

salvos

magazine



Take a load off your mind

Slowing down and being
present in the moment



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FAITH TALK

The gift
of being
present

MY STORY

Post-
earthquake
Vanuatu

NEWS

Extra
funding
for youth

**“Just because
you take breaks
doesn’t mean
you’re broken.”**

– Curtis Tyrone Jones





The Salvation Army is about giving hope where it's needed most.

What is The Salvation Army?

The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church.

Vision Statement

Wherever there is hardship or injustice, Salvos will live, love and fight alongside others to transform Australia one life at a time with the love of Jesus.

Mission Statement

The Salvation Army is a Christian movement dedicated to sharing the love of Jesus by:

- Caring for people
- Creating faith pathways
- Building healthy communities
- Working for justice



The Salvation Army Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet and work and pay our respect to Elders, past, present, and future. We value and include people of all cultures, languages, abilities, sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, and intersex status. We are committed to providing programs that are fully inclusive. We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of people of all ages, particularly children.

Salvos Magazine

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your mind**

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Vanuatu**

Take a breath

Most of us these days have a lot on our minds. How to balance the budget, looking after family, health concerns, relationships, work – the list is endless. We know we need a rest now and then and some time for ourselves, but squeezing that into the demands of daily life often seems impossible.

In this edition, Jo-anne Brown talks about mindfulness, but in a practical and down-to-earth way that most of us can relate to and benefit from. She writes about being in the moment, pausing when stresses and worries become too much, and really focusing on the small things that bring us joy.

Faye Michelson adds to this theme in Faith Talk, sharing how walking her dog and seeing how she delights in a simple walk has taught her to leave heavy thought and concerns behind for a moment and enjoy a reprieve, if only for a short while.

This edition also features some news updates from around the Salvos, and some personal stories from Vanuatu where Salvos personnel were assisting after the December earthquake last year.

Take a moment to enjoy these stories!

Simone Worthing **Editor**

Take a load off your mind

Slow down and be present in the moment for a while

We have plenty to think about every day. Research tells us that we have 20,000 thoughts a day, and not all of those are helpful, happy and positive. Is your mind full of anxiety, anger or frustration? Do negative thoughts about the past or fears for the future constantly whirl around your brain? One way to bring calm to your thought-cluttered mind is to practise mindfulness.

It's a bit of a buzzword at the moment, but what is mindfulness and how do you do it? Spiritual director and Salvation Army Major Jo-anne Brown provides insights into how to be mindful and its benefits to our mental health.

Salvos Magazine: What is mindfulness?

Jo-anne Brown: When we are being mindful, our focus is on simply being present to what's happening in this moment, without any judgment or interpretation. That means letting go of all distractions and thoughts that crowd our mind. Mindfulness is slowing our thinking down, kind of like giving our minds a rest and allowing all our senses to notice and embrace the present moment.

SM: What are the core features of mindfulness?

JB: These include slowing down, not dwelling on the past, or worrying about and planning for the future. Mindfulness is noticing what's around you, finding beauty in all things, finding God in all things. It's about letting go, accepting ourselves and our circumstances in the moment and not judging, fixing or trying to change things or ourselves.



22 FEBRUARY 2025

SM: How does mindfulness help improve mental health?

JB: There's a lot of research on how mindfulness reduces stress, helps anxiety, increases focus and improves memory. Choosing to be present to what is happening now stops the mind focusing on past mistakes and hurts, or ruminating about what might happen in the future. Being mindful keeps us in this moment – it slows down our restless thinking and gives us a pause. Mindfulness also soothes our nervous system, reduces cortisol and increases endorphins (the feel-good hormones) so we can be calm, creative and connected more deeply to ourselves and others.

“

*Mindfulness reduces stress,
helps anxiety, increases focus,
and improves memory.*

”

SM: Can you practise mindfulness anywhere?

JB: Yes! When we feel uptight or stressed, even taking just a few minutes to be mindful can make a difference. Slow down and pause. It's good to take mini breaks through the day to simply be in the moment. It can be helpful to connect being mindful to something you already do regularly, for example, when you put the kettle on to make a cuppa, go for your daily walk, eat a meal or pat a pet. I often take a few moments between tasks to simply be in the moment, stroll in the garden and feel the sunshine on my face.

SM: What are some ways to practise mindfulness?

