



Church at Home

Sunday 17th January 2021

Sunday worship on is on  YouTube

The easiest way to find the link to the YouTube meeting each Sunday is to find the link on the Corps web page. Type.....

www.salvationarmy.org.uk/ramsgate and select **Church on YouTube**

You can also find us by searching on YouTube and on the Ramsgate Facebook page.

But we want to still “meet together” and share our thoughts and prayers and testimonies. It will give a chance to share how God has spoken to us during the meeting – and allow us to encourage each other.

Sunday 17 th 10 am	Ramsgate Church at Home (YouTube)
Sunday 17 th 11.15 am	ZOOM fellowship
Sunday 17 th 12 noon	ZOOM Youth Group
Sunday 17 th 4.30 pm	ZOOM Children’s Church Kids Club (up to 11 years)
Tuesday 19 th 7pm	ZOOM Bible study
Wednesday 20 th 7pm	Zoom DHQ “In Conversation” – See next page for access details

Ramsgate ZOOM 8651865167

If you have no internet that we are providing each week's service on a DVD which we will deliver to you.



Please let us know if you **do not want** a DVD each week.

Also tell us if you **need help** watching the DVDs we are sending.



There is a full day of activities on Fortress Radio.

<https://www.fortressradio.online/listen-now.html>

Songs of Praise Sunday 17th January 12.25pm

Faith in Action

Singer Brenda Edwards presents her first Songs of Praise. She is in east London, joining the Bonny Downs Baptists on their Sunday 'walking church'.



The South East Division
"in conversation"
Wednesday 20 January 2021 – 7:30pm
Zoom meeting id: 827 0502 7154
Passcode: 881446

"It's time to sing your song again!"

Shaping together mission possibilities for 2021

THE SALVATION ARMY

A Christian Church and registered charity - No. 214779 and in Scotland SC009359

The banner features silhouettes of people in conversation and colorful speech bubbles. A red Salvation Army logo is in the bottom right corner.

Father, You are our ever-faithful and loving God. You care for us without exception. You support us without fail. When anxious thoughts plague us You cheer us up with Your comforting presence. When doubts and weakness unsettle us, You uphold us with Your unfailing love. Constantly remind us of Your steadfast love and grant us the determination to persevere through difficulties, for Your love never ceases and Your help never fails. Amen.

Father, Your word is trustworthy and worthy of all praise. Your word is true and Your promises are unbreakable. Help us keep and foster these truths that we may confidently persevere through struggles with strength from Your promises and assurances. Steer us away from doubts and a tendency to impatiently take charge of things. Keep us from relying on mere human understanding and capabilities.

Teach us to focus on You and find full confidence in You. When difficulties strike fear in our hearts, remind us that we can come to You for help. We need not be afraid for there is nothing any mere human can do to us. We can trust in You always. When difficulties arise, teach us to continually depend on You. When challenges ahead seem overwhelming, carry us through by Your grace. Amen.

Maggie is available with the constant prayer line where you can call or text for prayer. You can contact her on 07840 753 603

Daily Hope offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line.



Birthdays

Paula Wellard	22-Jan
Muriel Beagley	23-Jan

Prayers please for

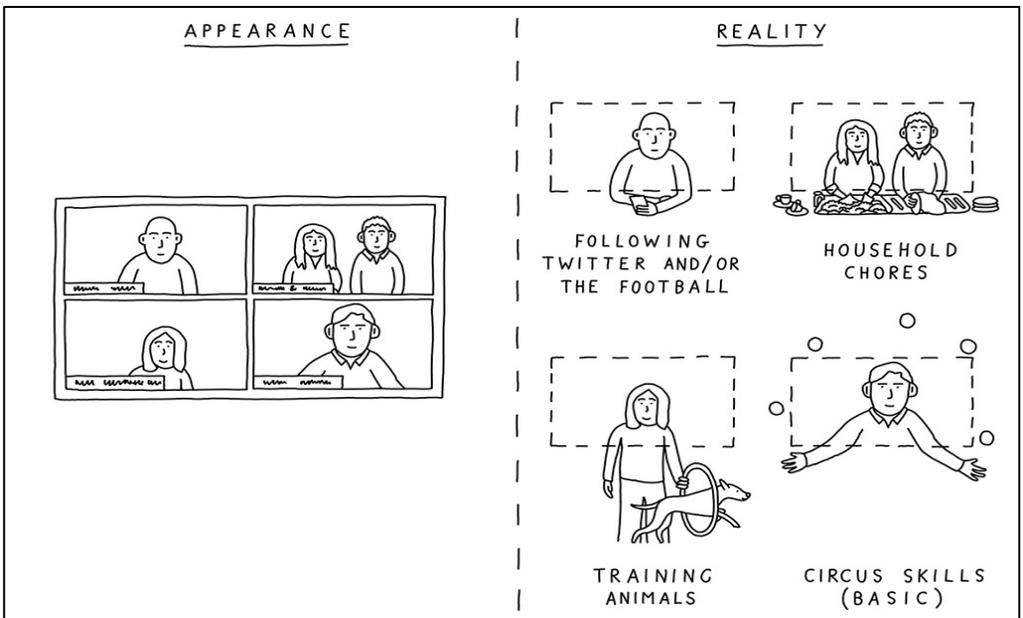
For the family and friends of Liz Harden as they prepare for her funeral. We continue to pray for **Muriel** recovering at home, for **Inga**, for **Grant** who will need further treatment at Kings Hospital in London. For **Al**, and **David** also awaiting surgery. Pray this will come soon. **Kate** recovering at home from COVID-19. **Paul**, son of Hazel who continues his chemotherapy;— and for **Archie** Lisa and Scott. We thank God for the recent medical appointment and ask that this will now lead to a health solution. Amen

