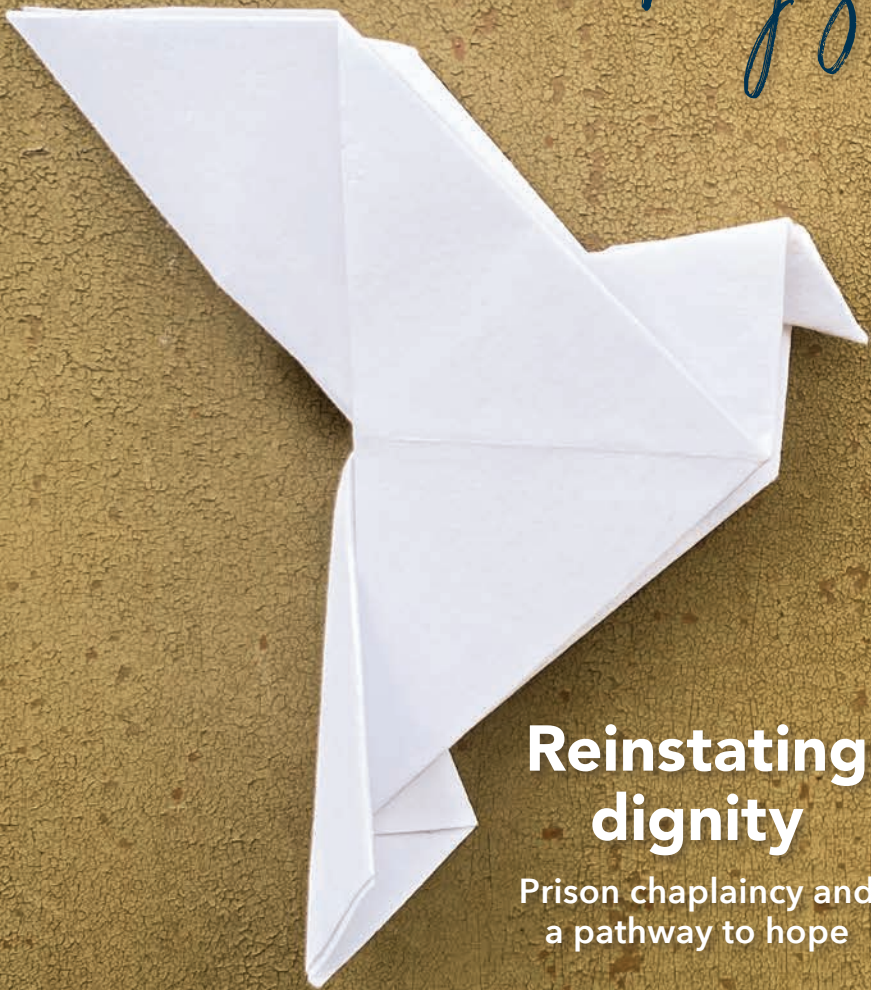


salvos

magazine



Reinstating dignity

Prison chaplaincy and
a pathway to hope



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FEATURE

Chaplains
on the
frontline

NEWS

Rebuilding
life after
prison

MY STORY

Sharing
life's
burdens

“THOUGH NO ONE
CAN GO BACK
AND MAKE A
BRAND-NEW
START, ANYONE
CAN START
FROM NOW AND
MAKE A BRAND-
NEW ENDING.”

— CARL BARD





The Salvation Army is about giving hope where it's needed most.

What is The Salvation Army?

The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church.

Mission Statement

Wherever there is hardship or injustice, Salvos will live, love and fight alongside others to transform Australia one life at a time with the love of Jesus.

Mission Statement

The Salvation Army is a Christian movement dedicated to sharing the love of Jesus by:

- Caring for people
- Creating faith pathways
- Building healthy communities
- Working for justice



The Salvation Army Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet and work and pay our respect to Elders, past, present, and future. We value and include people of all cultures, languages, abilities, sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, and intersex status. We are committed to providing programs that are fully inclusive. We are committed to the safety and well-being of people of all ages, particularly children.

