

Fullness of life for
all with Jesus



TIDINGS



July - September 2026
The Salvation Army, Woking

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From the CO's desk

Summer is upon us, and it feels like there is a busy season ahead. There are several events that I am involved in, and I guess that my dining room table becomes a place of preparation! The suitcase remains on the spare bed ready for several trips away, the toiletry bag ready to be topped up, and various other resources at the ready.

I love that my ministry is so diverse, with no two days alike.

However, I am aware that I can lose myself in the busyness and forget to reflect on each event and take time to rest and recover.

THE IMPORTANCE OF REST

Jesus understood the importance of balance. And so, He incorporated rhythms of rest into His life.

EDITORIAL CONTACT INFO

If you would like to contribute an article, story, photograph or announcement to a future edition of Tidings, please speak to **Major Freda** or **Vickie**.



The Message translates Matthew 11:28-30

"Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me— watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

Jesus doesn't just offer rest. He shows us how to do it. **It is a necessity, not a luxury. An act of worship, not a sign of laziness.**

First and foremost, Jesus modelled spiritual rest. He took time to be alone with God. This was the highest priority of His life as He knew He needed to hear God's

voice, understand God's direction, and rest in God's presence.

Jesus' example is profoundly changing my idea of rest. I see the value of an unhurried heart and body. And how that impacts all aspects of my life. Most of us can achieve at least one facet of rest. But few of us know how to embrace them all.

Yet God is calling all of us to fully rest in Him. To enjoy spiritual, physical and mental rest. When we do, we will recover our lives. And then we will learn the unforced rhythms of grace.

I hope that for all of us in the busyness of this summer season we find true rest.

Debbie

Useful Contacts

WOKING SALVATION ARMY CORPS

Corps Leader: Captain Debbie-Anne Hogarth

☎ Office: 01483 793704

🌐 Website: salvationarmy.org.uk/woking

📘 Facebook: @WokingSA

📺 YouTube: Woking Salvation Army (Sunday Service Livestream)

📍 Woking Salvation Army, Sythwood, Woking, GU21 3BE

OTHER PROGRAMME CONTACTS

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA):

Local helpline: 01252 521133 (open 08.30-22.30)

www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/

Recovery Bible Study: Jon Everett (07939 584033) or Ian Campbell

Foodbank (referral required): woking.foodbank.org.uk/

Citizens Advice: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/

Weekly Corps Programme

SUNDAY

- 9am - **AA Meeting**
- 11am - **Morning Worship**
- with Children's Church



MONDAY

- 9.15am - 11.15am - **Teddy Toddlers** (term time only)
- 2pm - 3.30pm - **Drawing Closer Bible Study**
(every third Monday)



TUESDAY

- 12.30pm - 2.30pm - **Food Bank** (referral needed)
- 7.45pm - **Band Practice**
- 8pm - **AA Meeting**



WEDNESDAY

- 10am - 11.30am - **Brunch Club**
- **Bible Study** (contact C.O.)
- 1.45pm - 3.15pm - **Hearts and Crafts**
(second and last Wednesday of the month)
- 5pm - 6.30pm - **Tasha's Haven**
(first Wednesday of the month)
- 7.45pm - **Songster Practice**



THURSDAY

- 9am - 12pm - **Coffee and Chat**
- 7pm - **Recovery Bible Study**
(every other Thursday)



FRIDAY

- 10am - 12pm - **Food Bank** (referral needed)
- 10am - 12pm - **Citizens Advice** (drop-in)
- 1.30pm - **Teen Meet Up** (monthly)



SATURDAY

- 9.30am - **'Full Monty' Men's Breakfast**
(last Saturday of the month - off site)



Worship at Woking

"I think she did an excellent Easter!" was just one comment heard after our Easter celebrations - referring, of course, to Captain Debbie!

WOW - what an amazing three months we've had! Action-packed, varied, hilarious, full of laughter, solemn reflection and tears as we moved through the weeks and celebrated Easter and Pentecost.

We were led through Lent to consider **those hidden graces within that help us to wholeness** that are part of our spiritual development.

EGGSPERIENCE EASTER

Come Palm Sunday, the band were outside on a raw morning, letting the community around us know that 'Eggsperience Easter' was in place.



There were crafts, plenty of activities to be involved in, a quiet zone for Bible study, free teas and coffees along with hot cross buns, and for the children an Easter egg hunt.



