



Prayer
Network

Prayer MATTERS

APRIL 2024



Dear Prayer Matters readers

Welcome to the April 2024 edition of *Prayer Matters*.

This month we focus on praying for Pioneer Ministry in The Salvation Army; we cover some important events in prayer, and we pray for the London Division and South and Central Scotland Division.

Our Friday Justice and Reconciliation prayers come from the Anti-Trafficking and Modern Slavery Team, and our Care for Creation focus is a series of reflections on our relationship with animals, written for us by Major Viv Prescott from the Forest of Dean.

Our Sabbath Prayers are written by Major Gary Lacey, and he introduces his theme of 'Rest' with these words:

'Rest is a well-used word. We all need it, we know we should do it, but all too often it becomes an optional extra that we don't always take up in our lives.

God commands us to rest when he asks us to 'remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy' (Exodus 20:8). The words 'keeping it holy' suggest that the best place to find rest is in God. Jesus said, 'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest' (Matthew 11:28). In these four short reflections, let's do just that. Let's rest in him.'

Thank you for your partnership in prayer. Let's keep going with our UKI Prayer Rhythm, united prayer for the mission of The Salvation Army.

Lyndall Bywater on behalf of the UKI Prayer Team

APRIL



MONDAY 1 APRIL: SHARING THE GOOD NEWS **Easter Music Course (1-5 April)**

Christians connected to The Salvation Army have come together from all over the territory to share in a week of music making, fellowship, Bible study and fun. Please pray for the music that will be learned – that it will challenge and bless those who spend time looking at it. May the lyrics and music speak to them in a way that is timely and needed.

(Stephanie Lamplough, Assistant Director, Music and Creative Arts)



TUESDAY 2 APRIL: SERVING & CARING **Pioneer focus: Deptford**

Soul Community Deptford is a network committed to co-creating places of healing in the community. Some people are Christians, but most are not; they all find some kind of family and meaning through the various spaces we hold, such as our choir that meets in the local pub. We also hold walking meditations, and lead a monthly Christian meditation online. Pray for wounds to heal, for wind to return to the sails and for new creativity as our team grows. Pray too for wisdom for the way forward.

(Dave Cotterill, Pioneer Development Worker)



WEDNESDAY 3 APRIL: GROWING IN FAITH ***Belongings* musical**

The cast of *Belongings* will be performing this new musical for the fifth time this week, when they visit the Easter Music Course. Pray that they will be able to recreate the performance with the same love and enthusiasm as when they last performed it two months ago. Pray that the storyline will touch people, and that God will talk to them through the musical, bringing joy and comfort.

(Stephanie Lamplough, Assistant Director, Music and Creative Arts)



THURSDAY 4 APRIL: INTERNATIONAL SALVATION ARMY - Bangladesh Territory

We pray today for the Bangladesh Territory, under the leadership of Territorial Commander Lieut-Colonel Elizabeth Nelson, Chief Secretary Major Gabriel Dewri and Territorial Secretary for Women's Ministries Major Chaya Dewri. In a country which has experienced many natural disasters in recent decades, we pray that God will equip his people to bring comfort and hope.

(Lyndall Bywater, UKI Boiler Room Team)



FRIDAY 5 APRIL: JUSTICE & RECONCILIATION **Anti-Trafficking & Modern Slavery: Direct Delivery**

God is in the restoration business. God wants to strengthen people and give them back their dignity. Pray for our 'direct delivery', the safe houses and outreach teams who support survivors to be safe and protected at home and at work. Pray for survivors who are looking to seek justice for what has happened to them, and for reconciliation with their families and communities.

(Major Estelle Blake and the Anti-Trafficking and Modern Slavery Team)



SATURDAY 6 APRIL: CARE FOR CREATION **Valuing our fellow creatures**

'God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.' (Genesis 1:25)

Did you know that about 70 billion land animals are killed for food every year? We can fall into the misconception that humans are the only ones who feel emotions and experience suffering, and this has led to an inhumane and unjust system of production which impacts us all, especially our 'other-than-human' family.

O God, increase our sense of fellowship with all living things. You gave the Earth to them too. Help us to value their presence and give thought to how our choices impact their welfare.

Action: Could you consider reducing the amount of meat in your diet – even becoming vegetarian or vegan? If you do buy meat, make a commitment to ensure that it is ethically farmed.