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Founders William and Catherine Booth

Salvation Army World Leaders

General Lyndon and Commissioner Bronwyn Buckingham

Territorial Leader Commissioner Miriam Gluyas

Secretary for Communications and Editor-In-Chief

Colonel Rodney Walters

Publications Manager Cheryl Tinker

Editor Simone Worthing

Graphic Designer Ryan Harrison

Enquiry email publications@salvationarmy.org.au

All other Salvation Army enquiries 13 72 58

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Feature [4]
Reinstating dignity

Faith Talk [10]
Simple acts of kindness

My Story [12]
Ex-prisoner finds 'freedom' in chaplaincy support

Frontline chaplaincy

Salvation Army chaplains can be found in all kinds of settings – remote farms, courtrooms, aged care centres, schools, prisons and more. They offer practical, pastoral and spiritual support to all they meet, and are also a source of encouragement, kindness and care.

In this edition we focus on prison chaplaincy, and the work of Major Alison Platt, a Salvos chaplain in Victoria. Our writers also explore two Salvos programs working to find solutions to prevent incarceration, and helping those who leave to rebuild their lives.

Joanne (not her real name) also shares some of her own experience of life in prison, and the impact of Major Alison and the team on prisoners' sense of worth, hope, mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Kindness is behind so many human interactions that bring help, hope and encouragement to others. In Faith Talk, James Burns writes about the power we all have to brighten a person's day with simple acts of kindness.

How are we exercising that power today?

Simone Worthing **Editor**

Reinstating dignity

Prison chaplaincy and a pathway to hope

Publications journalist LERISSE SMITH recently gained special access to Melbourne’s female maximum security prison to meet with Salvation Army Prison Chaplain Major Alison Platt. Alison’s mission transcends the mere confines of incarceration – it is illuminating pathways to hope, healing, forgiveness and renewal. And through her fervent commitment to supporting women in jail, Alison uplifts spirits and reinstates dignity in a place she believes she is meant to be.

Waking up each morning and heading off to prison is pure joy for Alison.

“I absolutely love it,” she says with a big smile while enjoying a cuppa.

“It is the most favourite ministry I have ever had. I just love being with the women and talking with them and seeing if there is a way I can help them because the women will come to me, or the prison workers will come to me, and say, “What can we do about this”? and often I have a solution. It is about being real and effecting positive change.”

“

It is about being real and effecting positive change.

”

Working with prisoners at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre, a female maximum-security prison in Melbourne’s western region, has been a labour of love for Alison during the past nine years. It has provided a unique opportunity to pour hope and help into the lives of women who often feel hopeless, helpless, rejected and despised.

Meet Alison in person and she’s friendly, personable and shines bright amongst the prisoners with her beloved red Salvos cardigan representing a warm welcome.

DISPELLING MYTHS

While countless people have asked the chaplain why she would work in such an environment, she is adamant prison is where she is meant to be. And dispelling preconceived notions about incarcerated women is all important when talking about her work.

“People think prison is like the television shows, *Prisoner* or *Wentworth*,” Alison reflected.

“They think it is all these tough women shaving other women’s heads and all that sort of thing, and that they are all in rooms with bars and it is all very institutionalised. But it is just not correct. Prison is a grim place indeed, but not like the concrete blocks and bars seen on TV.”

So, what is the main reason why women go to prison?

“A huge percentage have been sexually abused, coerced, and been victims of family violence,” Alison said.

“Some of them have been through such horrific stuff. They have been beaten, coerced, and so, in retaliation against



these situations, they have found themselves incarcerated. In the first month that I was at the prison, I would come home and say 'Men!' Everybody seemed to have a man at the base of why they were there for some reason."

Alison's role as chaplain has two key components – chaplaincy and welfare.

