to

As Major Kelsie Moreno plays the drums in the Lincoln, Neb., Corps Praise Band, 9-year-old Jasmine sits beside her, happily tapping to the beat on a tambourine. It's part of the corps' mentoring program.

Implemented in 2018 by corps youth development coordinator Suzy Haslett, the program places every youngster in the congregation with an adult from the congregation. The youth range in age from 4 to 18. All mentors are trained in Safe from Harm with an onsite trainer.

"It's been a great way to ensure every kid in our congregation has a trusted adult who models Christlike living. It's good for them to have an adult to look to," said Major Kelsie, who leads the Lincoln Corps.



Major Kelsie with Jessyca

"Mentors are encouraged to develop the relationships with their mentees; to celebrate birthdays, support them through prayer and encouragement and be a resource / example for spiritual growth," she added.

Several "Mentor Meet Up" events take place throughout the year where all mentors and mentees come together for fun with baseball games, game night or pizza night.

And any fifth Sunday of a month is considered a "Mentor Sunday," where youth sit with their mentors during the worship service and also shadow them in activities like collecting the offering.

Some mentors support programs at the children's schools, encouraging the young people by attending plays, concerts or athletic events.

"I have gone to a band or orchestra concert for my mentees. And my own kids have mentors who have done that for them as well," Suzy said.

Retired officer Major Fran Tuttle has two girls she mentors at the corps.

"I enjoy mentoring young people. I like spending time with them, watching them grow in God," Major Fran said.

She also tries to spend time with them outside of the corps.

"I remember the girls' birthdays and other special occasions," she said. "I always give them a gift of some kind. And I try to take them out for lunch."

As relationships have grown, Major Kelsie has seen many children begin to emulate what their mentors

do—from opening their Bibles to study God's Word to offering to take out the trash after a corps event.

"Mentors encourage their kids to grow in their faith by setting a good example of what a mature Christian looks like," the major said. "From their service in the corps and community to modeling Christlike behavior, mentors lead by example in big and small ways."



Suzy Haslett, corps youth development coordinator, with her mentee, Arthur

Beyond the woods

Continued from page 1



joy to witness campers make commitments to Christ, grow to become camp staff mentoring the next generation, and go on to do more in the name of Christ.

At Northwoods Camp, our hope and prayer is that faith isn't just taught, it's experienced. As campers come through our programs this year, our desire is that they return to their daily lives carrying a light ignited through the intentional moments, friendships and mentorships made at Northwoods Camp.



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

WILLIAM AND CATHERINE BOOTH
Founder

LYNDON BUCKINGHAM
General

COMMISSIONER EVIE DIAZ
Territorial Commander

ELIZABETH KINZIE
Editor

TWYLA STEINSLAND
Writer/Editor

LAURA STEWART
Publications Coordinator/Writer

TREVOR DARAGO
Digital Media Coordinator

HELENA TURNER
Administrative Assistant

KENNETH ROMIN
Graphic Design and Production

VISIT OUR WEBSITE—

www.salarmycentral.org
1-800-SALARMY

“Do it with all your might”

When Carlos Navarro became the new music and gospel arts manager at the Chicago Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center in August 2024, a challenge awaited him.

The center had been without a leader for its arts program for some time. A number of classes had been cancelled, and enrollment was low. Determined, Carlos dove right in, recruiting instructors and revamping the programs while teaching many of the classes himself. As he worked with a growing staff, the arts began to blossom once more.



Lts. Shanell and Kenesa Debela, who lead the Chicago Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center, with Carlos

Carlos says any talent can be used to help share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

“It can be through music, painting, cooking or writing poetry—all of them are forms of worship,” he said. “The best way my mom shows love is getting up early in the morning to cook breakfast. You belong, whatever your talent or gift may be.”

Over the years, Carlos has worked as a photographer, videographer and musician, performing on faith-based recordings in churches and in studios, including playing lead electric guitar on a worship album by Grammy-nominated artist Joe L. Barnes.

Carlos hopes to establish a music conservatory on Saturdays at the Chicago Kroc Center with at least 100 youth taking part and wants to record an album using talent from the center.



“Everyone who wants to be part of the album, can be,” Carlos said. “Maybe there is a kid who does not know how to sing, but she knows how to rap; or a senior who plays the harmonica. Everyone can join us.”

On Wednesday evenings, Carlos is part of the Bible study instruction for teens and young adults at the



Kroc Center. He organizes worship nights and other special programs. He is putting together a youth worship band for Sunday services and other occasions.

“It’s so important for these kids to understand the feeling of belonging, of being part of something,” Carlos said of the worship band.

According to Carlos, at first a number of the youth were reticent to join the arts programs, but he’s seen a dramatic turnaround. Many of them now shout “Hi!” to Carlos and give him a hug before class.

“All you have to do is be patient so you can understand what they might be going through,” Carlos said. “You have to have a relationship with the kids, and ask them, ‘How can I help you?’”

Seniors also have found a renewed zest for the arts.

“The senior ministry is one of my favorite parts of my job,” Carlos said. “It’s amazing where God puts you in a place to be teaching someone who

is perhaps much older than you are. The seniors are excited to be here. On days we don’t have music, they want to keep learning something else, or they just want to talk with me.”

Carlos finds joy in his work every day, bringing his love of the arts and his faith together.

Lt. Kenesa Debela, Chicago Kroc Center senior officer, concluded, “Carlos signs off his email with a scripture from Ecclesiastes that says, ‘Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.’ Carlos has done just that for us. He takes on a project, gives it his all, and the end result is always fantastic.”



Older adults have found a renewed zest for the arts.

Today, Carlos oversees 67 music and arts-related classes for youth and seniors at the center each week. There are 18 dance classes, 18 art classes and one theater class. Carlos teaches 12 of the 30 music classes, including brass, choir, guitar and piano.

“This was a team effort,” he said. “This is not something I did from scratch. I did it with the help of God and the community.”

Carlos grew up in Venezuela, where he and his parents and sister attended a Christian church. The Navarro family moved to Chicago in 2018, initially staying with friends, Majors Daniel and Nivia Paredes, who introduced them to The Salvation Army. Carlos became a soldier in 2019.

Until he could get a legal working permit, Carlos volunteered with the Army, using his musical talents at camps and in other programs. Once he was legally allowed to work, he was hired by Lts. Kenesa and Shanell Debela to lead the arts program at the Kroc Center.



Kids, older adults and everyone in-between love the 67 music and creative arts classes.



