



# 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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## Joy: the constant of Christmas

by Captains Matthew and Haylee Winters

Five years of ministry at Christmas. Each has been different. The first Christmas we were officers was during Covid. The second was getting back to normal. By the third, we'd perfected our system (or so we thought). The fourth saw us in a new appointment. The fifth brought perfecting and growing in the new system and context. Five years, five Christ-



mases—the constant has been the joy of the Lord.

We love the Christmas season and the opportunity to see society embrace the Kingdom values of love, generosity and compassion, and to become the conduit through which so many people give.

True, at times, the work at Christmas can be exhausting. Each Christmas, we have had different people helping with kettles, differ-

ent numbers of families and kids who needed assistance, different procedures, and different partnerships. Days are long and can feel like weeks.

And yet, we are reminded there is no better place to serve others than The Salvation Army. When we lose the joy, tasks become checklists, people become burdens, and schedules become rigid. We even might count the number of Christmases left as officers because they expend so much time and energy.

But as new captains—with 35 Christmases until retirement—our heart is focused on more time to be catalysts of hope.

Romans 12:11 reminds us, "Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord."



Colossians 3:23-24 says, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."

Christmas is humbling. We are reminded that we are a team, and there is no job too low for us. Each is crucial to the ministry. You will find us hosting parties for families, jumping in the dumpster to make sure all the trash fits, unloading toys from Toys for Tots, setting up the toy shop, meeting the Gideons as they hand out Bibles at the toy distribution, running from Angel Tree site to Angel Tree site to pick up toys, thanking donors and volunteers, marching in holiday parades, and offering coffee to guests who come into the building to get out of the cold and listening to their stories and praying with them.

While this list might seem exhausting, it's by no means comprehensive. We find that keeping our focus on why we do everything encourages us because the joy is not just from the Christmas season. It runs deeper. It is from our faith. We take delight in

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Captains Matthew and Haylee Winters with their daughters Addison and Amelia.

## The light has come!

by General Lyndon Buckingham

As a young boy, I suffered from chronic bronchial asthma. Often, asthma attacks would come in the dark of the night. The result: fear of the dark, panic and, as I recall, a sense of desperation as I struggled to catch my next breath. Cue Mum to the rescue: calming, reassuring, helping, embracing.

"Mum, can you leave the light on?" I would ask. The passage light was left on, my door was pulled to. The light, shining through the crack in the door, signified so much to me: I could see, the dark was not nearly as oppressive and the light represented the reality of my mother's presence. It calmed, reassured, reminded and, most of all, it dispelled the darkness and my fear. The light has come!

Over the centuries, light and dark

have been used by cultures and religions to differentiate between good and evil, pure and impure, right and wrong, life and death. Light overcomes the darkness, good triumphs over evil, right prevails over wrong, hope wins over hopelessness. "Mum, can you leave the light on?"

Light and dark is a recurring theme in Scripture from the very beginning. Early in the first book of the Bible, these memorable words are noted: "Then God said, 'Let there be light'" (Genesis 1:3 NLT).

The prophet Isaiah, writing at a time of political turmoil and spiritual despair, shared a message of hope and light. Against a backdrop of un-



certainty, fear, oppression and spiritual hunger, the prophet declared, "The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine" (Isaiah 9:2 NLT).

"For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His government and its peace will never end" (Isaiah 9:6-7 NLT).

Light symbolises the presence of God. The prophesy is fulfilled in the birth of Jesus Christ, God's Son, sent to be the Light of the World! He comes to bring the light of God's presence into the darkness of our

world. He brings forgiveness, redemption, healing, hope, comfort, courage and purpose—life in all its fullness. He reveals the nature, character and heart of God. He introduces a kingdom that will have no end, and He invites all of us to step into the light.

In John's Gospel we read, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it" (John 1:5 NLT). God's light for our world today is the revelation of himself in the person of Jesus Christ—the Light of the World who conquered the darkness of death with a radiant resurrection, vindicating everything He taught about His Father, the Kingdom, Himself and us as both true and trustworthy. Jesus reveals God's intention and

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# Krocettes savor award of excellence

**B**ustling about the kitchen at the Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center in Chicago, the Krocettes flip pancakes and roll sizzling sausages across frying pans for a special Christmas brunch after Sunday services. A "Breakfast with Santa" event every December also finds the Krocettes happily preparing food for Kroc Center families.

