

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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New World Services video series released

This spring be inspired by transformation in Sri Lanka

by Kristin Caddy

The World Missions Department is launching a five-year World Services/Self-Denial series focusing on our Partners in Mission. Partnership is a pillar of The Salvation Army's global ministry, as we share resources, engage in mutual learning, and encourage each other.

This series is designed to deepen

our understanding of our Partners in Mission as we learn about the ministry, culture and stories of each territory. Each year will be dedicated to one of our partner territories: the Caribbean, Congo Brazzaville, India South Eastern, Kenya East, and Sri Lanka. This series will invite us not only to grow in awareness but to increase our commitment to prayer, giving, and service.

The theme for 2026 is "Transformation" as we share the story of The Salvation Army in Sri Lanka. Since 1883 The Salvation Army has been a steadfast presence in Sri Lanka, a country shaped by colonization, conflict and



has a strategic focus on transformation, based on 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." (NKJV) This verse guided officers and soldiers in Sri Lanka as they outlined four mission priorities and development areas: spiritual life

and expansion of service, human resources, finances and resources, and social and community services.

In collaboration between the Visual Communications and World Missions departments, four new World Services/Self-Denial videos are being released, highlighting stories of transformation in Sri Lanka. The first video lays the foundation with a general introduction to the country and the partnership between our territories.

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Photos by Emily Aukes

Hope rises across North Dakota

by Captain Tracy Gantner

Territorial and Northern divisional leadership recently traveled across rural North Dakota, visiting every corps in the state to listen, observe and celebrate the work God is doing through The Salvation Army. Each stop offered a glimpse into the unique ways

officers, employees, volunteers and supporters are living out the mission in their communities—often quietly, faithfully and with deep compassion. What unfolded over miles of open highway, small towns, and wide horizons was a powerful reminder that God's work is alive and deeply rooted in the hearts of His people.

that unique landscape was a blessing. It was a trip to remember."

Throughout the week, Commissioner Diaz, along with Lt. Colonels Randall and Charlene Polesley, witnessed ministries that meet both spiritual and practical

"It was a joy to visit all of our corps in North Dakota. I was encouraged by the spirit of the corps officers and the employees and volunteers we met along the way," said Territorial Commander Commissioner Evie Diaz. "The mission of the Army is being accomplished in significant ways in each community. God is at work, and lives are being changed. Seeing the beauty of His creation in

needs. Though each community is unique, the heartbeat is the same: serving others in Christ's name. They visited food shelves and meal programs where families receive not only groceries but dignity and encouragement. They observed youth ministries that create safe, nurturing spaces for young people to grow. They heard stories of pastoral care, emotional and spiritual support, and countless quiet acts of service that rarely make headlines but shape lives every day.

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Majors Abran and Rhonda Tamayo with Lt. Colonels Randall and Charlene Polesley and Commissioner Evie Diaz in Fargo, N.D.



The Polesleys and Commissioner Diaz with Lts. Trevor and Julie Reed in Minot, N.D.



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Love and Leadership

by Colonel Julie Anne Louden
Territorial Leader for Leader Development

In the Kingdom of God, leadership is never merely positional. It is deeply relational. Jesus said, "By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35, NIV). As Christian leaders, our influence is validated, not by human authority or accomplishment, but by God's love. The love of Christ is not sentimental or passive; it is active, attentive, and sacrificial. It moves toward people. It makes space. It restores dignity.

When Jesus washed the disciples' feet, He was not just performing an act of servanthood; He was revealing His heart. Love becomes the posture through which Jesus-led leaders notice what others overlook, hear what others ignore, and elevate those who may feel unseen and forgotten. It is possible to manage people without loving them, but it is impossible to form Christlike community without it.

For Salvation Army leaders, this kind of love is not an alternative to

the mission but rather the driving force. Our calling is not simply to accomplish ministry but to embody the character of Christ. Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 13:3 that if we do not have love, we gain nothing. Leadership without love may be efficient, but it is never transformational because it is not ministry.

William Booth said, "The greatness of a man's power is the measure of his surrender." True leadership is not measured by how much we control, but by how fully we surrender ourselves in love to God and to those He entrusts to us. Catherine Booth echoed this truth when she wrote, "If we are to better the future, we must disturb the present." Love is often that holy disturbance—the willingness to lean into another's struggle, to speak truth wrapped in compassion, and to stand beside people when life is heavy.

I was reminded of this recently during a moment in my ministry. After a long meeting, someone lin-

gered at the door and said softly, "Thank you for seeing me today." It wasn't about the agenda, the strategy, or the decisions; it was about feeling noticed. That brief exchange reaffirmed something we know but sometimes forget: people long to be loved far more than they long to be led. In the Kingdom of God, the two should never be separated.

Love also requires courage. Leading with love means choosing grace when it would be easier to be dismissive, slowing down when urgency pressures us to rush past people, and offering forgiveness when disappointment tempts us to withdrawal. Love does not ignore truth but delivers it in a way that restores rather than wounds. It does not deny hurt, but it refuses to let bitterness become our language.

The longer we lead, the more we realize people rarely remember our

agendas, timelines or meeting outcomes, but they remember how they felt. They remember if their voices were heard, and they remember if our leadership made room for their humanity as well as their contributions.

As we move into this year of ministry, may the love of Christ not simply inspire us but shape us, so that our leadership reflects His tenderness, courage and compassion in every season.

Reflection

When people experience my leadership, do they walk away feeling directed — or loved?

A Prayer for Leaders

Lord, teach me to lead with Your love. May my words bring grace, my actions show mercy, and my decisions reflect Your heart. Fill me with compassion that endures, patience that listens, and courage that serves. Let every act of leadership point others to You. Amen.

Hope rises across North Dakota

Continued from page 1

The consistent thread weaving the locations together was hope—hope offered, received and lived out daily. Officers shared how God continues to open doors, provide resources and strengthen relationships within their towns. Volunteers spoke of the joy found in serving and the blessing of being part of something bigger than themselves. Community partners expressed gratitude for the steady presence of The Salvation Army, especially in rural areas where support systems can be limited.

The wide skies and rolling landscape of North Dakota provided a stunning backdrop to this journey. The land itself seemed to tell a story: resilient, open and shaped by time—much like the communities that call it home. A memorable stop of the trip was in Theodore Roosevelt National Park. Standing among rugged cliffs, winding rivers, and quiet expanses, they were reminded of the majesty of God's creation.

"The beauty of Theodore Roosevelt National Park reaches beyond what the eye can see. Out on that rugged landscape, you feel a spiritual connection that reminds you of God's presence in all things," said Colonel Randall.

This sense of connection—to God, to creation and to one another—mirrored what was happening in each corps. The ministries in North Dakota are not simply programs; they are living expressions of Christ's love, carried

out by people who serve with humility and purpose.

