


The Methodist Church Salisbury Circuit 26/23

Amesbury Methodist Church

Minister: Revd Rosemary Fletcher

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www.salisburymethodistcircuit.org.uk/churches/amesbury-methodist-church/



**Amesbury Methodist Church
Newsletter for January 2024**

Our Minister's Letter

Rank me with whom you will

As a lay person in the 1980s I shared in the annual Covenant Service with members of Sandon Road Methodist Church in Birmingham. They were the church situated nearest to where I lived in Bearwood, and I felt very much a part of the community, and glad to be ranked with them, but it had been my choice to be ranked with them. Then I candidated for the presbyteral ministry. I have always found Covenant Services moving, and not least the last one I shared in at Queen's College when in January 1990 the chapel was full of people with whom we had shared a deep experience of community and we hoped some of them would be friends for life but we were going to be scattered to the four winds. (One of them: the Reverend Dr Andrew Wood, your former District Chair, has indeed been a close friend throughout all those subsequent years).

Since then the Methodist Conference has ranked me with people in Swindon, Reading, the United College of the Ascension in Birmingham, then Sri Lanka, North Lambeth, Kingston-upon-Thames, and lastly St Albans. Then James and I chose to retire to Wiltshire. And so we have been living in Salisbury since September 2022. Our forever home. No more Manses. No more Circuit Stewards to make decisions. Now all our decisions.

But for 32 years I was an itinerant Methodist Minister. Many of you have served in the Armed Forces and know what it is like to move around too. Itinerancy means you do not choose with whom you are ranked and gives us the amazing opportunity to see God at work in the lives of people and communities in different places.

But we chose to return to Wiltshire and I was then asked to look after Amesbury Methodist Church for a short while. And that time is coming to an end. Thank you for the privilege of serving amongst you.

Other words in the Covenant Service are as follows:

Christ has many services to be done, some are easy and some are difficult are perhaps the most challenging. We all like to be doing things that please us and bring honour, so what about that line: some bring reproach? At times we are called to challenge and be prophetic and yet as presbyters the pastor and the preacher roles come more easily. Some are suitable to our natural inclinations and material interests and others are contrary to both. How seriously do we take these words?

In 1994 in Swindon the new Bishop (the Rt Reverend Michael Doe, with whom James and I are still in contact) used part of the Covenant Service in his consecration. It was also a sign of his commitment to ecumenism, but it was the first time I had experienced this liturgy used outside of the Methodist Church, and I became aware of the fact that it is Methodism's great contribution to the ecumenical party and a solemn liturgy to be shared. Its words are profoundly counter-cultural: challenging the values of our contemporary world, where we are encouraged to do what feels good and pleases us as individuals.

I found my last Covenant Service in St Albans very poignant – there each year the Anglican Church (St Peter's) with whom we worked closely, used to attend our Covenant Service, complete with their wonderful choir and organist. And on their Patronal festival 6 months later, we went to them (plus many other shared acts of worship in the year). I remember how sad I felt as I led my last Covenant Service. My last year with such lovely people. Our house purchase had not happened and there was uncertainty: where was I going to be ranked from September 2022 onwards? And I felt it was the last time I would be leading a Covenant Service. But God and the Methodist Church had other ideas! We think fondly of our years in St Albans but we are getting very settled in Wiltshire too, and making new friends.

On January 21st 2024 we welcome our new Methodist Minister for Amesbury, the Reverend Steve Hawkes, known to many of you already. And I will share in my last Covenant Service as a Minister of a local church, and say yet another Goodbye.

I have been content to be ranked with whomever God has sent me to serve alongside, and to be content with wherever God has sent me. But we all need to be challenged to apply the words of the Covenant Service to the lives of each one of us, as individuals and communities.

*Christ has many services to be done:
some are easy, others are difficult;
some bring honour, others bring reproach;
some are suitable to our natural inclinations and material interests, others are contrary to both.*

Our world needs the message of Christ so much.

Every Blessing

Rosemary

God Knows

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year: "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown." And he replied: "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way." So, I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night. And He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day.