*Thank
you*



Nigel, Claire and Leah say thank you for your love and prayers and the cards. It has been a great help knowing Liz was loved so much.
Nigel

Is this what happens during ZOOM?



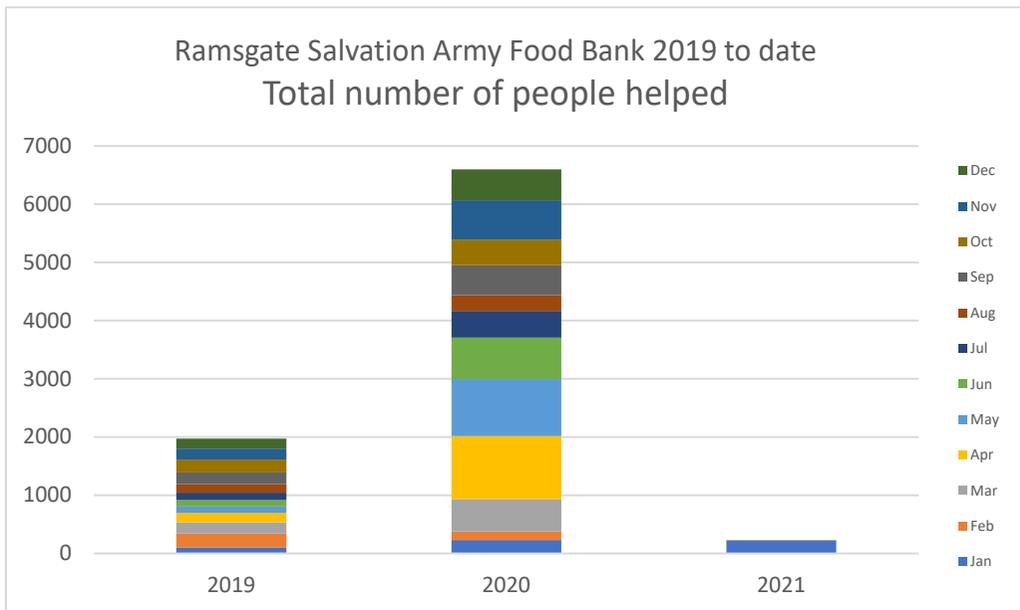
(From the Church Times – Thanks to artist Dave Walker)

Food Bank.

During 2020 we often gave updates on the work of the food bank. We have not done that recently although it is still very much needed and because of the requirement to reduce the numbers of volunteers – very busy for the few we are allowing in the hall.

A major piece of work was undertaken by Emma last year – to enter the data held on paper forms onto a spreadsheet. Then we could easily understand the needs, our activity, and the value of the food we were distributing. We had been asked by Thanet Council to share some of this information so they understand the needs of our community better and can provide more effective support.

It's only now that we're able to fully use the data and I want to share just a few facts. In April and May of 2020 – our peak Covid time – we did as many parcels as the whole of 2019 put together. The demand on our food bank tripled year on year.





We calculate the average value of each food parcel we provide and multiply by the number of people we have helped. The value in 2020 was a staggering £100,167.

Whilst we spent a record amount of money buying food last year, a significant amount of it still comes from food donated by the public in the supermarkets, the unsold perishable food we collect each evening and food brought to the hall by members of the public (and of course many of our corps family too). We also benefitted from many lorry loads donated by Salvation Army South Eastern region food hub in Tonbridge Wells.

As you can imagine this is a significant operation which involves many people. Those receiving the requests by email, Facebook, text and phone and adding the requests to our delivery sheets. Those who, seven days a week, collect the food. Those who unload van and lorries, sort the food and make the parcels. Those who greet the clients and provide the parcels on the door – and those who collect the parcels and deliver them. Before March 2020 we had NEVER delivered a food parcel (well I cannot remember every arranging a delivery). Since Covid we have delivered 876 parcels to people across the

area. The impact this has had for our ministry has been extraordinary. Our work has been recognised by the local media (we were recognised in the 2020 Thanet Heroes) and a Civic award from the Ramsgate Society will be given by the Mayor when we are allowed to gather again. The cooperation between the food banks across Thanet has been wonderful. We each share what we have in surplus with another bank in need. We ZOOM meet every month to share news and successes. The most recent innovation is that we are providing vouchers for our clients to spend in the newly opened Our Kitchen Food Shops.