"We put all of our tender loving care into it," said Wandella Akins, one of the original Krocettes who began volunteering when the center opened. "Food ministry is our thing."

"We are so focused," said Natasha Lewis. "We make everything we send out of the kitchen with love."

The ladies also prepare an annual traditional Thanksgiving feast for everyone at the Kroc Center.

"I always make my yams," Wandella said of the Thanksgiving dinner. "They love for me to make my yams."

In addition to these popular holiday meals, this stalwart group of 10 women cooks dinner every week for as many as 100 students in the center's Wednesday night Bible studies—and they have



The Krocettes are set to prepare and serve meals.

been for the last 12 years! The dinners consist of fare like spaghetti and meatballs, pork chops and gravy, macaroni and cheese and baked chicken that is delivered on trays right to the students in their classrooms.

"Sometimes it can be the only decent meal the students in Bible study get," Wandella said.

The Krocettes received a Territorial Award of Excellence for Holistic Min-

istries at the Belonging Conference in June.

"We had no idea we were getting the award," Wandella said with pride. "We felt like we were celebrities. Meeting Commissioner Bronwyn [Buckingham] was amazing!"

In addition to the glass trophy which the group was awarded, one also was given to Wandella, as a group leader, and Brenda Gordon, an-



other original Krocette leader. All three trophies are displayed, along with others, in a beautiful glass case at the center—a wish come true—and stands as a symbol of the dedication, teamwork and excellence that defines the Kroc Center.

Natasha, like the other Krocettes, was thrilled to receive the award of excellence.

"It is a privilege and an honor that they would think so much of our group and the work that we do," she said.

Captain Kenesa Debela, who leads the Kroc Center with his wife, Captain Shanell Debela, said, "We are so proud of the Krocettes. This award highlights not only their generosity but their commitment to building a Christ-centered community where all feel welcomed. They truly live out the spirit of belonging and ministry that we strive for at the Chicago Kroc every single day."

## The art of belonging

by Merri Bennett

**A**rtPrize is one of the most well-known events in Michigan and millions have visited Grand Rapids to see works displayed across the city. For the past two years The Salvation Army in Kent County and the Fulton Heights Corps have worked together to serve as a venue with family-friendly exhibits inspired by faith and spirituality. More than 200 people attended this fall.

"The public is more familiar with our iconic red shield, thrift stores and holiday fundraising versus our spiritual mission," said Fulton Heights Corps Officer Major Thom Moffitt. "ArtPrize provides an oppor-



Erin McDonald by her painting about the Trinity

tunity to introduce an entirely new audience to The Salvation Army."

While most artists aren't connected with The Salvation Army, Fulton Heights soldier Erin McDonald took part this year.

"Art and religion go back thousands and thousands of years," she said. "If you look at old cathedrals in the medieval era, there's so much art, especially with the stained-glass windows. Art was as an educational tool to tell stories to people because a majority in the medieval ages were illiterate and could not read the Bible."

Another artist, Lily Mattson, has worked at the Grand Rapids Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center since 2019. Her work from last year now hangs near the Kroc Center chapel.

"Even at the Kroc Center, many people come in and see the church side and say I didn't realize you guys were a Christian organization. With ArtPrize being such a huge thing for our community, it provides an opportunity for people to step foot into another one of our buildings and see for them-

selves what The Salvation Army is all about."

Erin thinks it's important that young people have a space to express themselves and ask questions. And she thinks ArtPrize is a wonderful way to open those doors.

One of the great things about having our doors open for ArtPrize is that we're opening our doors for people to belong, showing that they have a space. Many may not go to church or even believe in God, but we want to give them a space to belong."



Major Thom Moffitt, Grand Rapids Fulton Heights corps officer, Artist Lily Mattson, Major Tim Meyer, Kent County area coordinator, and Cathy Blackburn, Kent County development director, in front of Lily's 2024 painting called, "The Ultimate Good."



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## General's message Continued from page 1

desire for all humankind—life in all its fullness through faith in Him.

Once again, this Christmas we have the opportunity to reflect, celebrate and worship the God who steps down into darkness and brings light.

Friends, stay with me a little more. Jesus said to His followers, "You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14 *NLT*). You. Me. Us! This is the beautiful purpose of people who belong to God through faith in Christ. We become vessels through whom the light

of God is revealed: hope and healing, truth and grace, compassion and mercy, forgiveness and love.