JB: I find a comfortable spot to sit, lie down, stand, or even do this while walking. I like to close my eyes (unless I'm walking!) so I'm not being distracted by everything around me. Breathing is an important part of this practice for me. When we focus on our breath, the mind can't keep spinning in a multitude of directions. I begin by taking slow, deep breaths and focusing on a long exhale, allowing my full diaphragm to breathe in and out. It is most helpful if the exhale is longer than the inhale. ►





Sometimes I will focus on what I see (nature, my cat, the smoke from a candle or incense), or the sensations I feel on my skin (sunshine, shade, breeze). You can also focus on what you can smell, hear or taste – try allowing a small piece of chocolate to slowly melt in your mouth and focus on how that feels. Focus on tactile sensations – how does the material under my hands feel, or the carpet/ground/grass beneath my feet?

Body relaxation techniques, journaling, guided meditation, mindful walking, mindful eating are all ways to practise mindfulness.

SM: Does this ability to be fully present in the moment take practice?

JB: It's not something most of us are taught how to do, because we 'need' to be achieving and 'doing' something useful. As a society, I believe we are largely unaware that 'doing nothing' is not nothing. When we slow down our thinking and reacting, we are allowing a lot more to happen beneath the surface, such as healing and soothing.

Try starting with focusing on your breathing for two minutes in silence.

As you become comfortable with what feels like 'doing nothing', increase the time. It's also important to recognise that our brains were made to think, so it's okay to be distracted, but don't hold on to the thoughts that come. Let them drift and return your attention to the sensations you are experiencing in the moment.

SM: How does mindfulness fit into our spiritual life?

JB: For me, it's my regular practice of silent prayer and reflection that make it possible for me to live a life of mindfulness, to find moments to be still, to notice where and how God is present and at work, to acknowledge his presence and to respond prayerfully and gratefully. Being mindful is also very connected to the times God says, "Don't be anxious, don't be afraid" – it's mindfulness (and prayer) that takes us to that place of being without fear, the place of peace.



Scan here for more stories of hope.

Extra funding for youth programs

Victorian Salvation Army youth programs have recently received more than \$250,000 in funding through a state government initiative.

The programs, which target young people between the ages of 16 and 25 who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness, or who are disengaged from education and employment, are located in Mornington Peninsula/Frankston and Shepparton.



The Victorian Government's 2025-27 Engage! grants program awarded Peninsula Youth Services \$135,000 and The Salvation Army's North East Victoria Youth Services \$130,000, excluding GST.

The funds will be used in both areas to empower marginalised young people by equipping them with essential life and leadership skills, building community connections and helping foster self-confidence and creative expression.

"These grants will ensure that young people have the support and resources they need to thrive and contribute to our state into the future," said Victorian Minister for Youth Natalie Suleyman.

– **Kiralee Nicolle**

Some information and the quote in this article first appeared in the Shepparton News.

Salvos respond to Queensland floods

January and February have been busy months for The Salvation Army Emergency Services (SAES) as teams respond to floods, fires and other emergencies around the country.

In Far North Queensland, SAES teams have been assisting hundreds of people after the severe flooding in Townsville, Innisfail, Ingham, Gordonvale, Cardwell, and many surrounding areas of the Hinchinbrook Region earlier this month. Teams served 700 meals on the first day of their deployment in Townsville (2 February) to those impacted by flooding, as well as to first responders.



Teams prepare meals for those impacted by the floods in Townsville.

SAES General Manager Daryl Crowden said the Salvos were "bringing people, support and resources" to Townsville and Ingham and would remain engaged with Queensland and the local governments for as long as necessary.

Community welcomes Salvos marchers



Midsumma Pride marchers representing the Salvos stand behind a banner that demonstrates the Salvos' commitment to being a safe and welcoming space for all people.

The Salvation Army's Social Mission and Community Engagement teams led a group of Salvos in the Midsumma Pride March in Melbourne on Sunday 2 February.

The Salvation Army's Major Stuart Glover explains: "Our involvement in events such as these centres around our commitment to inclusion and effective inclusive practice, enabling The Salvation Army to be recognised as a safe and welcoming space for all people, especially those most vulnerable."

The Salvation Army representatives are always warmly welcomed as they march.