ALL WE NEED

A new podcast focusing on spiritual health

Each month a guest joins Territorial Commander Commissioner Evie Diaz to discuss the Central Territory’s priorities of spiritual life, youth or leadership development.

Episode IV: A Conversation with Tina Higgins and Charol McDonald about Youth Work

Listen and subscribe through your favorite podcast app.

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. — 2 Peter 1:3 (NIV)



Kids belong too!

Belonging 2025 is not just for adults! Programming and activities for youth are an integral part of the conference and congress. Register your whole family for a week of intentional ministry with tracks geared specifically for infants to teenagers in addition to the adult workshops and sessions.

"The youth priority is about building relationships and bringing youth to Christ," said Captain Michael Hanton, territorial youth secretary. "Belonging gives us the opportunity for intentional discipleship."

During the Belonging Conference, Tuesday evening through Friday afternoon, exciting activities are planned for children age 12 and under. Each day, the territorial youth department, with the assistance of select staff from the divisional

camps, will provide engaging on-site activities and play for ages 5 and under. Youth, ages 6 through 12, will enjoy supervised field trips to local attractions including a museum, the zoo and Army Lake Camp.

Teenagers, ages 13-17, will find workshops geared just for them. Led by Taylor Senak, territorial director of Christian education and discipleship, with assistance from the North & Central Illinois Division's youth department, workshops will include a lesson, discussion, practical application and fun activities. According to Captain Michael, the goal is to provide not just a place to hang out while parents are engaged in workshops, but to use that time to build relationships with young people.

"With the theme of belonging, we're going to focus on understanding what it means to be a citizen of

God's Kingdom, what that looks like in their life and how to live it out," said Taylor. "But we're not just going to sit. It's going to be a lot of fun."

Kids' Congress, designed for children age 12 and under, will commence on Friday evening and continue during each general session through Sunday morning. More than just childcare, Kids' Congress is being carefully planned by the territorial youth department in partnership with volunteer youth leaders from around the territory, as well as other ministry groups.

"We want the youth to experience the same things that the rest of the Congress is experiencing—community and belonging—as they come together," said Captain Michael. "This is their Congress too, and we want them there."

Alongside territorial and divisional

youth department staff, more than 40 Salvationist volunteer leaders will provide a safe and comfortable environment for the young delegates.

Children, age 5 and under, will engage in age-appropriate worship, play and activities with divisional staff leading each group. A specialized youth ministry group will lead worship services for kids, ages 6-12, for part of each session, including music and messages aligning with the theme of belonging. The remaining time will be filled with volunteer-led small group activities like games, crafts and discussion about the message.

"At Kids' Congress we want to give an overall sense not only that we belong together in fellowship with each other but also that we belong to Christ," said Captain Michael. "That's why we come together."

Growing young

by Major Jonathan Cooper

If your corps isn't growing young, it's growing old. That reality framed every conversation, challenge and moment of the Great Lakes Division's annual Youth Leader Weekend. With the Central Territory emphasizing youth discipleship as a priority, this gathering wasn't just another leadership conference, but a call to action—a call to move beyond programs and statistics and invest in the next generation with intentionality, passion and faith.

At the heart of the weekend was *Growing Young*, the research-based book from Fuller Youth Institute that challenges churches to rethink how they engage young people. It's not about gimmicks or entertainment; it's about creating a culture where youth feel known, valued and invited into something bigger than themselves. Through discussions, workshops and

shared experiences, leaders wrestled with what it means to prioritize young people—not as a ministry separate from the church, but as an essential part of its very identity.

The opening session's message from Dr. Andy Jung was clear: young people aren't looking for a perfect church but an authentic one. Leaders explored the six core commitments outlined in *Growing Young*: entrusting young people with meaningful roles, empathizing with their struggles, prioritizing discipleship, fostering warmth in the community, and ensuring they feel truly at home in the body of Christ. These ideas weren't just discussed; they were challenged, debated and brought to life through real-world application.

Beyond the strategies and conversations, the weekend served another vital purpose: renewal. Youth leaders, so often pouring themselves out for others, found space to be filled. The corporate worship wasn't just a scheduled event—it was a time of deep connection, a reminder they must be led before leading others. Conversations over coffee turned into prayers, and casual connections became sources of strength.

"This weekend reminded me why I do what I do," one leader shared. "Sometimes ministry feels like pouring into a well with no bottom. But being here, surrounded by people who share this same calling, filled me back up."

As the weekend ended, one truth re-

Junior soldiers

One of the most moving things to witness as a follower of Christ is the light that shines on the faces of children when they accept Him. After they take that first step, investing in their spiritual development through intentional discipleship is paramount to building a firm foundation of faith.

For youth, ages 7-13, junior soldier courses are an important resource for discipleship. Engaging curriculum has been developed for this generation, keeping true to the same purpose of introducing our elementary and middle school kids to the Bible, Salvation Army doctrine and distinctives, and how to live in a way that represents Christ.

Updated materials, including printable PDFs of lessons in both English and Spanish, a media kit for digital presentations, and videos are accessible online. An easy-to-use instructor's guide also includes activities or crafts to accompany each lesson.

In the six-week preparation course, children are introduced to God's purpose for mankind and His



desire for relationship with each individual. They learn about His love, what it means to receive Him, and what it looks like to worship and serve Him as part of The Salvation Army. The invitation to sign the junior soldier promise at the end of the course provides the opportunity to publicly declare their faith as they are enrolled and become official members of the Army. Once enrolled, junior soldiers continue courses to aid in their spiritual development.

The complete five-year program is broken up into 10 modules and centers around the 11 doctrines of The Salvation Army. Each module includes four elements: Salvation Army doctrine, Salvation Army tradition, Salvation Army distinctives, and practical faith, ensuring balanced instruction to grow spiritually healthy disciples with a strong foundation of biblical and theological understanding.

For junior soldiers who complete the 10 modules, the Honor Junior Soldier Course provides an ongoing opportunity to learn and grow in their faith until they are ready to engage in senior soldier classes at age 14 or older.

To learn more or to access jr. soldier course materials, visit salvationarmyyouth.org and click on the jr. soldiers icon.



mained: a church not growing young is growing old, not just in age but in vision, purpose and spirit. The challenge was clear. Youth discipleship isn't a side project; it's the heartbeat of a thriving church. It's not about chasing trends or making ministry more attractive; it's about making it real. Growing young is not about the future; it's about right now. Leaders left this weekend ready to step into that calling, to build something lasting, and to ensure that The Salvation Army isn't just surviving, but thriving for generations to come.