For many officers, the visit from the leaders was deeply personal—an

opportunity to share openly, be heard, and receive encouragement.

"The visit made us feel seen and loved," Lt. Julie Reed said. "We felt valued and supported. It meant so much to have time together to share openly and be heard by leadership."

Captain Amanda Hoscheit reflected on the importance of vision and partnership, "It was a truly wonderful experience to have dedicated time with Commissioner Diaz. Hearing her heart and having the opportunity to share our own dreams and concerns for this region was incredibly meaningful. Her presence brought encouragement and helped us clarify our focus for the future."

Major Roberto Davila emphasized the joy and refreshment the visit brought, "To visit with Commissioner Evie was a very refreshing and joyful, and blessed time. We appreciate her leadership and friendship—always good to see her."

These expressions highlight something essential: leadership presence matters. In a territory where miles stretch long and winters run cold,



Joining A/Captains Marsha and Eugene Ware in Grand Forks, N.D.



In Bismark, N.D., with Captains Brian and Amanda Hoscheit

knowing that leaders see, understand and care deeply strengthens the hearts of those serving daily.

The trip was more than a tour; it was a reminder of why we serve. The North Dakota corps are strong, vibrant, and mission-focused—evidence that God truly is at work across this beautiful state. What leaders witnessed was not just programs functioning well, but people living out their calling with courage, creativity and faithfulness. The visits underscored that The Salvation Army in North Dakota is not defined by its size or geography, but by the steadfast commitment of its people "Doing the Most Good" in Christ's name.

And across the wide expanse of North Dakota, hope continues to rise.



A selfie with Majors Roberto and Elia Davila and interns Yeinis Machado and Julio Vitola in Williston, N.D.

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A home for hope and healing in Springfield

Community members, donors, officers and soldiers celebrated the groundbreaking of the new Harbor House in Springfield, Mo. This project, long envisioned and prayerfully pursued, represents far more than bricks and mortar. It is a tangible expression of faith, compassion and the enduring mission of The Salvation Army.

The new Harbor House will replace the existing men's shelter, which has faithfully served the community for decades from an 85-year-old former corps building. The upgraded facility will provide approximately 50 beds for men working toward sustainable housing, along with

10 dedicated medical respite beds—a crucial resource for individuals recovering from illness or injury who have nowhere to go.

The new space will include rooms for life skills classes, equipping residents with the tools they need to rebuild their lives. It also will house Sally's Frontline Feeding, a vital ministry that serves between 150-175 hot meals daily to people in need.

In addition, a second facility will expand the reach of The Salvation Army's social service ministries. This building will include a warehouse and an expanded Family Choice Pantry, meeting the growing needs of families who are experiencing food insecurity.

The groundbreaking ceremony was a celebration of God's faithfulness and the power of partnership. Among the speakers were former Springfield Mayor Ken McClure, Springfield Chamber of Commerce President Matt Morrow, and donors Mona Casady and Charlie O'Reilly. Each shared stories of how The Salvation Army has shaped the fabric of Springfield for more than 135 years. Their words echoed a common theme: The Salvation Army's enduring presence has been a lifeline for individuals and families during life's most difficult seasons.

Major Amos Shiels, corps officer, reflected on this milestone, saying, "Some variation of this project has been talked about for 15 years. Today is a long time in the making."



A rendering of the Family Choice Pantry that will combat food insecurity.

One of the most moving moments of the ceremony came when Robert Hightower, shelter manager, shared his testimony. Robert's journey with The Salvation Army began in 1999, not as an employee, but as a resident seeking help.

After completing the program and moving into permanent housing, Robert felt called to return and serve. Over the past two decades, he has worked in the shelter and now leads the team that once served him. His story embodies the redemptive power of God's grace and the lasting impact of the Harbor House ministry.

"This new Harbor House," Robert said, "means more lives will be changed, just like mine was."

To recognize his years of faithful service, Major Cyndi Shiels presented Robert with a sculpture symbolizing his impact on countless men

who have found hope. She quoted the words of Jesus in Matthew 25:40, saying: "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

She continued, "The impact of Robert's compassion and kindness is witnessed in moments of comfort for an anxious soul, sustenance for those who are wanting, encouragement for the one who hasn't known anyone to be in their corner, support in a reminder to 'just focus.' We can't always adequately measure this kind of impact, but we can see it in lives transformed."

In recognition of his legacy, the new residence will include a dedicated space named "Hightower Station," a place that will stand as a tribute to Robert's steadfast commitment to serving others in Christ's name.

The ceremony marked more than the beginning of construction. It symbolizes a new chapter of hope for The Salvation Army in Springfield. The new Harbor House not only will shelter men but will nurture their spirits, restore dignity, and create pathways toward lasting transformation.

With prayerful anticipation and grateful hearts, the Springfield Corps looks forward to the day when the doors of the new Harbor House and Family Choice Pantry open wide, welcoming the weary, the broken, and the hopeful into a place of refuge, renewal and God's unending grace.



Shelter Manager Robert Hightower receives recognition for his commitment to service from Major Cyndi Shiels, corps officer, and Chris Brumett, Springfield social Services director.



Springfield, Mo., Advisory Board Representatives and corps officers break ground. Pictured (l to r) Nick Sheppard (Vice Chair), Bethany Forrester, Brian Jared, Bryan Musgrave, Adam Riso, Majors Cyndi and Amos Shiels (corps officers), Rob Dvorak (Board Chair), Frances Bixler, Tijuana Julian and Libby Salisbury

Revival!

Commissioning weekend

June 13-14, 2026

Edman Chapel, Wheaton College

More information and registration opening soon.

ALL WE NEED



A 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.

Season II, Episode II: A Conversation with Peggy McGee

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)

Prayers heard around the world

We invite you to join us in praying beyond ourselves and lifting up Central Territory officers serving overseas and the prayer requests they've provided.