(Major Vivienne Prescott, Forest of Dean Corps)



SUNDAY 7 APRIL: SABBATH PRAYER **Sleep**

One of the greatest gifts in the world of rest is sleep. The famous anthropologist Terri Guillemets said, 'A day without a nap is like a cupcake without frosting!' She is right! Are you getting enough sleep? Sleep is vital for our energy, vital for our health and vital for our Christian living.

Prayer (for yourself or for someone you know who isn't sleeping well):
Dear God, as I lay down to sleep, calm the tension in my body, mind and soul. Still my restlessness and quell the thoughts which worry and perplex me. Help me to sleep, in Jesus' name.

(Major Gary Lacey, Territorial Prayer Co-ordinator)



MONDAY 8 APRIL: SHARING THE GOOD NEWS **Pioneer focus: Streatchurch, Norway**

We are the officers of Hønefoss Corps, close to Oslo in Norway. We have restarted an old corps in a new location. 'Streatchurch' opened on 16 February 2024. Please pray for new people to get saved, and that many others will find their home.

(Captains Bodil and Helge Østergreen, Hønefoss Corps, Norway)



TUESDAY 9 APRIL: SERVING & CARING **South and Central Scotland Division**

Pray for the officers and territorial envoys across the division who will be leaving their current appointments in the summer as part of the General Farewell in July. Some will be moving to new appointments and some will be retiring from active service. Pray that everyone impacted by these changes will have a deep assurance of God's provision and peace in these final months before things change in the summer.

(Lieut-Colonel Judith Payne, Principal, William Booth College)



WEDNESDAY 10 APRIL: GROWING IN FAITH **Pioneer focus: 'Connected' Pioneer Gathering 2024**

125 people will come together at the Pioneer Gathering this coming weekend (12-14 April), most of whom are directly involved in helping to develop new Salvation Army communities, living out the gospel in cities, towns and villages all over the UK and Europe. Teaching will cover topics such as pioneering leadership, prophetic call, discerning the Spirit, the shape of team and the pioneering spirit. Pray that we will connect with each other and with God.

(Major Andrew Vertigan, Territorial Pioneer and Fresh Expressions Enabler)



THURSDAY 11 APRIL: INTERNATIONAL **SALVATION ARMY - Australia Territory**

We pray today for the Australia Territory, for its leaders, Territorial Commander Commissioner Miriam Gluyas and Chief Secretary Colonel Winsome Merrett, and for all those who worship and serve in Salvation Army corps and centres all over the country, that they will be surprised by joy today, and that God will lift burdens from heavy hearts.

(Lyndall Bywater, UKI Boiler Room Team)



FRIDAY 12 APRIL: JUSTICE & RECONCILIATION **Anti-Trafficking & Modern Slavery: Integrated Mission**

Just as many of Jesus' followers had different ideas about the kind of justice he was bringing to the world, so today we see people fighting for justice in different ways. Let's pray that God will help us to discern what justice and reconciliation look like, when the Kingdom of God comes on earth as it is in Heaven.

(Major Estelle Blake and the Anti-Trafficking and Modern Slavery Team)



SATURDAY 13 APRIL: CARE FOR CREATION **The blessing of birds**

'Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.' (Matthew 6:26)

There is a wonderful moment in the Gospels when God decides to come in the form of a bird. When Jesus is baptised, God's Spirit arrives as a dove, and Jesus receives the affirmation that he is God's beloved Son. Ponder the significance of this.

Father God, we thank you for the birds that fill our skies with their graceful flight and melodic songs. We pray for protection of migratory routes; we ask that the creation of bird-friendly spaces will become more of a priority in man's planning, and that you will empower the voices of those advocating against practices like deforestation that disrupt their habitats.

Action: Set your alarm to rise early enough to experience the dawn chorus. At this time of year it is especially wonderful. Listen for the first voice that calls as the darkness breaks, then enjoy hearing all the different calls as the light comes. Throughout the day, stop, listen and give thanks for the beauty and variety of the sounds birds make.

(Major Vivienne Prescott, Forest of Dean Corps)



SUNDAY 14 APRIL: SABBATH PRAYER **The choice to stop**

Stopping what we're doing is never easy, either when we're enjoying something or battling with something. We've probably all heard someone say, 'You need to stop!' As hard as it is, it is a choice that we can make.

Lord, give us the strength to stop and let go. Escort us to a place of quietness and confidence. In Jesus' name we pray.

(Major Gary Lacey, Territorial Prayer Co-ordinator)



MONDAY 15 APRIL: SHARING THE GOOD NEWS **'Join the Crescendo' Forums**

At this online forum, Creative Arts and Music leaders gather together to unpack the 'Join the Crescendo' resource. These leaders are dealing with very different groups and situations. Pray for encouragement and revival for those whose groups are in decline. Pray for those who are at a loss as to which direction their group should take and are looking for support.