This is a brilliant scheme that empowers people to access fresh food for themselves at very low cost. We are providing vouchers for people to spend in the shop with the hope that it will encourage clients to use the shop more, obtain more healthy food and reduce their need to come to us. If you have been following the news on the school meals this week you will understand why I am such a fan.

We have a remarkable relationship with Ramsgate Town Council. Their staff have been so helpful and continue to assist us – on almost a daily basis. These people have become part of our corps family – doing as we will hear the General implore later on – the work we are known for.

The volunteers led by Jacqueline have been invaluable. A cliché to write that we could not have done it without them – yet utterly true. During 2020 we had over 75 helpers. In this most recent lock- down we are relying on a core team of 10. Thanks to them – and thanks to our amazing God who put His church in a place where it can serve those in need.

What comes next? The significance of this question will come later. It must be to allow us to spend more time – when Covid permits- with the clients and witness the “why” of “what” we do. Whenever you did it for them, you did it for Me. (Matthew 25.40)

From Major John
Where can we put our trust?

It seems that many were looking forward to leaving 2020 behind and to the beginning of a New Year, and hopefully better things. Sadly with the new strain of the virus and further lockdown, plus the dark and dismal days, we seem to be in the same place again. With the vaccine now being rolled out we have to believe for better times to come, but where can we find hope and the faith to get through these days?

The verse of a hymn has been on my mind recently which says...

Yet in the maddening maze of things,
And tossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed trust my spirit clings,
I know that God is good!

Psalm 106 and 107 both begin by underscoring this

Give thanks to the Lord, **for he is good**; his love endures forever.

A prayer chorus (783 SASB) we often used might also bring some consolation and comfort...

Prayer gently lifts me to highest Heaven,
From earth's confusion to Jesus' breast;
My sin and weakness, my doubt and sorrow,
Are lost forever in sweetest rest.
Amen

Time to Smile

The vicar was one of a coach party returning from a church outing when, unfortunately, the coach was in an accident. Several people were injured and were taken to hospital. Later two ambulance men were discussing the incident. 'Lucky there were no serious injuries' one remarked. The other replied 'Ah , but you didn't see the guy with the black shirt and stiff white collar. We had a terrible job getting his head the right way round again!'

Mother: Come on son, it's getting late. You must get up and get to church!

Son: But I don't want to go.

Mother: Give me two good reasons why you shouldn't go.

Son: First, I don't like the people and second, they don't like me.

Mother: Never mind, it's late, now get up and go to church!

Son: You give me two reasons why I should go.

Mother: First, you are fifty years old, and second you are the vicar.

Quiz

- 1.Canterbury stands on which river?
- 2.Which former colony was called the jewel in Queen Victoria's crown?
- 3.Who was given Blenheim Palace as a reward for his military service?
- 4.What was King Charles 11's nickname?
- 5.Who was the presenter of 'Countdown' when it was first televised?

World Tour

- 1.Which Cape was originally called the Cape of Storms?
- 2.What is the principal island of Japan?
- 3.Las Palmas is in which Island group?
- 4.Where is there a Parliament called the Knesset?
- 5.Which two countries does the Khyber Pass separate?

Anagrams. Old Testament Books.

USED OX THREES RICH CLONES I JAM HERE SEE SIGN

Anagrams
EXODUS ESTHER CHRONICLES JEREMIAH GENESIS

World Tour
1.Cape of Good Hope 2.Honshu 3.Canaries 4.Israel
5.Pakistan and Afghanistan

Quiz
1.Great Stour 2.India 3.Duke of Marlborough 4.The Merry
Monarch 5.Richard Whiteley

You Say... God Says...

You Say

God Says

Bible Verses

I can't figure it out.

I will direct your steps.

Proverbs 3:5-6

I'm too tired.

I will give you rest.

Matthew 11:28-30

It's impossible.

All things are possible.

Luke 18:27

Nobody loves me.

I love you.

John 3:16

I can't forgive myself.

I forgive you.

Romans 8:1

It's not worth it.

It will be worth it.

Romans 8:28

I'm not smart enough.

I will give you wisdom.

I Corinthians 1:30

I'm not able.

I am able.

II Corinthians 9:8

I can't go on.

My grace is sufficient.

II Corinthians 12:9

I can't do it.

You can do all things.

Philippians 4:13

I can't manage.

I will supply all you needs.

Philippians 4:19

I'm afraid.

I have not given you fear.

II Timothy 1:7

I feel all alone.

I will never leave you.

Hebrews 13:5



Maybe in the news over the weekend you will hear mention of Blue Monday. Here is a thought.

Sadly, a lot of people will be affected by this date and there are some good reasons why they might find themselves being even more distressed than other days.

