


The Methodist Church Salisbury Circuit 26/23

Amesbury Methodist Church

Minister: The Reverend Steve Hawkes

High Street, Amesbury, Wiltshire, SP4 7ET

E-mail: revdsteve@outlook.com and phone: 01722 334833

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



Amesbury Methodist Church
Newsletter for July & August 2024

Minister's Letter

Dear friends.

Having just returned from the United States, I've been thinking about what it means to have faith. This was triggered, in part, by my journey to the U.S. and what it involved. Regardless of our religious persuasion, we all have faith of sorts. A good example of this is the fact that when we travel, we have to have faith that our mode of transport, whatever that might be, will get us from our starting point, to where we need to be. For me, and my journey across the Atlantic, it was the Boeing 787 on which I travelled. I remember being totally staggered when the pilot announced that our take-off weight (including fuel, baggage and passengers) was over 225 tonnes. How on earth can that much weight even get off the ground, let alone travel over 4,000 miles at 600mph and at 42,000 ft!

It was difficult for me to 'have faith' that what I've just described could actually be achieved, but, of course, what seemed to me to be a total 'miracle' was actually down to the very careful and precise design and manufacturing expertise of those who plan and build aircraft with such amazing capabilities.

But there are times in our lives when we experience things that really are 'miraculous' – the sort of things that we cannot explain adequately using either engineering or science. And this reminded me of a story that I first came across many years ago. It's an American story, but, as this is what prompted my train of thought in the first place, I'm hoping you will forgive me.

The story goes like this: A little girl by the name of Tess went into her bedroom and pulled out a glass jar from its hiding place in the wardrobe. She poured the coins it contained onto the floor and counted them very carefully. Placing the coins back in the jar, she slipped out the back door and made her way 6 blocks to the local Drug Store. She waited patiently for the pharmacist to give her some attention, but he was too busy and didn't even notice her. Tess twisted her feet to make a sort of scuffing noise... nothing. She cleared her throat with the most disgusting noise she could muster.... still nothing. Finally, she took a quarter from her jar and banged it on the glass counter. That did it! 'And what do you want?' the pharmacist asked in a very annoyed tone of voice. 'Can't you see I'm talking to my brother. He's from Chicago and I we haven't seen each other in ages.'

'Well... I want to talk to *you* about my brother,' Tess answered back in the same annoyed tone. 'He's really, really sick... and I want to buy a miracle'. 'I beg your pardon?' the pharmacist said. 'His name is Andrew', Tess continued 'and he has something bad growing inside his head.'

Daddy says only a miracle can save him now, so how much does a miracle cost?' 'We don't sell miracles here, little girl' the pharmacist said, softening a little. 'I'm sorry, but I can't help you'.

'Listen,' Tess replied, 'I have the money to pay for it. If it isn't enough, I'll get the rest. Just tell me how much a miracle costs.'

The pharmacist's brother, a well-dressed man, had been listening to the conversation. He stooped down and asked the little girl, 'What kind of miracle does your brother need?' 'I don't know,' Tess replied with her eyes welling up. 'I just know he's really sick and Mummy says he needs an operation, but my Daddy can't pay for it, so I want to use my money.' 'How much money do you have?' asked the man from Chicago. 'One dollar and eleven cents,' Tess answered her voice barely audible. 'And it's all the money I have... but I can get some more if I need to.' 'Well,' smiled the man, 'what a coincidence. One dollar & eleven cents; exactly the price of a miracle for little brothers.' He took her money with one hand and with the other he grasped her mitten and said 'Take me to where you live. I want to see your brother and meet your parents. Let's see if I have the miracle you need.'

The well-dressed man was Dr Carlton Armstrong, a surgeon specialising in neuro-surgery. The operation was completed free of charge and it wasn't long before Andrew was home again and doing well. After the excitement had settled down, Mum and Dad were happily talking about the chain of events that had led them to this place. 'That surgery' Mum whispered 'was a real miracle. I wonder how much it would have cost?' Tess smiled. She knew exactly how much a miracle cost... one dollar and eleven cents – PLUS the faith and perseverance of a little child.

Why are some healed in response to prayer whilst others are not? Well, the honest answer, is that we simply don't know. However, my prayer, is that we will all continue to put our faith in the marvels of modern technology and engineering, whilst also putting our faith and our trust in the one true God, the creator, sustainer and redeemer of all that was, of all that is, and of all that is yet to come.

With every good wish.

Steve.

SERVICES OF WORSHIP July and August 2024 - Please pray for all those leading worship

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| Sunday 7 th July | Revd Steve Hawkes – Holy Communion |
| Sunday 14 th July | Revd Katharine Robinson |
| Sunday 21 st July | Revd Anna Bishop – All Age Worship |
| Sunday 28 th July | Mr Bernard Robert |
| Sunday 4 th August | Revd Dr Stephen Maunder – Holy Communion |
| Sunday 11 th August | Revd Steve Hawkes |
| Sunday 18 th August | Mrs Gwen Leslie – All Age Worship |
| Sunday 25 th August | Mrs Moira Burton |



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

SALISBURY CIRCUIT DATES 2024 AND 2025

Quidhampton is planning to hold an Open Day on Sunday 7th July, with some gardens open, teas in the village hall and lots of activities at the White Horse. As this is the first Sunday in the month it is also the day of their monthly service of Holy Communion, which on this occasion will be held in a marquee in the garden of the White Horse, at the usual time of 10.30. All are welcome. Further details from the Reverend Jane Taylor janee4taylor@btinternet.com

Wednesday 10th July 1pm Circuit Justice and Peace Group at Bemerton MC. All welcome. Bring your own lunch. Drinks provided.

