

# The Methodist Church



**Salisbury Circuit 26/12**

**Amesbury Methodist Church**

Minister: Deacon Selina Nisbett

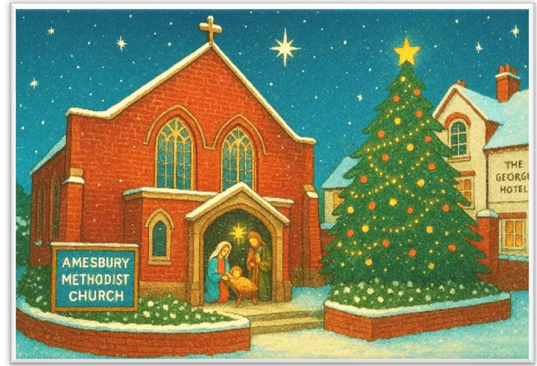
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[methodist-church/](http://www.salisburymethodistcircuit.org.uk/churches/amesbury-methodist-church/)

**Newsletter for December 2025**



## Minister's Letter

Dear Friends

When people initially think about Christmas, minds turn to nativity plays, twinkling lights, jollity, children's eager and expectant faces, not to mention the "canned music" in supermarkets, which subliminally urges people on to "buy, buy, buy" and celebrate the season with unaffordable extravagance. Christmas has been sanitised, and commercialised and "Santa," sometimes conspiring with elves and a reindeer or two, has hijacked the season to such an extent that the Christ child has been pushed out of the manger, often right out of sight, and with the emphasis upon merriment, we lose the real meaning of Christmas, as well as alienating those who are struggling for many different reasons.

The truth is that the first Christmas was much more akin to the difficult life circumstances we experience as part of the human condition and was a world away from the un-abandoned mirth that calls out to us today.

When we look more deeply into the account of the birth of Christ, we find it is rooted in something very much at odds with our society's understanding of Christmas today. We have the humble obedience and in a sense the sacrifice of Mary, which put her at risk of alienation, persecution, and huge life changing experiences. Then there is the quiet faithfulness of Joseph, who discerned through a God-given dream not to break off their betrothal but to care for Mary and Jesus.

The Christmas story then takes to the road; a long, arduous and fearful 90-mile journey to Bethlehem on foot (at best on a donkey!) If the journey had been undertaken during the Judean winter, the weather would have been hot during the day and freezing at night. Undoubtedly the heavily pregnant Mary, with Joseph, her supportive espoused, would probably have doubted themselves and questioned why on earth they were on such a tedious and difficult journey at such a critical time.

Sadly, at journey's end, the hardship was far from over, because we are told in the Gospels, that the town was overcrowded and there was nowhere for them to stay; can you imagine the desperation and despair, at being turned away in such a fragile state? Some scholars think it plausible that the place where Mary gave birth, was not a stable, but a cave. Whilst such a place may have provided some protection from the elements, the harsh conditions under which Jesus was born, would have made the event far from the cosy, warm and comfortable stable depicted on our Christmas cards. Christ coming into the midst of humanity, is as real, and as gritty as it comes.

There was neither comfort nor perfection; it was an unstable world, which was chaotic and harsh and confusing. Christ was born into an occupied land from which the family went into exile, becoming refugees in Egypt, due to the jealousy and wrath of king Herod, and hot on their heels was the massacre of the holy innocents at the behest of Herod, something which rarely gets a mention.

As we reclaim the reality of the first Christmas, and put the manger back in its place, we are reminded that God comes to us, expressed in a “language” and “clothed” in a form that we can understand and relate to; not as a mighty and powerful king, but in vulnerability, in the midst of struggles and pain, in the midst of doubts and fears, into a situation of displacement and alienation.

During Advent and Christmas, we often hear the words “*And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.*” The word “dwelt” in Greek means “tent.” In our over familiarity with the “cosy” account of Christ’s birth, we can so easily forget too, just how extraordinary it is that God moved into OUR neighbourhood, as the Message translation puts it, taking upon himself this fragile tent of humanity, experiencing all the pain and suffering of the human condition.

As we peer into the humble manger at Christmas, what we come face to face with is a tiny newborn baby, a symbol of new life and hope, the Christ child, our God who enters into our darkest and most fragile places. He comes to us in an act of solidarity, offering struggling hearts the assurance that he is indeed Emmanuel, God with us, but also pointing forwards to the new life he brings through his resurrection, and to the time when he will come again in glory, when there will be no darkness, no heartache, no empty chairs, no lingering sadness, no regrets, no pain, no tears, only unbroken and immeasurable joy.