Meet the Territorial Youth Department

A faith-filled team that's dedicated to the spiritual development of youth

Captain Michael Hanton

Territorial Youth Secretary

Captain Mike was inspired by The Salvation Army at a young age. After serving as an employee in youth ministry for more than 20 years, he was led by the Holy Spirit to full-time ministry as an officer. Commissioned in 2013, Captain Mike loves being an officer, serving alongside his wife Captain Kelly (territorial candidates' secretary), and their four children, Keegan, Cole, Madden and Ryan. He was appointed territorial youth secretary in 2019.



The captain cherishes opportunities to connect and share Jesus with others and has devoted his life to creating intentional relationships. He has a passion for sharing God's Word, music and sports, especially the Detroit Lions.

Peggy McGee

Assistant Territorial Youth Secretary

With over 20 years of experience, Peggy has spent her career developing strategies and practices that ensure participants feel welcomed and safe. With an educational background in youth development, she will graduate in May 2025 with a MA in Trauma-Informed Leadership.



Peggy's passion for youth ministry stems from her own experiences growing up in The Salvation Army where programs and leaders helped shape her Christ-centered worldview and laid a solid foundation. Peggy's love for Jesus motivates her to ensure young people have the opportunity to experience God's love.

She resides in the Chicago suburbs with her daughter and their pets. When she's not busy leading, she's likely starting a new art project or reading a book.

Ben Dial

Christian Education for Outreach Director

Ben loves Jesus, his family, sports, Star Wars, superheroes, and everything in between! He was a senior in high school when God turned his world upside down and called him into full-time youth ministry where he's been serving for 10 years. In his position, Ben partners with the divisional youth departments and corps to help develop strategies for corps to strengthen



community resourcing that allows connecting points to Jesus.

Ben is blessed with his wife Katie, son David, and their dog Raven.

Jeanie Dobney

Director of Camping and Outdoor Ministries

Jeanie's love for the outdoors began as a young camper in Salvation Army programs and grew into a passion for camping ministry. Turning that into a career, she earned a Bachelor's in Outdoor Education and is working toward her Master's in Outdoor and Adventure Leadership.



She has a deep appreciation for how creation points to the Creator and wants to remove barriers that keep people from experiencing the outdoors. When she's not leading outdoor adventures, you'll find Jeanie with coffee or tea in hand, reading, by any body of water, playing games with friends, or pursuing her next personal challenge. Jeanie has been married to Brian for 10 years.

Zane Koehler

SA Gaming Director



Zane has a passion for creating experiences and environments people will remember. Whether at youth events, gaming online or in person, he wants everyone to feel welcomed and for each young person to see and experience Christ. Connecting with them through video games is the starting point but bringing the gospel to them is the mission.

Zane and his wife, Catherine, have one daughter, Hazel. He loves root beer, chicken wings, gaming, and playing music.

Taylor Senak

Christian Education for Discipleship Director

Taylor oversees youth programming focused on youth development in corps, including but not limited to junior soldiers, character-building programs, and corps cadets. While new to this position, Taylor is not new to youth ministry. He has held various roles in youth ministry, including his most recent position in the Western Pennsylvania divisional youth department.



Taylor is married to Sofia. They have a son, Michael, and a new baby daughter Olivia. His hobbies include golf, lawn care, and smoking meat.

Camila Yanez

Youth Production Specialist

Cami provides support to the youth department team through multimedia, including photography, graphics, video production, and more. Born in Santiago, Chile, she grew up as an officers' child, living in various parts of the world, which instilled in her a love for diverse cultures and experiences. A follower of Jesus, Cami is fueled by a passion for serving God and His Kingdom and sharing her faith with others.



She enjoys traveling, creating memories with friends and family, reading rom-coms and engaging in artistic pursuits like film, dance, and music.

How I belong



Mason Colestock

St. Paul, Minn.

What do you do with The Salvation Army?

I am the Community Center and Youth Programs Manager at the St. Paul Citadel Corps. I run community programs and rentals for the gym. I also oversee the youth programs like Wednesday night activities which include dinner, small groups, devotionals, crafts and recreation in the gym.

Why do you do it?

I am following God's calling. When I was 17, I was called to children's ministry. I also have a bachelor's degree in sports management. This position is the best of both worlds.

What's the best part about your ministry?

Working with kids, I can be myself, mess up, and be goofy without being judged.

How did you get involved with The Salvation Army?

I got hired at St. Paul Citadel in 2021 as the Community Center Coordinator, not knowing anything about the position. I slowly learned about what officers do and how the organization is run. After eight months, I was promoted into various youth ministries positions.

What's on your playlist?

I am currently listening to a lot of worship music. My favorite song now is "Graves into Gardens" by Brandon Lake.

What are you praying for right now?

I am praying for revival in St. Paul, especially at our corps. There are a lot of families in the area who don't know Jesus. I'm praying we will be able to reach as many of them as possible.

What one word sums up your testimony?

Roller-coaster

What do you do in your spare time?

I play video games and stream. Rocket League is the main game I play. I also like to go out and eat good food with my wife.

The best place to be



The Goshen, Ind., Corps recently enrolled seven junior soldiers.

Youth at the Goshen, Ind., Corps have found the best place to be on a Sunday. It's a place where they are welcomed by leaders and their peers, encounter Jesus and know they belong. Recently, the corps enrolled seven new junior soldiers, with more ready to participate in the next prep course this fall.

"Investing in the spiritual development of youth is one of the most important things we do," said Lt. Aurelia Pettit, corps officer. "If we don't disciple the next generation and meet them where they are, how will The Salvation Army's work continue in our communities?"



confidence and experience sharing Christ and leading.

Each Sunday morning worship service is complemented by a lively children's church. Called "Wrap," it's geared toward active worship for kids to engage their whole bodies in praise while also giving them a chance to expend some energy. The afternoon is dedicated to fellowship over a hot lunch, character-building programs and relational discipleship with the support of several soldiers who volunteer as leaders or helpers.

"I believe that the youth are our future, and we need to encourage them with knowledge to be able to have a wonderful relationship with Jesus Christ," said Erica Starnier, a lifelong Salvationist who attends the corps with her four children, leads the explorers and junior soldiers, and lends a hand wherever she is needed. "At the Goshen Corps we are teaching them about prayer, discipleship, evangelism and God's Word. It is exciting watching the children grow and be disciples of Jesus."