Blue Monday was “discovered” by a Cardiff University scientist using this formula

$$\frac{(C \times R \times ZZ)}{((Tt + D) \times St)} + (P \times Pr) > 400$$

Goodness me..... This includes hours of day light (D) , amount of debt (ZZ), weather (C.), days since Christmas, (R) how well we are doing with our new year’s resolutions (P) , how motivated we feel and (Tt) how hopeless things are. (St)

And somehow when all the values are put into the formula - the date of Monday 18th January pops out as the day in 2021 when we will feel most gloomy.

If you need a reason for why you are feeling especially sad at the moment, then you’d better not read the next part.

It’s actually all nonsense. It was invented by a travel company to encourage people to solve their problems by booking a summer holiday. Instead of dark,

cold, rainy days – imagine you are on a sun-drenched beach looking out to an azure sea without a trouble in the world.

But what has happened is that journalists across the nation have grabbed our attention by repeating it so often that we believe it must be true.

And as with many hoaxes there is enough truth in it to make it credible. Most of us do not like dark evenings, chilly weather, rain. We do get anxious when we think about the money we have spent over Christmas and the mounting bills. And as we mentioned last week, this is the time when we begin to fret that we have failed again in our new year resolutions. But you don't need to feel sad on Monday – just because there is some pseudoscience that says you should.

Rather, as we mentioned at bible study on Tuesday look at these words from Paul's letter to the Philippians

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

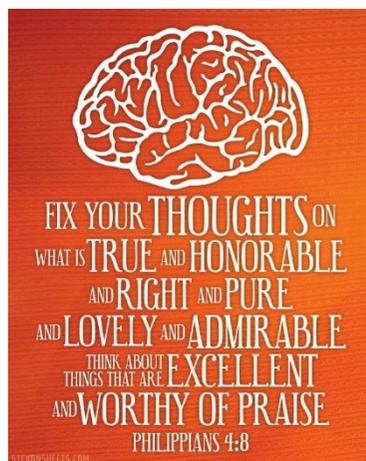
Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable— if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

And the God of peace will be with you.

Philippians 4:4-9



So if you hear someone talking about Blue Monday – do what Paul suggests.

Rejoice, say thanks to God, praise him and ask Him to help you with whatever you are facing. Don't think about Blue Monday – instead focus on what is good, lovely, happy and God's peace will be yours.

And pray for your family and friends that they might also see what is good about the day (Monday 18th) God has made – and be glad – and rejoice.

Sing number 793

The Lord is near; have no anxiety,
Make your requests known to God in prayer.
The Lord is near; have no anxiety,
Make your requests known to God in prayer.
Then the peace of God,
Which is beyond our understanding,
Will keep guard o'er your hearts and thoughts.

Then the peace of God,
Which is beyond our understanding,
Will keep guard o'er your hearts and thoughts.

Phil 4: 6-7 Adapted John Larsson



Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6

Worship at Home Sunday 17th January 2020

Call to Worship

'When you're still, you can feel the Master whisper to you.
Hold his hand, understand that he's always there for you.
When the way is cold and dark and you've lost your will,
Find a quiet place, breathe, and be still.
When you're still, you can refill all that daily life has taken.
You can share; he'll repair the troubles of the day.
There's no burden too great to leave with him,
Find a quiet place, breathe, and be still.
He, who put the stars in place; he knows your full life's plan!
He understood your needs before time began!
So be still, trust his will, relax in his love.
Glorify! Magnify! Worship Christ, Lord above.
If the way grows dark again; once more you've lost the will.
Find a quiet place, breathe, and be still.'

The message from General Brian Peddle

So what's next?

Central to my Christian experience is faith in a gospel that brings good news, confidence in Jesus, who is my Saviour, and certainty of what God has accomplished through Calvary and the fact that his work continues in the world.



At the beginning of this New Year, 2021, I confess my usual handshake and faith-filled 'Happy New Year' is marked by a slight hesitation. While I know God is faithful and present in the midst of every storm, people I know, people you know and, yes, people who are listening...are carrying a burdensome legacy from last year.

Some continue to experience hardship and continue to stand on the edge of uncertainty. Others step into 2021, very alone, vulnerable, exhausted, and filled with fear.

Hearing my own words, I admit they sound dismal, but it is important to acknowledge the storm that is sweeping the world.

In doing so, I remain steadfast and reaffirm:

my faith in the gospel,

my confidence in the Saviour

my awareness of what God has done and my belief that he has not finished his work yet.

So together we share challenges in these interesting days.

What does it mean to believe when we are blind to our future?

How are we to be bold in faith when chaos creates uncertainty?

And, yes, what does it mean to be 'calm in spirit' when the winds batter our frail humanity?

Song Number 391

Stand up and bless the Lord,
Ye people of his choice;
Stand up and bless the Lord your God
With heart and soul and voice.

Praise ye the Lord, hallelujah!