"God, can you leave the light on?"

"I have."

May God reveal again His light as you celebrate this Christmas. May we, who have placed our faith in His Son, shine like stars in the universe as living testimonies to the power and sufficiency of Jesus, the Light of the World.

God bless you.



# Shining the light, sharing the joy

by Captain Brenna Lee

On the first Saturday of December, downtown Nashville, Ind., transforms into a Hallmark-inspired moment, as thousands of people gather for one of the community's most-anticipated traditions: The Salvation Army's Christmas Light Parade. Hosted by the Brown County Outpost and organized by Captain Vinal Lee, this annual event draws locals and visitors from across the country to experience the true spirit of Christmas.

This parade features over 70 floats, designed

and decorated by local schools, churches, civic groups and community organizations. They vary in design, but all represent Brown County's artistry and the message of the season.



"This is a moment when the community truly comes together," Captain Vinal shared. "Every part of the parade reminds us that Christmas is about the hope, love, joy and peace Jesus has to offer. The Salvation Army is honored to be part of creating that experience."

Beyond its beauty, the parade also serves a deeper purpose. Spectators and participants are invited to bring new toys to contribute toward The Salvation Army's Christmas assistance ministry, ensuring children across Brown County wake up on Christmas morning with gifts under the tree. Thanks to the generosity of the community, last year more than 800 toys were collected, directly blessing families in need and spreading joy throughout the community.

For many, the Christmas Light Parade has become an annual tradition that signals the start of the holidays. Families line the streets as they wave to Santa at the parade's finale. Local businesses and organizations eagerly

prepare their floats weeks in advance, knowing they are contributing to something that brings the whole community together.

This year The Salvation Army has created a new collaborative agreement with the nonprofit St. Vincent De Paul of Brown County. Together, they will provide Christmas assistance to families in Brown County. This new ministry, called "Blessing Tree," is an empowering effort to ensure families "unwrap joy" Christmas morning. It also moves toward a yearlong cross-community collaboration.

The Christmas Light Parade floats may shine for only one night, but the impact of the parade lasts far beyond that evening.

"When we gather together supporting those most in need throughout the season, we get a little glimpse into God's Kingdom," said Captain Vinal. "The Christmas Light Parade is a living example that we are better together."



## Wrestlers ring in the holidays

The Christmas season is upon us once again with its decorated trees, colorful lights, holiday carols and professional wrestlers slamming one another onto the floor of a ring. While it may not fall into the standard theme of Christmas, the second annual Red Kettle Rumble wrestling event is back again this season at the Wichita West Orchard, Kan., Corps.

The program has become a popular way to raise money for the corps' Christmas fundraising campaign. Last year's inaugural Rumble, attended by an estimated 150 people, raised nearly \$2,000.

"Everyone loved it," said Lt. Kristi Dalberg, who leads the corps with

her husband Lt. John Dalberg. "It was a unique fundraiser, and people loved seeing something different."

Billy Simmons, a professional wrestler since 2001, and the owner of Heartland Championship Wrestling (HCW), a professional wrestling company in Wichita, created the Red Kettle Rumble as a way to give back to The Salvation Army for the help his family received years ago.

After getting hurt on the job while working as a corrections officer, Billy waited two years for his disability payments to arrive. He and his wife were struggling to feed their family that included their two young daughters.

"We couldn't provide for our kids.

The Salvation Army helped us keep food on the table. And during the holiday season, they provided us with Christmas gifts to give to our kids. I will never forget that," Billy remembered fondly. "I just wanted to give back to the people who so graciously helped me."

The family friendly Red Kettle Rumble features a number of single and tag-team wrestling matches, followed by a "royal rumble," with about 35 wrestlers making individual entrances into the ring, in quick succession. There are also matches where champions defend their belts.

"We bring our own chairs, tables and ring. We do all of the set up and tear down," Billy said. "We decorate it up too. We like to entertain the crowd. That is what we do. And it gives me joy to give a check back to The Salvation Army."

HCW champion wrestler Rey León will take part once again in this season's Red Kettle Rumble. He hopes that guests can forget about their troubles and simply have fun.

"Families can take a moment to just enjoy themselves and not have to worry about the daily struggles of life," Rey said.

He also is pleased that all proceeds



Lt. Kristi Dalberg with Rey León (left) and Billy Simmons of Heartland Championship Wrestling

will be used for Salvation Army programs.