Youth practice a flag routine as part of character-building.

Each Sunday more than 30 kids, and sometimes as many as 50, flood into the building full of boundless joy and energy, excited for the day's activities. Sunday school opening sets the tone for worship, bringing the focus to Christ, before they head off to Sunday school classes.

"It all comes down to having great leaders," said Lt. Aurelia. "I really could not do this without them."

The corps is blessed to have generational discipleship that flows from the senior members through the young adults and teens to the children, with each generation investing in the next. Soldiers who grew up attending the corps have taken up the baton and are intentionally engaging teens, while the teens rotate assisting with the children's church to gain



Sunday afternoon fun at the Goshen Corps.

Transforming young lives

The power of temporary community

by Captain Matt DeGonia
Midland Divisional Youth and
Candidates' Secretary

Spiritual life flourishes in environments where faith is actively experienced, not just discussed. While church and youth groups provide ongoing discipleship for our young people, some of the most transformative moments happen in temporary communities—places like camps, retreats, and Youth Councils. These short-term, immersive experiences create a unique setting where young people can step away from everyday pressures, focus on their faith, and build deep, lasting spiritual connections.

A temporary community provides an intensified experience of Christian fellowship. For a few days, our young people live, worship and grow alongside peers who share their desire to know God. Stripped of daily distractions—school stress, social media, and peer pressure—they are free to engage in meaningful conversations about faith, ask difficult questions, and explore their



relationship with Christ in a safe, encouraging space. For many of our youth and young adults, these spaces provide opportunities to build friendships within the Christian community they may not find in their day-to-day lives.

Youth Councils plays a key role in this process, offering an annual op-

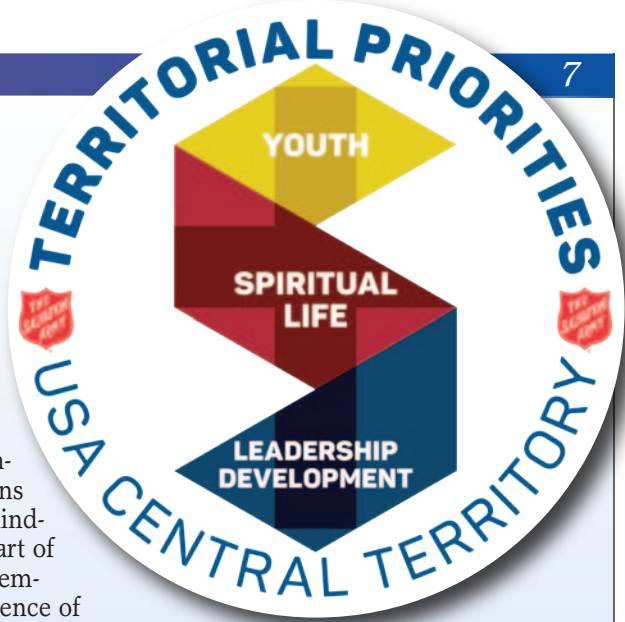
portunity for young people to reconnect with the broader faith community in the Midland Division. These gatherings reinforce the lessons learned at our corps, reminding youth that they are part of something bigger than themselves. The shared experience of worship, teaching and fellowship builds a sense of spiritual unity that encourages continued faith development long after the event.

At the heart of these experiences is the opportunity for intentional discipleship. Whether through cabin devotions, small-group discussions, or altar calls, these moments provide young people with space to wrestle with faith, encounter the presence of God, and make personal commitments to spiritual growth both for our campers and our camp staff. Many of us, including myself, can trace their calling back to a campfire prayer, a retreat worship session, or a Youth Councils weekend.

What makes temporary community so powerful is that, despite its

short duration, its impact is long-lasting. The friendships, lessons and encounters with God become foundational experiences that shape a young person's faith journey. These moments remind our young people that faith is not just something they practice alone, but something they share with a community of believers.

Camps, retreats and Youth Councils are not just events; they are catalysts for spiritual renewal. They provide a space where young people can experience the presence of God in a fresh way, build lasting relationships, and return home with a renewed passion for living out their faith.



What TSAO can do

by Captain Sarah Eddy

In Indiana, we love to be outside! TSAO (The Salvation Army Outdoors) ministries are growing in the state, especially with archery programs in multiple corps.

Our High Adventure Camp also has become popular in the last few years. During the week, young people unplug from the world and focus on God's creation while staying in tents, enjoying activities like fishing and swimming, all while learning skills like building fires and growing in their relationship with the Lord.

Last year for this camp, our division partnered with world-renowned wilderness survival instructor, author, speaker, and guide Creek Stewart. He not only shared essential survival skills with the young people in Indiana but, most importantly, shared his love of Jesus and passion for them to know Him more.



In one of the most captivating gospel presentations I've heard, Creek talked about how an ember works. Although hot, an ember does not recognize its full potential until air is breathed into it. Once air is breathed in, the flame can catch on, and its fire is essential to life—keeping wild animals away, cooking, cleaning, warmth, etc. We are like that ember. When we allow God to breathe into our lives, we become a fresh fire for Him. We feed that fire by growing in our relationship with God, reading our Bible and sharing about Christ. The more we grow, the more the fire catches with those around us. At the end of Creek's

devotional, the teens were challenged to allow God to start a fresh fire in them and to burn brightly for Him. Many of them decided to follow Jesus either for the first time or in a new way.

This is why TSAO ministry is so important. Through archery programs and camps, we can share the gospel with young people in a way they may not have experienced.

We can't wait to see what God will do this year in Indiana as archery programs continue to grow and more opportunities open to teach our young people about God's creation through TSAO.



ADVENTURE AWAITS! REGISTER NOW!

THE SALVATION ARMY OUTDOORS

OUTDOOR WILDERNESS LEADERSHIP SCHOOL



Experience an action-packed week of hands-on training and certifications, preparing you to safely guide outdoor adventures where participants can discover and encounter the love of Jesus.

AUGUST 18TH-25TH

NORTHWOODS CAMP

FINLAYSON, MN

REGISTER HERE!



Creating a place for ministry and growth

Safe from Harm updates training, expands participation

by Lisa Jordan

What makes you feel safe? This is one of the first questions we ask in Safe from Harm (SFH) training. There are as many answers as people in the room. Think about it for yourself. Perhaps it's the people you know, places you're familiar with, a schedule, feeling in control of situations? But imagine if your life circumstances did not allow for a sense of security.