2 Though high above all praise,
Above all blessing high,
Who would not fear his holy name
And laud and magnify?

3 O for the living flame
From his own altar brought,

To touch our lips, our minds inspire,
And wing to Heaven our thought!

4 God is our strength and song,
And his salvation ours;
Then be his love in Christ proclaimed
With all our ransomed powers.

5 Stand up and bless the Lord,
The Lord your God adore;
Stand up and bless his glorious name
Henceforth for evermore.

James Montgomery (1771-1854)

Stay with me for a few moments and I will comment on these challenges, but first let me share a story.

Earlier in our officership while serving with another couple, we often took care of their four-year-old boy. It happened when Mum and Dad were busy, and usually it was for a few hours.

During these hours he would keep me, in particular, quite busy.

Then came a request for us to take him for a weekend...

I immediately went into planning mode: activities, games, TV, it was all on the schedule.

Well, nothing lasted long and too often I heard the words, 'Major Brian, **what's next?**'

He couldn't help it, he was bursting with anticipation, he was never fully captivated by what was happening but waiting for what was coming next.

Let me come back to the challenges...

My first word for you today is 'patience'.

If we look to Genesis 12:1-3 we catch a glimpse of the life of Abraham and Sarah.

They became familiar with the challenge of 'being blind to the future' and yet their active and unreserved belief in God secured for them a plaque in the Hall of Fame for Faith Followers!

It is an amazing story. God shows up and what followed was a call to go that was accompanied by

extreme testing on the journey. But it all happened under the umbrella of God's promised presence.

Sound familiar?

Abraham and Sarah stepped out giving us a stellar example of obedient faith.

Hebrews 11:1: Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

Friends, I don't pretend to know what lies ahead but I witness to the fact I know and I trust the one who does.

Song Number 768

Jesus, my strength, my hope,
On thee I cast my care,
With humble confidence look up,
And know thou hearest prayer.
Give me on thee to wait,
Till I can all things do,
On thee, almighty to create,
Almighty to renew.

2 I want a sober mind,
A self-renouncing will
That tramples down and casts behind
The baits of pleasing ill;
A soul inured to pain,
To hardship, grief and loss,
Bold to take up, firm to sustain,
The consecrated cross.

3 I want a godly fear,
A quick-discerning eye,
That looks to thee when sin is near,
And sees the tempter fly;
A spirit still prepared
And armed with jealous care,
For ever standing on its guard,
And watching unto prayer.

4 I rest upon thy Word;
The promise is for me;
My succour and salvation, Lord,
Shall surely come from thee.
But let me still abide,
Nor from my hope remove,
Till thou my patient spirit guide
Into thy perfect love.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

My second word: 'Perseverance.'

Let's look further into the Scriptures and let me take you to Numbers 27.

It is in this chapter we meet Moses and Joshua and if you know your Bible stories you will understand that their predicament was not so much about blindness, unable to see the way forward, but more about possessing boldness. Boldness in a time when the rains of chaos and uncertainty have been falling for years.

Moses had led the Israelites for some time.

We know of the dramatic escape from Egypt, we know of the repeated miracles, and we know of all God did for them.

But, at a certain point, both leader and people blinked and when they opened their eyes all they could see was giants and enemies and their boldness disappeared, prompting 40 years of wandering in a desert.

I admit I smile when I read this story. In part it is lovely that Moses, who had been mentoring Joshua, is ready to pass the leadership torch.

Look closer.

What a mess.

Still wandering, people still disgruntled and still a nation in the midst of chaos.

I likely would have said, 'find someone else'.

If you stay with this story, and read it all the way through, things change. Joshua would soon own the words, 'Be strong and courageous'.

Nothing across the river had changed...same giants, same enemies. He could not have known what the next months would hold for them. What created extreme boldness were words from the Almighty:

'I will give you the land...'You will be able to stand...'I will not forsake you...'Be strong and courageous.'

Again, sound familiar?

Here we are standing on the edge of this new year and most are saying, 'nothing is for sure.'

Hear his voice: 'I will not forsake you... be bold... be strong and courageous... get yourselves ready.'

And 'follow me.'

And so today I pray, Lord, give us an Army that is clear about its mission undaunted by uncertainty.

Let us be an Army who knows the battle is the Lord's.

Song Number 948

Be strong in the grace of the Lord,
Be noble and upright and true,
Be valiant for God and the right,
Live daily your duty to do.

Be strong! Be strong!
And God will your courage renew.
Be strong! Be strong!
And God will your courage renew.

2 Be strong in the grace of the Lord,
For wholehearted service prepare;
Be thoughtful for all who are weak
And hasten their burdens to share.

Be strong! Be strong!
Be eager to do and to dare.
Be strong! Be strong!
Be eager to do and to dare.

3 Be strong in the grace of the Lord,
Be armed with the power of his might;
Be daring when dangers abound,
Courageous and brave in the fight.

Be strong! Be strong!
And victory will be your delight.
Be strong! Be strong!
And victory will be your delight.

