**PRAYER MATTERS – JULY TO DECEMBER 2023**

**Welcome Letter**

Hello Everybody,

Welcome to *Prayer Matters*!

What excites me and motivates me the most about this resource is the rhythm of prayer it naturally creates. Prayer schedules have long been a vital ingredient in the Christian faith. The Bible shows us regular meetings in homes and outdoors where people would gather to pray. Monasticism has been built around praying at regular intervals throughout history and to this very day.

In the Prayer Network we are currently working on encouraging and implementing a rhythm of prayer for the territory, as I believe that it is a proven and necessary action to keep alight the fires of prayer and relationship with our astonishing Saviour, Jesus Christ.

I want to thank you for taking the time to undertake this prayer work that *Prayer Matters* facilitates, and I pray that you will be blessed by the Spirit of God as you use it in your daily life.

While no longer in printed form, *Prayer Matters* is available through different channels such as *Salvationist* magazine, [Salvationist.org.uk](https://www.salvationist.org.uk/resources/discipleship/prayer-matters), the Prayer Network’s [Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/saukprayerpage) and PDF copies sent via email. This is in line with our environmental mandate as we seek to be more responsible in how we treat our God-created planet. So please enjoy this amazing periodical and let God speak with you through it.

And finally, a big thank you to all those who have contributed to this edition whether in producing it or writing for it.

Be absolutely blessed!

Gary Lacey (Major)

(Territorial Prayer Network Co-ordinator)

**JULY – Jesus, Transformer**

*Each month we will be centring our prayers and themes on a character trait of Jesus. In July the focus is on Jesus and his transforming power.*

**Mission Focus**

**Major Gary Lacey,** Territorial Prayer Network Co-ordinator

**Context**

The mission of God is in progress and has been since the beginning of time. It spans the centuries, navigates through history and travels onward into the future. As believers we are called to join that mission, to actively spread God’s word and love in order to make a positive difference in this world. There are many reminders in Scripture of the mandate given to us and we will look at seven of these scriptural mandates to influence our prayers in this part of the publication – prayers for ourselves, our loved ones, our communities, and our world.

**Saturday 1 July**

‘Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit’ (Matthew 28:19)*.*

Father, you have created us to carry out your mission. Strengthen us to embrace your ever-presence and your relentless love and work to build your Kingdom here on earth. Lead us into places we never thought possible. Help us to develop trust without borders, so that we make sure we seek you first and not our own agendas. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

**Task**

Create your own prayer based on this Scripture.

**Sunday 2 July**

‘For this is what the Lord has commanded us: “I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth’ (Acts 13:47).

Today is Founders’ Day, the birthday of The Salvation Army. Originally called The Christian Mission and co-founded by William and Catherine Booth, we are still called by God to share the mission of bringing light to the world and fighting injustice to the very end. Lord, give us the sharpness and the spiritual tools that we need to join in your mission. Amen.

**Task**

The Scripture above outlines that the Lord has commanded us to be a light to those without the light of God. What is the Spirit of the Lord saying to us about this?

**Monday 3 July**

‘And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come’ (Matthew 24:14).

God, you have laid down our pattern for mission in no uncertain terms. We are to preach the gospel, live out the gospel and spread the gospel. Thank you for including us in this astonishing task. Help us to embrace this challenge and give us the necessary skills to do so. Amen.

**Task**

Reflect on the last time that you communicated the gospel to a person who doesn’t know the Lord, whether by word or deed. Ask God for another opportunity to do so.

**Tuesday 4 July**

‘Declare his glory among the nations, his marvellous deeds among all peoples’ (1 Chronicles 16:4).

The power of the declared story is that it brings testimonies to life and implants them in people’s hearts as the Spirit infuses every story of his amazing love to us. Jesus, we declare that you are King of all. We commit to share stories of your deeds to all we meet. Amen.

**Task**

Write down your story, reflect on it and what the Spirit wants to say through it. Consider sharing your story with someone you feel may need to hear it.

**Wednesday 5 July**

‘But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth’ (Acts 1:8).

Holy Spirit, come and invade every inch of my very being. Strengthen my resolve in witnessing to the whosoever. Empower your Church to be a truly fired-up people. Amen.