Minnie Louise Haskins (1875– 1957)



SERVICES OF WORSHIP JANUARY 2024

Please pray for all those leading worship

Sunday 31st December 2023 10.30am United Circuit Service at Salisbury Methodist Church – or online – <https://salisburymethodist.org.uk/> If you were not able to attend, you can find the service still on line



Sunday 7th January 2024 10.30am All Age Worship for Epiphany the Reverend Rosemary Fletcher

Sunday 14th January 10.30am Worship led by Valerie Liversidge

Sunday 21st January 10.30am Annual Covenant Service led by the Reverends Rosemary Fletcher and Steve Hawkes to include the Sacrament of Holy Communion

Sunday 28th January 10.30am The Reverend Dr Mark Cheetham

Sunday 3rd February 10.30am The Reverend Philip Richter to include the Sacrament of Holy Communion

We extend a warm welcome to all and invite you to stay for refreshments, which will be served after the morning service. We usually take the Offering by having a plate in the Vestibule on your arrival to church and the Welcome Steward brings it up in the first hymn where the offering is dedicated during the Service. You can set up a Standing Order HSBC, Amesbury Methodist Church, Sort code: 40-08-25 Account No: 61117300

Prayer for Epiphany from https://www.faithandworship.com/prayers_Epiphany.ht

The story is out! Jesus Christ, Light of the World has been born to dispel the darkness that covers its people. God's glory appears in human form. Life on earth will never be the same again!

Father God, the star that led the Magi to the stable announced to the world that its Saviour was born. Today we live in a world that is still covered by darkness, and still needing to make that journey to the stable door. May our lives reflect your light day by day, as we seek to serve where you have placed us, that we might be the means through which others can encounter Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Methodist Covenant Service

In the Roman Catholic and Anglican traditions there is a service for the renewal of Baptismal vows which often takes place on Easter Eve. In the Methodist Church the equivalent is the annual Covenant Service. John Wesley (1703-1791), himself an Anglican clergy man, saw the relationship between God and humanity as essentiality covenantal.

This idea of Covenant was basic to John Wesley's understanding of Christian discipleship. He saw the relationship with God in Covenant as being like a marriage between human beings (both as a community and as individuals) on the one side and God in Christ on the other (cf. Ephesians 5.21-33).

The Covenant Service is at the heart of Methodists' devotion and discipleship, and their dedication in working for social justice. In the service the Church joyfully celebrates God's gracious offer to Israel that "I will be their God and they shall be my people". This offer is then extended beyond Israel to all people in Jesus Christ, who also provides the supreme example of what it is to live in such a relationship with God.

That relationship primarily involves the corporate life of the community of God's people (i.e. Israel; the Body of Christ). It is concerned with individuals within that group. What God offers is a loving relationship. The Covenant is not a contract in which God and human beings agree to provide particular goods and services for each other! It is not something that we have to do to create a relationship with God. God has freely and graciously already made it possible.

Rather, the Covenant is the means of grace by which we accept the relationship and then seek to sustain it. It is therefore not so much about getting into a relationship with God as it is about staying in it. It is not about acquiring a relationship with God, but living within the loving relationship that God has already offered us.

God's gracious offer to us is therefore simultaneously a challenge. If God is committed to us, are we prepared to accept that as reality and commit ourselves in return to God? Even if we do choose to accept it, how can we manage to live out our commitment adequately, frail and human as we are?

The New Testament suggests that as we join the group of those seeking to follow the way of Jesus, we respond to God's challenge with him and begin to share his relationship with God as Father. Within the group of disciples, this leads to his Spirit bubbling up in us as individuals, encouraging and enabling us to live out our side of the relationship (i.e. "writing God's ways on our hearts" as Jeremiah 31 describes the Covenant).

Origins of the Covenant Service

Wesley recognised that people needed not just to accept but also to grow in relationship with God. He therefore emphasised that God's grace and love constantly prompts and seeks to transform us, and so we should continually seek and pray to grow in holiness and love.