Walter Henry Windybank (1872-1952)

My third word: 'Possibilities.'

One more challenge. How do we possess a calm and certain spirit when we are confronted by our human fragility?

If this past year of a global pandemic has taught us at least one thing and that is that human fragility belongs to us all.

Would you with me reflect on the rollercoaster ride of the disciples.

In Matthew's gospel, chapter 28, where The Great Commission comes.

Can you imagine endless days strolling in the presence of Jesus?

Can you imagine days and days of miracles?

Then comes Jerusalem. Opposition takes the stage. You become an onlooker to a rigged trial. Then the worst possible outcome –crucifixion. if that were not enough, the tomb was empty!

Appearances of Jesus occurred and, finally, parting words from the Saviour, and a commission like no other!

I wonder if anyone asked them on Monday, 'How was your weekend?'

I have often heard the words, 'after all we have been through, now this'.

I am not wanting to put these words in the disciple's mouths but having read and re-read Matthew 28:16-20, I can almost hear the muffled words coming

'you want us to do what?'

Emotionally drained, tired, aware of their frail humanity, afraid, they receive a call from God that holds eternity in the balance for all humankind. Ordinary men and women responded to that call with obedient faith and, no, the uncertainties did not change, but they were changed and, in turn, they changed the world.

Does that sound familiar, as God calls us?

Our challenges will overwhelm us if we can't approach God with anticipation.

Salvationists, family: ask God, 'what's next?'

For you. For your family. For the Army.

Ask the question knowing that God is greater than pandemics, economic downturns and, yes, even death!

Ask him 'what's next? –the one who redeems the desert places and replenishes the soul, the one who heals the broken-hearted. Turn to a God who transcends the temporal, triumphs over the transitory, and the one who turns us by his grace toward things that are eternal.

I am inviting you to rely upon a God who hears our cry of suffering, who acts on our behalf and whose plan includes you. And I invite you today to know that plan is intact and on target.

And it is OK to say, 'God, what's next?' I pray we will be a people, a global Salvation Army that takes God at his word and even if we cannot see, even if our timidity gets the best of us and even if we are disturbed in our spirit, still we step out in faith, we move at his command, we speak in his name because, in the absence of clarity, there is confidence in a God who is sovereign.

So General, what's next?

Well, it is not new, but depending on your response, what's next is our responsibility to change the world.

Hear the Call to Mission...Be Ready, Be Engaged, Take Responsibility. Don't blink, don't take your eyes off him, not for a moment.

Salvation Army: hold fast to eternal values, don't become distracted. Turn towards the multitudes who need him, and win some for the Kingdom.

Rise up from an online church reality and bring Jesus into the community where you live. Cease your longings for a new normal. Only a focus on eternity will suffice, everything else will disappoint.

So today, with **patience**, with **perseverance** and with the idea that there are untold **possibilities**, step into this new year with confidence in a God who sees, who knows and who will provide.

Song Number 499

It is Jesus I need, it is Jesus indeed
Who can make it all possible in me;
Without Jesus I find I am so often blind
To the truth he is wanting me to see.

O Jesus, Jesus,
You are the one who can make my life complete.
O Jesus, my peace restore.
It's Jesus I need, Jesus indeed,
Jesus in me, more and more.

2 It is Jesus I need, it is Jesus indeed
Who will make my faith beautiful and bold;
And with Jesus in me I need no longer be
So afraid of what future days may hold.

Joy Webb

Dear Father, Your ways are beyond our comprehension and Your wisdom exceeds the utmost of our understanding. Allow us to fully surrender unto you, trusting in the path you have set us on. We may not fully understand our troubles, and those of others but we know that in Your immeasurable wisdom You have planned things perfectly and You have our best interests in mind. Allow us, I pray, to draw from Your wisdom that we may see things from Your perspective and be strengthened to continue pursuing Your will. Amen.

Lord, You are the very source of our faith and the One who brings it to ultimate perfection. You made this possible by suffering an unjust death and allowing Yourself to be shamed on the cross. You left the comfort of heaven so that You could be the very example of suffering and perseverance for us. As we face life's challenges and adversities, help us to learn from You and focus on what You did for us. Teach us to run life's appointed course for us with patient endurance. Amen.

Some reflection

We were very challenged by the General's word and feel it would be helpful to see how it might apply to our context.

So we start with that question. We are given permission to ask that question, indeed we are expected to ask that question

What's next for Ramsgate Salvation Army.

I expect you have been asking this question a lot as you sit at home. When we return what will it be like.

Well in one way we can tell you some of the things you can expect.

The chairs and carpets have been cleaned. There are new taps in all of the sinks so you don't burn yourself when washing your hands. There are guards on the door jambs so you won't catch your fingers. There is a disabled lock on the toilet door, and a lock on the cleaning chemical cupboard and extra shelves that have helped keep things tidy. There is a new copier in the office and some of the

shelves and cupboards have been moved into the adjoining room. There is the new door after the fire in 2019 and that dull passageway is fresh and welcoming. In the next few weeks we have plans to sort and tidy so that the hall is inviting and homely.

