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news



The seven new senior soldiers stand by The Salvation Army flag – Lizhen Zhang, Lai Fong Chan, Jinxia Sheng, Ann Li, Mark Owi, Jessica Zhang and Soen Yin Chen.

New soldiers find a spiritual home at Perth Chinese Corps

By Anthony Castle

Membership at the thriving Perth Chinese Corps, located in the heart of Chinatown in the city, was boosted when seven senior soldiers were enrolled during an inspiring service on 10 December.

The corps' first enrolments in two years, the event saw first-generation migrants committing to faith and service in their community.

Esther Ong Ng has been the Congregational Leader at Perth Chinese Corps for over eight years.

"We serve the Chinese community here in Perth, with programs running throughout the week," explains Esther. "I conducted eight classes of soldiership preparation, or what we also call discipleship classes for those who'd become part of our community. We covered the basic doctrines of The Salvation Army and the basics of what you need to know as a believer."

Multiple community groups meet in the corps building and utilise the space. The corps helps people meet the challenges of migration and negotiating the language barrier.

"We reach out to a lot of the unchurched, perhaps 80 people per week," Esther says. "Some of them come through the social programs, connecting people with lawyers, migration agents, helping people to fill out

forms, giving them advice. We have different community groups here, choirs, people making use of the building."

Migrant students connect with Perth Chinese Corps regularly. There are Sunday meals after each service and small groups where first-generation migrants can come and connect, as well as a table tennis program.

"One of the people who just became a soldier had come through table tennis."

"We started the table tennis here three years ago," Esther explains. "One of the people who just became a soldier had come through table tennis. He was the first to join us for it, which led to faith conversations, being at the corps for three years, and now soldiership."

Most newly enrolled soldiers have been actively volunteering with the corps for some time. Soldiership is an affirmation of faith and a commitment to the community, but it's also a reflection of the home that people have found with The Salvation Army.

"Two of the soldiers shared their testimonies on the day, with one of them saying they found a home here," Esther says.

"Soldiership can bring that pride of belonging, wearing the uniform, being part of the community. There are all these Chinese migrants, far from their homeland. They're coming to a foreign land, so a feeling of home is something important."

news



Major Cathryn Williamson's new cookbook, *Special Occasion Treats*, is now available to order.

Cathryn's new cookbook a special treat for any occasion

By Lauren Martin

If you're doing any baking for a special occasion, then you might like to consider throwing Major Cathryn Williamson's new cookbook into the mix.

One of The Salvation Army's best-known bakers, Cathryn has released a new cookbook – *Special Occasion Treats*.

This book is the fourth in her successful '2 Thumbs Up' series, the first three being *Brilliant Biscuits*, *Sensational Slices and Cakes Loaves and Muffins*.

Cathryn, Corps Officer at Grafton/Maclean in northern NSW, said putting together this newest edition had taken her longer than the other three books combined.



The Salvation Army's best-loved baker, Major Cathryn Williamson, in the kitchen making gingerbread from her newest cookbook, *Special Occasion Treats*.

"There was COVID, and a bit of a lack of motivation," she admitted, explaining that other factors like illness in the family and her need to have foot surgery also meant an extended break out of the kitchen.

But now that the book has finally been released, Cathryn says she can't rule out doing another; however, the next edition may be aimed at a younger audience.

"The next one might be a kids' cooking book to go along with the Kids in the Kitchen program. And it will have little Bible devotionals along with the recipes," she said.

Cathryn developed the Kids in the Kitchen program in 2017 when she was the corps officer at Cowra (NSW). It is now a program many corps across the territory use in their children's ministry and outreach to local communities.

Cathryn said it was a family affair making *Special Occasion Treats*. Her mother contributed the Hot Cross Buns recipe ("because I'm not mucking around with yeast!" laughed Cathryn), and her father designed and printed the book.

The book contains some detailed recipes and some quick, easy treats – like the Christmas nougat in which you simply melt white chocolate melts in the microwave, add marshmallows and then stir through nuts and cranberries.

"Probably the most involved is the burger cupcake – it looks like a burger," said Cathryn. "The Portuguese egg tarts were difficult. I tried so many different variations to get one that would work. We have had Portuguese tarts in Macau, so we were very picky in wanting to get it right."