Lilia and Jamie enjoying the activities



Jon, Gwen and Trevor on hot cross bun duty

EASTER WEEK

During the week that followed, we met together on Maundy Thursday in a stillness that reminded us of the events of those years back when Christ was

betrayed. The worship was interactive as we experienced the washing of hands, and Captain Debbie adopted another persona by simply wrapping herself in a large shawl to present a reading that turned our thoughts to that fateful night.



On Good Friday, some of the corps attended the Churches Together service in Jubilee Square. After Silent Saturday, we gathered to celebrate Easter Day with joyful and triumphant worship. We looked again at the women who went to anoint Christ's body, the shame they faced and overcame, and the Upper Room where the disciples created a 'tomb' for themselves until Christ's appearance rolled the stone away.

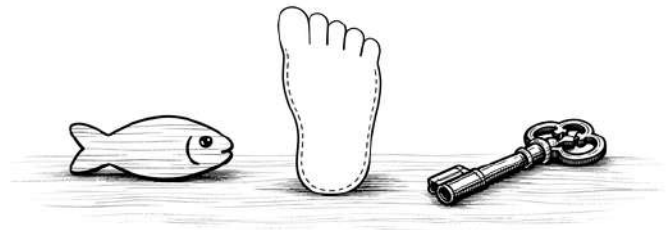
Resurrection Day is inexhaustible with meaning!

Captain Debbie certainly provided us with an excellent Easter!

FOLLOWING PETER'S STORY

In between Easter and Pentecost, we considered the need for officers and leaders in the Army, based around the story of Peter. Over the weeks we received small aide-mémoires:

a small fish, a paper foot and a small key to remind us of Peter's story.



We also prepared for Candidates' Sunday through a series entitled **'Called to be...'**, with the final week being **'Called to be a leader'**.

Pentecost Sunday was another occasion when worship was celebratory as we remembered the coming of the Holy Spirit. The account in Acts 2 was read confidently by Keith, barely 13 years old, followed by the same verses read in Shona by Ethan.

LEADING US IN WORSHIP

Alongside Captain Debbie's carefully prepared worship, meetings were also led by Majors Ted & Freda, Ethan, Major John and Captain Jan H.

Ethan, as part of his Terrain course, took us thoughtfully through the seven sayings of Christ on the cross, including:

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

"Father, into your hands I commend my spirit."

"It is finished."

Worship at Woking - continued

Major Ted, usually completely put together, managed to upset a complete tin of Quality Street intended for Kids' Time, knock a glass of water off the rostrum and have his large Bible slide to the floor at a crucial moment! As one online viewer commented, **"He preached brilliantly!"** Ted had spoken of doubt and belief using the account of Christ's appearance to Thomas and the sadness of many people who have quite unhappy lives waiting for but never seeing Jesus.



Major John used the post-Pentecost visit to the Temple by Peter and John to challenge us with the question, **"What are you waiting for?"**

The disciples had waited for the coming of the Holy Spirit. The waiting was over – time for them, and for us, to get on with the job!

A GREAT BIG GOD AND TRANQUILLITY

Captain Jan took the theme of tranquillity. There were a few crazy moments as Jan, together with Sue S. and Jo Cox, became young things again as they led us in Our God is a Great Big God.

Jan then, through the use of beautiful old



Jan, Sue and Jo teaching everyone the actions to Our God is a Great Big God

songs and a tranquil demeanour, reminded us that if Jesus needed to find space to be still, then perhaps we mere mortals ought to also. A beautiful experience.

Amongst our 'guest' leaders and contributors we also had a visit from Greg, a friend of John's who had visited the corps before and blessed us by Singing 'You Raise Me Up'.



FAITHFUL MUSIC MINISTRY

Our Band and Songsters consistently provide amazing music that blesses us week by week. Major John not only leads the band but also provides sensitive piano accompaniment during the offering, for which we are so grateful. We are indeed a truly blessed people.

Freda

An Evening at Crowthorne

By Major John Martin

A large audience gathered at Crowthorne Methodist Church for the visit of the Band and Songsters. **There was plenty of variety in musical sounds and colours; indeed, something for everyone!**



The band commenced with the march **Star Lake** and, following a congregational song, Major Freda prayed that the evening would bring blessing and challenge. The Songsters sang two songs in contrast, **Sing, Love** and **Live and Lord, There Are Times**, before the band

played Lightforce. George Hayter created much amusement with his excellent elocution item, *The Saga of the Eb Trombone*, before his father, Martin, excelled in the cornet solo *I Want to Tell*. The beautiful song *How Can a Sinner?* created a beautiful atmosphere before congregational participation in the band item *He's Got the Whole World in His Hands*.