EFFECTING POSITIVE CHANGE

A key element of her chaplaincy is the coffee, tea and chat group she runs on Tuesdays that includes a Pass the Salt card activity that prompts chats about various life topics.

Alison's welfare work includes linking the prisoners with other Salvation Army services, corps (churches) and welfare organisations for practical and material aid.

Effecting positive change is also a top priority. Alison runs The Salvation Army's Positive Lifestyle Program for prisoners wanting to participate, with the course covering topics including self-awareness, anger, depression and loneliness, stress,

grief and loss, assertiveness, self-esteem and future direction.

A major focus is discussing choices with prisoners. Forgiveness is one of the main challenges.

"Forgiving themselves for mistakes they have made is huge," Alison reflected.

"I will say to them, 'You are being punished for what you did wrong, but ▶



not for who you are, you need to let it go.’ They keep beating themselves up day after day after day. The guilt is awful. They will say, ‘How could God forgive me?’ Well, can you forgive yourself? Because God has already forgiven you.”

Alison’s faith and spiritual beliefs influence her approach to work. “I always think that, in looking at the women, I’m looking into the eyes of Jesus,” she said.

A key highlight and source of joy for Alison is remembering the children of the prisoners. She delights in giving these children (aged 12 and under), birthday presents with the gifts donated from the annual Salvation Army Christmas Appeal.

Her trips to Sunshine Salvos in Melbourne’s west to pick up a birthday present, which she posts or hand delivers, is extra special. Mothers will write their own messages on cards Alison provides to them.

“

Hope is ... a hard thing to keep, especially when you are being released with nothing and no set place to go.

”

HOPE AND A FUTURE

Witnessing prisoners endure hardships is an inherent aspect of the chaplain’s duties. For those leaving prison, homelessness and leaving with no possessions or suitable clothing presents an ethical and moral dilemma for Alison.



“When you know that people are being released into homelessness, it’s really difficult,” Alison said.

With Alison preparing to retire soon, the women won’t be far from her mind. She welcomes a hug and cuppa with former prisoners if they want to make contact.

And she remains a firm believer in hope for all incarcerated women.

“Hope is a hard thing to have, and a hard thing to keep, especially when you are being released with nothing and no set place to go,” Alison said.

“But I passionately believe there is hope and a future for each woman. The ultimate value of being a chaplain is showing that you care, and through that, that God cares.”



Scan here for more information on Salvation Army prison chaplaincy.

Chaplains ministering on the frontline of Salvos work

Salvation Army chaplains are found across Australia in a range of areas in which they work and minister:

- Social mission
- Family and Domestic Violence
- Rural and Remote
- Prisons
- Red Shield Defence Services (RSDS)
- Australian Defence Force
- Aged Care
- Employment Plus
- Salvos Stores
- Statutory bodies
- Schools.



Majors Dianne, left, and Russell Lawson are Rural and Remote Chaplains for the Salvos in Central West NSW and ACT.

Chaplains have often been described as the frontline of The Salvation Army's work among the Australian community, providing practical, pastoral and spiritual support to those living through a crisis, coping with trauma or who need a listening ear.

"Our chaplains are dedicated to being a presence that shares peace and hope to all who face challenging situations," said Major Lynda van Gaalen-Prentice, Executive Manager – Chaplaincy Support.

"While each setting has its own unique circumstances and challenges, the chaplain's role is grounded in the love of God."

Chaplains do this by:

- Conducting Christian services and ceremonies.
- Connecting people to healthy faith and social communities.
- Pastoral care – emotional and social support and guidance; advocacy.
- Spiritual care – looking at meaning and purpose, listening, praying.

"They also provide education and counsel in Salvation Army social services and enterprises, missional leadership among management teams, and are the ethical and cultural advisors on the frontline," said Major Brad Watson, Head of Community Engagement for the Salvos.



Scan here for more information on Salvation Army chaplaincy services.

Building a new life after prison

A Melbourne inner-city Salvos corps (church) has begun a multi-faceted program to assist those recently released from prison.