**Task**

Sit quietly and ask the Holy Spirit to remove the barriers that we sometimes erect ourselves, like resistance, doubt, fear of the unknown, unbelief. What would it mean for us to be ‘fired up’ by the Spirit?

**Thursday 6 July**

‘As the Father has sent me, I am sending you’ (John 20:21).

Lord, this verse feels like a spiritual green light! You are calling us to go into a world of unbelief to speak the truth of the gospel. Fire us up to go in your name. Amen.

**Task**

Reflect on what stops us from joining Jesus in his mission. Write it down and pray about it, along with the verse above.

**Friday 7 July**

‘How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, “Your God reigns!”’ (Isaiah 52:7).

Lord, we speak your good news over our nation and the whole world. We declare that peace reigns, we spread joyful tidings of your mighty works, we shout salvation over our families and our communities, and we declare over all the world that our God reigns! Amen.

**Task**

Go to your window, look out on to your street and pray out this prayer over all the people who live in your community.

**Jesus, Transformer Focus**

**Portia Sterling-Mack and Julie Meek (Reading West Corps)**

**Saturday 8 July**

‘Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here!’ (2 Corinthians 5:17).

We praise you, Jesus, because you are at work transforming lives in our communities and our world. The past was forgiven and forgotten when you gave your life for us and filled us with your Holy Spirit. Lord, as we go through this week, continue to renew our hearts, inspire our thoughts of you and, above all, be enthroned in our lives. Amen.

**Sunday 9 July**

‘Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind’ (Romans 12:2).

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we thank you for your amazing power to change us to become the people you want us to be. Help us to renew our minds through Scripture and prayer, in communion with you. May our lives be transformed for your praise and glory. Amen.

**Monday 10 July**

‘And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit’ (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Lord, inspire us to look at your glory instead of looking to the world for our needs. Help us to see the truth that you live in us, transforming us into your image. Help us to understand who we are in Christ and to let his glory shine through us as we go about our everyday lives. Amen.

**Tuesday 11 July**

‘This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel’ (Acts 9:15).

Father God, we thank you for Saul’s transformation. Thank you that Jesus spoke to him on the road to Damascus and that he did not doubt that it was your Son, obeying everything he was told. Thank you that he became a great preacher, transformed from being persecutor of the good news to becoming the one spreading it. Amen.

**Wednesday 12 July**

‘And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it’ (Matthew 16:18).

Thank you, Father God, for the transformation of a fisherman called Peter. Although Peter was often guilty of acting first and thinking later, Jesus saw his potential. Thank you that, although Peter denied knowing the Son of Man, he sought to put things right and became a valued apostle. Amen.

**Together 23 Focus**

**Majors Nick and Kerry Coke (Together 23 Co-chairs, THQ)**

**Setting the Scene**

The theme for ‘Together 23’ is *Wholly Holy*. As we gather to worship, fellowship, pray and deepen our understanding of who we are in the light of our holy God, during the next few days we use the daily themes from the event to help us as we pray.

**Thursday 13 July**

‘But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy’ (1 Peter 1:15-16 *NLT*).

God is holy, and all of creation – including you! – is charged with the holiness of God. In fact, we are all a reflection of God’s glory (*imago dei*). Lord, help me to see you reflected in me today. I offer you all that I do this day, as an act of worship to you. Amen.

**Friday 14 July** **– ‘Holy God, holy people’**

Holiness is not something you can generate yourself. Instead, it comes from a transformational relationship with our holy God, and it affects everything you do – body, mind and spirit. God continually calls you to turn from your sin (the deliberate and wilful subversion of the holy) and ‘be holy’. Father, help me to be wholly holy today. Amen.

**Saturday 15 July – ‘Encountering the Holy’**

‘Earth’s crammed with Heaven, and every common bush afire with God. But only he who sees takes off his shoes; The rest sit round and pluck blackberries’ (Elizabeth Barrett Browning). We can meet God in holy moments and holy places if only we would open our eyes to see God at work. Jesus, open the eyes of my heart to encounter you in the most unusual of places today. Amen.