On December 25th, 1747, John Wesley started the principle of urging his followers to renew their Covenant with God. His first formal Covenant Service was held on 11th August 1755. John Wesley used words from Joseph and Richard Alleine. John Wesley published his first Order of Service in 1780. This was revised by the British Wesleyan Methodist Conference in 1880, and then in 1936, after the various branches of Methodism had reunited. More recently it was revised in Britain in 1975 and then in 1999. However, John Wesley's original version is still the basis for the current orders of service. It is a distinctively Methodist liturgy, although other denominations now make use of it. Its words have a profound meaning.

It is now traditionally held on the first Sunday of the New Year, or as near to it as possible, and includes the Sacrament of Holy Communion. At Amesbury this year ours is on Sunday 21st January 2024.

The most famous prayer in the Covenant Service is the prayer of commitment, written by John Wesley: *"I am no longer my own, but yours. Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will: put me to doing, put me to suffering; let me be employed by you or laid aside for you; exalted for you or brought low for you; let me be full, let me be empty; let me have all things; let me have nothing.*

I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal. And now, glorious and blessed God, Father Son and Holy Spirit, you are mine and I am yours. So be it. And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven."

("Put me to suffering" reminds us that following Christ brings us into contact with those who suffer, and it wounds us to touch the pain of others.)

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (WPCU) 2024 is 18 to 25 January. This is traditionally observed from the 18th to the 25th January – the octave of St. Peter and St. Paul.

This year's resources have been produced by the churches in Burkina Faso, West Africa, on the theme, 'You shall love the Lord your God . . . and your neighbour as yourself' (Luke 10:27). Ruth Gee, a former President of the Methodist Conferences, has provided an introduction, with thoughts on the importance of WPCU itself. She notes that the week of prayer also offers "the opportunity to share together in mission and service and other ways which might continue to develop over the following months or years". <https://ctbi.org.uk/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2024/>

Prayer for Christian Unity

Lord God, we thank you for calling us into the company of those who trust in Christ, and seek to obey his will.

May your Spirit guide and strengthen us In mission and service to your world;

For we are strangers no longer

But pilgrims together on the way to your Kingdom. Amen.

Prayers for the current world situation



We used the Meditation below in our 2023 Carol Service after singing "O Little Town of Bethlehem". This was written in 2010 but it is just as applicable now.

O West Bank town of Bethlehem,
how still thy victims lie;
the grieving weep, deprived of sleep;
militiamen roam by;
for through thy dark streets rageth
the never-ending fight:
such hopes and fears, such bitter tears
are met in thee tonight.

O morning news, O papers,
report the dreadful death
of saints who sing to praise the King,
of peace across the earth;
where Christ was born of Mary
'midst wondering angels' love,
in anguish deep, sad mortals keep
few thoughts of things above.

How violently, how violently
the hope of peace is riven;
can God impart to these torn hearts
the blessings of his heaven?
Who now recalls his coming
to this dark world of sin?
Where harsh words still promote ill-will,
can Christ now enter in?

O Child once born in Bethlehem,
draw near again, we pray;
you died to win this world from sin –
yet sin persists today.
May we, like Christmas angels,
announce Immanuel,
till all are given a glimpse of heaven
and not a taste of hell. – Martin Leckebusch

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Prayer for the Peoples of Palestine and Israel

O God of all justice and peace, we cry out to you in the midst of the pain and trauma of violence and fear which prevails in the Holy Land. Be with those who need you in these days of suffering; we pray for people of all faiths - Muslims, Jews and Christians and for all people of the land. While we pray to you, O Lord, for an end to violence and the establishment of peace, we also call for you to bring justice and equity to the peoples. Guide us into your kingdom, where all people are treated with dignity and honour as your children, for to all of us you are our Heavenly Father. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

The Very Revd Canon Richard Sewell, Dean of St George's College, Jerusalem.

Prayers for Ukraine - we continue to remember the ongoing situation in Ukraine

Holy and Gracious God, we pray for the people of Ukraine and the people of Russia; for their countries and their leaders. We pray for all those who are afraid; that your everlasting arms hold them in this time of great fear. We pray for all those who have the power over life and death; that they will choose for all people life, and life in all its fullness. We pray for those who choose war; that they will remember that you direct your people to turn our swords into ploughshares and seek for peace. We pray for leaders on the world stage; that they are inspired by the wisdom and courage of Christ. Above all, Lord, today we pray for peace for Ukraine. And we ask this in the name of your Jesus. **Amen.**

Prayer for us all

We pray for the leaders of the nations,
that you will guide them in the ways of freedom, justice and truth.