But I don't imagine that is what you mean?

OK, so what about our activities, when it is safe to return, will the programme be like it used to be. If you like coffee mornings, or listening to the band or lunch club , or Alpha or film nights, or Kidz club. Will there be social activities on Saturdays and teatime special on Sundays, will music practice still be on Wednesday evenings?

If we were together it would be fascinating to shout these out and ask you to raise your hands or cheer. The truth is it is not possible to say. Not least because we do not really know what returning safely will actually be like. It is hard to imagine that there will be a date in the diary and after that day we can all go wherever we like, and do whatever we want. Or maybe we can.

Or what about this. The new normal. You may have heard this term already and certainly it is being used more and more. A very local example is the place where Grant works. I remember talking to Grant as he sat at home next to his phone and computer. He explained that he was not expecting to go back to his office ever again. And in this week's paper I read – Saga call centre up for sale. An office that can accommodate 900 staff will never be used by Saga again. Grant was right. His new normal is to work from home. Not just for the pandemic – but for ever.

Is there a new normal for Ramsgate Salvation Army?

If you are listening to this at 10am on Sunday morning, sitting in your arm chair with a cup of tea in your hand and slippers on your feet you may well feel that is a nice way to be at church. Could this be your new normal?

So back to the question

What's next for Ramsgate Salvation Army

Will we continue to have such a demand for the food bank and other practical support. Will people still ask us to collect prescriptions? Will we still face an avalanche of donations from people of food, and clothes and almost everything else?

The last nine months have been so different in the ways we have operated. Will this remain or stop as suddenly as it started.

If you have been wrestling with these questions – and others - lets go back to how the General was leading us.

What is so clear is that he didn't go anywhere near these question. And of course the changes we have seen at Ramsgate will be replicated a thousand time over across the Army world. We have all adapted and evolved and done it at breath-taking speed. So, he is well aware that the Salvation Army in January 2021 is hardly recognisable compared with the Salvation Army of 2020.

So why didn't he ask us these questions? When will you open, what will you be doing, what night will you have timbrel practice?

Simply because that is not the question that needs answering

This is what he said, Hold fast to eternal values, don't be distracted, turn towards the multitudes who need Him and win some for the kingdom. Only a focus on eternity will suffice, everything else will disappoint.

In fact he went so far as to say – stop your longing for a new normal, Stop your longing for the Salvation Army that you want.

That was quite a wake up for me!

You see what has happened. We almost have a blank piece of paper before us. We can begin to believe that we can recreate the Salvation Army in the way we would like it to be and you can easily see where that might lead.

So the general said stop – instead

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in his wonderful face;
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of his glory and grace.
Helen Howarth Lemmel (1863-1961)

Hold fast to eternal values, So what are eternal values?

This is something I am keen to explore with you all in the weeks to come. If our focus is upon what really matters in life – how can I put that into words?

What would you say really mattered in life? What are the eternal values?

If we are imaging our church in the coming months what are the must haves and must dos. I would be really pleased if you would write down your thoughts and send them to me.

The theologian Ken Boa suggests three things that really matter and as you hear or read them you will see how much they align with the General’s challenge.

1. Remember there are only two things in the world that are eternal – God’s Word and people. Your time must be spent by investing in the former so that you can share it with the latter.
2. Live with only two days in your calendar; today and the day of Christ’s return. These are the only days that ultimately matter. You can’t change the past or determine your future, and the day of Christ’s return will help you focus on eternity. The wisest way to live each day is doing the best you can with the gift God has given you – the gift of today – and being ready for tomorrow.
3. Meditate daily on the briefness of this life and the eternity of the life to come. This will help you not to lose heart when the mundane things of this life fail you (2 Corinthians 4:16). Understanding that the days of your life are finite will lead to a “heart of wisdom” (Psalm 90:12) and a desire to make the best of every moment

Song Number 750

Father, I know that all my life
Is portioned out for me;
The changes that will surely come
I do not fear to see;
I ask thee for a patient mind,
Intent on pleasing thee.

2 I ask thee for a thoughtful love,
Through constant watching, wise,
To meet the glad with joyful smiles,
And wipe the weeping eyes;
A heart at leisure from itself,
To soothe and sympathise.

3 I ask thee for the daily strength
To none that ask denied,
A mind to blend with outward life
While keeping at thy side;
Content to fill a little space
If thou be glorified.

5 Wherever in the world I am,
In whatsoever estate,
I have a fellowship with hearts
To keep and cultivate,
A work of lowly love to do
For him on whom I wait.

Anna Laetitia Waring (1823-1910)

What about you? What really matters for you? What's next for you, for me, for God's Salvation Army here in Ramsgate?