SFH is designed for the implementation of policies and practices related to child and vulnerable adult protection. It looks at safety and abuse prevention from all angles with a desire for protection of all involved to create a prevention culture. SFH practices are one of the best ways we can love people by assuring Salvation Army spaces are safe physically, emotionally and spiritually and allow us to create an atmosphere for growth. We like to



think of it as both a strong foundation under all we do and an umbrella over the top to shield our ministries.

To champion this cause and to be in line with the Central Territory's move-to-deliver training through a unified learning management system, we at SFH have undergone updates to move to that platform. This is an opportunity for a "one-stop shop" for learning and development, as well as enhancement for officer, employee, corps leader and other volunteer engagement across our organization through eLearning.

While we have kept the integrity of foundational SFH, we are excited to deliver it through this new platform. This important message has been streamlined and will go out consistently across the territory. It will allow all learners to receive initial and compliance training online at their own pace and timing. As well, new and improved instructor-led training is still available, if needed.

This project has caused us to make some changes to our SFH training strategy. To simplify the training process, the following changes have been implemented:

- All officers, employees, independent contractors and volunteers (except one-time volunteers and bellringers) will be required to take the SFH training course within 30 days of starting at any Salvation Army unit in the Central Territory. It will be assigned as part of onboarding to set everyone up for success.
- In order to stay on the cutting edge, our training compliance or recertification will move from four years to three years to stay in line with training requirements among similar service organizations.
- SFH training will cover both the basic principles and supervisor / manager expectations. This will ensure that employees understand what managers expect of them and what they can expect from their manager. It also builds in additional prevention measures against anyone who may mean to do harm if they are immediately made aware of our procedures.

When you think about what makes you feel safe, always first rest in Jesus! "You will be secure, because there is hope; you will look about you and take your rest in safety" (Job 11:18, NIV). Then, also know that SFH is here to help. We want to provide the best care to all we serve and all who are serving, through the best protection and prevention measures possible.

A champion for safety

"I've been in your shoes. And I still love youth work." This is what Lisa Jordan, territorial Safe from Harm (SFH) program director, will tell you. There is not only an understanding of the challenge but an affinity of purpose.



Lisa's path to her current role with SFH was paved by 18 years as youth development director at the Oakbrook Terrace, Ill., Corps. When she took the job, she instinctually knew "it would be the best." And it was. She also knew God would need to make it clear when it was time to leave. And He did.

She'd thought perhaps at the 15-year mark youth might need someone younger with fresh ideas to minister to them, but it wasn't until the spring of 2023 when three job offers came that she sensed it was time. But which job did God want her to take? Quite a bit of soul searching, prayer and talking with trusted confidants were required to discern His will.

"It became clear that this was what I should apply for to continue God's calling in my life to minister to youth and families and to provide safe spaces for people to meet Jesus and grow in their relationship with Him," Lisa, a third-generation Salvationist, said.

Having been involved with SFH from its inception and as a trainer for many years, she was aware of its importance and had been a champion for safety and protection of vulnerable populations.

"I believe SFH is not only a tool to help us minister to our communities but also a ministry all its own to bring understanding and provide training so that The Salvation Army can create safety physically, emotionally and spiritually for all those we serve," Lisa explained. "It's exciting to explore new ways to do that and interact with others who also are committed to this mission."

Lisa says she is privileged to have received extensive training from her predecessor (Megan Olson) and to network with counterparts across the country and internationally in the effort to promote a prevention culture.

She also is grateful for the support of her husband, Ev, and their three adult children, who with their spouses are serving God as teachers, soon-to-be officers, a doctor and civil engineer.

While SFH is a large responsibility and this area of service can be difficult, Lisa's faith remains steadfast. She still aspires to the verse she chose as a young adult to guide her daily living, Philippians 4:8 (NIV): "Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."

Lisa concluded, "We live in a world that could easily steal our joy, but as we fix our minds and hearts on Jesus—who is all the things listed in this verse and so much more—and focus life through the lens of our relationship with Him, we experience true joy which is how I want to live my life."



USA CENTRAL TERRITORY

BELONGING

UNITED IN PRAYER 2025

WEEKLY PRAYER TOPICS

"Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear." Isaiah 65:24 (NIV)

Week of May 4:
Belonging 2025 Conference Workshop Presenters

Week of May 11:
The witness and influence of Belonging in Milwaukee

Week of May 18:
Safe travel of delegates to Belonging 2025

Week of May 25:
General Lyndon and Commissioner Bronwyn Buckingham
Commissioner Evie Diaz

I commit to...

- Praying for BELONGING 2025.
- Praying for the different programs and ministries of The Salvation Army.
- Praying for those entering our doors to feel like they BELONG.
- Praying for myself and my relationship with Christ.

Signature _____ Date _____

Strong roots, strong leaders

Imagine a tree. When you look at its trunk and branches, it may look quite strong. But what matters most is actually below the ground. Strong roots are the key to a strong, healthy tree.

The same can be said for leaders, said Major Enrique Azuaje, territorial personnel projects officer, who has created a new Intrapersonal Exemplary Leadership course for Spanish-speaking officers in the Central Territory. The continuing education class debuted earlier this year.

"The 'roots' make a difference—they are a person's consciousness, spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence—the hidden areas of a leader that are profound, invisible," Major Enrique said. "That is the focus of this course. How they can develop those qualities that are deep within them. If they don't have strong 'roots,' they need to fertilize and take care of them."

The major commented that many Hispanic officers are coming into the Army from different backgrounds.

"It is important they understand the international movement, so we talk the same language. And it's important to know the context of leadership development in the U.S. This course is aligned with The Salvation Army mission," Major Enrique said. "And it embellishes what people learn at the College for Officer Training (CFOT)."

The goal is to help officers cultivate habits that bring leadership and faith

together to transform them and the organization, he explained.

Eight students took the six-week course in February and March via Teams. Each week different leadership themes such as empowerment, joy, inspiration or resilience were examined through discussion groups, chat channels and other interactive Teams activities.

Lt. Maria Medina Cusack, Chicago Midway Citadel, Ill., corps officer, says she was eager to take the course because she feels true leadership begins within oneself.

"Understanding that, knowing myself, my strengths and weaknesses, my relationship with God, will help me lead others with love, wisdom, vision, humility and integrity with purpose and authenticity," Lt. Maria said. "I want to always be guided by God's principles, purpose and revelation for my life."