**Sunday 16 July – ‘Blazing with holiness’**

You have been sent into the world as a holy agent of the Kingdom of God! Your corps/centre is a visible community of holiness, waiting for the day when Christ will return and all of creation will be restored and made wholly holy. Spirit, I praise you that I can be a part of God’s story for creation. Help me to blaze brightly with holy fire today. Amen.

**Monday 17 July**

Lord, I surrender myself to you and ask that you would pull me out of whatever is keeping me distant from you and from your creation. Shape me wholly into the holy person you want me to be. I pray for our newly commissioned lieutenants as they begin a new part of their journey with you, and everyone who experience something of Together 23. Live in them and move in them by the power of your Spirit. Amen.

**Change Focus**

**Major Gillian Miller (Prayer Network)**

**Tuesday 18 July – Ready for change**

Father God, I offer myself to you again, asking you to change my heart. Take away all unkind thoughts, any critical spirit that has grown in my life and all my fears and doubts. Fill me with compassion, empathy, understanding and love for the world where I live and for the people with whom I interact. I am ready to change. Do it, Lord. Amen.

**Wednesday 19 July – Unofficered corps and centres**

O Lord, we are so aware of the need for more leaders in your Church. We bring to you those places who find themselves without an officer leader. As your lay people undertake more responsibility and are asked to do new things, we pray for grace as changes are made. May the changes bring about transformation in the fellowship and prove to be team-building and fruitful for your Kingdom. Amen.

**Thursday 20 July - New appointments**

Dear Lord, as many Salvation Army leaders officially take up new appointments today, we pray that each one will be bold and courageous as they undertake this new period of ministry and mission. O Lord, strengthen your people so that we all may stand firm in the battle against the darkness and bring your transforming light into the places and the people that still need you. Amen.

**Friday 21 July - Education**

Holy One, we bring to you all who work in education. We pray that the positive contribution each one has made to the lives of the students under their care will be blessed and the seeds sown will bear fruit. Give our education teams time for renewal and refreshment over the summer and bring them back full of new energy ready for the year ahead. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

**Saturday 22 July – End-of-term excitement and anxiety**

Loving Lord, we bring to you students who are facing the prospect of new schools, colleges and universities next term. We pray for a calmness of mind and heart. We claim for each one the knowledge that they are unique human beings with individual personalities and dreams. May they know the encouragement of family and friends. Thank you, Lord, Amen.

**Sunday 23 July - Welcome Sunday**

Father God, we thank you for the willingness of your servants to move to new ministries and new communities. We praise you for your people who are ready to embrace and support new leaders. Pour out the blessing of your Spirit today on all who are working with you on the new thing you are doing. May today be one of encouragement and joy. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

**Malachi Place Focus**

**Major Ruth Gray (Ilford Corps)**

**Setting the Scene**

In 2015, five-year-old Malachi donated £5 of his tooth fairy money to The Salvation Army so that they could help those experiencing homelessness in Ilford. This simple act turned into a much bigger dream, and five years later a £5 million investment called Malachi Place opened up, accommodating 42 people. This week’s prayers give insight into the transformational reality of that simple act.

**Monday 24 July**

Dear God, help us to see today where you are already working and show us how to join in. £5 began a vision that became the Malachi Project. Like the boy and his lunch in the Gospel story, help us to realise that however little we have, when placed in the hands of Jesus anything is possible and nothing impossible. Amen.

**Tuesday 25 July**

Dear God, today we pray for anyone who is sleeping on the streets in a land of plenty. Our prayer is that they will meet significant people who can open doors to enable them to find a suitable alternative. Lord, may we, The Salvation Army, stand in the gap for anyone who needs it today and fulfil our destiny and calling. Amen.

**Wednesday 26 July**

Dear God, thank you that 42 people have a bed for the night at Malachi Place. We give thanks for the numerous others who have been rehoused through this initiative. May lives continue to be transformed as we, The Salvation Army, continue to offer hope in places of darkness. Amen.

**Thursday 27 July**

Dear God, transformation comes in many sizes, whether through a lonely person’s smile as someone says ‘hello’, or as keys to accommodation in the hand of someone who was sleeping rough. We believe in transformation and we know that you can transform. Help us to be agents of transformation, as we share the grace and love of God with those we meet every day. Amen.