I am really excited. I don't know what the future holds but I do trust the one who holds it

I know it will be hard and we may not like all we have to do – but I am convinced the world need to hear about Jesus more than ever before

We have a God who is bigger than any problem and if we let Him lead then the best days of Ramsgate Salvation Army are ahead of us

These are fine words for me to say and you to hear. But I believe they are true – and they are true because that is why we have been chosen. As you said last week – we are a covenant people – Ramsgate Salvation Army are a covenant people because God needs the world to see and know him. We are his lights. Let's shine

Pray that God will speak to you over these days and weeks. As the lock down ends and the fear of the pandemic recedes what is God telling you to be doing.

Let's start talking about this and hear again the General's concluding words

So today, with **patience**, with **perseverance** and with the idea that there are untold **possibilities**, step into this new year with confidence in a God who sees, who knows and who will provide.

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

*Teach us to number our days,
that we may gain a heart of wisdom.*

Psalms 90:12

Depending on God My Shepherd Prayer

Father, You are my Great Shepherd. You provide my every need. You direct me to the right path. You protect me from every harm. In You alone, I find everything I need to live a full life. By Your help, I can deal with life's challenges effectively and perseveringly. Teach me to be like sheep, following Your lead submissively,

trusting Your protection confidently, and depending on Your provisions assuredly.
Help me to submit to your guidance wholeheartedly, that I may keep pursuing
the right path for my life. Amen.

Song Number 986

Keep in step all the time.
Do not lag or falter by the way,
Keep in step all the time.
You may find the way is long and drear,
Many dangers may cause you to fear;
Do not give in but strive and persevere
And keep in step all the time.

Keep in step all the time,
Keep in step all the time;
Don't fall out and rest for a while,
Follow Jesus all the way, and smile.
Keep in step all the time,
Keep in step all the time;
You will find each day your pathway easy
If you keep in step all the time.

2 Valiant soldier, you must not despair,
Keep in step all the time.
Follow Jesus gladly everywhere,
Keep in step all the time.
March on bravely o'er the battlefield,
In the mighty conflict never yield,
But trust in Jesus, he's your guide and shield,
So keep in step all the time.

Alfred Herbert Vickery (1894-1976)

What next?

X	W	R	F	F	J	W	A	R	E	D	E	M	P	T	I	O	N	W	S	
R	X	U	W	K	E	T	E	R	N	I	T	Y	U	K	C	K	R	J	A	T
N	G	I	E	R	E	V	O	S	O	B	E	D	I	E	N	C	E	G	F	A
C	O	N	F	I	D	E	N	C	E	I	N	J	E	S	U	S	E	R	G	N
T	D	S	U	S	E	J	T	A	G	N	I	K	O	O	L	P	E	E	K	D
J	S	N	Y	M	A	C	P	H	D	E	G	N	W	V	S	A	O	A	G	I
R	E	F	T	C	E	K	N	H	M	J	R	U	O	I	V	A	S	T	O	C
E	E	S	U	R	O	T	B	E	R	E	A	D	Y	P	G	C	T	N	D	O
P	S	W	U	T	U	M	E	K	S	Z	C	S	J	M	G	G	R	E	K	M
L	M	P	Z	O	U	S	M	R	Q	E	E	G	W	N	J	U	O	S	N	M
E	D	H	C	V	E	R	T	A	N	F	R	J	N	E	W	Z	N	S	O	I
N	M	Y	T	R	B	G	E	E	N	A	B	P	R	I	N	Z	G	R	W	S
I	F	B	E	E	N	G	A	G	E	D	L	M	B	O	L	D	N	E	S	S
S	E	L	W	N	O	V	E	R	A	L	L	V	I	R	T	A	O	L	L	I
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E	P	A	E	T	S	A	F	D	L	O	H	V	N	L	A	O	E	H	G	N
S	J	L	G	B	P	A	T	I	E	N	C	E	O	M	U	C	B	U	L	F
S	F	F	A	I	T	H	I	N	T	H	E	G	O	S	P	E	L	V	F	U
O	W	R	K	N	B	X	G	O	D	P	R	O	V	I	D	E	S	E	U	O
U	T	B	B	P	O	S	S	I	B	I	L	I	T	I	E	S	P	F	S	Z
L	X	T	A	K	E	R	E	S	P	O	N	S	I	B	I	L	I	T	Y	A

BE ENGAGED

BE READY

BOLDNESS

COMMAND

COMMISSION

CONFIDENCE IN JESUS

COURAGEOUS

ETERNAL VALUES

ETERNITY

FAITH IN THE GOSPEL

FUTURE

GOD KNOWS

GOD PROVIDES

GOD SEES

GOOD NEWS

GRACE

GREATNESS

HEALING

HOLD FAST

KEEP LOOKING AT
JESUS

MIRACLES

OBEDIENCE

OVER ALL

PATIENCE

PLAN

POSSIBILITIES

PRESENCE

REDEMPTION

REPLENISHES SOUL

SAVIOUR

SOVEREIGN

STAND

STRONG

SUFFICIENT

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

TRUST