MUSIC, FELLOWSHIP AND INSPIRATION

After light refreshments, the band contributed ***Where I Love to Be, Bognor Regis, All in the April Evening*** and, to close, Melodies from the Great Composers. Greg Phillips (Taunton SA) wowed the congregation with ***You Raise Me Up***. The Songsters sang ***Everywhere*** and ***Come, Let Us Sing***.

Major John compered and spoke about the power available to the Christian – via a car battery anecdote (!) and references to the founders of The Salvation Army, William and Catherine Booth.



*Did you notice? The battery company was established in 1865
- the year The Salvation Army was founded.*

Thursday Coffee and Chat

By Peter & Louise Stickland

Coffee and Chat on a Thursday morning is proving very popular. We are seeing new faces quite often, but more importantly, we are seeing some attending Sunday worship, which is really lovely.

On 2nd April, Lesley and the team organised a Spring Sale, which turned out to be an extra-special day.

You will have read in the last issue of Tidings about Lesley's encounter with the Mayor.

Well, the Mayor, Councillor Amanda Boote, chose this day to come and visit us. Knowing how busy the Mayor is, we expected her to stay for about half an hour, but no — **she was with us from 9.00 am until midday**, spending time talking to those who had joined us for the morning. We had over 60 people in attendance, which I think is a record number.



L-R: Debbie, Lesley, Rosemary, Mayor Boote, Jan and Sunita

Thanks to Lesley, Rosemary, Janet G and Sunita for the warm welcome, toast and homemade cakes they supply each week.

“The day raised £250 for church funds.”

On the back of the Mayor's visit, Captain Debbie received an invitation to the Mayor's Lunch.

“I had the privilege of attending the Mayor's Lunch on 14th May. As this was the last event the Mayor was holding in her mayoral year, I should have attended with Lesley but instead attended with Sunita, one of our other Thursday volunteers. We enjoyed a lovely meal at The Gosling and I had the opportunity to do some networking with local businesses and charities.”

Bike Repair Clinic

By Ian Campbell

THE FIRST BIKE REPAIR CLINIC

A vibrant intergenerational Bike Repair Clinic was held on Saturday 4th April, with 12 participants.

Special thanks to Roger, and it was a joy to have Amanda join us quietly for a few minutes.

There was also a beautiful pop-up Easter Café, thanks to Alison C., Vickie and Kishna Tulsi.

THE SECOND BIKE REPAIR CLINIC

Intergenerational, hands-on bike repairs happened again at the second Bike Repair Clinic on Saturday 18th April. Thanks to Roger, Roy and Jon for sharing their skills.



A short reflection on addiction risk in the local area was shared by Ryan. The group of nine people also remembered the addiction recovery work of Many Hands in Zambia, which Jon described.

A short practice ride by a group of five revealed a wobbly wheel on Nkhosa's bike, which Roy replaced during the following week (his hands proved it!). Nkhosa rode proudly away and then lined up for the Big Ride on 30th May from Guildford to Shoreham-by-Sea.



Many Hands Bike Ride

THE BIG RIDE FOR ZAMBIA

On 30th May, a team of cyclists set off from Guildford to Shoreham-by-Sea to raise funds for Many Hands and the completion of the final dormitory at Lochinvar Primary School in Zambia.

Ian, Jon, Luke, Matt, Nkhosa and Sam completed the 39-mile ride, with Ethan joining for the first part of the journey and Margaret meeting the group later along the route. Roger and Vickie provided excellent support throughout the day, keeping everyone fuelled, hydrated and moving in the right direction.

The weather was kind, the scenery beautiful and the conversation flowed as the team made their way to the coast. For some, it was an opportunity to meet new people and enjoy the journey together. Matt commented on the beautiful scenery and the chance to get to know everyone, while Nkhosa was simply proud to have completed the ride.

As Ian reflected afterwards, it was a **"hotchpotch of bikes all on one journey."** Different ages, different experiences and different reasons for riding, but all travelling together for the same purpose. The friendships, conversations and encouragement shared along the way reflected the heart of what Many Hands is all about.