Monthly Ecumenical Prayers for Justice and Peace in the Trinity Chapel of Salisbury Cathedral 12 noon to 12.30 **Wednesday August 21st & Wednesday September 18th** Always 3rd Wednesday of the month.

Sunday September 1st 3.00pm District Welcome Service for the Reverend Rachel Bending – new District Chair – at SMC - Preacher: The Reverend Dr Jen Smith of Wesley's Chapel, City Road, London

Sunday September 8th 4pm Circuit Service at Bell Street United Church, Shaftesbury, SP7 8AL To celebrate Tisbury, Shaftesbury and Motcombe joining the Salisbury Circuit

Our Zambia link

July and August are cool dry months in Zambia. Travel is much easier, because the roads and tracks are dry. It is the season when regional and national conferences and other gatherings are held, especially during August when schools are on holiday.

This year the United Church of Zambia (UCZ) will hold the National Synod, which meets every two years; national office holders are elected.

Pray for wisdom and peace as these appointments are made.

On Thursday, 13th June, UCZ said thank you and farewell to Gina Siatwinda Oliver, a mission partner from UK who has been the UCZ's Health Secretary. National Synod Bishop Sydney Sichilima spoke of Gina's unwavering dedication to the church's mission and to the community and her extensive travels throughout the huge country. Much of the UCZ's health work, its hospitals and clinics, is in far apart rural areas; Gina has tirelessly visited and supported even the remotest clinics; her work has been during the Covid epidemic and the cholera outbreak – challenging times. Gina replied "Thank you for being an amazing team" – the team of health workers and administrators she has led.

It is our hope that Gina will visit Salisbury after her return to the UK. Pray for her, giving thanks for her ministry in Zambia. Pray also for Revd Emmanuel Kafwita Bwalya who is now acting Health Secretary of UCZ

Cecil King

Christian Aid Week

Huge thanks to all those who participated in the Christian Aid service at Amesbury on 12th May, especially the children and the Junior Church leaders. Christian Aid collections from Salisbury, Amesbury, Bemerton and Shrewton churches totalled £773.10. Added to the house-to-house collections in the streets where SMC delivers envelopes, we raised a splendid total of £2295.65.

A Prayer for the General Election

God of grace and truth, in Jesus you embody your choice of us.

Bless all who make choices in this general election.

Clothe your people with gratitude for the right to choose our government, and turn that gratitude into clear choices.

Give those who vote your spirit of wisdom and understanding.

Uphold all who stand for election:

preserve their dignity, and guide them in the path of integrity.

Renew this nation in honour for the stranger,

respect for the different, and cherishing of diversity.

When all the votes are counted, show us ways to foster the flourishing of all and be a blessing to our neighbours. In the name of Christ and the power of your Spirit. Amen.



Regular Hall Bookings and weekly activities at AMC

Booking Secretary: Helen Artt

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: 07938 711049 E-mail: amesburymethodisthall@gmail.com

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| MONDAY | <p>09.00 – 14.00 YR Wiltshire Citizens Advice</p> <p>13.30 - 16.00 MH The Alzheimer’s Support Group</p> <p>19.30 – 21.30 BH Scottish Country Dancing</p> | TUESDAY | <p>11.00 – 13:00 BH Line Dancing with Julie</p> <p>11.00 – 13.00 MH The Salisbury Food Bank</p> <p>14.00 – 16.00 BH The Amesbury Archer’s Songsters</p> <p>18.15 – 20.00 ALL rooms Girls Brigade (meet on 2nd July)</p> |
| WEDNESDAY | <p>09.00 – 14.00 YR Wiltshire Citizens Advice</p> <p>14.00 – 16.00 MH Craft Group (meet on 10th July, 24th July, 7th August and 21st August)</p> <p>18.00 – 19.30 MH Junior Taekwon-Do (not yet started)</p> <p>17.15– 20.15 BH Line Dancing with Julie</p> | THURSDAY | <p>11.00 – 12.30 BH Line Dancing with Julie</p> <p>13.00 – 15.00 MH The Salisbury Foodbank</p> |
| FRIDAY | No Bookings – Cleaning | SATURDAY | 10.00 – 11:30 MH Coffee morning |

BH = Back Hall, **MH** = Main Hall, **YR** = Youth Room

Easter Offering 2024 – ‘Let Justice Roll’

A huge thank you for your support with the Easter Offering envelopes and donations to the Methodist Church World Mission Fund. The donations from Amesbury Methodist Church totaled £108.00 towards the total of £1,235.00.