How ever you approach Christmas this year, may you all find, know and dwell within the peace, light and hope of the Christ Child.

With love and blessings  
Dcn. Selina Nisbett

#### PRAYER POINTERS FOR THE MONTH

- For those who find the Christmas season painful or lonely
- For those struggling with addictions
- For those who are homeless and sleeping out
- For our two sessions when we will open to offer hospitality when Foodbank is closed

Circle us, Lord, Circle this nation and all people with Advent love and hope. Create a desire to listen to the Advent message. Create a willingness to understand and respond. Create a need to reach out to the Christ Child. Lord of creation, Lord of Salvation, Circle our nation and all people with the light of your presence (John Birch)

#### Our Zambia link:

The rainy season has begun in Zambia, where prayers are constantly for sufficient rain these next months to fill the rivers and dams and to water the newly planted crops.

During December, the UCZ will, like us, be observing Advent and celebrating Christmas. Pray especially for the choirs, drama groups and preachers as they present the Gospel of Jesus’ coming and birth among us.

December 21<sup>st</sup> is Health Sunday in UCZ churches, praying especially for the work of the church in its two rural hospitals and its nine clinics.

During the rainy season malaria is particularly prevalent; the wet weather is the time for mosquitos to breed. The work of the hospitals and clinics is vital while Zambia is still suffering the after effects of Covid and cholera epidemics.

Pray especially during the weeks of December for young people receiving the results of their school leaving examinations and decisions about their future.

A Zambian Christian who was asked “Are you ready for Christmas?” replied: “You mean, am I ready for Jesus to be born again in my life, my home and my church? Well, I am trying to make room for Jesus in my heart.” That is a word to us that being ready for Christmas is not only about the presents, the food and the travel arrangements; it is about being ready for Jesus.

In the UCZ, worship to see the New Year in is very important. The theme of New Year worship this time is to be “The narrative must change” – the story we tell about ourselves as a church and as a nation needs to be about our unity and what we have in common rather than our arguments and rivalries. This is especially important because 2026 is an election year in Zambia, and the repression and violence around neighbouring Tanzania’s recent election has raised anxiety in Zambia.

Pray for Zambia, especially the people of St Andrew’s, Lusaka, as they pray for us.

*Cecil King*

### **Prayers for the United Church of Zambia**

At the beginning of Advent, pray that each of us and each congregation will make room for Jesus to be born again in our hearts, our homes and our congregations.

Pray that rains will continue and be sufficient for good crops.

At St Andrew's, pray for the minister, Revd Theresa Matimba, and her family.

Pray for the 17<sup>th</sup> Lusaka company of the Girls' Brigade, for officers and girls, as they pray for us.

Cecil King

Happy advent period .The rains are getting heavy by each fall.Farmers are happy and we thank our merciful father GOD for such wonderful rains ..Our GB calendar has come to unend and we are soon having our 17th company enrollment service ,on the 11th January 2026.As we all commit ourselves to the work of Christ, let us remember our church leaders in prayer.By doing so Heaven will assign ANGELS to fight our battles and make provision for our protection as a church.We are always keeping you in prayer ,just as you remember to pray for us.

FridahK.Kabibwa

### **SERVICES OF WORSHIP December 2025 - Please pray for all those leading worship**

- Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> Dec 10.30 am Morning worship- Mr Bernard Robert
- Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> Dec 10.30 am Nativity Service – Junior Church and Deacon Selina Nisbett
- Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> Dec 10.30 am Holy Communion – Rev Dr Mark Cheetham
- Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> Dec 4pm Carol Service – Deacon Selina Nisbett
- Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> Dec – All Age Christingle Service – Deacon Selina Nisbett
- Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> Dec – Family Christmas Day Service – Deacon Selina Nisbett
- Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> Dec- Morning Worship- Rev Anna Bishop



**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**

### Church Vacancies

To enable our Church to run effectively, we need the following volunteers;

- Communion Steward
- Church Council Secretary
- Gift Aid Secretary

If you feel you would be able to contribute to the life of the Church by being able to give a small amount of your time for one of the above vacancies then please speak to Selina or Derek for further information.