We pray for those who bear arms on behalf of the nation,
that they may have discipline and discernment,
courage and compassion.

We pray for our enemies, and those who wish us harm,
that you will turn the hearts of all to kindness and friendship.

We pray for the wounded and the captive, the grieving and the homeless,
that in all their trials they may know your love and support.

Most holy God and Father,

hear our prayers for all who strive for peace and all who fight for justice.

Help us, who today remember the cost of war, to work for a better tomorrow;

and, as we commend to you lives lost in terror and conflict,

bring us all, in the end, to the peace of your presence; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

What is the lectionary?

A lectionary is a cycle of biblical readings that runs through the Church Year, beginning at the start of Advent. The Methodist Church in Britain uses the Revised Common Lectionary, which was developed in the 1980s and 90s and is now used throughout the world by many Christian denominations.

The Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) was the product of a collaboration between many denominations in the World. After a nine-year trial period, it was publicly released in 1994. There was a 4 year trial period when we had a year for each of the 4 Gospels (some of you might recall this) but the overwhelming response was to opt for a 3 year lectionary. The Methodist Church in Britain introduced the new 3 year lectionary in 1999 when the new Methodist Worship Book was published. This replaced

the previous 2 year lectionary which churches had been using previously. The current RCL is widely used across the world.

When James and I were on our train holiday in Italy in August 2023 it was lovely to worship in the local Roman Catholic Church and know the same Gospel was being used across the world in many, many churches. Similarly on a holiday in Devon we attended the village Anglican Church and again to think we were linked with so many people reflecting on the same scripture was wonderful. And when we lived in Sri Lanka we felt the same. There are regional and denominational variants but most Sundays the readings are the same whether we be Roman Catholics, Methodists, Anglicans or many others who chose to follow the RCL.

What is the three-year cycle?

The lectionary for Sundays is arranged in a three-year cycle that is planned around the four gospels in the New Testament.

Year A is the year of Matthew

Year B is the year of Mark, which is the year we are currently in – from Advent Sunday 2023 until the Sunday before Advent in November 2024 .

Year C is the year of Luke

Each year of the lectionary cycles begins on the First Sunday of Advent.

Year A begins on the first Sunday of Advent in 2025, 2028 etc.

Year B begins on the first Sunday of Advent in 2023, 2026 etc.

Year C begins on the first Sunday of Advent in 2024, 2027 etc.

Extracts from the Gospel of John are read each year, especially around Christmas, Lent and Easter. Additional readings from John are also included in the year of Mark (Year B), whose Gospel is shorter than the others. The sequence of Gospel readings is designed to assist God's people into a deeper understanding of Christ and a stronger faith in him. Readings are grouped around the birth, baptism, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The liturgical seasons have familiar names: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Ascensiontide, Pentecost, and then there are a large number of what is called "Ordinary Time"

What is Ordinary Time?

As well as times of the year that have their own distinctive character, there remains in the year twenty nine or thirty weeks (some years have 52 Sundays, some have 53) in which no particular aspect of the mystery of Christ is celebrated. These Sundays are known as Ordinary Time. This is not because it is common or everyday but comes from the word "ordinal" as in "ordinal numbers". The weeks of Ordinary Time are numbered Proper 1 through to Proper 29 or 30. This is all rather jargon filled but it might help you understand some church language. Some Sundays in Ordinary Time do have titles such as Trinity Sunday or the Feast of Christ the King. There are two periods of Ordinary Time; the first period begins on the Sunday after Candlemas (February 2nd) and ends on the day before Ash Wednesday. The second period begins on the Monday after Pentecost and lasts until the Saturday before Advent Sunday; it is the longest period in the liturgical year. The Church Year starts again on Advent Sunday.

Dates for your Diaries

Wednesday 17th January 10.30am - the Stewards meet at the home of Linda Tumer

Saturday 20th January 2024 4pm – 6pm in the Large Hall at AMC

Family Friendly Quiz in aid of the Fund for Human Need

Tickets £5 adults and £2 for those in education.