Captains Matthew Beatty and Rona Mutcha

**International Headquarters; United Kingdom and Ireland Territory
London, England**

- Our current appointment, our staff and transition of new management for our homelessness services
- Our new appointments and the people we will serve alongside
- Our health, physically, emotionally and spiritually, as we prepare for new responsibilities



Colonels Philip and Sheila Davisson

**International Headquarters
London, England**

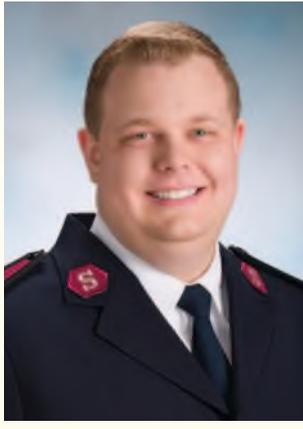
- Continued wisdom and grace for our new appointments as secretary for training and leader development and secretary for international personnel
- Guidance for how to help develop others
- Spiritual rest and restoration



Majors Amy Jo and Paul Ferguson

**Middle East Regional Headquarters
Janabiyah, Bahrain**

- Peace in the Middle East and safety and protection of all the worshipping communities in this part of the world
- For those who are in bondage through human trafficking to be rescued and restored and that their enslavers would be brought to justice and would repent
- God to open doors for continued and expanded ministry here



Captain Blake Fewell

**International Headquarters
London, England**

- The Global Strategic Framework, Compass, as IHQ supports territorial efforts to empower people, enhance mission impact, and establish an enduring legacy
- Leadership of territories in the Americas and Caribbean Zone as they navigate the complexities of their territory within their context
- Americas and Caribbean Zone officers who will attend the International College for Officers to have receptive minds and hearts as they learn about the international Salvation Army and grow in their walk with the Lord



Captains Derek and Heather Jung

**Gumi Corps, Korea Territory
Gumi, South Korea**

- That we will be evangelists who teach God's Word
- That we will be stewards who serve God's Kingdom
- That we will be instruments who deliver God's healing



Major Mary Kim

**International College for Officers
London, England**

- That I would "seek first His Kingdom and righteousness" (Matthew 6:33) and "not be so preoccupied with getting, so you can respond to God's giving...Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions." (Matthew 6:30-33 MSG)
- Continued joy while missing my old home, life and family and loving my new home, life and "family"
- That I will be a pivotal, positive change agent in my Salvation Army and will remain a vibrant prayer warrior



Captains Leta and Abraham Marin

**Osorno Corps and School, Chile
South America West Territory**

- Spiritual growth in the corps congregation
- Bridging the feeding program with our corps activities
- Wisdom and new ideas to connect our primary school (655 children) with Christ and the corps



Majors Cornell and Candace Voeller

**Switzerland, Austria and Hungary Territory
Budapest, Hungary**

- Growth of our Roma ministry as officers and soldiers from several corps work together to reach out with the gospel and practical expressions of God's love
- Growth of youth ministry in Hungary as cadets help to strengthen youth work in our corps and through regional gatherings
- Effective ways to share about The Salvation Army's work and to maximize fundraising. We especially need to secure funding to purchase and furnish an apartment for one of our corps officer couples.

Ministry trip leaves team speechless

*"I am speechless, I'm astonished and amazed
...And I am speechless in Your presence now.
I'm astounded as I consider how
You have shown us*

A love that leaves us speechless."

—Steven Curtis Chapman, Geoff Moore

by Viki Payton

These are the best words I can use to describe our territory's Global Mission Team (GMT) to French Guiana, part of the Caribbean Territory and one of our Partners in Mission. The 12 team members represented six divisions, the Adult Rehabilitation Centers Command and Territorial Headquarters.

Many of us felt *speechless* because we did not speak the languages that surrounded us (French and Haitian Creole).



We often did not have the words we needed to converse with our brothers and sisters. Yet, we experienced joy as we made the effort to connect and communicate through smiles and translation apps.

Our team was *astounded* by what we learned while visiting French Guiana. Though located in South America, it is a territory of France and, therefore, a part of the European Union. This was a first-time location for a GMT from our territory and a first-time visit for every person on our team. As matter of fact, for several team mem-



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bers it was the first time traveling with a passport!

We were *amazed* by the beauty of the country. Being on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean, it has beautiful beaches with big ocean waves, but it also encompasses jungle areas since it's located on the edge of the Amazon Rainforest. We enjoyed tasting local food, including coconuts, sugar cane, curries and fish.

And we were *astounded* as we con-

sidered God's love shown to us by our hosts. The officers, soldiers and corps members were gracious and kind. Some opened their homes to share a Sunday family four-course dinner with us. At the Balata Corps, our worksite, we joined with corps members each day to build their new corps and learned from them how additional measures must be taken to build responsibly in a location that experiences hurricanes. They provided us with cold drinks, a vehicle for transportation, and thank-you gifts at the end of the week.

As we prepared to leave Balata on our final afternoon, our team was left speechless and tearful, as the corps members gathered to say goodbye and sang "....His promise is true, He will not forget you, God is still on the throne."



How is your soul?

Forged cohort strengthens youth leaders

by Peggy McGee

Since 2022, 15 Central Territory youth ministry leaders have joined other Salvationists from around the nation to participate in a transformative journey through Forged, a two-year youth ministry training cohort created through an innovative partnership between Asbury University and The Salvation Army.

Designed to develop leaders from the inside out, Forged blends practical ministry training with deep spiritual formation, not only to shape youth programs across the territory, but also the hearts of those who lead them.

For many participants, Forged has provided the chance to step back long enough to assess the health and direction of their ministries.

"The Forged Program has given me the rare opportunity to look at and work on youth ministry, rather than being submerged in it," said Kelly Lindell, youth and outreach ministries director at the Noble, Minn., Corps in the Northern Division. "We finally had space to ask, 'What's working? What's not? What could we do better?'"

Through the coaching structure and cohort-based accountability, Forged encourages leaders to identify strengths, challenges and goals. Then

participants are supported in making meaningful changes.

Others described how the program has shifted their understanding of leadership. Joy Caro, youth director in the North & Central Illinois Division reflected, "I learned that I am not Superman. I can't do everything on my own."

By equipping leaders with tools to prioritize, delegate and share the work of ministry, Forged helps combat burnout and cultivate healthier, more sustainable leadership.

But it is more than just a training program. At its core the focus is intentionally spiritual. Delegates participate in monthly coaching sessions that begin with a single question: *How is your soul?* Participants pray together, reflect deeply and explore how their own walk with Christ shapes their ability to serve young people.

Kelly described this emphasis on personal spiritual health as essential. "We had to understand that if we want our programs to be healthy, we must be spiritually healthy first," she said.

Many delegates highlight the relational impact of the program. Cohorts quickly become communities of encouragement, honesty and prayer. "Our group became a cheerleading team for each other," said Joy. "We still reach out and check in."



The first Forged youth leaders cohort

Open to employees, volunteers and officers, seasoned leaders and brand-new youth workers all find a place to belong.

"Meeting other youth workers from all over the country who get what I'm going through was a game-changer," shared Kim Herivel-Walter, Western Divisional youth ministries manager. "Being part of that community has helped shape me into the youth worker I am today."

In addition to supporting the spiritual health of youth leaders, Forged also works to strengthen ministry practices.

Suzy Haslett, youth ministries coordinator at the Lincoln, Neb., Corps in the Western Division emphasized, "I have used some of the tools they taught us with my program team and volunteers, and it has shaped our youth nights for the better. The leaders and coaches truly care about you as a person and about your ministry succeeding."