**Friday 28 July**

Dear God, thank you for the engagement we have with families in our communities. In times of a high cost of living, thank you that you provide the resources we need to feed the hungry. Through the transformation of people’s lives, we see a glimpse of the vision of the Kingdom of God and how a small act of kindness really can change the world. Amen.

**Enabled Summer School Focus**

**Chris Stringer (Learning Disability Inclusion, THQ)**

**Context**

The Enabled Summer School is a weeklong event for people with disabilities. The participants have the opportunity to be included in activities such as music, drama, dance, craft and sport.

**Saturday 29 July**

Today is the first day of the final Enabled Summer School to be held at the National Star College in Cheltenham, who no longer have enough accommodation to be able to host us. Pray for Enabled members and supporters who are travelling from around the territory to gather at Cheltenham.

**Sunday 30 July**

The theme for this year’s Enabled Summer School is ‘People of Power’. Participants will be reminded, whoever we are, that we were created in the image of God, knit together by him in the womb, and that he has plans for us. Pray that people’s gifts, skills, qualities and talents will be celebrated today.

**Monday 31 July**

The focus of the fellowship groups today at the Enabled Summer School will be the story of David and how he overcame Goliath. Lord, at times we may be considered by some to be of no consequence and overlooked. However, thank you because with your power we can do and achieve great things. Amen.

**AUGUST – Jesus, Restorer**

*In August prayers will be centred on Jesus, the restorer.*

**Tuesday 1 August**

Today some of the Enabled participants will visit the Cotswold Wildlife Park, while others will go to Bath or Swindon, perhaps for the Steam Museum or outlet village. Pray for everyone as they consider God’s creation through seeing the animals or enjoying architecture or machinery whilst sharing in a time of relaxation together.

**Wednesday 2 August**

Today’s Enabled fellowship groups consider the conversion of Saul. God, thank you because you can reach out and transform anybody regardless of who they are. Please use our gifts and skills to further your Kingdom. Amen.

**Thursday 3 August**

Catherine Booth is the focus of today’s Enabled fellowship groups. She was a spiritual leader and effective speaker who advanced the role of women in Church life. Lord, help us to faithfully follow your direction and trust that the results can be way beyond our expectations. Amen.

**Friday 4 August**

Pray for Enabled participants today as they showcase the skills they have learnt throughout the week as well as enjoying a time of fellowship with family and friends.

**Saturday 5 August**

Lord, as Enabled participants leave the National Star College campus for the final time, we give thanks to the many years of friendship and fellowship that they have enjoyed in Cheltenham. We pray for the next chapter as a new venue and different activities are explored for 2024. Amen.

**Family Tracing Focus**

**Karen Wallace (Family Tracing Service, THQ)**

**Context**

The Family Tracing Service helps to restore and sustain family relationships by locating relatives who have lost contact with each other, either recently or in the past. Of applications accepted, there is an 89% success rate, averaging at more than eight people being reunited every working day.​

**Sunday 6 August – Fathers**

‘And he (Jesus) said, “Abba Father, all things are possible for you …’” (Mark 14:36 *NKJV*).

Pray for fathers who seek first or renewed connection with their children. Pray that where there may have been injustice and strife, God will restore them to one another, with acceptance accompanied by the joy of reconciliation.

**Monday 7** **August – Mothers**

‘Honour your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you’ (Exodus 20:12).

Pray for mothers who yearn to be once more in relationship with their children. Pray that where there is pain and distress from separation, the day will come when they can know healing and rejoicing because of their constant and outreaching love.

**Tuesday 8 August – Brothers and sisters**

‘Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good’ (Romans 12:9).

Pray for brothers and sisters with broken relationships. Pray that where pride reigns, the day will come when sibling love will be restored within their common bond. Pray that in circumstances where they were taken from each other, they will find growing forgiveness towards others and love in their hearts for one another.

**Wednesday 9 August – Grandparents and grandchildren**

‘“Don’t be afraid,” David said to him, “for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table”’ (2 Samuel 9:7).