Proceeds from *2 Thumbs Up Special Occasion Treats* will go towards The Salvation Army's 'Making it Happen' women's ministry fundraising appeal, as well as the work of The Salvation Army with Ukrainian children.

Copies are \$10. To order, email Cathryn at: two.thumbs.up@hotmail.com

feature



The striking new Warrnambool Salvation Army Worship and Community Centre.

'Eye-catching' Warrnambool centre open and ready to serve

By Lerrisse Smith

The striking new Warrnambool Salvation Army Worship and Community Centre has officially been opened, bringing much excitement to the local community.

The development of the contemporary premises in Mortlake Rd, spanning 1320 square metres with its eye-catching wall of glass and angular shaping at the front, captured the attention of local community members who eagerly anticipated its completion.

"It's been exciting for the neighbourhood," said Major Sally-Anne Allchin, Warrnambool Corps Officer.

"We've had a lot of people just walking in and marvelling at what they have seen. The builder is to be congratulated on his attention to detail. There has been a lot of interest ... it's a very beautiful spot. Original gum trees are still out the front. On a recent Sunday, while we were having morning tea, we were blessed to watch a koala walk past and climb one of the gum trees.

"The worship and community centre is on a main arterial into town, and we just feel really blessed to be in a beautiful facility that's been purpose-built."

The journey leading up to the official opening by Colonel Winsome Merrett on 18 November has been filled with both sentimentality and a priority of ensuring community members feel welcomed and neighbours' voices are heard.

Six weeks before staff and the congregation moved into the new building, a team of 16 people walked around their extended neighbourhood, praying and dropping postcards into letterboxes to let people know they were coming to the area.

The neighbours whose properties backed onto the new premises were personally invited in for a tour and the opportunity to ask any questions about the site.

"That was their opportunity to be reassured that we are being common sense about what we're doing here and

that we want them to feel confident about who we are. We want them to feel confident that their future neighbours are going to be safe neighbours as well," Sally-Anne said.

The church's former location in Lava St for 49 years has not been forgotten, with a stained-glass window from the old building being a special feature in the new one. The decision to move came after the Lava St site was no longer fit for purpose, nor was it user-friendly for anyone with mobility issues or a pram. Initial plans were to renovate. Following costings, it was decided the better option was to relocate.

A special church service was held to commemorate the history of the Lava St building before its doors were closed.

Many people came for that last service to share their happy and fondest memories of times spent at the church and to ensure they were there for the final one. The corps then had different people come for the first service at the new building.

The building features not only the church, a large entrance foyer, and multiple rooms of varying sizes and purposes but also office spaces that accommodate Salvos Housing Victoria, homelessness services, and Doorways emergency relief and financial counselling. The corps' Thrift Shop remains in the middle of the town.

Looking to the future, Sally-Anne said she had a vision for social housing to be built on the new premises through the Victoria Government's Big Build program, as the land was formerly an indoor tennis centre, and space was available for such a project at the rear of the building.

The proposal would be 21 townhouses containing one, two and three-bedroom dwellings for those on the social housing list who met the requirements, assuring a safe neighbourhood for all. The aim would be to provide the occupants a 'forever home'.

Community is at the heart of the new site for Sally and Brett as The Salvation Army's leaders in Warrnambool.

"This building was designed to build community," Brett said. "It is as much a community meeting space as it is a place of hope and goodness, offering a practical Christian response to others."

stories of hope

Andrew discovers his true self in Jesus

Overwhelmed by emptiness, Andrew pleaded for divine intervention. God, who had never left nor forsaken him, delivered Andrew in a powerful way. He recently told his story when being enrolled as a Senior Soldier at Coffs Harbour Corps (NSW).

My life was far from glamorous. My childhood was not like any picture-perfect family. I witnessed struggles and conflicts that no kid should ever be witness to.

I would lie in my bed each night pretending to be asleep, praying for all the pain to go away. The pain I felt couldn't be expressed in words. Before long, I was taken away and placed in foster care. I felt lost and abandoned. I found solace in the quiet moments, gazing up at the night sky, wondering about my purpose in this life.

Some years passed, and I returned home. The next few years are as if they have been wiped from my memory.