Pray that everyone present will find fresh vision for the ways in which God's love can be communicated through music and creativity.

(Stephanie Lamplough, Assistant Director – Music and Creative Arts)



TUESDAY 16 APRIL: SERVING & CARING **Pioneer focus: – the challenges of planting**

'Some might think it's a walk in the park, but I have not found this to be the case. Pioneering is the hardest job I've ever had; but that said, it has been the most fruitful, both in the shoots of life that sprout up from time to time, and also in my own life as a Christian.'

Pray for those who are finding pioneering to be a struggle today; for grace to keep going and for determination to keep making Christ known, even when they don't see fruit.

(Quote from Dave Cotterill, Pioneer Development Worker)



WEDNESDAY 17 APRIL: GROWING IN FAITH **Natural Church Development Conference: 19-21 April**

This conference gathers groups from corps and gives them an opportunity to consider how to capitalise on the strengths they have as a worshipping community, how to overcome obstacles to growth, and how to disciple the church while engaging in mission. Pray for all those who will attend, that they will return home with fresh ideas and fresh energy.

(Based on the event description on the *Salvationist* website)



THURSDAY 18 APRIL: INTERNATIONAL **SALVATION ARMY – Nigeria Territory**

We pray today for the Nigeria Territory. We ask God's blessings on Territorial Commander Commissioner Daniel Kasuso and Territorial President for Women's Ministries Commissioner Tracey Kasuso. In a country where faith is often a flashpoint for strife and violence, we pray for protection for Salvationists and for the programmes they are running. May the word of God bear fruit and change lives.

(Lyndall Bywater, UKI Boiler Room Team)



FRIDAY 19 APRIL: JUSTICE & RECONCILIATION **Anti-Trafficking & Modern Slavery: Contract Team**

The Contract Team connect with local authorities, partner organisations and individuals, to offer advice and to do anything else they can to help bring survivors of trafficking to freedom. Pray for them as they navigate complex decisions and processes, to ensure that survivors receive the care and support they deserve and are entitled to.

(Major Estelle Blake and the Anti-Trafficking and Modern Slavery Team)



SATURDAY 20 APRIL: CARE FOR CREATION **The privilege of pets**

'The righteous care for the needs of their animals.' (Proverbs 12:10)

Many of us share our homes and lives with a beloved pet. They are our companions, comrades, confidants and sometimes even ministry partners. They help us realise the truth that the Earth is full of 'persons', and only some of them are human. When we pray for their health, happiness and wellbeing, it strengthens the bond we share with them. They teach us something beautiful about unconditional love.

Thank you, Creator God, for the gift of our 'other-than-human' companions. Thank you for all they teach us about the One who created them. Help us to make their lives as full, safe and wonderful as we can, and to accept the lessons they teach us with awareness, grace and a grateful heart.

Action: Take a moment to sit with your pet and look at them properly. Admire their colour, the softness of their fur, the depth of trust you see in their eyes when you hold their gaze. Today, do not take for granted their presence in your home and life. Do something enjoyable and special to celebrate them as a loved and valued family member.

(Major Vivienne Prescott, Forest of Dean Corps)



SUNDAY 21 APRIL: SABBATH PRAYER **Sabbath for the mind**

Our mind is the hub of our life. Everything we know, do, love, dislike, think and choose goes through the mind. No wonder the apostle Paul talks about our thoughts as a battlefield (2 Corinthians 10:4-5)! Our minds need a regular Sabbath.

Father, pour your quietude on our minds. Give us rest from the hustle and bustle that happens in our thoughts every day. Protect our minds as we rest, and help us to focus on you.

(Major Gary Lacey, Territorial Prayer Co-ordinator)



MONDAY 22 APRIL: SHARING THE GOOD NEWS **Pioneer focus: supporting and releasing**

Pioneers often don't feel at ease within the age-old structures of established church, and those who pioneer within The Salvation Army are no exception. Pray for those in divisional and territorial leadership, that they will know how best to support and release those who have the vision and skills to pioneer. Pray for strong relationships between pioneers and those in leadership, so that The Salvation Army will be a safe place where innovative mission flourishes.