Pray for the grandparents separated from their grandchildren through circumstance, spite or fear. Lord, we ask that you fill their hearts with peace and rest in you. Give them the gentle courage to go forward towards the restoration of this special connection. Amen.

**Thursday 10 August – Children**

‘For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made’ (Psalm 139:13).

Pray for the many children, including those now grown, who earnestly seek reconciliation with their father or mother. Pray also for those who, perhaps in the recent discovery of their true parenthood, live with an overwhelming need to experience their blood-identity, to find and know the one from whom they came, whilst still loving those who care so deeply for them. Keep them strong, Lord, we pray. Amen.

**Friday 11 August – Family**

Lord, thank you for the gift and bond of family, whether blood related or joined together by circumstances. Continue to bless the work of the Family Tracing Service in this territory, specifically team members Lorraine, Grace, Billy and Karen, and for colleagues in other territories who are also committed to seeking justice and reconciliation for separated families. Amen.

**Saturday 12 August - Restoration and reconciliation**

‘Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation’ (2 Corinthians 5:18 *NASB*).

Pray that the need seen in the Family Tracing Service for human love and acceptance will help the team to seek more of God’s love and gracious salvation. Thank you, Lord, because Jesus is the only One who can restore us to our Father, and give peace to our hearts for the rest of time. Amen.

**Jesus, Restorer Focus**

**Prayer Network**

**Sunday 13 August**

‘Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me’ (Psalm 51:12). Lord, your restoring power comes in many forms and brings restoration to so many areas of life. Today, would you restore the joy of our first love, filling us afresh with your Spirit. Amen.

**Monday 14 August**

‘“But I will restore you to health and heal your wounds,” declares the Lord’ (Jeremiah 30:17).

Lord, we pray for those who are ill, those living with chronic pain or waiting to receive a diagnosis. May you restore them to health, according to your plan and purposes for their lives. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

**Tuesday 15 August**

‘After Job had prayed for his friends, the Lord restored his fortunes …’(Job 42:10).

Lord, so many people are facing so much right now. I bring to you my friends and family who need to know your presence or your direction, or need new open doors to step into. Go before them and make a way. Amen.

**Wednesday 16 August**

‘Come, let us return to the Lord’ (Hosea 6:1).

Lord, I pray that you would restore to yourself people who once knew you but have turned away from you, and those who have still not encountered your loving presence. May they find all they need in your outstretched arms. Amen.

**Thursday 17 August**

‘The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it’ (Psalm 24:1).

Lord, humanity is slowly destroying your creation. We pray that you would give us wisdom in looking after it. Help us to be agents of restoration and not destruction. Restore all creation to yourself, we cry. Amen.

**Friday 18 August**

‘The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full’ (John 10:10).

Lord, there are so many distractions that come to rob us of our peace. Restore life where it has seeped away, restore minds that are tormented, restore the fullness of your presence. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

**Saturday 19 August**

‘…but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength’ (Isaiah 40:31).

Lord, restore our hopes and dreams. Restore our faith in your promises. Restore our tired bodies and minds. Restore hearts of gratitude. We praise you because you are the restorer of all things. Amen.

**Neighbourhood Focus**

**Prayer Network**

**Context**

If you are able to do so, you may want to prayer walk your area each day, praying for the different aspects of your community highlighted in the daily prayers.

**Sunday 20 August**

Lord, I pray for my street. As I see or visualise each house around me, I pray for the people that live there: for each family unit, couple, child or teenager, elderly person or those living alone. You know what they need right now. Give me an opportunity to share the love of Jesus with them. Amen.

**Monday 21 August**

Lord, I pray for each commercial establishment around me. As I see or visualise each shop, office, supermarket, gym, hairdresser or restaurant, I pray for the people that work in there. I pray for their finances too, in these difficult times. Sustain each person, I pray. Amen.

**Tuesday 22 August**

Lord, I pray for areas around me that are struggling with violence. As I see or visualise each police station or people walking by with fear in their eyes, I pray for peace. Be especially close to the families of the countless lives lost on our streets due to gun or knife violence. Fill these areas with your presence, Lord. Amen.