Though not raised in a religious household, I found myself at the age of eight, walking into a church by myself and sitting amongst the 300-plus people in the church pews listening to the words of God. Though I was riddled with the fear of anxiety in my life, I felt at peace. For the next few years, I found myself attending Sunday services, after-school kids' Bible classes and doing the work of Jesus by helping the elderly and less fortunate through the church.

As I grew older, I faced my own battles, grappling with feelings of loneliness and self-doubt. My troubles grew, and I found myself entangled in a web of bad choices. I sought solace in the wrong places, searching for meaning and purpose in all the wrong things. The allure of drugs and the subsequent pain they inflicted on my life consumed me.

During these dark times, I resisted the call of God, turning away from my faith in search of solace elsewhere. It is in these moments of rebellion that I learned firsthand the perils of straying from the path of righteousness.

Overwhelmed by the emptiness that consumed me, I found myself filled with self-hatred. Thoughts of suicide frequently crossed my mind as I struggled to find solace within the confines of my mundane existence. Every aspect of my everyday life no longer provided comfort.

In a desperate attempt to awaken the dormant spirit within me and escape the emotional void, I began actively seeking out danger. Engaging in activities that others would avoid became my means of feeling something, anything at all. The adrenaline rush of taking risks became my only refuge.

However, if it hadn't been for divine intervention, on multiple occasions, I wouldn't be here today. These miraculous interventions, occurring at just the right moments, saved me from the brink of despair and allowed me to continue this journey called life.

Filled with a desperate longing for guidance and redemption, I reached out, pleading for divine intervention. It was in this vulnerable moment of surrender that a transformative encounter unfolded before me, forever altering the trajectory of my life. The presence of divine grace



A pivotal moment in Andrew's faith journey – being baptised by Coffs Harbour Corps Officer Major Andrew van Gaalen.

enveloped me, embracing me with its ethereal touch, drawing me closer to the purpose for which I was created.

Since that profound experience, my life has taken on a new meaning. It was as if the weight of the world had been lifted. A kind-hearted congregation – Coffs Harbour Salvation Army – welcomed me with open arms, offering love, acceptance and understanding.

As I immersed myself in the teachings of the Bible, I began to rediscover the faith that had always resided within me. I found strength in prayer, guidance in Scripture, and solace in the fellowship of my new-found community. God's grace renewed a sense of purpose and hope.

In 1 Corinthians 10:13 Paul tells us: "God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength but with your testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it."

Because of Jesus my heart is free.

viewpoint



General Lyndon Buckingham became the 22nd world leader of The Salvation Army earlier this year.

What makes The Salvation Army tick?

London's *City Matters* newspaper website recently interviewed The Salvation Army's world leader, General Lyndon Buckingham. The article is reprinted here for *Salvos Online*.

The red shield of The Salvation Army is instantly recognisable to millions of people around the world, but have you ever wondered who is responsible for this organisation and what it actually does?

The international leader responsible for The Salvation Army is currently General Lyndon Buckingham. This interview with the General took place while he was visiting Uganda, one of the 134 countries in which The Salvation Army serves. The General is the only elected position in The Salvation Army.

General Buckingham explains, "First and foremost, we run churches! Wherever the Salvation Army flag is flying, you will find a congregation of people worshipping. One of our driving ambitions is to meet human need without discrimination, and that 'human need' varies depending on where we are in the world. We provide shelter for the homeless, feeding programs, schools, hospitals, drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs, counselling services and prison ministry, and services for children and families who are in need. Our International Social Justice Commission, based in New York, speaks to the United Nations on global social justice issues. The Salvation Army is currently making a compassionate contribution to the care of people affected by the war between Russia and Ukraine. We do what we can, where we can, to support those in need based on our ability to respond. I am grateful to everyone who helps us make a difference."

Since August 2023, The General has been responsible for overseeing The Salvation Army globally (including its 1.5 million members worldwide). Although based at the International Headquarters in London, the General travels extensively in support of overseas territories. He said, "The office of the General is responsible for the spiritual life and wellbeing of the movement, but also has policy and direction responsibilities which are delegated and

shared between the General's Council and the Salvation Army's International Trustee Company. This is the office that acts as the glue that holds together the international Salvation Army and its mission around the world."