"I love that I am a part of this event, and that we are using this as a way to help The Salvation Army help families—whether it is with groceries or with something else," Rey said.

The Red Kettle Rumble brings in a wide range of people to the corps, from wrestling fans to those who have never seen a wrestling match before, according to Lt. Kristi.

She said, "Not only is Red Kettle Rumble a fundraiser, but it is also a great way to get new people into our building, allowing them to learn about our mission, programs and services."



Wrestlers take part in the Red Kettle Rumble at the Wichita West Orchard, Kan., Corps.



# MAN OF GOD

## Conference strengthens men to stand for Christ

by Mark Bender

Six hundred men from across the Midwest gathered at the Green Lake, Wis., Conference and Retreat grounds this fall surrounded by God's stunning autumn colors. For many, this was a retreat from the fast pace of city life. For others, it was a much-needed break from distractions and an opportunity for rest. For all, it was an opportunity to learn more about what it means to be called a man of God.



spoke about God's design of masculinity, how to deal with anger, and how to be relaxed and experience joy in a world in chaos.

Each session was sensitively supported by the Territorial Worship Collective (TWC), combining contemporary worship songs with hymns of the church. The Chicago Staff Band (CSB) enhanced the worship with new arrangements and marches, including several pieces played with the TWC.

Major Trevor McClintock and Captain Michael Hanton were memorable as they started each session with "deer stand dad jokes." Meetings also



Over three general sessions, nationally syndicated radio host and best-selling author Brant Hansen connected with the crowd as he



included inspiring testimonies from Ricardo Cardenas (Kansas City Blue Valley, Mo., Corps) and Tony Quirin (Elgin, Ill., Corps).

The Forge SA (theforgesa.org) was highlighted by Phil Hull (Indiana Division). The Central Territory's monthly curriculum for men will be focusing on the theme, "Man of God" in 2026. Similar to "Embrace" in



Women's Ministries, The Forge SA is a downloadable monthly short video teaching with discussion questions for men.

Throughout the weekend, opportunities were given to contribute to The Salvation Army Adult Blind Center and Workshop in Nassau, Bahamas. The workshop employs adults who are visually impaired to make mops which are sold throughout the Bahamas to resorts, government agencies, hardware stores and businesses. Money was collected specifically to help the "Mop Shop" purchase a used small cargo truck (estimated at \$18,000). Through offerings and a grant from THQ, more than \$16,000 was raised for the project.





# A brotherhood in Christ

by Lt. Landon McClintock

I had the privilege of attending the Territorial Men's Conference this fall alongside 39 incredible men from the Kansas and Western Missouri Division. As we traveled nine hours on a bus to the conference, I couldn't help but reflect on how fortunate I was to be surrounded by so many men who are



bittered us is in God's care. We are to take our thoughts captive and view our circumstances through a godly lens.

Conversations, laughter during meals and quiet prayers in the early morning all pointed to the beauty of brotherhood in Christ. It reminded me we are not alone in our struggles or victories. We are part of a larger story God is writing with care and purpose. The same God who dresses the lilies and watches over the sparrows is involved in every detail of our lives.



Photo by Katelyn Church



seeking to be more like God. That we needed a bus instead of a few minivans spoke volumes not just about numbers but the spiritual hunger and commitment God is stirring in our hearts.

Though I arrived with my voice nearly gone—thanks to a Christian metalcore concert just days earlier—I realized this retreat wasn't about what I could say or sing but rather what I could hear. And what I heard was awe-inspiring.

During worship I usually sing at full volume, but God nudged me to be still and listen. As I stood among 600 men lifting their voices in praise, I was humbled. Their worship was so powerful it drowned out the praise band. It was a holy moment that reminded me God is moving mightily in the hearts of men across our territory.

We were challenged to embrace a Christian view of masculinity that protects, serves and is wholly reliant on God. In a world that often distorts what it means to be a man, this message was timely and transformative. True strength is found not in dominance or independence, but in surrender and dependence on our Creator.

One of the most impactful teachings centered on anger which can distract us from what God is calling us to do. Left unchecked, anger can become a barrier to obedience and peace. We are called to lay it down and trust Christ who holds all things together.