The before (above) and after (below) of their 39 mile bike ride from Guildford Station to Shoreham-by-Sea



A huge thank you to everyone who rode, supported, donated and encouraged the team. It was a wonderful day and a reminder of what can be achieved when people come together for a common purpose.

A Riot of Raders

By Robin, Diana, Alison & Carolyn

DRAGON BOAT RACE PICNIC

Sharon, Jess and Luke were there in good time and had a prime spot on the grass right behind the timekeeper with the chequered flag! Vickie, with Alison C. and her sisters (Robin, Diana and Carolyn), and Jon E. got there after the meeting and found them easily, thanks to Jess! Naomi and family had already passed by and stopped for a chat. Then Darren turned up with his son, Jack.

We made a happy group. The children played together and with us, and we all passed snacks around. Ethan was not able to make it, but he sent a video greeting from along the River Wey as he walked to work



L-R: Diana, Alison, Robin, Carolyn - A riot of Raders
(the collective noun for a quartet of Rader sisters!!!)

Robin enjoyed exploring. She said, **"It was my first time at a dragon boat race."** As she walked around, she saw families and groups who had set up to

watch and cheer on the boats. She was impressed to see young people signing up for Sea Scouts and enjoyed a rock choir.

Diana also took a walk and saw that some of the groups were supporting charities, feeling the sense of camaraderie between the boating teams was remarkable. Carolyn noticed that the dragon head and tail are interchangeable so that the boats do not have to be turned around.

AROUND THE LAKE

Lilia found a bird nesting right on the water and brought us to see it through binoculars. Jamie was chatty in his own way, happily demonstrating a pop-up toy to all in the circle. Vickie brought along the crisps left over from the bike ride so that the Americans could sample some British varieties, including prawn cocktail!

Jon Everett got a bit chilly in the less-than-sunny weather and wore one of the picnic blankets, which happened to be a Maasai wrap in a conspicuous red colour. If you have ever seen the jumping Maasai warriors from Kenya, it is quite a sight – but Jon did a fair version!

We heard that the teams in the boats had not even practised. The final race between the top three boats was very exciting and close. This was the third annual Salvation Army picnic at the Dragon Boat Race. We hope to see you there next year.

Congratulations and Achievements



Agatha Dzomba & Dzikamayi N Maremb0

*On the occasion of
their marriage on
Tuesday 8th April 2026*



We thank God for His grace and faithfulness in our lives.

We were joyfully united in marriage on 8th April 2026 in Chitungwiza, Zimbabwe, my hometown. Our journey began at a church function, where we met and formed a friendship that, through God's guidance, blossomed into love. After two years of dating, the Lord blessed us with this beautiful union.

We are trusting God as we begin this new chapter together, and we look forward to being reunited soon, as he will be joining us in the near future.

Dzikamayi is a committed member of The Salvation Army, where he faithfully serves as Corps Sergeant-Major. We are grateful for his dedication to God's work and His people.

We appreciate your prayers and support as we continue to build our marriage on the foundation of Christ.

Agatha

Congratulations and Achievements



Stella with son Nael

Warmest Congratulations

to

Stella and Nigel
on the safe arrival of their
daughter Nayla,
a sister for Nael



ONE PROUD NAN!!

Pauline (Whiting) was one proud Nan recently when her grandson, Brandon, married Jasmine on 6th April.

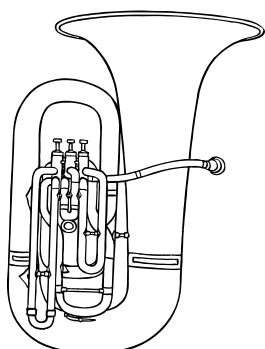
Among the bridal party was Pauline's granddaughter, Casey, as a bridesmaid. Another reason for Pauline's pride is that Casey, now 16, was dedicated in The Salvation Army and attended the corps for several years from the age of two months!



Congratulations to Robin

Been great having Robin worship with us and playing with the band for some while now.