He continued, "The senior leaders within The Salvation Army are ordained ministers who, through a series of appointments, have been entrusted with greater responsibility based on their character, skill set and performance. This is a combination of time, experience, skill, and affirmation from peers. International appointments are then made by the International Appointments Board as a result of recommendations from peers."

The Salvation Army was founded in 1865 with a quasi-military structure, but the question sometimes arises concerning how appropriate this uniform approach is today. General Buckingham said, "As we mature and develop, we are recognising both the strengths and perhaps some of the weaknesses of our military motif and metaphor. We are managing the tension between our desire to be collaborative in leadership style while using the motif to its best advantage. We are probably less militaristic today, and we're trying to find a 'win-win' way of using the motifs in a modern context."

With the impact of COVID-19 still very real across the globe and a cost-of-living crisis biting in many countries, can charities still rely on the general public for support? General Buckingham said, "We recognise the challenge for any one organisation, whether it's a government or an NGO, to 'do it all'. Collaboration and cooperation between government agencies and NGOs is a healthy response to the needs of the world."

He continued, "I think that people are right to be discerning about how they support various global NGOs. We are incredibly grateful for the level of support that people around the world are able to give to The Salvation Army, and we continue to endeavour to be good stewards of whatever resources are entrusted into our care. This enables us to do very good work for those less fortunate. [But] the motivating force behind this movement is God's love for us and our desire to express that towards our neighbour."

army archives

How the Salvos went from being flour-bombed to loved in Launceston

By Stephanie Dalton

From rocky beginnings in November 1883 – when onlookers exploded flour bombs in the Salvationists' faces or threw mud and beer, to near unanimous support in 2023 – The Salvation Army in Launceston has come a long way.

The Salvos were not always received warmly in the early days – they were seen as a “noisy and disrespectful bunch to many, encouraging the larrikins of the town”, and often arrested during their parades.

However, on Sunday 26 November, the Launceston Corps received a very different reception when the community came together to celebrate exactly 140 years from their first service.

Corps Officer Aux-Lieut Roderick Brown said the celebration was a testament to the faithfulness and hard work of those who had come before.



The original Elizabeth Street Barracks. Picture supplied

“We have a long history of supporting people in practical ways, in tangible ways, and supporting people holistically with their spiritual needs too,” Roderick said. “The Salvation Army is a faith-based movement, motivated by the love of Jesus. So that’s why we do what we do; helping and caring for people and trying to show them how valued each and every person is in the eyes of God. We want to lift them up.”

Over the past 140 years, 96 corps officers have been appointed in Launceston, all doing their bit, as Roderick says, to support others when they need it most.

During the anniversary celebration, photos and archive materials were available to look at and church friends and family shared stories and memories from their time in the corps.

Within two years of the Army ‘opening fire’ in Launceston, the present corps site in Elizabeth Street was obtained and built upon in 1885. It’s reported that about 1100 people attended the opening of the Elizabeth Street Barracks, with a further 300 to 400 more outside, unable to get in.



Songster leader Jeremy Reeve at The Salvation Army in Launceston, where they celebrated the 140th anniversary. Picture by Phillip Biggs

In November 2010, the latest building restructure and remodel occurred, integrating all of the Launceston services into one site.

Over the years, the Salvationists opened many social service initiatives and places, including a maternity hospital for unmarried mothers and other young women “to whom life had been unkind”; provided shelter to unemployed single men; fed and clothed those affected by the 1929 Invermay floods; ran soup kitchens in the winter and during the Great Depression; and much more.

After 1945, The Salvation Army responded to new social problems by extending its services to assisting people experiencing homelessness, missing persons, drug, gambling, and alcohol abuse, disability and migrant services, employment, and aged accommodation, and helped in emergencies like the 1967 bushfires.

In 1970, the annual Red Shield Appeal doorknock began, raising much-needed funds. In the first year, The Salvation Army raised \$9153, equivalent to about \$119,206 today.

Despite the initial protests against the Army, *The Examiner* newspaper reported on 30 November 1883 that “the effects of the good these people are doing is becoming plainly visible”.

An edited version of an article that first appeared in Launceston newspaper The Examiner.



During the anniversary celebration, photos and archive materials were available to look at. Picture by Phillip Biggs