Her experience reflects what many participants have expressed, that Forged instills practical skills, supportive coaching and renewed confidence.

As the Central Territory continues to focus on our territorial priorities of Spiritual Life, Youth and Leadership Development, this ministry training gives attention to all three areas. Forged offers a rare gift of intentional time to grow, reflect and be shaped for long-term, Christ-centered ministry.

"I recommend to anyone who works with youth in The Salvation Army to apply for Forged," Kim concluded.

Youth leaders are encouraged to prayerfully consider applying for the next cohort. The next application cycle opens February 16, 2026. Applications will be available through the divisional youth departments.

Real faith, honest conversations



The Territorial Youth Department's new podcast, "Go and Tell" has been created for youth, young adults and the leaders who support them.

Each episode features real, honest conversations with young adults and leaders of Salvation Army ministries who are living out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) in everyday life.

From stories of faith and mission to

practical encouragement for following Jesus in a complicated world, this podcast aims to inspire and equip the next generation to go, serve, and tell the story of Jesus right where they are.

If you're looking for inspiration, practical encouragement and a fresh reminder that God can use you right where you are, this podcast is for you!

Find it on Central Youth Network's YouTube channel.

A place of joy

by Captain Ken Alip

The keys to the corps were on our dining table. We weren't supposed to start our new appointment until the next day but, driven by excitement, we took them and drove to the building.

After touring the main floors, we found ourselves in a forgotten space, filled with dusty billiard tables and piles of discarded items. As we stood in the silence, my wife said, "I see it." She described a vision of families playing together and kids laughing and running, the room filled with life. "The Lord will do something great here," she said.

That promise felt distant. Our new appointment was a whirlwind of activity, but not that kind. We ran massive food programs including daily meals and food boxes, and a client-choice food shelf. Yet, at our first Sunday worship service, there were only five people, two of whom were employees. We yearned for the sound of families my wife had envisioned.

Holding onto that vision, we prayed for a youth program. We met with local churches and Youth for Christ. We applied to our divisional headquarters for a SA Gaming grant and were approved.

A little more than a year after arriving at our appointment, we announced the opening of a community Rec Center on our Facebook page. The post exploded, with more than 300 shares and catching the attention of our city's mayor, who came to visit. On opening day, 40 kids walked through the doors.

This ministry is not easy. We work with children in difficult situations.



One young man came to us aggravated and at times aggressive in his behavior. Despite the challenges, we continued to love him over time. Last summer, he had reached a place that enabled us to send him to camp, and this young man—who has no dad in his life and whose mom is a professed atheist, and who already is a father at 13—received Jesus as his Savior. Now, his family comes to worship services at the corps.

That dusty forgotten space has been transformed into a place of joy. It's a place where we hear laughter every weekend as the majority of our Rec Center kids now come to church. On Sundays, they also have started serving in the soup kitchen without being asked. Our congregation now averages 30, and God continues to add to our corps family.



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

Blending God into the recipe

Maricssa Meraz brings the Word of God into everything she does at the Kansas City, Mo., Blue Valley Corps—including making popcorn! While recently making popcorn ball treats with a group of children in the corps' kitchen, Maricssa found a way to blend God into the recipe.

She told the children how one kernel of corn represents a "small and defenseless person." But intense heat (much like a person going through pressure and trials in life) makes that kernel burst open into a piece of popcorn.

"When you 'pop,' you go through a transformation with Christ," Maricssa said, giving a tangible example of the difference faith in Jesus makes. "Then, as the popcorn is molded with syrup into a popcorn ball, it is just as God molds people into the shape He wants for each one of us."

For her excellence in youth ministries, Maricssa received a territorial



Maricssa receives an Award of Excellence for Youth Ministries.

award at the Belonging Conference in June 2025.

"It was an honor," she recalled. "It was a wonderful experience, being recognized for something I love doing."

As youth and program ministries assistant, Maricssa meets with members of the community about many programs and services, but her main focus is guiding youth in their journey of faith.

"We are trying to get them excited for the Word of God. It is getting to know them; getting to know what they need, what they are struggling with; being a guide for them," Maricssa said.



Youth and Maricssa prepare for the corps' annual holiday program.

Maricssa, 30, and her family began attending the Blue Valley Corps when she was 13 years old. She became a soldier at 16—the first in her family to do so.

"I loved becoming part of The Salvation Army; being a soldier, being a leader of our church," she said. "I took the opportunity to be more."

Now, she organizes programming for youth, including weekly Sunday school classes and special gatherings like kids' councils, a day where kids share their faith in God with other youngsters. Maricssa also leads the corps' Kids' Club with the support of her corps officers, Captains Gunther and Yami Briceno. They are often joined by members of the Independence, Mo., Corps.

"It's like vacation Bible school, but a bit smaller," Maricssa said.

Maricssa often meets new families in the corps' lobby when they come to the corps for assistance. She introduces herself and shares information about youth programs. Because she is bilingual, she can interact with

those who speak Spanish or English.

She is also a good listener.

"People love to talk, and they like to come to me. I always have a listening ear," she said. "You meet that person at their needs. I let them talk and then guide them on who Jesus is."

Maricssa's corps officers see her use her strong faith every day.

"The Word of God says in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, 'All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work,'" Captain Gunther said. "Maricssa is this person—a servant of God—well-prepared and equipped for every good work, mainly with youth. We recognize Maricssa (our 'Timothy') for her responsibility, obedience, and deep love for the Lord Jesus, which is reflected in everything she does."



Youth cook and talk about faith with Maricssa Meraz at the Kansas City, Mo., Blue Valley Corps.

Children to score big through new partnership

The Salvation Army and the U.S. Soccer Foundation announced a new national collaboration to expand opportunities for children living in underserved communities to embrace active, healthy lifestyles while nurturing their personal growth beyond sports.

The partnership advances both organizations' missions to use play and mentorship as catalysts for positive change, providing young people with access to safe spaces, supportive relationships, and programs that build teamwork, discipline, and leadership skills.

A ceremonial signing of the memorandum of understanding took place in November at National Headquarters, commemorating the start of this shared commitment to empowering youth through sport and community connection.

For many children, sports offer more than physical activity. The field often becomes the first place

they learn to work together, manage emotions, resolve conflict, and build confidence. Research shows that consistent mentorship and structured activities significantly improve academic engagement, overall health and well-being, and long-term resilience among youth in under-resourced communities.

"This partnership with the U.S. Soccer Foundation will make a real difference in communities across the country," said National Commander Commissioner Merle Heatwole. "Together, we can provide programs and support that empower children and families, strengthen communities, and bring hope to those who need it most."