Drinks and Nibbles will be provided.

Quiz Master: James Rowley

Further details from James and Rosemary

01722 703045 or rosemary.fletcher@methodist.org.uk



The *Fund for Human Need* (FHN) is a small Methodist-affiliated charity established in 1960 to relieve poverty and hunger. Relief payments (once only, up to a maximum of £120) are made, irrespective of faith, ethnic origin or social group to individuals in the UK. Priority is given to those who are destitute or have no income or benefits, to those who are particularly vulnerable and to those where a small amount of money will make a significant difference. Rosemary has been a trustee since 2014.

Annual Covenant Service Sunday 21st January 2024 10.30am - when we say Goodbye to Rosemary and Welcome to the Reverend Steve Hawkes

Wednesday January 24th 1pm at Bemerton Methodist Church – bring your own lunch – Circuit Justice and Peace Group will meet again – all are welcome.

Saturday 3rd February 10.00am – 12.30 at Woodfalls Methodist Church the Reverend Anna Bishop will be hosting “Church for Change” - all are welcome. Ideas as to how to be church in the 21st century.

Tuesday 6th February 10.30am Pastoral Visitors Meeting at AMC with the Reverend Steve Hawkes

Wednesday 7th February 7.30pm Church Council Meeting at AMC Middle Hall

Wednesday 14th February - Ash Wednesday – Circuit Service at Amesbury Methodist Church at 2.30pm, led by the Reverend Steve Hawkes

The Amesbury Food Bank
sam@salisbury.foodbank.org.uk

We are now suggesting that we bring items for the Food Bank whenever we remember and leave in the collection point in the Church foyer.

Here is the list of current requirements

Most needed: Long Life Fruit Juice, UHT Milk, Tinned Soup, Tinned Fruit, Tin of Ham/Spam/Curry, Tinned Potatoes, Instant Mash Packet, Rice Pudding/Custard, Bar of Chocolate, Sponge Pudding.

Bible Study at Amesbury Methodist Church

We completed Ephesians in December 2023.

The 2024 meetings will await the Reverend Steve Hawkes's arrival.



ECO Matters

Recycling at Amesbury Methodist Church



Mobile Phones If anyone has an old mobile phone lying around, please do give it to Rosemary, to pass on to Paul Butler at Salisbury Methodist Church. He collects them for the Christian Aid appeal.



And please bring your **postage stamps** for collection in the vestibule at Amesbury Methodist Church; we raise funds for the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) through these. Please do bring in yours.



Printer Cartridges

Please bring any unwanted Printer Cartridges into Church for the GB to collect and raise funds for GB. Salisbury Methodist Church are also collecting Printer Cartridges for Amesbury's GB.



Up until January 21st 2024 we are still collecting.

Bras for the Reverend Anna Bishop's Bra Bank at SMC

Spectacles – not their cases – Rosemary will take these to Specsavers in Salisbury
Old Greetings Cards - for Rosemary's neighbours who use them to recreate cards for the Diocesan Medical Link with Sudan/South Sudan. Salisbury Diocese is linked with the Diocese of Sudan and South Sudan. As at 30th November 2023 they had raised over £4000 for this work in 2023 alone. Amazing work!

We are in the process of making a link with Medic to Medic and have started by collecting old pens – all sorts of pens but not pencils – so please have a sort out and fill up the Medic to Medic container at AMC.



The aim of the Medic to Medic is to guarantee the tuition fees for healthcare students who have academic potential but are in financial need. With this consistency of income, students are able to focus on their studies until graduation. Look at their website <https://www.medictomedic.org.uk/>

They work with medical organisations in Zambia, Uganda and Malawi.



RECYCLING

Medic to Medic have active recycling communities collecting a whole range of items that cannot be collected through kerbside council collections. We have active Terracycle collections (<https://terracycle.co.uk/>). Our recycling programmes add environmental and financial sustainability to our organisation.

From these collections funds are raised for Medic to Medic More in next month's newsletter. Watch this space.

