



## Newcastle City Temple Connected

Reimagining Church Together

### Dear Friends

As we join together in worship this Sunday, albeit remotely - either via Zoom or working through this weekly worship bulletin on your own or as members of one household, we are encouraged to 'present our gifts to God' by way of a virtual Self-Denial Altar Service - and direction as to how we can enter into the spirit of that will be explained later. Though our Altar Service be 'virtual' the needs of those served by our Partners in Mission are very real. It's been helpful to be reminded of the work of the Salvation Army in Burkino Faso and Mali, Bangladesh, The Philippines and Pakistan; and also to have a greater understanding and appreciation of their particular struggles.

The financial gifts we offer today (thank you to those who have already returned your Self Denial Envelopes), are gifts which are given in addition to our regular giving in order that we can support the work that is being done within the Salvation Army - but in areas of real need overseas. What a blessing it is to know that others will benefit from that which we sacrificially give.

Consider these words of Will Brand, as seen in song 997 of the Salvation Army Song Book;

This, our time of self-denial  
We as faithful soldiers keep;  
By our consecrated giving  
Wider fields our comrades reap.  
Souls in darkness yet are calling,  
Come and help us, still they cry;  
With our gifts our hearts outpouring,  
We will help them lest they die.

2. Laying now our gifts before thee,  
We toward thine altar move;  
Lord, accept these simple tokens  
Of our deep, unswerving love.  
None can estimate their measure  
When within thy hands they lie;  
All that we sincerely offer  
Thou wilt use and multiply.

3. Naught we hold save by surrender;  
Nothing keep but that we give;  
Loving life too much, we lose it;  
Dead to self, we truly live.  
Jesus, grant us understanding,  
Gain is found through sacrifice;  
For thy gift of life eternal  
Thou didst pay love's greatest price.



We are encouraged to give prayer consideration to our giving; I'll always remember an occasion in my home corps when one gentleman who really was living hand to mouth in providing for his family, moved by the plight of those whom he considered much less fortunate than he - prayed that the Lord would help him to understand what it was that he could give. He'd listened to the story told of Major John Carlton, who back in 1886, made the decision for himself and his family that for one whole year they would give up having puddings in order to support the Salvation Army's expanding overseas work.

**"By going without pudding every day for a year" he said, "I calculate I can save 50 shillings. This I will do, and remit the amount named as quickly as possible."**

General Booth liked the idea – he encouraged others to do something similar and suggested a shorter period, which was to be an annual event – and so the Self Denial Appeal was first launched that very year.

Well, this gentleman from my home corps - over 100 years later prayed that the Lord would help him to make a similar sacrifice - as he prayed he considered the things he owned, the things he enjoyed - and despite finding great pleasure in listening to music he took the decision to sell his much loved HiFi countering that he could still listen to music on a much simpler / less extravagant machine. Doubtlessly he sacrificed the quality of sound, settling for something far inferior - for the greater good of others.

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Continued...



The actions of this gentleman, remind me of the actions of the poor widow, who from 'out of her poverty, put in everything - all she had to live on' (Mark 12:44) and also the young boy who gave the contents of his packed lunch box for Jesus to bless and share among the 5,000 (John 6:9-11)

I wonder how many of you recall from Sunday School days the song 'All that I have' - a song which tells the story of the feeding of the five thousand and the widows mite;

Two little fishes, five loaves of bread,  
Five thousand people by Jesus were fed.  
This is what happened when one little lad  
Gladly gave Jesus all that he had.

*All that I have, all that I have,  
I will give Jesus all that I have.*

One lonely widow, two pennies small,  
Jesus was watching when she gave her all.  
Then Jesus spoke, for His heart was made glad,  
"See, she hath given all that she had."



Selfless sacrifice - an mere imitation of the actions of the One who gave His all for you and for me.

Over the past 5 weeks we have been building on the self denial theme which has been set for this year; to **'Love beyond' - 'Rebuilding Hope and Resilience Together'**; and as we have done so, I have been praying that we each will have been challenged by the videos which we have watched together, (or the transcripts which you will have had opportunity to read) and that as we look out upon the complexities of our world - and consider how we can respond, that we won't have felt so overwhelmed by the scale of need, a need which has perhaps become even more apparent in the wake of the global coronavirus pandemic; but rather that we will have felt a strong desire to do what we can, with what little we have.