The collaboration builds on The



Salvation Army's longstanding commitment to meeting human need without discrimination through after-school programs, summer camps, meal programs, and emotional and spiritual care.

It also aligns with the U.S. Soccer Foundation's mission to use soccer as a vehicle for social change and to improve the health and well-being of children in underserved communities.

"This is a pivotal moment for soccer in our country—one marked by unprecedented momentum and growing recognition of the sport's power to uplift communities," said Ed Foster-Simeon, President & CEO of the U.S. Soccer Foundation. "Our partnership with The Salvation Army

reflects a shared commitment to advance the health and well-being of youth living in underserved communities nationwide. Together, we will expand access to proven programs, equip coaches and youth leaders with the tools they need to inspire, and create safe spaces to play. Soccer is more than a game; it's a catalyst for connection, growth, and opportunity. Through this collaboration we're ensuring that youth can experience all the benefits the game has to offer."

Through this partnership, The Salvation Army will integrate U.S. Soccer Foundation resources and soccer programming into community centers, corps, and after-school initiatives nationwide. The evidence-based programs will promote teamwork, leadership, and respect, helping young people succeed both on and off the field.

Originally posted on National Headquarters' website

How I belong



Viki Payton
Territorial Headquarters

What do you do with The Salvation Army?

I am the Assistant Director of the World Missions Department and a soldier at the Oakbrook Terrace, Ill., Corps.

How did you get involved with The Salvation Army?

I am a fifth-generation Salvationist. My parents were officers who spent the majority of their service outside of the U.S. I've always wanted to be fully involved and invested in my church, so most of my career has also been with the Army.

How do you help others belong?

I'm a shy introvert, so my reach isn't wide—but it's deep! I'm very loyal. Once I know you, you can't get rid of me.

What pushes you beyond your comfort zone?

Travel. It's a paradox. My happy place but also a challenge because I meet new people, try new foods, etc. While I am comfortable travelling, it really stretches me.

What's your superpower?

Calm under stress. In the last few years, I've encountered a lot of travel hiccups. But I can pivot and figure things out without falling apart.

What's on your bucket list?

Travel. High on my list are Hawaii, Australia, the Greek Islands. Wherever there is sunshine and warmth, I want to go there.

What one word sums up your testimony?

Redeemed

If you could have an unlimited supply of one thing, what would it be?

Diet Coke

If you could have dinner with one person in history, who would it be?

My maternal grandfather. He passed away before I was born, so I never got to know him. He was beloved by my family. I would love to be in his presence and have a conversation.

Editor's note: Viki pictured above in Slovakia on a Summer Mission Team visit.

World Services video

Continued from page 1

"Our relationship is more than an official arrangement. It is a living partnership, born from mutual love for Christ and a shared calling," said Sri Lanka Territorial Commander Colonel Nihal Hettiarachchi. "Though this partnership was arranged by International Headquarters, we see clearly how God uses each partner for His glory."



The video, "Transformation through Ministry," explores the vibrant youth work and expansion ministry of The Salvation Army in Sri Lanka. This segment features a powerful story of transformation through the testimony of Colonel Nihal.



Property transformation is one way we can faithfully steward the resources God has entrusted to us. In the video "Transformation of Property" we highlight the renovation of various Salvation Army properties, which are being restored for safety and functionality. In this segment we learn the story of Hope House, an historic facility which is being reimaged for a new purpose.

The final video for this year focuses on the transformation of the Sri Lanka Territory's financial strategy as they work toward increased

financial sustainability. By prioritizing income-generating projects, the territory is strengthening its financial foundation and working toward becoming more self-supporting.

Throughout the videos, mission support projects are highlighted to show how USA Central Territory World Services/Self-Denial offerings are making a difference in the Sri Lanka Territory. To help congregations connect more personally, discussion questions accompany each video. The questions are designed to encourage reflection and conversation, and may be useful in a variety of contexts like women's ministries, dinner church, youth groups, and small groups. Additional program resources, including a Sri Lanka family kit and Self-Denial fundraising ideas are available on the website.

Through this year's World Services/Self-Denial emphasis, we are encouraged to join with our brothers and sisters in the Sri Lanka Territory, celebrating the transformative work of the Holy Spirit.

As Colonel Nihal reflected, "This is the partnership in mission—serving side-by-side, learning from each other, and inspiring one another to go deeper in faith and bolder in service."

At the same time, let us also commit ourselves to being agents of transformation in our own families, corps, and communities.

For more information, contact the World Missions Department:

Website – centralmissions.org
Email – usc.thq.missions@usc.salvationarmy.org
Facebook/Instagram/Tik Tok – SA World Missions

FEBRUARY

Sometimes our *big and bold* prayers are actually sung. St. Augustine is credited for saying, "He who sings prays twice."

This month our *Praying Beyond* prayer is a song written by Evangeline Booth:

The world for God! The world for God!
There's nothing else will meet the
hunger of my soul.
I see forsaken children, I see the tears
that fall
From women's eyes, once merry, now
never laugh at all;
I see the sins and sorrows of those who
sit in darkness;
I see in lands far distant, the hungry and
oppressed.
But behold! On a hill, Calvary! Calvary!
*The world for God! The world for God!
I give my heart! I'll do my part!*

For weekly prayers, see your corps officer or visit salarmycentral.org and click on the action box.

Your World Services giving at work

Ever wonder where the money from your World Services fundraisers goes? Here are just a few of the ways you've made a difference through recent projects supported by the Central Territory.



Kenya East Territory

Supporting the Kenya East Territorial Strategic Plan, Officer Development and Leadership Training has enabled 15 officers to enroll in colleges and universities to continue their education. The goal is to increase the capacity of officers to perform their duties more successfully and support Salvation Army ministry. Officers have the opportunity to take a variety of courses to increase their knowledge and enhance their skills, including theology, business administration, leadership management, counseling and social work.

South America East Territory

The South America East Territorial Youth and Candidates Department held vital meetings with officers about the status of youth and candidate work in the territory. Following these leadership meetings, young people interested in becoming officers visited the Training College for a day, providing insight into college life and allowing participants to explore experiences involved in the ministry of a Salvation Army officer.

India South Eastern Territory

In Nagercoil, India, where the weather is hot year-round and humid during the rainy season, air conditioning is essential. The Central Territory was glad to equip the new India South Eastern Territorial Headquarters (THQ) with an efficient and reliable air conditioning system, providing a comfortable and functional environment for officers and employees.

Caribbean Territory

The 2025 Caribbean Music Institute (CariMI) brought 70 young people together for 10 days to develop their talents that will enhance ministry in their corps, divisions and the territory. Along with increasing their skills through the teaching and training by faculty who emphasized the importance of Salvation Army music ministry, CariMI encouraged the young musicians to cultivate spiritual growth through prayer, Bible study, worship and fellowship.