The Salvation Army Project 614 program titled People Going Beyond (PGB) offers participants 12 months of accommodation, an individual caseworker and access to The Salvation Army's Positive Lifestyle Program, Alcohol and Other Drugs assistance programs, family violence programs and mental health care.

Possible participants soon to be released are identified by Salvation Army prison chaplains, who then partner with Project 614 to deliver services.

The church has also partnered with construction company Hickory Group Australia to provide training and employment opportunities for participants.

PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION

Corps Officer (pastor) Major Brendan Nottle said the goal of the PGB program, was personal transformation for those recently imprisoned.



Major Brendan Nottle launches the People Going Beyond program at the Salvos Project 614 in inner-city Melbourne.

"What we really want to do is see people that have been in prison come out, receive intensive support and actually get back on their feet," he said. "Our goal is that we're providing accommodation [and] we're addressing the drivers for offending."

Brendan said workers would love to see participants rebuilding family relationships or reconnecting back into the community through education. He said the program had been running for four months and began solely for women who had been imprisoned but had now been extended to both men and women.

Last year marked the 140th anniversary of the launch of the first expression of Salvation Army social work anywhere in the world, a halfway house titled the Prison Gate Brigade for those imprisoned at the Old Melbourne Gaol.

– Kirralee Nicolle



Commissioner Miriam Gluyas, right, leader of the Salvos in Australia, with key supporters at the launch of the PGB program.

NT offers alternative to prison

The Salvation Army in Darwin is partnering with the Northern Territory Correctional Services to deliver a program known as Open House.

“People who experience generational poverty and homelessness often don’t have a voice and cannot advocate for change,” said Fred Docking, the Salvos Homelessness Manager in the Northern Territory.

“Programs like Open House provide interventions that prevent people going to prison and [are] evidence for law reforms that encourage social equality.”

Ben Champion, Manager of Open House Darwin, explained that this unique residential program offers an alternative solution to taking young men and women into custody.

“Many times, it’s for quite minor offending and they can be in there without being sentenced,” he said.

“So, people can participate in the program while they are waiting for their court appearance.”

About 80 per cent of referrals come from the court. Legal Aid and the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA) support the clients.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Open House partners with the community and local providers to give clients the best opportunities to gain life skills. In Darwin, the STEPS numeracy and literacy program delivers a service on-site and assists the clients with job and life skills ranging from how to use Microsoft Word and create a resume, how to make a birthday cake, gardening skills, and how to feed a turtle.

“Once they finish with our service and go out to independent living, they have the skills to do better for themselves and not get back again in the same situation they were before,” Ben said.

“The greatest benefit for clients has been getting them back to their families, which has been good, and having that change [in their lives]. When they come here, they are a different person to when they go back.” – **Lerisse Smith**



Case Managers George Kypreos, left, and Alison Penny catch up with two clients from the Open House program.

Simple acts of kindness

The power we all have to change a person's day

By James Burns

When my friend Pauline asked if I wanted to hear some good news for a change, there was no way I was going to say no. Is it just me, or is positive news in short supply now?

RANDOM KINDNESS

Pauline and her friend were in a café, and when she sat down, she put her stick beside her, which fell and hit the man at the next table. That wasn't a problem, and they engaged in some banter.



When they were ready to leave, they went to the counter to pay, but the waitress said there was no charge. They couldn't understand this, so they asked why.

The waitress said that the man they had spoken to had paid for their meal along with his. As theirs came to £16 (A\$30), it was by no means a small amount. Pauline wanted to thank the man, but he had already left. The waitress explained that the man was a regular customer, and once or twice a week, he chose to settle other diners' bills. But he always leaves before they can thank him, presumably as he doesn't want a fuss. How kind is that?