**Wednesday 23 August**

Lord, I pray for places of education around me. As I see or visualise each school, nursery, college, library … I pray for the teachers and employees that work there. Give them wisdom and strength for each day. Be with the pupils too, from the youngest to the oldest. Help them in their learning and interaction with those around them. Bless them today. Amen.

**Thursday 24 August**

Lord, I pray for health facilities around me. As I see or visualise each surgery, hospital, pharmacy, dentist or clinic, I pray for all the professionals that work in them. Give them insight and stamina. Thank you for their dedication. I pray, too, for those who are sick and their relatives and friends who sustain them. Come close to them today. Amen.

**Friday 25 August**

Lord, I pray for those around me who get people to and from appointments. As I see or visualise bus, taxi, train, tram or underground drivers and pilots or sea captains, I thank you for their service. Give them strength for the long days. I pray, too, for the passengers and all their different travel circumstances. Look after them, Lord. Amen.

**Saturday 26 August**

Lord, I pray for those around me with different faiths and from different countries and cultures. As I see or visualise each person, I thank you for creating us all in a special and unique way. Help me to seek to understand the things I do not know and to love my neighbours as I love myself. Amen.

**World Focus**

**Stephanie Chagas-Bijl (THQ)**

**Sunday 27 August – Restore peace**

‘The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace’ (Psalm 29:11).

Lord, there is so much fighting across the earth – wars, civil unrest and other conflicts brewing. Men die in vain, women and children are displaced, so many families ripped apart. We echo the psalmist’s plea: give strength and bring peace, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

**Monday** **28 August – Restore hope**

‘By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion …’ (Psalm 137:1).

The Israelites were exiled and felt hopeless; they saw no way out of their situation. Lord, millions of people are displaced across the world today, longing to return home. Restore their hope in the places in which they find themselves and raise up people to support them and advocate for them in their new land. May they know you are by their side. Amen.

**Tuesday 29 August – Restore love**

‘Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud’ (1 Corinthians 13:4).

Lord, we pray for those in positions of power all over the world. Holy Spirit, ignite in them compassion for their people, so that their leadership may be an example of love in action, and not one of personal gain. Amen.

**Wednesday 30 August – Restore trust**

‘Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding’ (Proverbs 3:5).

Lord, we know that you are good, and sovereign above all that is going on in our world. Provide for those struggling financially, bring healing to the sick and comfort to those in despair. God of the nations, we put our trust in you. Amen.

**Thursday 31 August – Restore faith**

Lord, I pray for your Church across the world. May we, as your people, be a powerful witness to those around us. Bless the communities that are seeking to bring about transformation, bless the voices that are speaking out with the oppressed and marginalised, and increase our faith for greater things when hopelessness prevails. We ask this in the powerful name of Jesus. Amen.

**SEPTEMBER – Jesus, Companion**

*In September we will be centring our prayers and themes on Jesus, companion.*

**Early Years Focus**

**Andrea Stevens (Early Years Operations, THQ)**

**Friday 1 September**

As we come to the end of the holidays, for some parents the summer may have been a stressful time with the change in routine, arguments and financial pressures. In Matthew 5:9 Jesus says: ‘Blessed are the peacemakers.’ Pray that parents and carers would be encouraged today.

**Saturday 2 September**

Psalm 37:7 says: ‘Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him.’ Patience is hard when you are excited and waiting for things to happen. Lord, I pray for peace and patience for little ones who can’t always understand the ins and outs of what is going on around them. Amen.

**Sunday 3 September**

Sunday is often referred to as the day of rest. For those with young children, however, it may not feel like this! Lord, we pray for exhausted families who may feel there is no end to the ongoing business of life and never-ending washing, feeding and caring responsibilities. May the church be a place where the noise and chaos of family life are welcomed. Amen.

**Monday 4 September**

For some children, school has already restarted, while others will be returning to new childcare provisions and educational settings. This will bring a lot of emotions to children and carers alike. Psalm 127:3 (*CEV*) says: ‘Children are a blessing and gift from the Lord.’ As adults, we have the privilege and responsibility to care for them. Pray for the protection and safety of the children around us. May they live the full and abundant life God desires for them.