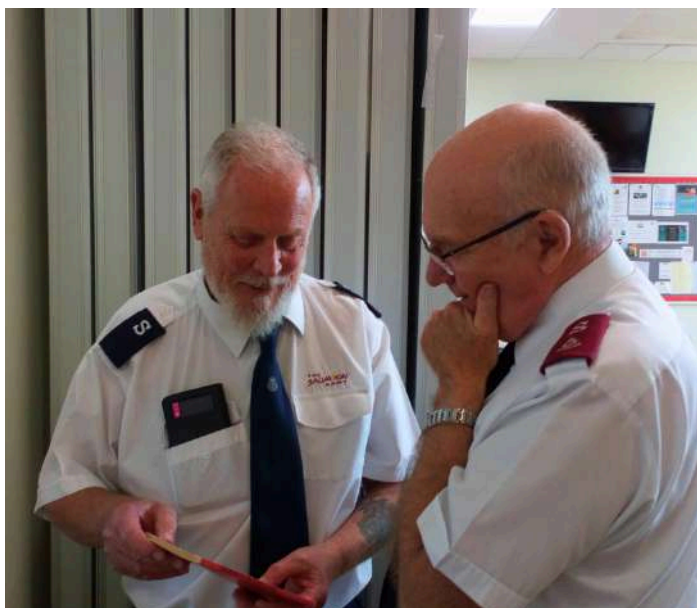
Warmest congratulations Robin on your success in passing your Grade 3 euphonium exam with merit!!
Brilliant



Go Long - Farewell - to David Riches

Way back at the beginning of the year, David had a very bad bout of flu and was missing from worship for a few weeks. On the Sunday he was present, he was still very much under the weather. His illness meant he had thought things through regarding his journey to Woking from where he lives and so tried the journey to the corps at Petersfield, realising that this was more practical, particularly as he, like so many of us, is not getting any younger!

We really miss seeing David on a Sunday. He has a long association with The Salvation Army, from his time in Australia to links with Cambridge Heath Corps in East London – just a stone's throw from the Army's birthplace on Mile End Waste. Mile End Waste was the East End version of Speakers' Corner in Victorian times. In the 1860s, William Booth, the founder of The Salvation Army, preached there and the Army was born!



A Message from David

Dear Friends,

I've had a wonderful time at Woking Corps. Thank you all for your fellowship. You've all been a terrific blessing to me.

By transferring to Petersfield Corps, I can get a train an hour later (9.30 am instead of 8.30 am – following a bike ride to the station!) and it's an easier train journey.

I shall miss you all.

***God bless,
David***

David is the only person I have ever known who has knelt at the Mercy Seat on his arrival for worship on a Sunday. He would always take his offering to the plate at the back. The last thing he did when he called in to see Captain Debbie about his decision to transfer was to spend a few moments at the Mercy Seat.

God bless you, David – we'll miss you!

Freda

Commissioners Garth & Patti Niemand

NEW INTERNATIONAL APPOINTMENTS

In 2025, during the interregnum – the time when we were without officer leadership – between Xander and Vanessa leaving for Australia and Captain Debbie's arrival in July, Andrew's boss, Commissioner Garth Niemand, along with his wife, Commissioner Patti, led worship on two occasions: Sunday 16th March and then on Sunday 8th June, which was Pentecost Sunday. In my diary, the single word **"WOW"** sums up our Pentecost celebrations that morning.

On Friday 5th June 2026, it was announced that Commissioner Garth is to become Chief of the Staff as of 1st October, succeeding Commissioner Edward Hill, who is retiring. (Commissioner Hill also led our worship on 19th January last year.) Commissioner Patti, presently International Secretary for Spiritual Life Development, has been appointed World Secretary for Women's Ministries.

We wish Commissioners Garth and Patti every blessing and all strength and wisdom in their new appointments.

(Incidentally, Commissioner Garth's appointment means that Andrew has to train up a new International Secretary for Business Administration!!!)



DID YOU KNOW...?

The Chief of the Staff of The Salvation Army is the international second-in-command, serving directly under the General. Based at International Headquarters in London, the Chief acts as the worldwide chief executive, managing daily global operations and coordinating international strategies.

The role carries immense administrative and leadership responsibilities, including:

- *Overseeing the administrative departments that manage the Army's work across 134 countries.*
- *Acting on behalf of the General and providing primary support in implementing the Army's global mission.*
- *Summoning and chairing the High Council, the body responsible for electing a new General when a vacancy arises.*
- *Shaping and implementing international policies, coordinating with territorial leaders, and overseeing mission and community projects around the world.*

Little Did We Know...!!!