The course looks at the pillars of exemplary leadership, intrapersonal, managerial and organizational, but also the spiritual aspect.

"It equips officers with practical skills but also emphasizes the spiritual and relational foundation of their leadership," Major Enrique said. "Leadership has foundation in spiritual disciplines, a deep reliance on God's guidance to make ethical decisions and foster transformation."

While taking the course, Major Yaneth Scott, Milwaukee Cold Spring, Wis., corps officer, said, "I believe that effective leadership requires a



9

solid foundation of self-awareness and self-management. I sincerely believe that this course will enhance my ability to influence my appointment, especially as I have come to a new country."

Major Enrique has been grateful for the input and support of Lt. Colonel Darlene Harvey, territorial officer resource and development secretary; Rob DeGeorge, manager, officer resource and development department; Dietrich Hunter, educational services supervisor at the CFOT; and Pantaleon Martinez, a technician in the IT department at Central Territorial Headquarters.

Lt. Colonel Darlene said although

the first cohort was in Spanish, her department hopes to offer it in English in the future.

"I am so thankful for how God has brought this course together," she said. "Because it has been taught online, it has offered flexibility for officers all over the territory the opportunity to network. We are pleased with the feedback we have received that the course is beneficial, practical, and building capacity for officers in the field."

For more information about this course, contact your command leader for officer development or the officer resource and development department.

Faithful in every season

by Major Heather Montenegro

If I had to sum up my lieutenant years in one word, it would be: chickens.

Yes, chickens! One day, a farmer walked into the corps and asked if we wanted some chicken. Running a daily feeding program always in need of food, I quickly answered, "Yes," expecting neatly packaged chicken breasts ready to be cooked. Imagine my shock when I walked in the next day to the sound of live chickens clucking in the warehouse!

Seizing this unexpected "blessing," I turned it into a women's ministries opportunity. I watched in amazement as the older women of our corps, many of whom had grown up on farms, joyfully taught our corps' teens the art of butchering, cleaning and cooking fresh chickens. Ministry can bring unexpected blessings when you're willing to embrace the crazy.

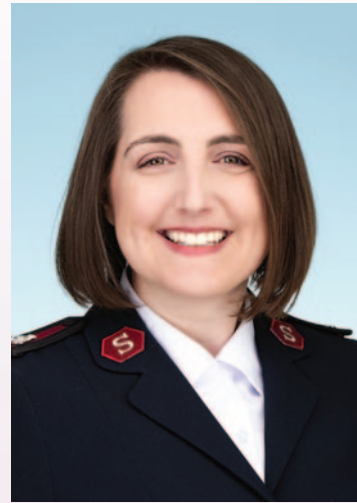
My captain years can be summed up in two words: medical emergencies.

During my six years as the health officer at the College for Officer Training, I spent countless hours in ERs and doctors' offices with cadets from all over our territory. These moments were often filled with anxiety as they awaited medical results or sought relief from pain.

While the downtown Chicago ER isn't exactly a fun or comfortable place, some of my most meaningful moments came from simply sitting, listening, and connecting with cadets during these trying times. Ministry can bring sacred moments when you're willing to sit in the uncomfortable.

My first years as a major can be summed up in one word: fire.

During this time, I faced a series of unexpected challenges in both my work and personal life that required me to adapt and pivot repeatedly. These difficulties, though trying, became opportunities for growth and transformation. Through it all, God



was at work, refining me in ways I could not fully see at the time.

Now that life has stabilized, I can look back and recognize how much I've grown as a leader, a mother, a friend, and a child of God. Ministry can bring refining when you're willing to walk through the flames.

Reflecting on my journey, I've come to realize that ministry is a series of seasons, each bringing its own unique challenges and blessings. Through it all, I've learned that ministry isn't about having all the answers or always being prepared—it's about being faithful, flexible and willing to let God work through the unexpected. Each season has reminded me that, no matter how crazy, uncomfortable or challenging, God's purpose is always at work, transforming us and those we serve.



To learn about becoming an officer, visit salarmycentral.org/candidates



Newly accepted candidate



Christopher Szoke

First-generation Salvationist

Rockford Temple, Ill., Corps

North & Central Illinois Division

Majors Monty and Angela Wandling, corps officers

Spiritual Gifts

Discernment ♦ Serving ♦ Teaching

Ministry Passion or Experience

Social Services ♦ Preaching / Teaching

Spiritual Mentors

Major Mickey Hale ♦ Major Monty Wandling

A global perspective

by Captain Blake Fewell

If you stand with your nose pressed against a mural, your view is limited to a small section of the whole. The colors and brushstrokes may be vivid, but without stepping back, you can't fully appreciate how each part fits into the grand design. In many ways, this is how we often see our work and ministry—through the lens of our immediate surroundings. However, stepping back provides a broader and richer perspective. Serving as an officer at International Headquarters has given me that opportunity, allowing me to witness the worldwide impact of The Salvation Army.

Since last September, I have been privileged to serve as the assistant under secretary for the Americas and Caribbean Zone. While my role focuses on a specific set of administrative responsibilities within the zone, my interactions with officers from around the world have widened my

perspective. Seeing how The Salvation Army operates at a zonal and global level has reinforced the truth that we are part of a much larger mission.

One of my favorite ways to gain this global perspective is through the delegates of the International College for Officers (ICO). This six-week session, held at Sunbury Court in London, is a transformational experience for officers. It provides leadership development, spiritual growth and an opportunity to build relationships with fellow officers from diverse backgrounds.

My responsibility is to support delegates from the Americas and Caribbean Zone through the approval stages and the logistics of traveling to and from London. The interactions I have had with them and other delegates from around the world have shown me the great collage of culture and Christian expressions within the global Salvation Army. The stories



At the Zonal Conference last October with leaders

and experiences of ICO delegates remind me that Christian ministry is not isolated; it is part of a much greater mission.

The global perspective is also strengthened through territorial and international leadership. Last October, territorial leaders from the Americas and Caribbean Zone convened in Dallas, Texas, for a Zonal Conference with The General and the zonal team. This was a time of vision casting, collaboration and encouragement as leaders from across the zone considered the future of ministry in their context.

A significant moment in the conference was when some of us recognized the USA Central Territory's lasting impact on the Americas and Caribbean Zone and the international Salvation Army. Several officers at the conference were connected to the USA Central Territory in one way or another; some are in territorial leadership, others have family who are cadets or officers in the Central Territory, and a few even did their training at the



Captains Blake Fewell and Ketsia Diaz on ICO Zonal Day

CFOT. These global connections are a reminder and testament to the continued investment of the USA Central Territory in developing strong officer leadership with a global perspective and for the global mission.