**Tuesday 5 September**

‘Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God’ (Philippians 4:6). Times of transition are ongoing throughout our life: a new baby, a new job, children leaving for university. Pray today for peace and smooth transitions in the lives of people who you know are needing it right now.

**Wednesday 6 September**

‘Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant’ (1 Corinthians 13:4 *NRSV*). Spend time today loving yourself. Give yourself permission for self-care, whether it be a walk in nature, a phone call with a friend to arrange a meet up or a cup of tea away from your phone. The better we look after ourselves, the better we can look after others.

**Thursday 7 September**

Pray for all the children and families who access The Salvation Army through early years settings, contact centres, debt advice services, young people’s programmes, food banks and in many other ways. Lord, we pray that families who find life hard at the moment will reach out for support and know that help is available. Although it may not feel like it at times, may they know they are loved by you. Amen.

**Heart Focus**

**Deborah Tubby (Community Manager, Harwich Corps)**

**Setting the Scene**

Up and down the territory there are ever-increasing spaces like the Heart, a drop-in at Harwich Corps. There the community can have a cup of tea, get advice from various agencies and find support via food parcels and surplus bakery.

**Friday 8 September - Names**

‘I have summoned you by name; you are mine’ (Isaiah 43:1). Jesus, thank you that you have such a heart for all of us and that you know us personally by name. Thank you that through Heart, your love can be shown to those who attend and for the fact that they are named individually. Help us to show your companionship to people as we journey with them. Amen.

**Saturday 9 September** **- Hospitality**

‘For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in’ (Matthew 25:35). Jesus, thank you that you are a good host. Thank you for hospitality that is shared at Heart, and through corps and centres across the territory and all around the world in your name. Amen.

**Sunday 10 September - Love**

Jesus, thank you that you love us completely. Help us to show that love to others.

‘You say I am loved when I can’t feel a thing. You say I am strong when I think I am weak. You say I am held when I am falling short. When I don’t belong, you say I am yours.’ (Lauren Daigle, ‘You Say’)

**Monday 11 September - Rescue**

‘I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry’ (Psalm 40:1). Jesus, thank you that through Heart people can have a new start. Continue to lift people ‘out of the slimy pit’ (v2) through the work of The Salvation Army in Harwich and across the territory. You are the rock on which people can stand. Amen.

**Tuesday 12 September** **- Challenge**

Jesus, thank you that although you love us as we are, you love us too much to leave us there. Thank you that you have a purpose and a plan for us and that means us being challenged to move forward. Thank you that Heart can enable people to be supported to make a positive difference. Amen.

**Jesus, Companion Focus**

**Captain Claire Durrant (Wrexham Corps)**

**Wednesday 13 September** **- Matthew 11:29**

Lord Jesus, help us remember that life in all its fullness can only be experienced when we live intimately in relationship with you. Lead us into a right appreciation of how we should live out what we believe, in the here and now. Amen.

**Thursday 14 September - Matthew 18:20**

Loving Lord, in the moments when we feel far from you, help us to remember that your presence will always be visceral when we gather with other believers. Lead us into a true understanding of our relationships with others, in light of our relationship with you. Amen.

**Friday 15 September - Matthew 28:20**

Eternal Saviour, when we are tempted to doubt you or disbelieve Scripture, help us comprehend the limitless nature of your promises. Lead us to an accurate perspective of ourselves and each other as your beloved creations, both on earth now, and in Heaven for ever. Amen.

**Saturday 16 September - Luke 24:13-35**

Almighty One, help us to remember that there is no road that we walk without you with us. Give us a desire to speak to you and, more importantly, to listen to what you want to teach us. Lead us into a deeper, more intimate, relationship with you so that we can instantly recognise your words and deeds in our day-to-day lives. Amen.

**Sunday 17 September – John 14**

Gracious Friend, thank you for revealing the truth of the Trinity to us. In relationship with you we experience the love of the Father, the compassion of the Son and the transformation of the Holy Spirit. Lead us into a fuller assurance of what being followers of Jesus should mean for those around us. Amen.