"Thousands of community members lined the streets, showing us such grace, love and thanks for being

there," said Nicole Telfer, LGBTQIA+ Specialist-Social Mission and Community Engagement. "Now more than ever, it's vital we show that we are a movement committed to acceptance and unconditional love for all people. All are welcome here."

A key part of The Salvation Army's international mission statement is that "Its ministry is motivated by the love of God. Its mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and meet human needs in his name without discrimination."



Scan here to read
The Salvation Army's
Inclusion Statement.

WA SAES teams support fire crews through extreme conditions



WA SAES teams like this dedicated crew have been serving meals in Port Kennedy, Davenport and Carnarvon. Image: Supplied.

During the first week of February, Salvation Army Emergency Services (SAES) teams in Western Australia have supported firefighters with freshly prepared meals and snacks as they brought three separate blazes under control.

With hot weather contributing to fires across the country, SAES teams in multiple states have been meeting the needs of fire response crews. All significant fires in Western Australia are currently back under control, with SAES Response Coordinator for WA Benjamin Day saying crews are now focusing on preparing for whatever might come next.

In the early hours of 4 February, SAES teams deployed to Port Kennedy, near Rockingham, to provide dinners and light meals for 55 firefighters working to contain a blaze that took two days to fully control.

On the same day, SAES teams were also deployed to a fire in Davenport, a suburb of Bunbury, a city two hours south of Perth.

On 31 January, SAES staff and volunteer couple Sonya and Dave Cooper also flew to a cattle station in Carnarvon, a nine-hour drive north of Perth, to support fire crews battling a bushfire. The couple spent five days cooking in extreme conditions, where each day temperatures exceeded 45 degrees Celsius, with little air conditioning.

Benjamin said his teams were able to adapt when needed, with smaller crews of capable volunteers and staff members deploying to remote areas when the need arose.

"We're proud of our volunteers that they can step up when that happens," he said. – **Kirralea Nicolle**

The gift of being present

Lessons on life from my greyhound and other dogs

By Faye Michelson

It's a summer morning, one of those days when the sun is brilliant in a cloudless sky, the air still has an edge of crispness, and the blossoms are picture perfect.

Have you ever been walking on a day like that, but really, it might as well have been the dreariest, most colourless, coldest time ever, for all the notice you took of it?

I've recently thought about how often I go on autopilot. Reading, eating, driving, watching a movie, walking the dog – without being aware of it, my focus shifts from thinking about what I'm doing, to thinking about anything and everything. It's as if the activity I'm doing is just a veneer to allow all sorts of thoughts to cram behind it into the rest of my mind. And usually, those thoughts are about what's making me anxious, angry, upset or nervous.

Walking the dog, in my case a greyhound called Blondie, is a lesson I'd love to share with you on how to take ourselves off autopilot.

EMBRACING LIFE

That dog really knows how to enjoy a stroll through a park. She embraces the experience so much that it can take a very long time to walk a very short distance. For instance, there are large, strappy plants lining some of the paths. She buries her nose right into the centre of their leaves so deeply, that all you can see is the top of her head.

She sniffs for ages before moving on to the next plant and doing the same. She likes flowering plants, seeming to inhale their fragrance as she pushes the blooms around with her nose. She walks along the grass, nose to ground, stopping frequently to investigate some invisible scent of interest or to chew on some tasty pieces of greenery. When I sit on the park bench, she stands beside me, her face lifted to the sun, or she leans against me for a pat.