Stepping back to see the bigger picture is both humbling and inspiring. It reminds us that no matter where we serve or what we do, we are connected in mission, united in purpose and privileged to be part of God's unfolding story through The Salvation Army.



The Americas and Caribbean Zonal office team

Omaha Kroc Center celebrates 15 years

The Omaha, Neb., Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center has been serving the Omaha Metro area for 15 years. With more than 100 staff, 5,000 members and thriving programs like a youth soccer league, summer day camp and year-round fitness and enrichment classes for people of all ages, the center has become a place of connection and belonging for the community.

Currently led by Captains Alex and Carolina Yanez, the Kroc Center celebrated this milestone with an event sponsored by Cox Communications and attended by more than 130 guests, including community leaders, past and present donors and representatives from Western Divisional and Central Territorial headquarters.

"We wanted to have a community

event to connect with donors and friends of The Salvation Army," said Captain Alex. "The purpose was to celebrate, emphasize community collaborations that are impactful and reach out to the county/service area for active and intentional engagement."

Highlighting the great difference the Kroc Center has made in Omaha, the keynote address was given by Dr. Maria Vazquez of the Omaha Advisory Board Executive Committee. Remarks also were given by Commissioner Evie Diaz, territorial commander, and Major Dan Sawka, Omaha city commander.

On behalf of the Western Division, Majors Scott and Jolinda Shelbourn, divisional leaders, presented Captains Yanez with an award recognizing the ongoing efforts of the Kroc Center to be a light in the community, emphasizing significant growth in membership and community partnerships over the past three years.

"It is never our goal to be recognized," said Captain Alex. "But it was a wonderful and humbling surprise. I want to give credit to our strong team. They go above and beyond expectations and have really embraced the mission of the Kroc and The Salvation Army. It makes a difference."

Kroc Center staff and members shared their perspectives in a video presentation which painted the center as a warm and welcoming place



Majors Jolinda and Scott Shelbourn (far left and right), Western divisional leaders; Lt. Christopher Rutledge-Clarke, Kroc Center officer for congregational life; Commissioner Evie Diaz, territorial commander; Major Dan Sawka, Omaha area commander; and Captains Carolina and Alex Yanez, Kroc Center leaders.

to be, just as Joan Kroc intended when she made her historic donation for The Salvation Army to build community centers across the United States. The Kroc Center in Omaha was the first opened in the Central Territory.

To help ensure financial strains are not a barrier, the Kroc Center provides sponsorships and scholarships for community members who cannot afford the membership fee. Currently 500 members are able to be part of the Kroc Center family thanks to these opportunities.

"We want the Kroc to be fully accessible to everyone," concluded Captain Alex. "The

Omaha Kroc is a good example of Joan Kroc's desire for the centers to make a difference in communities."



Captains Alex and Carolina Yanez with awards presented by the Western Division



Longtime donor Terry Moore with Christine Shada, Kroc Center associate director of events and rentals

Radiothon raises more than \$1.2 million

The Salvation Army of Metro Detroit held its 38th annual Bed & Bread Club Radiothon, raising \$1.2 million to help feed the hungry and homeless. Longtime partner News/Talk WJR-AM broadcast the event, which kicked off with pre-taped segments before going live for 14 hours from Ford's Garage in Dearborn, Mich.

The Bed & Bread program, which is partially funded by the Radiothon, provides nearly 3,800 meals daily, while also providing shelter for more than 160 individuals each night, 365 days a year.

"Our Bed & Bread Club truck drivers make their way through Detroit, traveling multiple routes and making stops to feed the hungry," said Great Lakes Divisional Commander Lt. Colonel Steven Merritt. "That includes holidays and days when the weather may prove dangerous because we understand that hunger doesn't take any days off."

Representatives from the Great Lakes Division joined WJR hosts on the air to share insights about those helped.



"When people come up to the truck and ask for food, they are also asking for hope, for help and for love. We are so blessed to do God's work," said Major Charlotte (Hall) Koehler, metro Detroit area commander. "If you've ever been on a truck, believe me, it's not an experience you forget."

"Nobody struggles by choice," said Major Andrew Shiels, Great Lakes associate general secretary. "Funds raised during Radiothon allow The Salvation Army to provide nourishing meals to the hungry and safe shelter to the homeless."

Started by Detroit Radio Hall of Famer Dick Purtan in 1988, the Bed & Bread Radiothon has raised more than \$46 million. Funds raised this year included more than \$300,000 in corporate donations from those including the Artichoke Garlic Foundation, Ford's Garage, Meridian Bank, Moran Automotive, the Dick & Gail Purtan Family Foundation, Edsel B. Ford II, Michigan native actor Tim Allen, Fifth Third Bank, National Food Group and Pat Milliken Ford.



Promoted to Glory

Major Jack Lindsey

Major Jack Lindsey was promoted to Glory on February 22, 2025. Jack's deepest desire was to represent Christ in such a way that everyone he came into contact with would see Jesus in him.



Jack Eugene Lindsey was born on September 18, 1936, to Waldo and Rosetta Lindsey in Wichita, Kan. When Jack was 10, his family began attending the Newton, Kan., Corps after a friend invited him to Sunday school.

Upon graduating from high school in 1954, Jack became a corps helper in Salina, Kan. He entered officer training in 1955 and there met Catherine Swann, whom he married on September 19, 1958.

For nearly 45 years, the Lindseys served in corps appointments, often being called upon to revive the work in struggling corps. Notably, Jack earned the Dale Carnegie Certificate and

later used his business acumen to keep a work release program in Chicago open as assistant divisional correctional services director.

The Lindseys retired in 2001 and then soldiered at the Indianapolis Eagle Creek, Ind., Corps.