The Amesbury Methodist Church Council which met on November 8th, 2023, voted for the church to work towards being an Eco Church and aiming to gain a Bronze award to start off with, and also to renew our commitment to being a Fairtrade Church. Please do look out for Fairtrade produce in your local shops.



PASTORAL NEWS



If anyone who is no longer able to come to church would like to receive Holy Communion at home, then please just ask Rosemary Fletcher as she will be able to bring it to you. For those who have access to the internet, there is always a service on <https://salisburymethodist.org.uk/> After January 21st please do contact Steve Hawkes revdsteve@outlook.com or 01722 697841

We continue to remember **Linda Pillay** as she undergoes further treatment.

We remember those not able to worship with us on Sundays due to age or ill health – **Barbara Coleman, Tony Hallett, and Hazel Terry. It was lovely to see Eve Ayres in Church in December.** Tony Hallett was also ill with shingles in December.

If you would like your name included here, please let Rosemary know, and if you would like to be included in prayers in church, please also let Rosemary know. **And after January 21, Steve.**

Brenda Skinner returned to Queen Eleanor Court in December. She is making progress, albeit slowly. **Ron Hodge** had another fall on December 21st and is in Salisbury District Hospital again, and on 27th December Ron had a major stroke. At the time of going to print, Ron is on end of life care and we remember Ron and his son Tony at this sad and difficult time. **Esther Parker (Etti)** was also admitted to the SDH with an infection on 30th December and she is making good progress. We remember all those who are not well in our prayers, and their loved ones.

Bereavements

We pray for the family and friends of both Jennifer Goddard (Jenny) and Michael Martin, who have died recently. We remember John, Robert and Stephen, partner and sons of Jenny, and June Turner, mother of Michael, especially. And we also remember John, Andrew and Christine Martin in their loss.

May all those who have died rest in peace and rise in glory.

Father of all, we pray to you for those we love, but see no longer: Grant them your peace; let light perpetual shine upon them; and, in your loving wisdom and almighty power, work in them the good purpose of your perfect will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

New Life

We were delighted to hold a Service of Thanksgiving on Sunday 10th December 2023 for the life of baby **Amele Rusila Ruby**, born on 24th June 2023, daughter of Lauren Newton and Anare Bativudi. And a sister for Elliot and Leon. Leon lit the Advent candle that morning.

Amele is the name of Anare's late mother and Rusila of his sister, who lives in Fiji, and Ruby is the name of Lauren's late maternal grandmother.

Lauren and Anare chose most of the hymns and readings. However, the final hymn was the Advent hymn *Hills of the North rejoice* and Rosemary made the link with Fiji and the southern seas in verse 2.

*Isles of the Southern seas,
sing to the listening earth,
carry on every breeze
hope of a world's new birth:
In Christ shall all be made anew,
his word is sure, his promise true.*

Photos below submitted by Lauren



1st Amesbury Girls Brigade

On Tuesday 5th December 2023 the Girls' Brigade said "Goodbye" to 4 officers and helpers who, between them, have completed nearly a total of 150 years service to the Girls' Brigade: Gillian Clarke, Glenda and Helen Christmas and Julie Nippard. Julie was not able to attend, but Catherine Burt, Assistant Director and Communications Manager of Girls' Brigade Ministries, came up from Portsmouth to make a presentation to the group, and to give thanks on behalf of GB, and the Reverend Rosemary gave a speech of thanks to all who lead and help at GB, and all those who have been involved since it began. She included this prayer:

Everlasting God, thank you for all who volunteer here at Girls' Brigade, strengthen and sustain all those who volunteer with young people in all our churches, that with patience and understanding they may love and care for your young people; and grant that they together may follow Jesus Christ, offering to you their gifts and talents; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen

And ended by saying:

So, I want to say, on behalf of the Church Community here at AMC, a great big thank you – not only to those who are retiring tonight – Gillian, Glenda, Helen and Julie - but to each one of you who will ensure the GB continues here.

Thank you for generously volunteering your time here at GB and I know it's not just what happens on the night, it is all your time and preparation each week. Your willingness to give your time and service is greatly appreciated. Your support of GB enables us to support girls in this community throughout year.