"CariMI 2025 truly embodied the theme 'Radiance — Christ be Glorified in Me,'" said Janett Ismay-Kerr, CariMI director. "Over eight blessed days, I witnessed delegates shine musically and spiritually, and the most moving moment was seeing many step forward at the mercy seat, recommitting to musical service in their corps and even some declaring readiness for officership."

Caribbean Territory

There's no doubt that transportation enables ministry. In the Caribbean Territory the chief secretary needed a new car as the position's vehicle was nearly 10 years old and unreliable. It inhibited his ability to visit corps and support and encourage officers in their service. Thanks to World Services, a new vehicle is allowing more engagement in pastoral ministry in Jamaica.

Sri Lanka Territory

For the first time in many years, a retreat was held for officers in the Sri Lanka Territory. They were able to encourage and support one another and find rest and renewal during the time away from their appointments.

Guests Lt. Colonels Greg and Lee Ann Thompson from the Central Territory shared God's Word and encouraged our brothers and sisters in Christ to step forward with a renewed sense of mission and urgency.

"What a blessing it was to share in worship and fellowship with the officers of the Sri Lanka Territory," said Colonel Greg. "It is clear that God is moving in miraculous ways as they serve Him each day. We witnessed a beautiful outpouring of the Holy Spirit as we spent time in learning, developing new friendships, and discovering new opportunities to share His love with others."

Small change, big difference

Take the World Services challenge

by Kristin Caddy

The Salvation Army World Services/Self-Denial initiative began in 1886 when Major John Carleton pledged to deny himself his daily pudding for a year and donate those funds to the expansion of Salvation Army ministry around the world. General William Booth was inspired by Major Carleton's sacrifice and launched the idea of Self-Denial Week, a time each year when Salvationists give up the "extras" in life to support global ministry.

Today our World Services/Self-Denial system is more structured and formalized, with budgets and assessments, but the heart remains the same: sacrificial giving as an act of worship.

Many individuals and corps in the territory already give faithfully to World Services/Self-Denial. We are very grateful for your generosity which is making a significant impact around the world.

To encourage even broader participation, we're introducing a "\$3 per week World Services Challenge." For this next year, we are inviting all officers, senior soldiers and adherents in the territory to contribute at least \$3 per week to World Services/Self-Denial. Over the year, this will equal about \$156 per person, contributed to your corps' World Services/Self-Denial assessment.

It can be challenging to come up with a lump sum of money to contribute to World Services/Self-Denial. However, consistent small

sacrifices can add up! Each week, rather than purchasing a \$3 item such as a specialty coffee, two vending machine snacks, or a fast food item, contribute that \$3 to World Services/Self-Denial. Or make a monthly adjustment and save \$13 by cancelling or pausing a subscription service, bringing your lunch to work instead of eating out, or implementing meatless Mondays. Either way, at the end of the year you would have contributed \$156 to support the ongoing ministry of The Salvation Army's international work.

Another approach is to try a cheaper alternative rather than denying yourself completely:

Skip the \$20 meal out with friends and host a potluck with ingredients totaling \$10. Contribute the \$10 dif-

ference to World Services/Self-Denial.

Choose a \$6 thrift store sweater instead of the \$30 retail purchase. Donate the \$24 difference to World Services/Self-Denial.

Buy a \$7 bottle of nail polish and paint your own nails rather than spending \$25 for a salon visit. Contribute the \$18 saved to World Services/Self-Denial.

We are excited for you to join in our challenge this year. Together, we can honor the Lord through sacrificial giving and meet practical needs for our brothers and sisters worldwide.

Have a self-denial story or tip? Share it with us at USC.THQ.Missions@usc.salvationarmy.org.

Walking the path of change together

The Minneapolis Parkview, Minn., Corps has received a Pathway of Hope (POH) Achievement Award for excellence in their work with families utilizing the initiative's holistic approach, including strengths-based case management, pastoral care, and corps ministry resources to assure successful completions and outcomes.

Corps leaders and staff look beyond their separate roles to create a comprehensive, unified ministry and a network of support as they work toward building a more stable life.

"One of the first things we do is walk them around and introduce them to everyone in the building," said Jesse Shaw, until recently the corps' POH case manager. As they learn about the various opportunities at the corps, they are offered pastoral care by Major Clara Braddock, who extends an invitation for them to join weekly activities and attend Sunday worship.

"We've had quite a number of families that have attended church," Jesse said. "The youth programs and family nights are popular. Some moms attend women's ministries."

The integration of families into corps activities has enabled corps members to build relationships and form a supportive community around them. One major point of connection has been monthly family nights which are attended by both POH and corps families.



"Family nights have been a big success and really helped bolster the sense of community for the families," said Janel Cook, social services manager. "It's great seeing the POH families feeling comfortable and safe with people at the corps."

A team consisting of the corps officer, lay leaders and social services staff meets to plan each family night. They discuss themes, choose activities, and take inventory of donated supplies to utilize what's available, keeping the cost

down. Thanks to their stewardship, family nights are free for participants and include a meal, devotional time, crafts, games and other activities that foster connections and give people an opportunity to get to know one another.

"We always try to do something that really encourages the family to share time together," said Jesse. "It's amaz-

cheered on by a genuinely caring community of faith.

"The successful Pathway of Hope program at the Minneapolis Parkview Corps can be attributed to the strong connection between their social services and corps," said Linda Brinker, territorial POH director. "The team creates an environ-



PATHWAY OF HOPE

ing to be able to do this without charge to them. It helps us connect with them as well."

A celebration for families who complete POH is held quarterly during a Sunday service. Each family is recognized for the hard work they've put into reaching their goals. Some choose to share their story and how POH has helped them get back on track,

ment where hope can be kindled and has been instrumental in assuring that family nights are a success! Many of their families have been introduced to POH from social services and, in turn, have built a relationship with the corps and Christ through the corps participation and support in the events and of the POH program as a whole."



Lt. Colonel Randall Polsley, Northern divisional commander, presents the Pathway of Hope (POH) Achievement Award to Jesse Shaw, then POH case manager, and Major Clara Braddock, corps officer, at the Minneapolis Parkview, Minn., Corps.



Newly accepted candidate



Sean James

First-generation Salvationist

Waterloo-Cedar Falls, Iowa, Corps ♦ **Western Division**

Captains Karissa and Zachary Zumwalt, corps officers

Spiritual Gifts

Mercy ♦ Serving ♦ Giving

Ministry Passion or Experience

Worship ♦ Preaching / Teaching

Spiritual Mentors

Denis and Jolene James (parents)

An agent for change

Linda Brinker, territorial Pathway of Hope (POH) director, thinks of herself as a change agent. With more than 30 years of experience in social services and a forward-thinking perspective, it's a fitting description.