### Christmas Poinsettias

As in previous years we invite people to bring a poinsettia to place on the window sill's during December with a short message of a loved one or someone you are thinking of during this Christmas season. Please bring them on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> and take them after Christmas Day

#### **STEWARDS ROTA FOR DECEMBER**

- December 7<sup>th</sup> 10.30 am **Derek**
- December 14<sup>th</sup> 10.30am **George**
- December 21<sup>st</sup> 10.30 am **Martyn**
- December 21<sup>st</sup> 4.00pm Carol Service  
**Derek**
- December 24<sup>th</sup> 4.0pm Christmas eve service **Fred**
- December 25<sup>th</sup> 10.30 am Christmas Day  
**Martyn**
- December 28<sup>th</sup> 10.30 am **Derek**

#### **BIBLE STUDY GROUP DATES**

2pm – 3.30 pm

- Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> Dec
- Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> Dec -Advent Reflections
- **(No meeting on Dec 25<sup>th</sup> or Jan 1<sup>st</sup>)**

We are all about to receive a lot of envelopes with stamps on them! Please bring your **postage stamps** for collection in the foyer at Amesbury Methodist Church. We raise funds for the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) through these. The Collection Box is in the Church Vestibule. All stamps welcome – throughout the year, and Gillian Clarke makes sure they get to RNIB



RNIB raise £20 for every 1kg of stamps so keep them coming all through the year!

#### **A POEM WRITTEN BY LINDA TURNER**

I've passed the chapel many times, to enter was my aim.  
But I had no Sunday clothes and no one knew my name.  
I stood outside so longingly when someone asked if he  
Could maybe take me through that door and be of help to me.

I told him I was burdened with a heavy load of sin,  
O brother do not worry, you are welcome, please come in.  
They sang of friendship with their Lord, the Lord they all adored,  
Then they were still and quiet while listening to the word.

That I had no Sunday clothes for this they had no care,  
For they helped me understand his love for man they share.  
I'm back again this Sunday, maybe I'll come on Monday too  
They gather again on Tuesday when they come to pray to you.

For your world wide family, that peace may come in time  
O Lord I am so happy you have made these people mine.  
For love of you they welcomed me back to my Saviour's side  
Through open door I entered, and now you are my guide.

*This poem by Linda is a good reminder of how important it is to invite people into our church and to be a welcoming, hospitable community.*

The Coming by RS Thomas

And God held in his hand  
A small globe. Look he said.  
The son looked. Far off,  
As through water, he saw  
A scorched land of fierce  
Colour. The light burned  
There; crusted buildings  
Cast their shadows: a bright  
Serpent, a river  
Uncoiled itself, radiant  
With slime.  
On a bare  
Hill a bare tree saddened  
The sky. Many People  
Held out their thin arms  
To it, as though waiting  
For a vanished April  
To return to its crossed  
Boughs. The son watched  
Them. Let me go there, he said

## Hall Bookings

For all bookings or enquiries contact Opal Webber the Community Hub Administrator who can be contacted on 07938711049; or by email [amesburymethchurch@gmail.com](mailto:amesburymethchurch@gmail.com)

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 Contact the Stewards**

<b>MONDAY</b>	<b>10.00 – 12.00 BH</b> Afghan Community Hub <b>13.30 - 16.00 MH</b> Beyond Dementia (formally The Alzheimer's Support Group) <b>19.30 – 21.30 BH</b> Scottish Country Dancing	<b>TUESDAY</b>	<b>11.00 – 13:00 BH</b> Line Dancing with Julie <b>11.00 – 13.00 MH</b> The Salisbury Food Bank <b>14.00 – 16.00 BH</b> The Amesbury Archer's Songsters <b>18.15 – 20.15 ALL rooms</b> Girls Brigade
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	<b>10.00 – 12.30 BH</b> Pre-Natal Yoga <b>13.30 – 17.00 MH</b> The Amesbury Bridge Group (every 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday) <b>17.00– 20.15 BH</b> Line Dancing with Julie	<b>THURSDAY</b>	<b>11.00 – 12.30 BH</b> Line Dancing with Julie <b>13.00 – 15.00 MH</b> The Salisbury Foodbank <b>14.00 – 16.30 QR</b> Bible fellowship (1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> dates of the month)
<b>FRIDAY</b>	Cleaning at 18.00	<b>SATURDAY</b>	<b>10.00 – 11:30 MH</b> Coffee morning

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

24<sup>th</sup> December 16.00 – 18.00

Christingle Service

Amesbury Methodist Church CCLi licence no 206298.