Also, my special thanks to you all for hosting the Dedication service. Your preparations and the lovely refreshments were very much appreciated.
Every blessing, Liz Chick

**Report from Circuit Justice and Peace Group
to Salisbury Circuit Meeting on 10th June, 2024**

The Circuit Justice and Peace Group meets once a quarter, is open to everyone and aims to raise awareness of and encourage action on Justice and peace issues.

Information about Amnesty International's Prisoner of Conscience each month is in circuit churches inviting people to pray and to write letters.

Members attended a Connexional webinar on using church property to alleviate homelessness, to learn how this circuit could do that.

Aiming to work with people of other churches, we have a Catholic member of the group, encourage people to join in prayers for Justice and Peace at the Cathedral and hope to work with people of Salisbury Baptist Church.

We encouraged people to help at People in the Park in May and Big Green Week in June.

We were reminded that, as a charity, the Methodist Church is not to support a particular party in the General Election, but we are to find out from candidates their policies on poverty, third world debt, overseas aid, climate action, refugees and human rights.

Making Salisbury a City of Sanctuary is something Mark Cheetham is keen to explore and is on our agenda after the end of Mark's sabbatical.

Cecil King

Details of the planned Whole Church Course starting in September 2024:



At the AMC Annual Church Meeting Steve suggested starting a Whole Church Course that could be run on a week day evening. Due to other commitments and annual holiday, this is planned to run from September 2024. More details will follow, but the course will be The Bible Course – provided by The Bible Society and will be over 8 weeks on a Wednesday evening starting at 7pm. Key features are:

- *The Bible Course* helps you see how the books of the Bible are part of one big story
- Using a unique storyline, *The Bible Course* will show you how key events, books and characters fit together
- Video teaching, written guides, diagrams and readings will help you grow in confidence as you read the Bible for yourself

The Methodist Church
Southampton District

District Welcome Service
for

**The Revd
Rachel
Bending**

as Chair of the
Southampton District

| | | |
|-----------------|----------|-------------------|
| SUNDAY 15:00 | 1 | SEPTEMBER 2024 |
|-----------------|----------|-------------------|

at
Salisbury Methodist Church
26 St. Edmund's Church Street,
Salisbury SP1 1EF

All are welcome to our service of welcome
including Holy Communion,
followed by refreshments

For any queries please contact PA to the Chair,
Sarah Potheary: chairspa@sdmc.org.uk

WORLDWIDE APPEALS — July 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.



EDUCATION ACTIVIST ARBITRARILY DETAINED

Ahmad Fahim Azimi and Seddiqullah Afghan, activists working with the education organization Fekre Behtar, were arbitrarily arrested at their office in Karta Char, Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, by the Taliban's General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) District 40, on 17 October 2023. While Seddiqullah Afghan was released on 9 April under the Taliban's supreme leader Eid pardon decision for prisoners, Ahmad Fahim Azimi is imprisoned in Pul-e-Charkhi prison. He is falsely accused of working against the Taliban de-facto authorities, convicted through an unfair trial by the Taliban primary court, and sentenced to one year in prison. His arrest, arbitrary detention, and unfair trial are against international human rights law. He must be immediately and unconditionally released.

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

Mr. Abdul Haq Wasiq
Director of Intelligence
General Directorate of Intelligence
Chaharahi Zanbaq
Kabul, Afghanistan

Dear Mr. Abdul Haq Wasiq,

I am writing to express my deep concern about the arbitrary arrest and detention of education activist Ahmad Fahim Azimi who works with Fekre Behtar, an organization which is recognized for its work with the Afghan girls' robotics team. The organization is also a vocal critic of the education restrictions the Taliban imposes on women and girls.

On 17 October 2023, Ahmad Fahim Azimi was arrested by members of the Taliban's General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) District 40 at their office in Karta Char, Kabul. He was kept in GDI District 40 for 72 days for interrogation. He is falsely accused of assisting girls from the national robotic team to leave the country, inciting women protestors, and organizing protests. Azimi and his families have refuted these allegations. Initially the Taliban judge deemed the interrogation findings inconclusive and ordered his transfer to Pul-e-Charkhi prison until completion of interrogation. However, on 1 April 2024, he was brought to the court where he was convicted and sentenced to one year in prison. This court decision was made in the absence of his family and fair trial, and it was announced to them only on 1 April.

Due to the ordeal Azimi has endured, his father suffered a severe stroke and is currently hospitalized. Additionally, I am gravely concerned that Azimi is reportedly subjected to torture and other ill-treatment, including sleep deprivation and solitary confinement. There are growing fears that these abuses will persist.

Ahmad Fahim Azimi's situation represents a clear violation of the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and a fair trial – rights that are guaranteed under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Afghanistan is a state party.

I therefore urge you to:

- **Immediately and unconditionally release Ahmad Fahim Azimi;**
- **Uphold the obligations imposed under the Convention against Discrimination in Education by immediately allowing girls of all ages to attend school and receive education on an equal basis with boys;**
- **Stop the practices of abduction, arbitrary detention, and torture and other ill treatment of people working to defend human rights including those peacefully campaigning for the right to education.**

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 - www.salisburyai.com