For the last 14 years, Linda has served in the territorial social services department. Recently, she became chairperson of the National Pathway of Hope Committee. The committee serves as an ongoing oversight and implementation team where members discuss challenges, solutions and new ways to improve the initiative. As chairperson, Linda offers insight and guidance.

"It's a great honor to be able to take the helm," she said. "I've been here since the beginning, so I have a lot to bring to the table."

Linda joined the territorial social services team in 2012 as project manager when POH was just getting off the ground. Her knowledge and experience, garnered from undergraduate and graduate degrees, and a lifelong career in social work, case management and leading case management teams made her a valuable asset.

"I think because of my background, I said to myself, 'This is doable,'" she said. "I am a change agent. I was meant to be in this role. It's been quite the journey."



In conjunction with territorial leaders Commissioners Paul and Carol Seiler, the social services department, headed by Dr. Maribeth Swanson, developed POH. Linda was part of the process of structuring, training and implementing the initiative throughout the territory. She invested herself in the process, believing the POH approach could help families break the cycle of inter-generational poverty and would set the Army apart from other agencies.

"What differentiates us is that we offer spiritual care to provide the holistic approach that's needed and is hugely beneficial to our clients," she said. "Studies showed that when spiritual care was offered, we saw improvements in hope. When you increase your hope, you increase your ability to reach some of your goals."

The Salvation Army

PRAYER CENTRAL

USA Central Territory

March Prayer Calendar

My Prayer List	Day	Bible Reading	Pray for The Salvation Army
	1 Sunday	Isaiah 45-50	St. Louis Euclid, Mo., Corps
	2 Monday	Matthew 23-25	Traverse City, Mich., Corps
	3 Tuesday	1 Corinthians 1-2	Anderson, Ind., Corps
	4 Wednesday	Genesis 36-39	Branson, Mo., Corps
	5 Thursday	Ruth	Chicago Temple, Ill., Corps
	6 Friday	Psalms 27-29	Des Moines Citadel, Iowa, Corps
	7 Saturday	Job 19-20	Taiwan Region
	8 Sunday	Isaiah 51-55	Freeport, Ill., Corps
	9 Monday	Matthew 26-28	Grand Forks, N.D., Corps
	10 Tuesday	1 Corinthians 3-4	Hastings, Neb., Corps
	11 Wednesday	Genesis 40-43	Kansas City Eastside, Mo., Corps
	12 Thursday	1 Samuel 1-5	Southwest Indiana Area Coordinator
	13 Friday	Psalms 30-32	Milwaukee, Wis., ARC
	14 Saturday	Job 21-22	Uganda Territory
	15 Sunday	Isaiah 56-61	Atchison, Kan., Red Shield Center
	16 Monday	Mark 1-2	Benton Harbor, Mich., Corps
	17 Tuesday	1 Corinthians 5-6	Superior, Wis., Corps
	18 Wednesday	Genesis 44-47	Sault St. Marie, Mich., Corps
	19 Thursday	1 Samuel 6-10	Wausau, Wis., Corps
	20 Friday	Psalms 33-35	Kansas and Western Missouri Division
	21 Saturday	Job 23-24	Aurora, Ill., Corps
	22 Sunday	Isaiah 62-66	USA Central Territory
	23 Monday	Mark 3-4	Battle Creek, Mich., Corps
	24 Tuesday	1 Corinthians 7-8	Cape Girardeau, Mo., Corps
	25 Wednesday	Genesis 48-50	Chicago Midway, Ill., Corps
	26 Thursday	1 Samuel 11-15	Decatur, Ill., Corps
	27 Friday	Psalms 36-38	Italy and Greece Territory
	28 Saturday	Job 25-26	Elgin, Ill., Corps
	29 Sunday	Jeremiah 1-3	Flint Citadel, Mich., Corps
	30 Monday	Mark 5-6	Hillsdale, Mich., 360 Life Center
	31 Tuesday	1 Corinthians 9-10	Michigan City, Ind., Corps

Go to www.salarmycentral.org

click on the spiritual life development icon.

A column on holiness

Of Polyester and Ultimate Reality

by Envoy Bill Ury

National Ambassador for Holiness



Remember the day I first attempted to contemplate reality. What existed before creation? It blew my mind. What is eternity? What preceded the miracle of creation? That mystery, properly approached, is a formative thought process. We must not begin with what we think is real from our perception. Everything is radically limited if we focus on the universe too quickly. The Bible slowly and carefully unfolds the essence of the One who made us for Himself.

Just what was God before there was anything else? Two major, and I would argue, inseparable concepts in the Bible are revealed about God's nature. He is "holy" (Exodus 3:5, Leviticus 11:44, II Kings 19:22). And He is "love" (I John 4:16). Holy Love is what is ultimately real. Everything else about God pertains to us: i.e., His sovereignty, His mercy, His justice. Those attributes are in relation to the created world. But the eternal nature of God is three Persons in mutual self-giving. If that is a correct view of the true essence of God, then holiness becomes vitally important. We do not begin on the right foot for anything God says or does if it does not find its origin in the transcendent and personal reality of love and holiness.

Many have been tempted to think that holiness is old-fashioned, narrow, petty and worst of all, an impossibility for humans till glorification. But The Salvation Army shouts, "No!" Holiness is exactly what we need to understand the nature of everything. God, who is only Holy in Love, loving holiness has made us to know Him as He is. Our discussions—and many debates—about holiness over the years can deflect us from the major purpose of the Holy One. His eternal plan was to involve His creatures, you and me, with His own nature. He wanted us to bear His image, to see His reflection in us, and so to reveal to the

world His true nature. His sanctifying presence, which is seen clearest in a heart overflowing with the divine love He continually pours in, is what salvation is. That is the salvation to which all our flags and symbols witness.

Nothing is ultimately real without Him. He wants to bring us out of unreality (a great definition for all self-centeredness and sin) into the reality which He is. Holiness is the only true thing. Everything else can only find purpose, value and meaning if it is related to the Holy One.

I often hear Salvationists contemplating the need for becoming more relevant in our age. Perhaps there are things we need to discuss. Jesus makes it very clear that man-made traditions are potential barriers to offering His full life. Could it be that we in The Salvation Army are not as out of touch or irrelevant as we might be made to feel by our polyester and our bands and smaller numbers? Maybe our unrelenting focus on holiness is exactly the reality that every person is made for and needs the most! We don't mind being a bit different if someone can be touched by Jesus in redeeming power and can be filled with the Holy Spirit who can only be where He can make holy. Jesus has raised us up for one reason. Perhaps pointing to—and showing how to live in—Ultimate Reality. Holy Love is that very purpose.

Reflections

SELAH.
Pause for a while and
think about these things.