And lastly there would be no GB without the girls so thank you to all of you who attend each week and make it all worthwhile!



Catherine Burt visited GB on Tuesday 5th December to say thank you to those who are leaving GB

Photo taken and submitted by Alison Williams

We send our very good wishes to Co-Captains **Jane Deeley and Anthea Herrett** for their work with the 1st Amesbury GB in the years to come.

Circuit Justice and Peace Group

The Circuit has voted to become an **Eco Circuit** and Jim Gillings, a member of Salisbury Methodist Church, has been appointed our Circuit Eco Champion. He will be helping churches consider becoming Eco Churches. Salisbury Methodist Church has now been awarded the Silver Award. The Amesbury Methodist Church Council, which met on 8th November, voted for Amesbury Methodist Church to start the process for becoming an Eco Church and working for the Bronze Award.

At the Circuit Meeting on 12th June 2023, and following the recommendation of the Circuit Justice and Peace Group, the Circuit Meeting agreed that each month we would adopt the **Prisoner of Conscience** which the Cathedral and other local churches are praying for each month.



We are also encouraged to write to/about and take up the cause of the specific prisoner each month. The person we are encouraged to pray for and to write about for December '23 is attached at the back of this newsletter. On Sunday 3rd December Amesbury Methodist Church took part for the first time in the **Amesbury International Write for Rights campaign**.

Ecumenical Prayers for Justice and Peace – every third Wednesday of the month 12 noon Salisbury Cathedral - in the Trinity Chapel - next one Wednesday January 17th, 2024.

The next meeting of the Circuit Justice and Peace Group is Wednesday 24th January at 1pm at Bemerton Methodist Church – bring your own lunch. All are welcome. Plenty of car parking space.

Our Circuit Zambia link

“Our Girls’ Brigade have formed a link with the Girls’ Brigade of St Andrew’s United Church of Zambia (UCZ) in Lusaka. St Andrew’s UCZ are a big congregation with a very big church building in a smart area of

Zambia’s capital city. Their Girls’ Brigade have shared with us a video of their activities, and we hope to keep in touch with them through the electronic media. We also pray for each other through the weekly prayer link our circuit has with the UCZ in Lusaka.

At this time of year in Zambia, school pupils have just finished their school leaving exams and will be expecting their results in the New Year. The rainy season has begun, so people are busy planting in farms and gardens. For the church, the week before Christmas has been “Christmas Revival Week”, when the good news of Jesus is shared widely, so that Jesus will be born in the hearts and lives of more people.”

The Reverend Cecil King

Amesbury Methodist Church Libraries

Just to remind you all that we have two lending libraries at Amesbury Methodist Church.

In the Quiet Room there are theological and spiritual books which have been organised and we would love folks to use this library and borrow books.



And the second one is a bookshelf of novels and biographies in the small hall which Glenda Christmas organises. By people taking and donating books, money is raised for Amesbury Methodist Church. We raised **£71.50** from these book sales for the year ending 31st August 2023!

Regular Hall Bookings and weekly activities

Booking Secretary: Liz Rose

We have 2 large Halls and a small Meeting Room available for hire: Ideal for Family Parties, Groups, Exercise Classes, Dance Groups, etc. The Kitchen is large, spacious, and well equipped and complies with all Health & Safety Regulations. **For more details** Tel: 01980 623541 E-mail: g4yqv@tiscali.co.uk

MONDAY	13.30 - 16.00 MH The Alzheimer’s Support Group 19.30 – 21.30 BH Scottish Country Dancing	TUESDAY	11.00 – 13.00 BH Line Dancing with Julie (from 9 th January) 11.00 – 13.00 MH The Salisbury Food Bank 14.00 – 16.00 BH The Amesbury Archer Songsters (from 9 th January) 18.00 – 20.30 ALL rooms Girls’ Brigade (from 9 th January)
WEDNESDAY	10.00 – 13.30 BH Pre-natal Yoga (from 10 th January) 14.00 – 16.00 MH Craft Group (meet on 10 th and 24 th January) 18.00 – 19.00 MH Amesbury Town Band (from 10 th January) 17.30 – 19.00 BH Line Dancing with Julie	THURSDAY	11.00 – 12.30 BH Line Dancing with Julie 13.00 – 15.00 MH The Salisbury Foodbank
FRIDAY	No Bookings - Cleaning	SATURDAY	10.00 – 12 noon MH Coffee morning

BH = Back Hall, MH = Main Hall

Thank you to **Sammy Guy** for putting this newsletter together – please send her items for the January 2024 newsletter on or before 15th January 2024 to sammycsw@yahoo.com.