When we met a few days later, she had heard of an elderly lady who was in the supermarket. When it came to paying for her groceries, she couldn't remember her card's PIN. And the more she tried without success, the more flustered she became. Finally, she asked the till operator to put the groceries behind, and she would return once she had gone home to get the PIN. At this, a young woman behind her in the queue offered to pay. At first, the lady declined the offer, but the young woman insisted and paid the £20 (A\$38). Again, not an insignificant amount.

RESTORING FAITH IN HUMANITY

One can only imagine what a lift it gave the recipients of the gift, and we can be sure that they were probably walking on air for the rest of the day ... if not the week. And you can be certain that they



will have told many people about the stranger's kindness, for that's how I heard about it. It is a real way to restore our faith in human nature, in total opposition to the 'me first' culture we often meet.

“

What will you do to brighten someone's life?

”

Whether these donors were carrying out random acts of kindness or subscribing to the Pay it Forward movement (rather than paying someone back for their support), we will never know, but for me, I hope it was done as part of their Christian service.

Jesus said, “Ask yourself what you want people to do for you; then grab the initiative and do it for them! If you only

love the lovable, do you expect a pat on the back? If you only help those who help you, do you expect a medal? If you only give for what you hope to get out of it, do you think that's charity? The stingiest of pawnbrokers does that. I tell you ... help and give without expecting a return. You'll never – I promise – regret it. Our Father is kind; you be kind” (Luke chapter 6, verses 31-36, *The Message Bible translation*).

We may not be able to afford to pay for someone's meal or groceries, but we can all do simple acts of kindness. What will you do to brighten someone's life?

James Burns is a freelance writer from the Dunstable Salvos in the United Kingdom.



Scan here for more stories of hope.



Ex-prisoner finds 'freedom' in chaplaincy support

Sharing life's burdens and the renewal of hope

By Joanne*

When I was incarcerated at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre, Melbourne's female maximum security prison, it was December 2018. It was my first (and only) time going into a foreign world I had never experienced before.

I was told that we could speak to chaplains for support if we chose. Though I hadn't been an active church member for a while, I decided to enter the chapel and have a chat. Of course, I was wary of being overwhelmed with religion from a chaplain, but that is not what I got.

So, what did I get from a chaplain, specifically Alison (see story pages 4-6)? I got understanding, compassion, empathy, support, friendship, education, tutoring, guidance, humour, life experience, confidentiality and even free coffee and tea! And so much more.

A BURDEN SHARED

Alison provided a space where I and others could go to talk about any issues without judgment. You go through so much more than I could hope to explain when you are incarcerated and yes, post-traumatic stress disorder is real.

You carry the burden of guilt so heavily for being in jail and all the reasons why and who it affects on such a broad front, yet there is a beacon of light who is there to welcome anyone who drops by for a shoulder to cry on or to have a laugh with. To feel safe to be vulnerable when outside in the yard, you cannot show that vulnerability. To participate in the Positive Lifestyle Program, a course on self-reflection and change, so popular that there is a permanent waitlist for participation.

“

You carry the burden of guilt so heavily, for being in jail ...

”

Each week, a coffee, tea and chat morning is held where women can come in at any time, sit down and grab a coffee or tea and a biscuit or even homemade goodies, and talk as a group or by themselves about anything. It's a chance to feel human in a time of unnatural circumstances.

Throughout the COVID pandemic, times were particularly unsettling with many visits and services cancelled at the prison, yet I always knew that Alison was there when we needed her. She is there for court support for many women, often going along to support and comfort women when they are going through their trials before sentencing.

Then there are the celebrations – not just Easter and Christmas services, but supportive of our achievements such as education, drama, art and others, often attending shows or graduation events.

INSIDE AND OUT

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the Christmas hampers. The effort that goes in behind the scenes is astonishing.

Chaplains also organise support services for those doing it tough – both inside and when they leave prison. Vouchers for food and clothing. Housing referrals and support services for mental and physical health and rehabilitation.