We also explored the burdens of anxiety, worry and bitterness. Everything we are anxious about, that we worry over or has em-



God is raising up men who are humble yet bold and deeply rooted in faith. I am grateful to have witnessed this at the men's conference and to be part of something in which God is clearly working.



cuss things they learned or things that were particularly meaningful to them. The men in these groups will help to hold each other accountable as they return home and start putting newfound ideas into action.

The weekend concluded with a beautiful time of worship. The CSB led a heavenly chorus of men singing, "Holy Forever." Men were given an opportunity to share their heartfelt testimonies of how God has both changed and challenged their lives. Chief Secretary Colonel



Thomas Loudon spoke about Elijah, a man of God, and challenged delegates to take a stand as a man of God, even when life gets tough. Men lined the altar, committing to live as men of God, and 22 stepped out in faith feeling God's calling to become officers.

Man of God 2025 was an inspiration to all who attended, and spurred men on to be the men God created them to be.





# A beacon of hope in East Detroit

by Merri Bennett

The newly renovated Conner Creek Corps in East Detroit is serving as a safe haven for struggling youth, families and seniors. After a brief closure for the renovations, the corps, led by Lt. Johnathan Harvy and Captain Dalvius King-Harvy, held a ribbon cutting and dedication ceremony this fall to mark the reopening.

"This is not just about brick and mortar," said Major Dawn Worthy, Metro Detroit area commander. "We are talking about lives that will be changed or even saved by new programs in an area of the city where



Kevin Rogers and Will Smith

our help is desperately needed."

Will Smith is a retired police officer from the Detroit Police Department's 5th Precinct which is near the center. He and Kevin Rogers, who is from the Conner Creek area, work with youth during afterschool activities.

"One of the zip codes in the Conner Creek service area is considered extremely dangerous and has a high rate of youth violence," Will said. "My job is to help reduce some of the negative impact in the community. We do that by first giving these young people the respect that they deserve. We don't treat them like criminals. We treat them like young people."

The renovated corps is open during normal business hours but also has evening hours to allow more people to take advantage of the new programs. Other additions to the corps include a new computer lab with access to tutoring and educational certifications to help people find employment, as well as a new kitchen where families take cooking classes and learn how to prepare healthy meals which they take home.

"I'm working on changing the way they access food," said Captain Dalvius. "People in this community have a higher rate of diabetes and heart disease, so it's also about education. We kind of incorporate Jesus into all our other programs. We are doing it in word and deed, and so we're showing them Jesus and then we're telling them about Him in various ways. At the same time, they are seeing themselves as valuable."



Captain Dalvius King-Harvy and Lt. Johnathan Harvy (center) with Majors Dawn and David Worthy

Will, who says he is a product of The Salvation Army, agrees that life skills and spiritual support are both important. "When I was a kid growing up in Pontiac, we would not only get clothes from The Salvation Army, but we would go and play basketball. They didn't push it on us, but they would pray for us. So even though recreation may be the magnet that draws them in, they will learn so many other life skills, just like I did."

"When you're in poverty, you don't

have that sense of community. We provide services without discrimination, but the chapel is a huge part in everything that we're providing here," Captain Dalvius said. "Regardless if you come on Sundays, this place provides a pastor throughout the week. My hope is to always use every area of this building. I believe we are put here by God to be a beacon of hope, and so I want this place to be the centerpiece of the community in this area."

## Joy

Continued from page 1

knowing we are positioned to offer what the world cannot. And we do not do it alone. We are surrounded by volunteers, staff and corps members who love the Lord and want to serve.

So, this Christmas season, be encouraged. Make sure you take time with the Lord, so you give from an overflowing heart and not one that is drained.

In John 15:9-12, Jesus reminds us, "As the Father has loved me, so

have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."

May your joy be complete in the Lord as you serve faithfully in the context of the ministry He has called you to. Merry Christmas!

Scripture from the New International Version.

## A sacred space

by Major Tony Bowers

One of the highlights of my life as an officer is time spent at summer camps. It is more than a program; it's a sacred space where lives take a turn, faith unfolds, and there's an abundance of joy found in community. Every summer, I get this incredible reminder of why I answered God's call to this journey and why camp holds such a special place in my heart.

I love how camp takes young people out of their routines and drops them into a world filled with laughter, discovery and love. It's amazing to see walls come down and new possibilities open. I can't tell you how joyful it makes me to watch campers who come to camp feeling shy or uncertain start to blossom. They form friendships, discover talents, and, best of all, many times encounter God in a way that's deeply personal. Whether at a meal, around the campfire, by the lake, on the challenge course, during chapel or in chats with their cabin counselors, these moments reflect why camp is a vital part of the Salvation Army's ministry.