(Based on thoughts shared by Dave Cotterill, Pioneer Development Worker)



TUESDAY 23 APRIL: SERVING & CARING **Exploring Leadership Day (27 April)**

Lord, we give thanks for those who will gather on Saturday to explore what kind of leadership you might be calling them to. We pray for those who sense a call to serve as officers, that this day will help them know how to take the next step. We pray too for those who know officership isn't your path for them; help them to recognise their gifts, to hear your specific call on their lives and to take it up with courage and confidence.

(Captains Tim and Christiane Swansbury, Rotherham Corps)



WEDNESDAY 24 APRIL: GROWING IN FAITH **South and Central Scotland Division**

Pray for a deepening sense of, and response to, the Holy Spirit's presence. We've used the prayer chorus 'Set a fire' in recent days. The words of the chorus capture our prayer, as we look to God for his direction, and we want courage to pray these words: 'Set a fire down in my soul, that I can't contain and I can't control. I want more of you, God, I want more of you, God.' (song by Will Reagan)

(Major Janet Robson, Divisional Commander – South & Central Scotland Division)



THURSDAY 25 APRIL: INTERNATIONAL **SALVATION ARMY – Brazil Territory**

We pray for the Brazil Territory: for its leaders, Territorial Commander Colonel Wilson Strasse, Territorial President of Women's Ministries Colonel Nara Strasse, Chief Secretary Lieut-Colonel Manuel Márquez and Territorial Secretary for Women's Ministries Lieut-Colonel Paulina Márquez. Pray that God will grant them wisdom as they make decisions about the work in Brazil, and that God will send workers into the harvest mission fields.

(Lyndall Bywater, UKI Boiler Room Team)



FRIDAY 26 APRIL: JUSTICE & RECONCILIATION **Anti-Trafficking & Modern Slavery: International team**

Our international team support anti-human trafficking and gender justice projects around the world, as well as communities of good practice. They also support the repatriation and reintegration of survivors. This year, the Helping-Hand Appeal is supporting the work of the international team. Pray that, as they empower individuals, train staff and leaders, and support projects in challenging communities, they will be encouraged by the truth that we are world changers.

(Major Estelle Blake and the Anti-Trafficking and Modern Slavery Team)



SATURDAY 27 APRIL: CARE FOR CREATION **Forgotten creatures**

'Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise!' (Proverbs 6:6)

Today, take time to acknowledge the forgotten creatures. There are numerous lesser-known and often overlooked species that play vital roles in their ecosystems, some so tiny we barely know they are there. When we do notice them, it helps us remember their significance and advocate for their protection. Their lives matter and their presence is integral to the health of our planet.

Lord, thank you for the intricacies of life that make up this incredible planet. We pray for the forgotten ones, the insects and micro-organisms that silently sustain the web of life. May we recognise their importance and work to protect their fragile existence.

Action: Take yourself outside to a garden, or somewhere in nature where you can be still and quiet. Find somewhere that will become your 'sit spot'. Settle yourself on the ground and be still. Notice the life that is directly beneath and around you: the busyness of the ants, the bugs flying past your ear, and the other tiny life forms in and on the soil. In your stillness, give thanks for their busyness; they are vital cogs in a very big planetary wheel.

(Major Vivienne Prescott, Forest of Dean Corps)



SUNDAY 28 APRIL: SABBATH PRAYER **Sabbath for the heart**

Our heart gives us life. All our hurts, joys, victories and defeats are felt in the heart, in the centre of our very lives. It's good to remember that Jesus is in the midst of that daily heart activity. He is the one who can give us rest.

Lord, we enter into a sabbath in our hearts. We give you all our joys, hurts, worries and aspirations, and we choose to rest in you.

(Major Gary Lacey, Territorial Prayer Co-ordinator)



MONDAY 29 APRIL: SHARING THE GOOD NEWS **London Division**

As part of our vision for a reimagined Salvation Army in London, we are committed to working more collaboratively with Salvation Army services across the 32 boroughs and the City of London. Pray for these partnerships, that they will be fruitful and will carry the gospel far and wide. We believe that, wherever the river flows, life will flourish (Ezekiel 47:9).

(Major Steve White, Divisional Commander – London Division)



TUESDAY 30 APRIL: SERVING & CARING **London Division**

Join with us in praying that God will raise up spiritual leaders in London. Each day we pray the '9:38 prayer', based on Matthew 9:37,38: "What a huge harvest!" he [Jesus] said to his disciples. "How few workers! On your knees and pray for harvest hands!" (MSG). Since we have committed ourselves to pray in this way, we have had 12 people come forward to explore spiritual leadership – God is good!

(Major Steve White, Divisional Commander – London Division)

NOTES





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