



This Christmas Season - A reflection by CHAP Emma Street

My Christian community follows a traditional church calendar of seasonal worship. This forces us to journey through Scripture in its fullness and diversity, and not settle too long in favourite passages. A structured cycle of worship also helps to keep us looking upward and outward to the source of our hope, while the challenges everyday life work to narrow our focus.



These seasons are all about remembering, reflecting and appreciating God's work in the world. This also involves revisiting the same passages from different perspectives. For example, reading John 1:19-26 through the different lenses of anticipation, revelation and baptism. With each repeated journey through familiar texts, the nature of God, and what a believer is and does, is revealed a little more widely and deeply. As John the Baptist attests, knowing Jesus, and that he loves you and me, is only the start of the journey.

Likewise, our military and personal lives follow cycles. Each stage revealing something new about ourselves and the world. COVID has disrupted our ordinary patterns of work, family, travel, worship and celebrations. However, relationships, faith, work, the posting cycle, and the rhythm of the natural seasons continue to carry us all forward.

The traditional Christian year begins with the first Sunday of Advent on 28 November. Having a new-year mindset for a month before Christmas Day elevates that day as an extension of the celebration, rather than a weary bookend to the secular work year it can easily become.

My prayer for military members, families and supporters is that they are blessed with the peace and strength to boldly stride into the New Year. Perhaps a good way to share the spirit of Christmas is to spend the next month sharing this peace through offering a 'Happy New Year' to those around us.

CHAP Emma Street



Chaplain Street has written an insightful article for [The Forge](#). [Click this link](#) to read it.

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From the new MCF-A Chair and team

Advent, Christmas & New Year

As we enter the season of anticipations, reflection and joy at the celebration of the birth of Jesus, Emmanuel (God with us). It is wise to pause and reflect briefly on the trials of the year past however turn and look forward to the blessings of the year ahead. It is important at this time of Advent to take the time to pause, be still and reflect on the true reason for the season – Jesus and why. This we find written in John 3:16.

So this Christmas let us focus on being thankful for the blessings that were poured out on us, let us be gracious to each other, letting the light and love of Christ shine through us.

Wherever you are and whatever you are doing over this time the team at MCF wish you a Blessed & Holy Christmas and a Christ filled New Year for you and your families.

Steve Neuhaus – MCF Chair, on behalf of the MCF Office and the whole MCF team.

A comprehensive **AGM** report will be in the next eNews.

All Exec and Council member names can be found on the MCF Website at [MCF Leadership](#)

MCF online corporate prayer

NOTE CHANGE OF DATE - Corporate Prayer with MCF will on **Wednesday 1 December**, from 12 noon AEDT (SYD/MLB/CBR) via Zoom. The link will open around 1145 for those who wish to fellowship beforehand. All most welcome, for as long or short a time you have available.

50+ years of service alongside MCF



Russell and Helen Bielenberg have had significant involvement with Australian and international Christian military ministries and have been instrumental in MCF Australia flourishing for around 50yrs. Russell has been a member of MCF (or its equivalent) for 60 years since the early 60s when he graduated from RMC. Russell was the secretary for MCF 50 years ago in the 1970s. Helen was the prayer secretary for MCF for a number of years in the late 90s and early 2000s and she used to write many letters to MCF members and ADF personnel, especially when they were deployed.

Russell and Helen were presented with a quilt, donated by Aussie Hero Quilts, showing Russell's Regiment Badge, Service number and colours and included an embroidered MCF logo and thank you message from MCF. The quilt was presented to them after the MCF AGM by outgoing MCF Chair Jacob Choi along with David Coleman (Sec), Julie Jaensch (SW), and representing Aussie Hero Quilts, Mark Willis.

We are very grateful for the long and distinguished service of Russell and Helen to MCF and the broader military Christian community both here in Australia and internationally for the past 50 years.

You can read more of their story, with thanks to LTCOL Jamie Van Heel (past MCF Chair), in the attached PDF. (includes photos of the presentation – thank you to David Coleman)

Defence Christians Dinners for 2021



South Australia – On Saturday November 6 MCF members and supporters gathered together for a fantastic night of fun, fellowship and encouragement. ADF Navy, Army and Air Force members, Chaplains, DSTG Scientists and Engineers, reps from 1 Armoured Regt and those involved with submarines, along with their partners and others, were part of the group that gathered. Special thanks to Ian Spencer who gave an interesting and encouraging talk on Innovation and making space history in Australia with the first commercial rocket launch out of South Australia, and to Geoff Robertson who organised the event.

If you'd like to organise a dinner/BBQ or event in your area contact the [MCF Office](#) for assistance.

MCF Office - Christmas/New Year operating hours

The MCF Office will be **closed from Wednesday 22 Dec 2021 opening again Monday 17 Jan 2022**. Emails will be checked spasmodically. If your matter is urgent please ring 02 62121580.

Other items that may be of interest

SEEDS OF REVIVAL IN AFGHANISTAN

Linked is an encouraging report from [Christians in Afghanistan](#) sent in by Sam Hays – MCF Member Rep.

Have you moved in the past 12 months?

Please remember to click this link to [Update Contact Details](#)

Giving

Supporting the work of [MCF-A is easy at our website](#), or using these details with pay allotments:

- Bank: **DBL**
- BSB Number: **833205**
- Account Number: **20380708**
- Please include last name and first name or initial in the reference

We are thankful for these tax-deductible donations that help *equip, connect and inspire Defence Christians*.

Find a MCF group near you, support MCF work or link in with our Staff Worker, Julie at:

During ACT lockdown, we're using a different phone number



mcf-a.org.au mcf.office@defence.gov.au (02) 6212 1580

equip | connect | inspire

The Military Christian Fellowship of Australia is a non-denominational registered tax deductible charity (ABN 47 812 823 572) that operates within the Australian Defence Organisation. Find out more at mcf-a.org.au

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