A REFLECTION - TED & FREDA

On Thursday 29th May 1986 the Benneyworths arrived at Tetherstones, the Corps Officers' quarters in Woking, to be greeted by Audrey Mayes, the Corps Secretary and Corps Treasurer Edith Betts. Our appointment to Woking had begun.



Woking was to be our longest appointment. Eight years later we farewelled for Folkestone leaving Jo in Woking. Woking had almost become our second home and Jo and Martin saw their teenage years here.

We went through so many different experiences during those years and learned so much. Little did we realise in 1986 that 40 years later we would be officers in retirement and been soldiers of the corps for 14 years!!!

Although we served in several places after Woking with somewhere in Scotland being high on the list as a possible area to retire to. In the end it was all about family and friends. Woking was the appointment we had felt most at home in.

Our time there had seen some major personal and ministry experiences. Our family and friends were there, so why would we be several hundred miles away? Being able to spend time with Jo and Andrew and Martin after over twenty years away in our other appointments is so precious.

“Quite simply Woking was in God’s plan for us.”

Throughout the years God has been faithful. We thank him for the way he has guided and protected us, not only over those 40 years but over the 55 years since our ordination and commissioning in 1971 and before that too!! **We loved Woking then and we love our church family now and thank them**, those we see no more and those who bless us today and are such an important part of our life’s journey. We thank God for the plan he set in place all those years back!

Our God truly is a great God.....and we are so, so grateful.

Freda

Upcoming Events

JULY

- Thursday 16th - **Summer Market Stall** (9am - 12pm)
- Sunday 19th - **BBQ** at Jo & Andrew's (3pm)

AUGUST

- Sunday 2nd - **Cream Tea** @ Dave and Gwen's (3pm)
- Monday 10th - 14th - **Divisional Children's Camp**
- Sunday 23rd - **Divisional Worship Gathering** @ Maidstone Corps (4.30pm)

SEPTEMBER

- Saturday 12th - **Ladies 'Riverbank Day'** @ Maidstone Corps (10am-4pm)
- Thursday 24th - **McMillan Coffee Morning** (during Coffee & Chat)



For more details about upcoming events and activities, see the announcements during Sunday worship (also in our YouTube livestream) or the noticeboard in the café area.



Flower List

JULY

- 5th - Carol Pearce
- 12th - Wendy Taylor
- 19th - Kip Abbott
- 26th - Chris Hadfield



AUGUST

- 2nd - Debbie & John Hogarth
- 9th - Amy Davis
- 16th - Kip Abbott
- 23rd - Ruth & Wendy
- 30th - Dave and Gwen Cox



SEPTEMBER

- 6th - Margaret Cook
- 13th - Gill Givanovich
- 20th - Jan Reed
- 27th - Christine Hadfield



OCTOBER

- 4th - Jan & Andy Stickland
- 11th - Jo & Andrew Cox
- 18th - TBC
- 25th - TBC

Faith Beyond What We See

By Alison Sage

Faith is one of the most beautiful and challenging words in Scripture. It's easy to say, but hard to live.

Hebrews 11:1 gives us a definition that feels almost poetic:

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

It's saying that faith is not vague optimism or blind belief. Faith has substance – something solid beneath our feet – and evidence, even when our eyes can't see it yet.

FAITH HAS SUBSTANCE

The word substance means something real, something that holds weight. Faith is not pretending everything is fine; it's standing on the promises of God when everything around us feels uncertain.

It's like walking through mist – **you can't see far ahead, but you know the path continues** because the One who made it is faithful. **Faith gives shape to hope.** It turns our prayers into expectation, our waiting into trust, our weakness into courage.

FAITH HAS EVIDENCE

The writer of Hebrews reminds us that faith is also the evidence of things not seen.

That means faith sees differently. It looks beyond the surface of life – beyond fear, beyond delay, beyond disappointment – and sees the fingerprints of God at work.

Faith doesn't deny the storm; it looks for Jesus in the middle of it. It doesn't ignore the valley; it listens for the voice that says, **"I am with you."**



FAITH IN ACTION

Hebrews 11 goes on to list people who lived by faith – Abraham, Moses, Rahab and Noah. None of them had perfect faith, but they trusted a perfect God.

- Abraham stepped out not knowing where he was going.
- Moses faced Pharaoh with nothing but a staff and a promise
- Rahab believed that God's mercy could rewrite her story.
- Noah built an ark before the rain began.
- Faith always moves before the evidence arrives.