**come and  
join us**

**@ Amesbury Methodist Church  
to discover the gift of Christmas!**

14<sup>th</sup> Dec 10.30 AM Nativity Service  
 21<sup>st</sup> Dec 10.30 AM Communion Service  
 21<sup>st</sup> Dec 4.00 PM Traditional Carol Service  
 24<sup>th</sup> Dec 4.00 PM Christmas Eve Christingle Service



25<sup>th</sup> Dec 10.30 AM Christmas Day Family Celebration

**Gifted**  
The Methodist Church




**ALL ARE VERY  
WELCOME!**

Over the holiday season when the Foodbank is closed, Amesbury Methodist Church will be open for hospitality.

Hot drinks, cakes and snacks will be served.  
**There will be no charge.**

The Methodist Church

The dates and times we will be open are

Tues 30<sup>th</sup> Dec  
11am - 1 pm

and

Thurs 1<sup>st</sup> Jan  
1pm - 3pm



AMESBURY  
METHODIST CHURCH  
HIGH STREET  
AMESBURY  
WILTSHIRE  
SP4 7ET



# WORLDWIDE APPEALS — December 2025

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.



## TUNISIA

### Sonia Dahmani

'You condemn me for sullyng Tunisia,  
when it's you who sully it with your  
unfair trials.'

## Lawyer unjustly detained for peacefully expressing her views

**Sonia Dahmani, a lawyer and media personality, has been arbitrarily detained since May 2024 for peacefully exercising her right to freedom of expression. She faces five prosecutions and is enduring cruel, inhumane detention conditions that seriously threaten her health.**

Sonia has long spoken out on racism, migration, and prison conditions in Tunisia. Since late 2023, she has faced mounting legal harassment for her public comments. Authorities have charged her under a repressive cybercrime law for 'spreading false news'.

Her arrest follows President Kais Saied's authoritarian power grab and growing repression of civil society. Sonia is one of dozens of people targeted for criticising the government, and her case reflects the sharp decline of free expression and judicial independence in Tunisia.

### Send a message of support and solidarity

Sonia Dahmani  
c/o Amnesty International Tunisia  
5 Rue Zouhair Ayadi  
El Menzah 4  
Ariana, Tunis 1082  
Tunisia

**Language** French, Arabic, English

**Pronouns** She/her

**Suggested message** Dear Sonia, you are not alone. People around the world are standing with you and raising their voices to demand your release. Your courage in defending truth and dignity inspires us. We hope you feel our love and solidarity through every message you receive.

### Can I

**Send a religious card or message?**

Yes

**Send an Amnesty card or mention Amnesty?** Yes

**Include my name and address?** Yes

### Creative solidarity ideas

Share drawings of her dog, Carla. Write messages referencing her love of art, beaches and/or classic Arabic and '80s music. Send postcards with scenes of the sea or football motifs. Include theatre-themed notes or quotes; and/or handwritten playlists or movie titles she might enjoy. Solidarity messages can be posted on Instagram, tagging @soniadahmani.

### Send an appeal letter

Urge the president to immediately and unconditionally release Sonia Dahmani, quash her sentences, and drop all charges against her, as she is detained solely for exercising her right to freedom of expression.

#### Write to

Kais Saied  
President of the Republic of Tunisia  
Carthage Presidential Palace  
La Goulette Road  
Carthage Archaeological Site  
Tunis  
Tunisia

✉ [contact@carthage.tn](mailto:contact@carthage.tn)

**Salutation** Your Excellency

### Key dates

**24 May:** Sonia Dahmani's birthday

**10 December:** Human Rights Day

**18 December:** International Migrants Day

**Note** Social media pressure is encouraged:

✂ @TnPresidency using the hashtag #FreeSonia.

📘 [facebook.com/Presidence.tn](https://facebook.com/Presidence.tn)

### Amnesty country coordinator

If you are interested in further campaigns concerning this country, please contact Beverley Foulkes-Jones, country coordinator for Morocco, Western Sahara and Tunisia:

✉ [beverley.foulkes-jones@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:beverley.foulkes-jones@amnesty.org.uk)

**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](http://www.salisburyai.com)