Back in 2011, General Linda Bond launched a new vision for The Salvation Army worldwide, which reminds us that wherever we are serving God we are all part of **One Army** – with **One Mission** – and **One Message** to give to the world.

The verse of Scripture comes to mind is Matthew 28: 19...words spoken by Jesus spoken just prior to His ascension into Heaven – when he said, **"Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples; Baptise them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything that I have commanded you."** (GNT) These are words now known as The Great Commission – Jesus' instructions to His Disciples then, and His disciples now to spread the Good News of the Gospel.

Yes, we look at the world with all of its challenges – a world that so desperately needs to hear and respond to the message of God's love (a love which has no borders) and the Salvation that He offers through Jesus Christ... and it may be that we feel small and inadequate to the task before us; but what a privilege to know that we do have a part to play in God's mission and in making a difference all around the world by Partnering in Mission with our Salvationist brothers and sisters through our Self Denial Giving and through prayer;

and so let us pray...

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Continued...



## PRAYER

Lord, thank you for raising up The Salvation Army and for the unique place that we have within your church and in this world. Thank you for the mission and the message that you have given to us – The Salvation of the World and your love for the Whosoever.

Thank you that from just where we are we can support the work that is being done in your name – even in lands afar; and as we come to the end of this annual period of Self Denial - as we consider the gift that you are calling us to make – thank you for the knowledge we have that in partnering with others, both through our giving and in the message of love which we share through the assurance of prayer - we can and will make a difference.

And so we pray for our mission partners, and we ask that You will help them remain faithful to the call that You have given. When times are hard and circumstances make life difficult, when it would be easy to feel like giving up, we pray that You will grant them strength and a desire to carry-on, in Jesus name Amen.

**SUNDAY:** 7th March 2021

**Theme:** **LOVE BEYOND** - *the holy love of God, expressed in the heart and life of his people*

**Key Text:** 1 John 4:11-21

## Suggested Songs

He's got the whole world in his hands <https://youtu.be/MWpwCE94L3w>

The Lord's Command (SASB 932) <https://youtu.be/T-eWAhuE5Hc>

***"Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples; Baptise them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything that I have commanded you."* (GNT)**

There are many ways by which we can be identified as belonging to a particular group of people – a language or accent, types of food which are eaten or not, a membership card, sports shirt or scarf, a club tie, a uniform. When it comes to being identified as belonging to God there are close to 100 verses in the Bible that suggest that God's people should be identified by their love for each other; and a distinguishing mark of being a follower of Christ is a deep, sincere love for brothers and sisters in Christ; it's a truth which is clearly communicated in 1 John 4:11-21;

*11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.*

*13 This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. 15 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. 16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.*

*God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. 17 This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. 18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.*

*19 We love because he first loved us. 20 Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. 21 And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.*

Jesus himself made it abundantly clear that the distinguishing feature of his followers should be love for one another. "So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples" (John 13:34-35). The "one another" in these verses is a reference to fellow believers.

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Reimagining Church - Let's Worship Together



The Early Church demonstrated the type of love Jesus spoke about. There were people in Jerusalem from all over the known world (Acts 2:9-11). Those who were saved got together and immediately began meeting each other's needs: "*And all the believers met in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared everything they had*" (Acts 2:44-45). This was love in action, and you can be sure it made an impression on the people of that city.

This season of Self Denial provides the perfect opportunity for us to communicate our love to God and others, our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ; we can do this through our giving and our living., and so *may we pray* that God will be at work in and through us every day so that we will bring good into the world, live life fully and bring life to others. *Let us pray* that God's Spirit will work in us and give us the desire to give the way God has given. *Let us pray* for The Salvation Army officers and workers as they venture into harsh and remote environments to help those in need and to share God's love. *Let us pray* for guidance for our leaders in the distribution of Self Denial Appeal funds. *Let us pray* that all people around the world will find acceptance and friendship in their communities; and *may we pray* that God's love is not limited by cultural expectations and social conventions- and that we can love like Jesus does – beyond all barriers.