Visit salarmycentral.org and
click on the Spiritual Life icon.

Their little corner of the world

Tucked in the basement of the Macomb, Ill., Corps, right next to its weight room, is a tiny area that has become a giant blessing for many people. It's called the Clothing Corner.

The Clothing Corner opened in April 2025 after the well-established Clothing Closet in the city closed, when those who had run it for decades retired. The need was so great and undeniable that the corps found a way, with its limited space, to fill the void, accepting in-kind donations and passing them along to those who gratefully receive them.

"It has been a huge success, and God has blessed it every step of the way," said Macomb Corps Officer Captain Ron Felt, adding that donations of clothing, shoes, linens, towels, toys, pots and pans and more pour into the corps each day.

It meets a wide range of needs for the community, according to Amanda

Thorpe, Pathway of Hope case manager, who actually helped get the Clothing Corner up and running. Volunteers play an important role by sorting through donations, keeping the shelves and racks stocked and working with clients. The Clothing Corner is open from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Wednesdays. All items are free.

"We have seen individuals who are just starting their home or who have a new baby come and get supplies they need," Amanda said. "There are people who have been down on their luck who come in to get essential items. It has become somewhat of a 'family.' We have gotten to know them, and they have spread the word about us."

"Every time someone comes through our doors, it's an opportunity to plant a seed, show them love and make them feel welcome in the house of the Lord," said Captain Ron, who does his best to meet as many

people as possible.

Though it has a big ministry, the Clothing Corner is tight on space.

"We have utilized what little space we have now. We have used every inch," Amanda said.

Donated items that are too big to be kept indoors are housed temporarily in the corps' garage. Several Saturday "big giveaway days" for larger items took place outdoors in the warmer months of the year.

"It's like a free yard sale," Amanda explained. "There is a limit on how many furniture items that people take home—just 2-3 items—but for clothing items, they can take however many they need."

Since the community response has been robust, and continues to grow, the corps hopes someday to expand the Clothing Corner's space to in-



Captain Ron Felt helps unpack donations for the Macomb Corps' Clothing Corner.

clude a play area for children and an area for refreshments.

"It's the wonderful way that God works; it's beyond what we are thinking about," Captain Ron said. "He presented an opportunity. We stepped out in faith, and the pieces fell together."



Amanda Thorpe, at right, assists a visitor at the Clothing Corner.



The newest worship series for Lent, **The Gifts of Lent**, teaches that faith in Jesus Christ motivates us to use our possessions for Him. Stewardship is the theme. As we contemplate God's love in Christ, each of us has something we can give to Jesus.

Available in English and Spanish, the seven-week series includes worship service materials for the five Sundays of Lent, Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter, with music options, dramas, readings, "Children's Moments," and sermon ideas.

Resources are available at: sarmycentral.org/cacm/resources
See your corps officer for details.

Promoted to Glory

Major Tom Sillanpa

Major Tom Sillanpa was promoted to Glory on November 13, 2025. He was known for his warm heart, generous spirit, and sense of humor. A student of history, languages, music, and the Bible, Tom approached life with curiosity and gratitude.

Tom was born on January 31, 1929, in Minneapolis, Minn., to Aarne and Johanna Salminen Sillanpää. A first-generation American, Tom was proud of his Finnish heritage and spoke Finnish fluently, as well as Estonian, German, and Italian.

As a young man, Tom was the editor and publisher of a newspaper in St. Paul, Minn., and authored two books. Called to fulltime service, he was commissioned as a single officer in 1957. Tom married Lt. Nellie Williams in 1959, and they served in corps appointments, retiring from Logansport, Ind., in 1994. Throughout his officership, he was an active member of many service organizations.

Post retirement, Tom was named Guest Chaplain of the U.S. Senate by Senator Dick Lugar. Tom and Nellie each received the Sagamore of the



Wabash Award, the highest honor bestowed by the Governor of Indiana, in 1994.

Tom was preceded in death by Nellie, his beloved wife of 60 years. He is survived by his children David (Michelle) and Sharon (Tim) Sillanpa-Monroe; and seven grandchildren.

Major Barbara Wolf

Having lived a life rooted in faith, service and compassion, Major Barbara "Bobbie" Wolf was promoted to Glory on November 10, 2025.

Bobbie was born on August 2, 1932, in Detroit, Mich., to Captains Douglas and Ruth Norris. As an officers' child, she grew up all over the Midwest. After settling in Kansas City, she met and married William "Bill" Wolf in 1963.

Throughout her life, Bobbie was dedicated to spiritual outreach and community service, volunteering in lay leadership roles such as songster leader, corps cadet counselor and young people's sergeant-major, in addition to playing alto horn in the band and directing Christmas toy and food drives.



Entering the School for Officers' Training in 1983 and commissioned in 1985, Bobbie and Bill served in adult rehabilitation center (ARC) appointments, where Bobbie exemplified selfless love, kindness and grace, bringing hope and comfort to those around her. The Wolfs retired in 1996 to Florida, where they soldiered and volunteered at the Clearwater Corps.

Bobbie was preceded in death by her parents and sister, Margaret "Peggy" Payton. She is survived by her husband; daughters, Julia (Michael) Harner and Susan Wolf (Kyle Lore); brother, Frederick Norris; five grandchildren and seven nieces and nephews.

Captain Jennifer Bowyer

Captain Jennifer Bowyer (nee Perry) was promoted to Glory on October 23, 2025. Jennifer was a beautiful woman of God deeply rooted in His Word.

She loved Jesus and her family fiercely and extended His love to others unconditionally. She met even the hardest challenges with faith, turning them into an amazing God-

honoring testimony.

She was born on June 21, 1968, in Rockford, Ill. She graduated from Rockford East High School and later married Paul Bowyer at the Rockford Temple Corps on November 25, 1989.

Jennifer completed her nurse's training at Bethel College in Mishawaka, Ind., in June 2008 and began her nursing career at Swedish American Hospital in Rockford, where she worked for 10 years.

Following God's call to fulltime service, Paul and Jennifer became auxiliary captains in 2018 and received their commission as captains in June of 2023. They served as administrators of the Rockford Adult Rehabilitation Center. Jennifer, with a firm hand and loving heart, was a guiding light for men in the program who made positive decisions for their lives and families. In 2023 Jennifer was diagnosed with breast cancer and battled the disease for the next two and a half years while serving faithfully and trusting God every step of the way.

She is survived by her husband Paul; children Captain Joshua (Captain Darby) Bowyer, Nikki (Jonathan) Lopez, and Emma (Robinson) Nguyen; four granddaughters; mother Elna Carlson; mother-in-law Donna Bowyer; father Steve Fuehrer; step-mother Vicki Ehman; brother Jeff Fuehrer; and sister Penny Fuehrer.