And today, faith might look like praying again when you feel discouraged, forgiving when it hurts, or taking a step towards something God is calling you to – even if you can't see the whole path.

FAITH ANCHORED IN JESUS

At the heart of it all, faith is not about our strength but about God's faithfulness. **Jesus is the anchor of our faith** – the One who reaches into the storm, who lifts us when we sink, who walks with us through the valley.

Faith is not reaching up to God; **it's trusting that He has already reached down to us.**

FAITH SEES BEYOND THE NOW

So today, let this be our prayer:

Lord,

Help us to see beyond the now. Help us to trust You when the way is unclear.

Give us faith with substance – faith that holds on, steps out and stands firm.

Because even when we cannot see, You are still working.

And that is enough.

Amen.



Morning Blessing

FROM SUSIE LARSON

May the God of all comfort surround you with His tender mercies and strength. May he breathe fresh life into your soul and put a new song in your heart. May he broaden the path beneath your feet and make your footsteps firm. And may He lead you to a spacious place and answer your heartfelt prayer. Celebrate His goodness today!

Susie Larson is recommended on the Direct Line prayer page on Page 23

Romania - A Story of Grace

By Jon Hogarth

PART ONE...

GOD EMPOWERS ORDINARY PEOPLE

Since coming to faith, many people have influenced my life, and I would like to introduce you to three of them. But before that, let me remind you that after the overthrow of Nicolae Ceaușescu and his wife, we were shocked to see on our TVs the orphanages, hospitals and street children.

“Seeing it first-hand was heartbreaking: the noise, the smells, the lack of equipment, and the sense of no hope for the future.”

I knew that God wanted me to do something. My journey was broad, from building projects and orphanages, to supplying hospital equipment and taking crusades. None of it would have been possible without the support of so many people.

MEET MIKE

The first person I want to introduce you to is Mike. I first met Mike at my home church. He has a wonderful family and worked for the local bus company. Then one day he shared that he also worked for the organisation called Open Doors. **Open Doors was set up by Brother Andrew, also known as ‘God’s Smuggler’.** Mike supported the work of Open Doors when

Romania was under communism, and he would smuggle Bibles to the persecuted churches.

As I got to know Mike a bit more, he shared more about the work he did and began to encourage me to go and see for myself. He told me that one day he was waiting on a street corner for his contact and, when he was picked up, was informed that they were being followed by the Securitate, the secret police. Under Nicolae Ceaușescu, everyone was being watched; you couldn't even trust your neighbour.

Mike said to his contact, “Just drop me off,” and he replied, **“Brother Mike, we live with this all the time.”** Mike explained that he was still worried.

When Mike returned to his hotel room, the door burst open and the secret police came in and questioned him about his reasons for being in Romania.

Guns were pulled, and Mike's training with Open Doors clicked in. “I am a tourist,” he replied. As the secret police began to leave, they told him, “We will be watching you.”

“I then said to Mike, “And you want me to go there?” – who knew God’s plan.”

I have the privilege of calling Mike and his family dear friends. He eventually convinced me to go, and this was shortly after the revolution. That was the start of my work there, as I've mentioned at the beginning.

Thank you, Mike, for introducing me to Romania. It was life-changing.

To Be Continued...

In the next issue of Tidings.....



ROMANIA - THE BACKGROUND

The events described in John's story take place against the backdrop of Romania during the final years of communist rule and the period immediately following the Romanian Revolution of 1989.

From 1965 until December 1989, Romania was led by Nicolae Ceaușescu. During this time, the country experienced strict state control, with the Securitate (secret police) maintaining an extensive surveillance network. Many people lived with the fear that conversations could be monitored or reported, and shortages of food, fuel, medicine and other everyday essentials became increasingly common during the 1980s.

Although several Christian denominations were officially recognised, religious activity was closely regulated by the state. Churches were permitted to worship but were subject to varying degrees of oversight and restriction. Printing and distributing Christian literature, including

Bibles, was difficult, and many Christians relied on organisations such as Open Doors, which supported believers in Eastern Europe by providing Bibles and other Christian resources.

The Romanian Revolution of December 1989 brought an end to communist rule and led to significant political and social change. In the months and years that followed, many churches and Christian organisations from across Europe became involved in providing humanitarian aid, supporting local communities and partnering with Romanian Christians as the country began to rebuild.



Sources

Encyclopaedia Britannica. Nicolae Ceaușescu and Romanian Revolution of 1989.