## ***Presenting our Self Denial Gifts to God***

As we reflect on the words shared today and as we prepare to present our own gifts to God (if we haven't done so already) - I encourage you to read (or sing) the words of Song 623 'Take my life and let it be' (SASB 623) <https://youtu.be/MFUrik7wOW0>

In Ephesians 1:15-19 we find these words;

Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God's people everywhere, I have not stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly, asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called – his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance (Ephesians 1:15-19).

## **Further suggestions for personal worship...**

**SASB 952:** God's Soldier Marches as to War <https://youtu.be/1DUSgBJmDvw>

**Virtual Choir:** Soldier's Hymn <https://youtu.be/iQaqfpCuDYc>

## **Closing Prayer / Benediction** based on Ephesians 1:18

Go now, and embrace the hope to which God has called us.

Recognise Christ in friend and stranger,

and as Christ has been gracious to you,

so be gracious to those in need.

And may God give you a place of rest on rich pasture;

May Christ Jesus be the shepherd king who binds your wounds;

And may the Holy Spirit give you wisdom

and reveal to you the fullness of the one who fills all in all.

We go in peace to love and serve the Lord,  
***In the name of Christ. Amen.***

**With every blessing**  
*Major Liz*

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## **WEEKLY ACTIVITIES**

[COG & YOUTH ACTIVITIES TO BE NOTIFIED SEPARATELY TO THOSE CONCERNED]

**Mon 8th - Sunday 21st March** - Major Liz will be on furlough (Annual leave)

**Tues 9th March, 16th March, 23rd March** 1100 Weekly Coffee & Chat via Zoom

<https://zoom.us/j/94036559399?pwd=S3lCVFU1QklkcWVsOnJrRUpWNDlNdz09>

**Meeting ID:** 940 3655 9399

**Passcode:** 236837

MEMBERS OF MAJOR LIZ'S HOUSE GROUP - PLEASE NOTE THERE WILL BE NO HOUSEGROUP THIS WEEK. THE NEXT HOUSE GROUP WILL BE ON TUESDAY 23rd MARCH at 7pm.

**Thurs 11th March** 1900 Bob's House Group - Part 4 of *'From the Ram to the Lamb'*  
Meeting log-in will be emailed to those concerned by Bob

**Sunday 14th March** 1000 Morning Worship on Zoom for Mothering Sunday led by Adrian & Joy Sutton

**Sunday 21st March** 1000 Morning Worship on Zoom led by CSM Pauline Robson & David Richardson

## **HOLY WEEK & EASTER**

[COG & YOUTH ACTIVITIES TO BE NOTIFIED SEPARATELY TO THOSE CONCERNED]

**Saturday 27th March - Sunday 4th April & Sunday 11th April**

*From Bethany to Galilee - a self guided ten day Holy Week and Easter Meditation*

**Sunday 28th March** 1000 Palm Sunday Worship (via Zoom) led by Major Liz

**Tuesday 30th March** 1900 Major Liz's House Group - Part 5 of *'From the Ram to the Lamb'*

<https://zoom.us/j/93852306712?pwd=MIRmL3pDV3diNWg2OEcyT2VzNXdwZz09>

**Meeting ID:** 938 5230 6712

**Passcode:** 241604

**Wednesday 31st March** 1930 *'Where love and Sorrow Meet'* a meditation via Zoom involving both the band and songsters. All Welcome to log on and enjoy this service.

<https://zoom.us/j/92685666968?pwd=REh1T3NZOFAYdmtWYm1qQThEM0ITQT09>

**Meeting ID:** 926 8566 6968

**Passcode:** Meditation

**Good Friday 2nd April** 1100 *'Near the Cross'* a Good Friday Worship via Zoom led by Major Liz Hancock

<https://zoom.us/j/98210892704?pwd=WTV3b2w4N1lXd1BYdE4za2RaVDF5Zz09>

**Meeting ID:** 982 1089 2704

**Passcode:** Friday

**Easter Sunday 4th April** 1100 *'He is Risen'* Easter Sunday Morning Worship via Zoom led by Major Liz Hancock

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**PLEASE NOTE:** For each Sunday Worship Meeting Via Zoom - please use the following link

<https://zoom.us/j/97311064719?pwd=VXJxWEFBVGU1WFpPSjk2UUFWNWlvdz09>

**Meeting ID:** 973 1106 4719

**Passcode:** Worship