Jack was preceded in death by a sister and two brothers. He is survived by his wife, Catherine, of 66 years; children, Lynell (Dale) Richardson, Timothy Paul (Krissy), Matthew (Anne); five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

The Salvation Army

PRAYER CENTRAL

USA Central Territory

June Prayer Calendar

My Prayer List	Day	Bible Reading	Pray for The Salvation Army
	1 Sunday	I Peter 4:10-11	Ames, Iowa, Service Center
	2 Monday	Acts 20:35	Big Rapids, Mich., Corps
	3 Tuesday	Galatians 5:13-14	India Eastern Territory
	4 Wednesday	Matthew 20:28	Burlington, Iowa, Corps
	5 Thursday	Matthew 23:11	Chicago La Vallita, Ill., Corps
	6 Friday	Mark 9:35	Columbia, Mo., Corps
	7 Saturday	John 13:12-14	Des Moines, Iowa, ARC
	8 Sunday	Matthew 25:35-40	Eau Claire, Wis., Bread of Life Service Center
	9 Monday	Mark 10:45	Flint, Mich., 360 Life Center
	10 Tuesday	Philippians 2:5-11	Indonesia Territory
	11 Wednesday	Matthew 5:16	Gary-Merrillville, Ind., Corps
	12 Thursday	Hebrews 13:16	Green Bay, Wis., Corps
	13 Friday	James 2:14-17	Hutchinson, Kan., Corps
	14 Saturday	I John 3:18	Kalamazoo, Mich., Corps
	15 Sunday	Galatians 6:2-9	La Crosse, Wis., Corps
	16 Monday	I Samuel 12:24	Madison, Ind., Corps
	17 Tuesday	Deuteronomy 15:11	Midland, Mich., Corps
	18 Wednesday	Ephesians 2:10	Moline Heritage Temple, Iowa, Corps
	19 Thursday	Romans 12:9-13	Kenya West Territory
	20 Friday	I John 3:17	North Platte, Neb., Corps
	21 Saturday	John 15:12	Pekin, Ill., 360 Life Center
	22 Sunday	Colossians 3:23-24	Rapid City, S.D., Corps
	23 Monday	Luke 3:10-11	Shelbyville, Ind., Corps
	24 Tuesday	Proverbs 3:27	St. Clair County, Ill., Corps
	25 Wednesday	Joshua 22:5	Topeka Citadel, Kan., Corps
	26 Thursday	Ephesians 4:28	USA Western Territory
	27 Friday	I Corinthians 9:19	Wausau, Wis., Corps
	28 Saturday	Luke 12:33-24	NCI DHQ
	29 Sunday	James 1:27	Sweden and Latvia Territory
	30 Monday	Matthew 6:24	St. Louis, Mo., Area Command

Go to www.salarmycentral.org
If you follow the prayer calendar during the year,
you will have read through the Bible!

--Mustard Seeds--



Taking a stand for women and girls

Centralites informed, inspired at United Nations 69th Commission on the Status of Women

by Captain Sarah Eddy

A delegation of 12 women and one man from the Central Territory joined others from around the world in March at the United Nations 69th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York. This year's focus was the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Delegates attended sessions on gender equality, including the topics of education, government, social change, the impact of technology, environmental factors, health care and much more affecting women and girls around the world.

While globally great strides have been made for rights, equality and empowerment of women and girls, there is still a long way to go. The CSW meets annually to evaluate the progress the United Nations has made creating a world where women are seen as equals.



Lt. Breanna James, Envoy Melissa Murray and Erin McDonald

school. It also shared that one in five girls is married in childhood. UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Millie Bobby Brown said while change is happening, it's not fast enough, and girls are being left behind. She asserted that when an investment is made in girls, it not only changes them but their communities, countries and, ultimately, the world.

At the end of a week of informative workshops and sessions, our delegation met to reflect on our time at the CSW. We were challenged to describe it in one word. Among the descriptions were challenging, empowered, educational, hopeful and motivated. Delegates shared they'd been unaware of many of the statistics shared during the week, especially as it related to gender equity in the workforce and child marriages. We talked about the importance of men being brought into this fight as allies and that it should start at home in our youth programs and men's ministry groups. It was evident God was working in our hearts.



Major Nancy Mead

The event was a call to act in solidarity and boldness since women around the world still face gender-based violence, inequality in the workplace, lack of education and much more. In the face of these continued struggles, each of us is called to take a stand. We are called to spread awareness, be a voice and make a difference.

On the first full day of CSW, we had the opportunity to attend an event called Power4Girls which brought to light that 122 million girls around the world either don't have access to school or are unable to go to

Personally, CSW reminded me of the honor of being a Salvation Army officer. As a single woman, it has never been a question for me to have a voice, to preach, to teach and to speak with those in authority. However, as I spoke with women from around the world, it became clear to me that my experience is the exception.

Worldwide, The Salvation Army is known to minister to the most vulnerable, to stand with those who don't have a voice, to break social norms, and to be a light in a dark world. Yet, there is still much work to be done. Will you join us in the fight?



Majors Lorna Cossey, Christopher Marques, Nancy Mead and Katherine Clausell, Captain Sarah Eddy, Envoy Melissa Murray and Lt. Breanna James



Members of the Central Territory's delegation at the United Nations 69th Commission on the Status of Women

Get in the zone

Don't miss the dedicated prayer space during Belonging

by Major Debra Pascoe

Florence Booth, in *The Powers of Salvation Army Soldiers*, said it succinctly, "No matter how much we may labor, our toil will be unblest by God if it is not hallowed by prayer."

With the United in Prayer initiative, Salvationists across the Central Territory are a vital part of the preparations for the Belonging 2025 Conference and Congress in June. As we plan and seek God's guidance, your intercession is covering the countless details, programs and activities, speakers, workshop leaders and other participants.

The focus on prayer doesn't end when the conference begins. During the event, you are invited to visit a dedicated prayer zone. As you make your way to the workshop area in the Milwaukee Baird Center, look for the banners depicting people, like you, coming together to pray, and enjoy a multimedia presentation featuring photos of Central Salvationists engaging in prayer.

The prayer zone will be filled with interactive displays. In one area, you'll be able to take a request submitted by a fellow Salvationist and

commit to covering that person or situation in prayer. In another, you'll be able to share your own praise reports and encourage other delegates at a kiosk. Finally, bring your phone and some earbuds to scan a QR code and hear a prayer in one of several languages.

Plan now to spend some time meeting with God in this dedicated space.

Please continue to pray for General Lyndon Buckingham and Commissioner Bronwyn Buckingham as they prepare to be with us. Of course, we also want to remember our own Territorial Commander, Commissioner Evie Diaz, along with guest speakers who will join us from around the globe and many of our own employees, colleagues and officers. Lastly, please pray for the delegates.

We are United in Prayer for Belonging 2025!

To submit a request for the prayer zone, email usc.thq.spiritual.life.development@usc.salvationarmy.org

To register for the Belonging Conference and Congress, visit belonging2025.org