I also look forward to mentoring and training the camp staff. Many of them are young adults just beginning to navigate their faith and leadership journeys. It's incredibly rewarding to guide them through counselor training, support them when challenges come, and see them transform into strong leaders. Their energy and dedication strengthens ministry, and it is a blessing to see how God works through them.

Of course, camp is hard work! The days are long, filled with activities,



teaching, problem-solving, and caring for lots of kids. Yet even in the exhaustion, I find joy everywhere. The sound of laughter ringing out across the campgrounds, the sight of campers worshiping with all their hearts, and knowing that seeds of faith are being planted. These are the gifts of joy found in camp. Each summer brings its own transformation stories and being part of it is a blessing.

Most of all, summer camp reminds me that being an officer is about creating spaces for God to move in people's lives. It captures what it means to serve as an officer: serving God, serving others, and witnessing lives being changed for good.



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# How I belong



**Julie Robinson-Brown**  
Indianapolis, Ind.

**What do you do with The Salvation Army?**

I’m president of the Indianapolis Women’s Auxiliary and have been a member since 2005. I frequently volunteer as the mascot Shieldy at things like kettles, golf outings and children’s events. It’s so much fun!

**Why do you do it?**

I feel The Salvation Army makes a meaningful difference for those they support.

**What’s the best part about serving?**

Amazing experiences! One time a gentleman dropped money in the kettle and when I said, “Thank you,” opened his hand to show me a little wooden cross, then pointed upward and said, “Thank Him.” I needed that reminder. Another time at the mall Angel Tree, an older woman approached with her four granddaughters. She told them, “The reason this is important for you to hear is because when I was a struggling single mother The Salvation Army provided Christmas for your dad.” I was so touched.

**How did you get involved with The Salvation Army?**

I volunteered to ring bells in 1997 and enjoyed it so much I looked for other opportunities. At “Apple Fest” in 2005 I met two of the nicest ladies, Lisa and Carolene, who invited me to an auxiliary meeting. The ladies were so welcoming that I joined immediately.

**What’s on your playlist?**

Christmas music! All the classics like Andy Williams and Johnny Mathis.

**In the last year, what’s been your biggest blessing or challenge?**

2025 was a very difficult year. My husband of just 13 years passed in February after six months in hospice care.

**What is your favorite scripture?**

Matthew 5:16 (NIV): “In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

**What do you do in your spare time?**

Quilting. I belong to a charity quilt group whose quilts have gone to Salvation Army facilities and Peyton Manning Children’s Hospital.

The Salvation Army  
**PRAYER CENTRAL**  
USA Central Territory

January Prayer Calendar

My Prayer List	Day	Bible Reading	Pray for The Salvation Army
	1 Thursday	Romans 1-2	Blessings in the New Year!
	2 Friday	Genesis 1-3	Aberdeen, S.D., Corps
	3 Saturday	Joshua 1-5	Bay City, Mich., Corps
	4 Sunday	Psalms 1-2	Omaha North, Neb., Corps
	5 Monday	Job 1-2	South America East Territory
	6 Tuesday	Matthew 1-2	South Bend, Ind., Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center
	7 Wednesday	Romans 3-4	Coffeyville, Kan., Red Shield Center
	8 Thursday	Genesis 4-7	Bismark, N.D., Corps
	9 Friday	Joshua 6-10	Austin, Minn., Corps
	10 Saturday	Psalms 3-5	France and Belgium Territory
	11 Sunday	Job 3-4	Danville, Ill., Corps
	12 Monday	Isaiah 7-11	Excelsior Springs, Mo., Red Shield Center
	13 Tuesday	Matthew 3-4	Grand Island, Neb., Corps
	14 Wednesday	Romans 5-6	Indianapolis, Ind., ARC
	15 Thursday	Genesis 8-11	Kankakee, Ill., Corps
	16 Friday	Joshua 11-15	Pakistan Territory
	17 Saturday	Psalms 6-8	Leavenworth, Kan., Corps
	18 Sunday	Job 5-6	Marshalltown, Iowa, Corps
	19 Monday	Isaiah 12-17	Newton, Kan., Red Shield Center
	20 Tuesday	Matthew 5-7	Petoskey, Mich., Corps
	21 Wednesday	Romans 7-8	Singapore, Malaysia, Myanmar and Thailand Territory
	22 Thursday	Genesis 12-15	Great Lakes Division
	23 Friday	Joshua 16-20	Streator, Ill., 360 Life Center
	24 Saturday	Psalms 9-11	Watertown, S.D., Corps
	25 Sunday	Job 7-8	Willmar, Minn., Corps
	26 Monday	Isaiah 18-22	Central Territory Employees
	27 Tuesday	Matthew 8-10	Adrian, Mich., Corps
	28 Wednesday	Romans 9-10	Jasper/Newton County, Mo., Corps
	29 Thursday	Genesis 16-19	Davenport, Iowa, Corps
	30 Friday	Joshua 21-24	Madison, Wis., Dane County Coordinator
	31 Saturday	Psalms 12-14	Green Bay, Wis., Corps