Alison is also the person we turn to when illness or death occurs to family members while we are in custody. Being a comfort for those experiencing a virtual funeral, a shoulder for mums doing it tough with custody issues, a conduit for those not allowed to contact someone. The voice of positivity when all our hope is lost. The

“

**It's a chance to feel human
in a time of unnatural
circumstances.**

”

giver of bad dad jokes. Able to bring a smile or to share the burden of whatever is right or wrong.

Here I am, nearly two years post-incarceration, still able to pick up the phone and talk to Alison and lean on her for support when needed and that is a great feeling.

I only wish those who are reading this have the chance to cross paths with Alison and benefit from her knowledge, her compassion, her wisdom, her love of God, her friendship.

Thank you doesn't seem enough.

*As told to Publications journalist
Lerisse Smith*

**Not her real name. Joanne's identity
has been protected.*



Scan here for more
stories of hope.

Winter casserole



Ingredients

3 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into 2cm squares; 250g spinach; 250g sausages; 1 large onion, sliced; 1 clove garlic; 1½ tbs butter; ⅓ cup cream; 1 tbs cider vinegar; salt and pepper to taste; 1 cup grated cheese.

Method

- Preheat oven to 200°C.
- Place potatoes in pot. Bring to boil and simmer 15 min.
- Heat olive oil in frypan. Add spinach and cook 3 mins. Release liquid and chop.
- Cook sausages in frypan, then cut into 2cm pieces. Place in bowl.
- Saute onions for 5 minutes. Add garlic and cook another minute. Add to potato bowl.
- Mash potatoes with butter, cream, vinegar, salt and pepper. Stir in spinach and ½ cup cheese.
- Transfer potato mixture to greased baking dish, top with sausage mixture and sprinkle with remaining cheese.
- Bake 20-25 minutes.

HAVE A LAUGH



How many tickles does it take
to make an octopus laugh?
Ten tickles.

I gave my handyman a to-do list,
but he only did jobs 1, 3 and 5.
Turns out he only does odd jobs.

I went to a silent auction.
I bought a dog whistle and two times.

I'm reading a book about anti-gravity.
It's impossible to put down.

SIGNING IN



Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

	3			8		4		
				6				
				5		1		
2	4	3		9				1
9					4			
			3				4	9
3						5		7
	7				2		6	
				6			2	

Tum-Tum



On which page of this week's *Salvos Magazine* is Tum-Tum hiding?

Bible byte

"So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus."

Romans chapter 8, verse 1
New Living Translation

Quiz answers: 1. 1999. 2. Heart. 3. Apple. 4. Unicode Consortium. 5. Japanese artist Shigetaka Kurita. 6. Laughing-crying face.

Tum-Tum: is hiding on the shelves on page 6.



Quick quiz

1. What year were emojis created?
2. What was the first emoji?
3. Which company first included emojis in their smartphones?
4. Who comes up with new emojis?
5. Who invented emojis?
6. What is the most popular emoji?

ON THIS DAY...

13 July, 1937

Krispy Kreme Doughnuts is founded by Kentuckian Vernon Rudolph.

13 July, 1985

Live Aid benefit concert.
Simultaneously held in London and Philadelphia, the concert raised millions to benefit those affected by famine in Ethiopia. Over a billion people tuned in globally.

14 July, 1965

Mars flyby of Mariner 4.

The American spacecraft was the first to take pictures of another planet and send them back to Earth.

19 July, 1903

Maurice Garin won the first Tour de France, now an annual bike race.

8	9	4	7	5	7	6	3	8	3	2
1	7	5	8	3	2	2	1	4	9	5
3	6	2	1	4	9	5	8	7	4	7
6	5	1	3	2	8	7	4	7	4	9
9	8	7	6	1	4	2	5	3	3	3
2	4	3	7	9	5	6	1	8	1	8
4	2	8	9	5	3	3	1	7	6	5
5	1	9	4	6	7	8	3	2	2	2
7	3	6	2	8	1	4	9	5	5	5



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