“

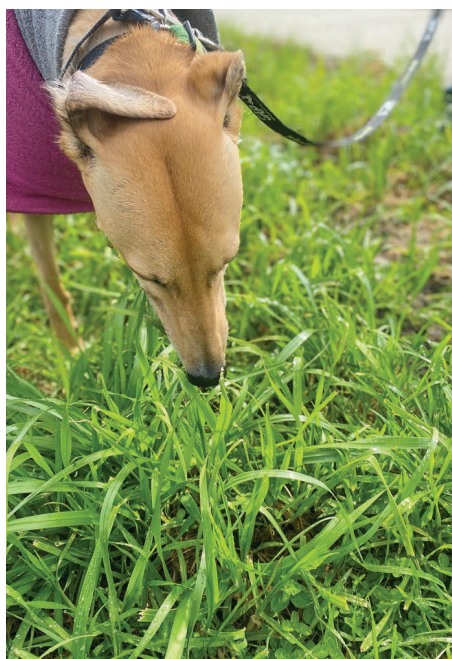
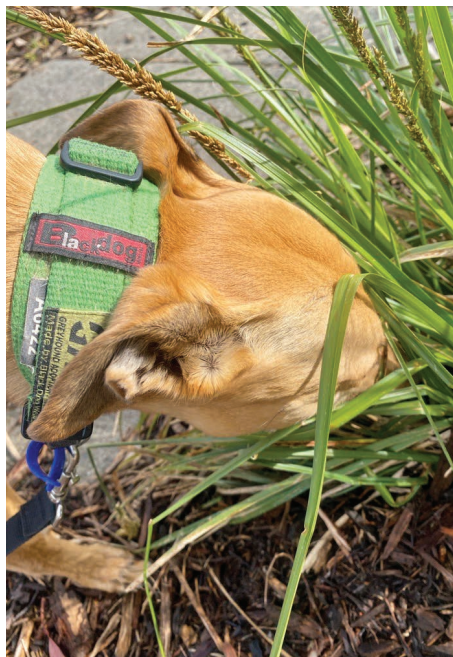
That dog really knows how to enjoy a stroll through a park.

”

There's no walking on autopilot for her. She's fully engaged and, judging by her tail, happy. For her, there's nothing but the moment she's living in and the everyday joys it brings.

We often have good reasons to cope with stressful thoughts, but what a relief, a reprieve even, to leave them behind for a while.

Being present in the present can be such a gift. “This is the day that the Lord has made; let's rejoice and be glad in it” (Psalm 118, verse 24, *International Standard Version*), even if only for a few minutes at a time.



Post-earthquake Vanuatu

Stories of gratitude and impact

By Daryl Crowden

Two Australian Salvo workers – Major Darren Elsley and Daryl Crowden – who are both part of The Salvation Army International Emergency Services team, assisted in the Pacific Island nation of Vanuatu after a magnitude 7.3 earthquake struck near the coast on 17 December 2024.

Below, Daryl shares two stories from local people who are grateful to the Salvos for the changes their assistance has brought.

PETER

"I was just like you; my body was same as yours," Peter, a man of faith living with a disability, shares. Peter's life changed when he was just 13 years old; he was forced out into the world to fend for himself. His grandmother took him in for a little while, but now, as he has for a long time, he lives in "his" (he says that word with great pride and a smile) small, clean and well-organised rented house.

Peter worships with a Seventh Day Adventist fellowship. To provide for himself and pay his rent, Peter explains that "I go into Port Vila town most days, with my amplifier and microphone and sing [religious songs] in the Chinese district. On 17 December I was in town singing but I felt bad, I felt that something was wrong, something bad was coming. I rang my bus and asked him to come quickly and take me home. I had just got out of the bus and taken five steps when I was thrown to the ground. People were screaming and running around me, but I was calm – I stayed relaxed. When the shaking stopped, I went to the hills with everyone else and stayed with people who took me in for two weeks before I came back here."



Peter feels "blessed" by the assistance provided by the Salvos.

Peter received a voucher to a local department store to help him replace some of his damaged household items and replenish his food and supplies. Proudly he points out to me a shiny, new, stainless-steel pot that "The Salvation Army blessed me with" and he asks me to thank all those who donated to The Salvation Army's appeal and made this possible.

ROLYN

Rolyn was at home in 21 Jump Street (The Salvation Army's community complex) with her five-month-old baby daughter and her one-year-old brother when the earthquake shook her house. While she knew what the cause was, this was worse than anything she had ever felt. Grabbing her baby and brother she didn't stop to pick anything up – she ran (literally) for the hills.

The rest of the community (about 500 people) were running and since she had no idea where to go, she followed them up into the surrounding hills.

"One thing we know is that if a tsunami is coming, we go to the hills," she says.

Like many of her neighbours, Rolyn had no one to go to. Generous people were taking in everyone, and so for five days she stayed with strangers. "They are now friends," she shares.

When Rolyn returned to her house it was "leaning at a bad angle, and I did not trust it [enough] to go inside."



Young Salvos volunteers collected household data for the voucher program.



Rolyn (right) enjoys a lighter moment with Daryl Crowden and Lilyrose.

Like many people in this community, if you need help you turn to Mama Lilyrose (leader of The Salvation Army in Vanuatu). Rolyn, her baby and her brother are currently living in The Salvation Army's buildings.