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--Mustard Seeds--





## Promoted to Glory

### Major Jeanette Larson

Major Jeanette Larson was promoted to Glory on August 26, 2025.

Jeanette was born on March 31, 1939, in Chicago, Ill., to Emma and Edwin Larson. She met The Salvation Army at age 5 when her aunt took her to the Englewood Corps, where she participated in many activities and enjoyed events with the Scandinavian Division.

Passionate about girls' programs, Jeanette worked as the first divisional girl guard and sunbeam director for the Northern Illinois Division before entering the School for Officers' Training and being commissioned in 1983.

After one corps appointment, she was sent to Territorial Headquarters where she served as guard and sunbeam director for 13 years, upgrading the curriculum. She then served in the personnel department for seven years before retiring in 2002.

For her dedication to leading sunbeams at her corps for 50 years, Jeanette received the Evangeline Booth Award in 2001.

She was an avid knitter and used her talent to create gifts for others. She especially enjoyed making baby blankets for expectant parents.

She is survived by her sister, Barbara Cusack.

### Major Herbert Dahl

Major Herbert Dahl was promoted to Glory on August 9, 2025. He touched countless lives with his warmth and kindness.

Herb was born on November 23, 1930, in Newark, Ill. He married Patricia Welch in 1951, and they entered the School for Officers' Training in 1962 and were commissioned in 1964, as members of the "Heroes of the Faith" session.

The Dahls served in corps appointments for nearly 30 years. Their longest appointment was in Kankakee, Ill., where Herb created the first D.U.I. state-accredited school for driving offenders and opened the city's first soup kitchen which served 30,000 meals in its first year. The Dahls also reopened and established a 64-bed shelter while leading the St. Joseph, Mo., Corps. They retired in 1993.

Herb was preceded in death by his son, David. He is survived by his wife, Major Patricia Dahl, and children, Deborah and Kathleen.

### Major Violet Windham

Major Violet Windham, nee Locke, a woman whose life was a vibrant tapestry of faith, family, and boundless joy, was promoted to Glory on October 8, 2025.



Violet was born on June 7, 1944, in Wichita, Kan. She began attending the Wichita Citadel Corps as a teenager and was involved in girl guards, corps cadets and music programs.

On March 6, 1964, Violet married George Windham. They entered officer training that year and were commissioned in 1966 as members of the "Defenders of the Faith" session. The Windhams served in three appointments before a break in service, during which Violet focused on raising their children.

Returning to officership in 1991, George and Violet served for nearly 20 years in corps, regional and divisional appointments. Violet's exceptional organizational skills and accounting background blessed their ministry. The Windhams retired in 2010 from Midland Divisional Headquarters, where Violet was older adult ministries director.

Vi was preceded in death by her husband. She is survived by her sons, Chris (Julie) and Dr. Chipp (Dawn); four grandsons and four great-grandchildren.

### Major Noel Fitzgerald Mason

Major Noel Fitzgerald Mason, affectionately known as "Fitzy," was promoted to Glory on September 25, 2025. Noel's life was marked by devotion, service, and an unwavering love for God and people.

Born on December 19, 1952, in Jamaica to Majors Raphael and Florence Mason, it was evident early on that Noel had a calling greater than himself. He answered God's call to be an officer and was commissioned in 1980. The next year he wed the love of his life, Rose Marie.