Thank you also to **Maggie Mudalige**, a friend of Rosemary and James, who proofread this newsletter.

Amesbury Methodist Church CCLi licence no 206298.



WORLDWIDE APPEALS – January 2024

An appeal from you to the authorities can help the victims of human rights violations. You can help free a prisoner of conscience or stop torture. Your message can bring liberty to a victim of disappearance. You may prevent an execution. The victims are many, the violators wide ranging. Every appeal counts.



TIKTOKER JAILED FOR CRITICIZING THE PRESIDENT

On 13 August, Angolan TikTokker, Ana da Silva Miguel (also known as Neth Nahara) was arrested in Luanda, capital city of Angola. On 14 August, she was convicted to 6 months in prison for the crime of 'outrage against the state, its symbols and bodies' for recording a live video on TikTok criticizing the president. Following an appeal by the public prosecutor on 27 September, her 6 months sentence was increased to 2 years in prison. Since her arrest, Neth Nahara has been denied access to her daily medication, despite her complicated health condition. On 3 December, she was hospitalized due to her deteriorating health. Her conviction and sentence stem from the peaceful exercise of her right to freedom of expression. Neth Nahara must be immediately released.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Minister of Justice and Human Rights

Marcy Cláudio Lopes
Casarão da Justiça, Rua 17 de Setembro
Gombota, Luanda, LU, Angola
E-mail: dndh.mjdh.angola@gmail.com

Dear Minister,

*I am writing to you to express concern about the arbitrary detention and conviction of **Ana da Silva Miguel (AKA Neth Nahara)**, solely for peacefully exercising her human rights.*

On 13 August, Neth Nahara – an avid TikTok user - was arrested by the Criminal Investigation Services at 04 de Fevereiro International Airport, in Luanda, Angola's capital, while preparing for a trip to Dubai. On 14 August, she was summarily tried and sentenced to 6 months in prison for 'outrage against the state, its symbols, and bodies' and a fine of 1 million Kwanza (approximately 1,200 USD) for having made a live stream on 12 August on her TikTok account criticizing the government and the President of the Republic.

On 1 September, Neth Nahara's lawyers were notified about the public prosecutor's appeal to extend the 6-months sentence. Without the lawyers having had the chance to submit their counter-appeal, the prosecution's appeal was sent straight to the second stage court, violating the laws which set deadlines at 20 days for a counter appeal before a judge can make a decision. The lawyers then submitted a complaint of unconstitutionality to the second stage court, which has not yet been responded to. On 27 September, the second stage court decided to uphold the prosecution's appeal, extending the sentence from 6 months to 2 years in prison, in a clear attack on human rights including the right to the freedom of expression, violating article 40 of the Angolan Constitution, article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights to which Angola is a state party.

In 2020, Neth Nahara made it public that she is HIV Positive. Since her arrest in August, Neth Nahara has not been receiving her daily medication for the virus, violating women's rights, thus seriously impacting her health, and putting her life at serious risk. Her health situation is critical and deteriorating. This led to an emergency hospitalization on 3 December. By preventing Neth Nahara from accessing her HIV treatment, the authorities are violating her right to sexual and reproductive health as enshrined in the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol).

I urge you to ensure that Neth Nahara is immediately released, since her conviction and ongoing arbitrary detention stem from the peaceful exercise of her human rights including to freedom of expression. Pending her release, the authorities must also ensure she has immediate access to all necessary and adequate healthcare.

Yours sincerely,

Amnesty International–Nobel Peace Prize 1977 UN Human Rights Prize 1978

For more information about the Salisbury branch please call Tony Miller 01722 322791 – or visit www.salisburyai.com