**Monday 18 September - John 15**

Living Lord, help us remember that there is no way for human beings to have true life apart from being in relationship with you. Lead us into a more vibrant experience of Kingdom life as we endeavour to remain in you and bear fruit for your glory. Amen.

**Tuesday 19 September – Revelation 3:20**

Compassionate Messiah, as we go about our busy day-to-day activities, help us to remember that you are waiting for us to invite you into what we are doing. Lead us into a proper understanding of your desire to be asked into every part of our lives. Amen.

**Champions of the Mission Focus**

**Second-year Cadets (William Booth College)**

**Wednesday 20 September**

Lord, we pray for the communities and people, corps and friends that have supported and prepared the Champions of the Mission and brought them to this point. We pray that the absence of the cadets from their sending corps will be filled and that you will continue to raise up leaders in The Salvation Army. Amen. (Cadet Rachel Frost)

**Thursday 21 September**

Lord, we pray that you would come alongside the new cadets at William Booth College, especially those travelling far from loved ones. May they feel God’s presence as they embark on this new season. Amen. Pray over them the words from Isaiah 41:10 (*NKJV*): ‘Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God.’ (Cadet Beth Perkins)

**Friday 22 September**

Heavenly Father, I praise you for being good and loving. Lord Jesus, thank you that you have called others to serve you, and thank you for every person who has said ‘yes’ to your call, including all the cadets. Bless them and fill them with the Holy Spirit. I pray that they will get even closer to you. May they have a blessed time at William Booth College and beyond. Amen. (Cadet Imrich Carny)

**Saturday 23 September**

Dear God, we want to thank you for the diverse community that is William Booth College. We pray for all those who enter the doors each day. May they witness your ‘God colours’ through people’s interactions with one another. Fill us with your Spirit and give us eyes to see you at work every day. Amen. (Cadet Luke Furlong)

**Sunday 24 September**

Heavenly Father, we praise you because you are the God of new things. You are within all the changes that surround us, and we know we can find peace and safety in you. Thank you for going before us, for standing behind us and surrounding us with your presence. We know you are always by our side. Amen. (Cadet Anastasia Layton)

**Financial Stewardship Focus**

**Major Richard Watters (Finance Secretary, THQ)**

**Monday 25 September - It all belongs to God**

Psalm 24:1 reminds us that everything we have, each gift and possession, is from God and belongs to God. The first [Fiscal Stewardship Principle](https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/about-us/policies/fiscal-stewardship-principles) of the territory states that ‘As stewards of God’s resources we do not have any entitlement, only responsibilities’. How does acknowledging this truth affect your attitude towards your ‘wealth’?

**Tuesday 26 September - The principle of first**

Read Exodus 13:1-2,12-14. We may not possess lambs and donkeys, but the principle of giving first to God is an important one for us. It takes faith to give the first, not knowing if there will be a second. What does it say about our love if we give only the leftovers? Is giving back to God a priority or an after-thought? Holy Spirit, speak to us in these moments of reflection.

**Wednesday 27 September - Use it wisely**

The parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30) tells of a master entrusting resources to his servants. They did not receive equally, but the expectation was that each would put to work what they had received. Once we’ve first given back to him, what does God want me to do with the remainder he has entrusted to me? Father God, direct me in my choices this day. Amen.

**Thursday 28 September - It’s a heart thing**

‘For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also’ (Matthew 6:21). It’s a constant battle – the conflict of interests; worldly gain promises security, significance, freedom, even happiness, but it’s an illusion. Only God can deliver the security of treasure in Heaven, the significance of being a child of the King and the freedom of truth and the fruit of the Spirit.

**Friday 29 September - It’s a trust thing**

‘Yes, the Lord is my Shepherd, I have all that I need’ (*SASB* 562). God already knows what you need and invites you to place your trust in him. When we trust God with tomorrow, it opens up avenues of contentment and generosity. Contentment and generosity are the weapons by which we defeat the spirit of mammon (the influence of material wealth). What worries can you hand over to God in prayer today?

**Saturday 30 September - It’s a joy thing**

‘Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver’ (2 Corinthians 9:7). Pray that God will lead you towards cheerful giving that demonstrates your love and faith in him.