Together, the Masons served for 38 years in the Caribbean and Central Territory. They embodied the gospel and touched countless lives. Noel was known for his humor, boundless energy and ability to make each person feel seen, valued, and loved. In 2019 the Masons retired from their final appointment as Minneapolis Parkview, Minn., corps officers and moved to Loganville, Ga.

Noel was preceded in death by his brother Lt. Colonel Raphael Mason and sister Patricia Mason. He is survived by his wife; children, Arike and Noel Jr (Akin); siblings, Major Paul Mason, Reverend L. Christopher Mason, and Mrs. Carol White; along with countless nieces, nephews and "spiritual children."

### Major Roy E. Rolling

Major Roy Rolling was promoted to Glory on September 11, 2025. Roy had a heart for urban ministry and served his family and others with love, patience and wisdom.

Roy was born on September 29, 1943, in Cleveland, Ohio, to John and Marion Rolling. He was raised



## Program brings toys and joy

### by Craig Dirkes

Each year dozens of volunteers wrap toys to bring joy to more than 500 children whose mothers are incarcerated at the Federal Correctional Institution in Waseca, Minn. The Christmas presents are sent to the children with a handwritten note from their mom, with no indication the gift came from The Salvation Army.

It's all part of The Salvation Army's Prison Toy Lift program, which has been helping kids and their parents stay connected for more than 30 years in the Northern Division during a difficult time of year.

"Many of these parents don't have regular contact with their children – they can't hug them like other parents can," said Charles Berry, Northern Division correctional services department director. "This program allows them to still have involvement with their kids in a meaningful way."

The families are grateful for this program, as illustrated in 49 thank you notes The Salvation Army re-

cently received from mothers in the Waseca prison. One wrote: *Thank you! Words can't describe what this means to me! Nothing but happy tears. God bless you, 10 fold.*

Volunteers for Prison Toy Lift often include groups from the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office and retirees from Land O'Lakes and Xcel Energy. All of them are thrilled to support the program.

"It's so important for the children to get gifts for Christmas—especially when their parents are incarcerated," said volunteer Nancy Tomhaze, 84, a retired Xcel employee who has wrapped gifts for Prison Toy Lift for 15 years.

Another retired Xcel employee, Dee Johnson, 91, added, "I love doing this. It makes me feel good, The Salvation Army is wonderful."

Their service truly makes a difference.

"Because of their generosity, nearly 500 kids will have a happier Christmas this year, receiving a gift they might not otherwise have been expecting," Charles concluded.



in the Catholic Church. In his youth he excelled at academics, basketball and football, and was a popular radio disc jockey.

After graduating, he served in the United States Army where he was recognized as a marksman and awarded the National Defense Service Medal. Following an honorable discharge, he married his high school sweetheart, Carol Ann Morrison.

In the early 1970s, Roy entered an adult rehabilitation center and recommitted his life to Christ. He became an auxiliary captain in 1987 and received his commission as captain in 1992, serving in Chicago and Detroit until retiring in 2005.

He was preceded in death by his parents; five brothers, John III, Robert, James, Micheal Sr. and Rev. Ronald; and three sisters, Barbara, Bernadette and Brenda. He is survived by his nephew and caregiver Marion; daughter Erica Christine; grandson Trey; sister Beverly; and a host of nieces and nephews.

### Major Marie Ellsworth

Major Marie Ellsworth was promoted to Glory on September 30, 2025. Her life was marked by unwavering faith, dedicated service and compassionate outreach.

Marie was born on November 27, 1945, to Agnes and Eugene

Ellsworth. After graduating from high school, she entered the School for Officers' Training in 1964 and was commissioned in 1966.

After being an assistant corps officer in Omaha, Neb., and Fargo, N.D., she served for 16 years at Booth Memorial Hospitals in St. Louis, Mo., and in Chicago, Ill. For nearly three decades, she served in the Office of the Territorial Commander and as administrative assistant to the President of Women's Ministries. She retired in 2011.

As an active officer and in retirement she was a faithful soldier at her corps. She frequently volunteered and created blankets, scarves and other crocheted items for family, friends and the homeless. She gave generously to many organizations but especially to The Salvation Army, believing ardently in its mission.

She is survived by her sister, Major Lois (Major Joseph) Wheeler; her niece, Sarah DiMaso; her nephews, Stephen Wheeler and

Captain Andrew (Captain Corey) Wheeler; 10 great-nieces and nephews; and four great-great-nieces and nephews.