"When The Salvation Army gave me a voucher, I was able to buy things for my baby and my brother and food," she says. "I want to thank the people of Australia who made these things possible. Everyone is blessed; God used you guys to help. The people of 21 Jump Street are so happy ... I can see smiles on their faces."

But, she says, "People are still scared. We need help to come 'home', not because our houses are damaged – we need help to forget."

The Salvation Army and other agencies are continuing to provide mental health and psychosocial support to this and all communities and impacted people, but with an estimated 80,000 people affected, it's going to be a huge task.



Scan here to donate to The Salvation Army Australia Earthquake Response Appeal.

Snow White's baked apples



Ingredients

4 large apples, 3 tbsp brown sugar, 1 tsp cinnamon, 1 tbsp sultanas, 1 tbsp chopped walnuts, 3 tbsp butter, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup boiling water, icing sugar, ice cream or custard (to serve)

Method

- Heat oven to 190°C. Wash and core apples, place in baking dish.
- In a bowl combine brown sugar, cinnamon, sultanas and walnuts.
- Melt butter and mix through.
- Spoon mixture into the apples.
- Pour boiling water into bottom of baking dish.
- Bake for 30-45 minutes, until apples are tender.
- Serve hot with dusting of icing sugar, ice cream or custard.

HAVE A LAUGH



Why is Peter Pan always flying?
He Neverlands

Which fairy tale character
has the fanciest door?
Goldilocks

What was Pinocchio doing
on the beach?
Lying

What does Shrek use to get into his hut?
A don-key

What kind of pet does Aladdin have?
A car-pet

BELIEVE IN GOOD: TIPS

1 March – World Compliment Day

- **Pay compliments to everyone you meet.**
- **Appreciate family, coworkers and friends for their hard work and for being in your life.**

Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

9			7		8		5	
	8					7		2
				6				
8				4		5		
	5		6					
	1		5	9			7	4
5	6	4				2	8	7
		2			4			3
1	3							

Tum-Tum

On which page of this week's *Salvos Magazine* is Tum-Tum hiding?



Bible byte

"Advocate for the rights of the afflicted and those in need."

Psalm 82, verse 3
The Voice translation

Quiz answers: 1. 1634 2. Breadcrumbs 3. White and red 4. The Grimm Brothers 5. A troll 6. Hans Christian Andersen
Tum-Tum: is hiding behind a pot on page 9.



Quick quiz

1. In what year was *Sleeping Beauty* first published?
2. What did Hansel and Gretel leave as a trail to find their way home?
3. What colour was the apple that the evil stepmother/witch gave Snow White to eat?
4. Who published the original Rapunzel fairy tale?
5. In the tale of Three Billy Goats Gruff, what lives under the bridge the goats must cross?
6. Who wrote *The Little Mermaid*?

23 February, 1954

The first mass inoculation against polio is conducted.

Virologist Jonas Salk's vaccine is still one the two versions used today.

23 February, 1455

The Gutenberg Bible is published.

Johannes Gutenberg's Bible edition was the first book ever printed in movable type, heralding the age of the printed book in the West.

26 February, 1917

The world's first jazz record is created.

The Original Dixieland Jass Band recorded 'Livery Stable Blues' and 'Dixie Jass Band One Step' for the Victor Talking Machine Company in New York. They became instant hits introducing the new genre of music to millions of people.

5	9	4	7	2	7	2	8	3	1
3	9	1	4	5	8	2	2	6	7
8	2	3	1	6	6	4	9	5	5
7	8	2	2	5	6	5	6	9	5
4	5	7	6	8	1	3	2	9	3
8	2	9	3	4	3	4	7	5	1
2	7	1	4	6	5	9	9	3	8
6	8	5	1	3	6	7	4	2	2
4	3	7	2	2	8	6	5	1	4

ON THIS DAY...

"DADIRRI"

THIS TERM IS FROM THE NGAN'GIKURUNGURR LANGUAGE
– AN AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE SPOKEN IN THE
DALY RIVER REGION OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY.

IT IS OFTEN USED TO DESCRIBE A DEEP LISTENING PRACTICE,
A STATE OF BEING FULLY PRESENT AND CONNECTED TO
ONE'S SURROUNDINGS.