United States Library of Congress. Romania: A Country Study (Religion and Church-State Relations).

Open Doors UK & Ireland. Historical information about support for Christians in communist Eastern Europe.

Lord there are Times

Lord, there are times when I have to ask, **'Why?'**
Times when catastrophe gives faith the lie.
Innocents suffer and evil holds sway.
Grant me some answers, Lord, teach me your way.

Lord there are times when I have to ask **'Where'?**
Times when it seems that you simply don't care.
Though I call out, you seem distant, aloof
Grant me some answers, Lord, show me some proof.

Lord, there are times when I have to ask **'What?'**
Times when your love is not easy to spot.
What is life's purpose and what of me here?
Grant me some answers, Lord, make your will clear.

Lord, there are times when the questions run fast,
Times when I fear that my faith may not last.
Help me, support me, Lord, help me get through.
Lead me through darkness till light shines anew.

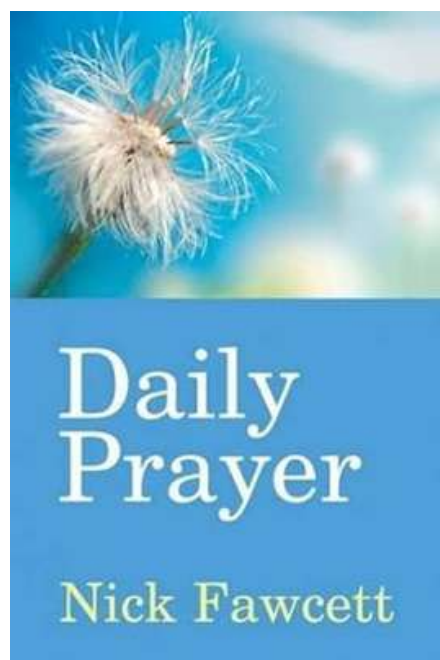
Nick Fawcett

*This much-loved prayer poem was written by Nick Fawcett, whose
Daily Prayer devotional is featured on the next page.*

Direct Line

There's a healthy book exchange going on in the Corps. "Have you read this? It's good - couldn't put it down!" The pile of books gets bigger as I struggle to find time to read them!

If you're looking for a new daily prayer or devotional resource, here are three suggestions...



DAILY PRAYER

Nick Fawcett has written several books. (Google Nick Fawcett to see some of his other titles.) His book *Daily Prayer* is a down-to-earth, well-constructed daily reading book with a simple format. It's a small, chunky, much-loved volume!

SUSIE LARSON - DAILY BLESSING

Subscribe to receive a daily blessing by email.
<https://Susielarson.com/daily-blessing>

"A daily blessing delivered straight to your inbox."

BATTLE DRILL DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Subscribe to receive a daily five-minute video featuring thoughtful teaching in a relaxed and accessible style.

<https://about.me/robwestwoodpayne>

"Five minutes that can make a difference to your day."



Comedy Hall - D.O.H.

(DEPARTMENT OF HUMOUR)

THE FORGOTTEN SUIT

A man went into the Dry Cleaners and explained to the assistant that he had been cleaning out his wardrobe when he found an old dry cleaning ticket from several years ago and he wondered if it was possible that they still had the suit.

The assistant went into the back room and emerged twenty minutes later with a smile on his face.

"You won't believe it, but I have good news," he said.

"You found it?" he exclaimed.

"Yep - it'll be ready next Tuesday " !!



BILLY'S BUS RIDE

As they waited for the bus, Billy's mum told him to say he was four years old if the bus driver asked his age. As they got on the bus the driver asked Billy how old he was.

"I am four years old," declared Billy as instructed.

"And when will you be six?" Asked the driver.

"When I get off the bus," replied Billy.

GARDEN DISCOVERIES

Every year when the grandchildren visit, we have a treasure hunt in the garden. It was very successful this year.



Two pairs of secateurs, three coffee mugs, a pair of sunglasses and a set of false teeth were discovered!

Keep smiling, 
Major Laugh

Our Vision & Mission



Woking Salvation Army Corps

OUR VISION

Fullness of life for all with Jesus

OUR MISSION

Love God • Love our neighbours • Love one another

We live this out by:



Reaching
out to
people with
Jesus' love



Supporting
believers to
grow deeper
in their faith
in God



Serving our
community in
transformative
ways