



# OPCEMI News

Newsletter of the Opera per le Chiese Evangeliche Metodiste in Italia

[Click here to view the ongoing renovation work in the OPCEMI's real estate.](#)

One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God.

*Acts 3:1-8*

The young Christian community conducts its life quietly, the believers praying, breaking bread together, and continuing their routine as they await Christ's imminent return. While all this is taking place Peter and John go up to pray at the Temple, and the cruel and evil world around them is revealed: a crippled man asks them for help. Towering like an obstacle between them and the prayer to be offered in the Temple is the contemporary society with its distortions. During that time, the absence of social security and health insurance, and other forms of government assistance left the socially disadvantaged people particularly vulnerable. As a result, those without family or support from their immediate community found themselves destitute, surviving solely on the kindness of strangers and sporadic acts of generosity from passersby and worshipers who frequented the Temple.

Even in our contemporary society, beggars can often be seen positioned near the entrance of a church, counting on the inherent sense of guilt that can prompt faithful individuals entering or exiting to offer whatever meager possessions they can spare.

However, upon deeper reflection, we realize that even today, despite the establishment of welfare programs and other forms of institutional assistance, our communities continue to grapple with the challenge of aiding those who still find themselves marginalized and excluded from the reach of such provisions.

In the book of Acts, the community of believers faced a challenge: they had limited financial resources, with little silver and gold available to offer to those in need. As a result, their assistance efforts were primarily focused on providing support to their own widows, a responsibility entrusted to individuals like Stephen and the other deacons. The two apostles therefore respond as they can to this demand for help: *“Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.”*

Peter finds himself equipped with nothing but the power inherent in the name of the Lord. It is precisely at this moment that the divine power intervenes, compensating for the limited capabilities of human beings.

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The healing of the lame man not only stands as a miraculous event but also represents the restoration of an individual to the embrace of society.

No longer condemned to be an outcast, relegated to a position beside the Beautiful door, the healed man is now fully reintegrated and an active participant in the society of that time.

As 21st-century believers, it is essential to explore the significance and relevance of this miracle that differs from those described in the Gospels as it involves an intermediary. What lessons can we glean from this story? What reflections can we engage in?

As Methodists, Waldensians, and Baptists, we share the belief that faith encompasses a personal commitment. While we engage in communal practices such as partaking in the breaking of bread and unwavering prayer, our journey does not end there.

The story impels us to consider the response offered by Peter and John: *“Silver or gold I do not have [...]”*.

Indeed, it is a reality that our church often faces financial challenges. Aside from the “Eight per thousand” annual income tax return devolved by Italian taxpayers to our institution, the church relies heavily on the offerings given by its members, and struggles to support pastors and lay workers.

The story impels us to consider the response offered by Peter and John: *“Silver or gold I do not have [...]”*.

However, we must not overlook the latter part of the sentence, as the two apostles refuse to let their lack of financial resources become an excuse.

Peter does not simply say, *“My apologies, but I don't have any money at the moment, so I must go and pray at the Temple.”* Instead, he adds with conviction: *“but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.”* Now!

Let's be honest with ourselves. None of us would have the power to heal a lame man simply by telling them to get up and walk. However, even this should not serve as an excuse for us.

Instead of saying, *“I'm sorry, but I don't have any money, and now I must go to the church where I'm expected. If I had the ability to heal you, I would, but I am not Peter or John,”* we should recognize how this sounds like a mere excuse, much like saying, *“I don't possess gold or silver.”*

Both statements hold truth; we are not lying. But the question remains: what should we do in such situations?

We don't go to church to break bread, we don't use money that we don't even have, we don't perform miracles, and so what?

Indeed, it is essential to focus on what we can do. We can make a difference by bringing food to the hungry, reaching out to the social services of our municipality to report serious cases, and distributing clothes to those in need. Through these actions, we bear witness to the boundless love of the Lord for the least fortunate among us. By actively engaging in acts of kindness, we show society that there is an alternative way of living in this world, that transcends the destructive patterns of violence, warfare, and the creation of refugees. Instead, it strives to alleviate poverty for others while rejecting the pursuit of personal wealth at the expense of others; proclaiming the kingdom of God by embodying compassion and generosity, even in the simplest of gestures like offering a latte and a pair of socks.

*“Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, [...]”*

The Name, the Example, the Teaching, the Grace of Jesus Christ: this is what the church of Jerusalem brought to the world, and this we must strive to bring to the world too, even if we have no gold.

**Enrico Bertolini**  
**OPCEMI Standing Committee**



## Prayer

O gracious God who looks with love and compassion on the poor, the needy, the lonely, the immigrants, the marginalised, and the refugee, forgive us our forgetfulness and fear to embrace all those who suffer believing that among us they will find a refuge...You are the omnipotent shadow, you are the shelter, the hope, the refuge and the peace of the suffering. Forgive us and let us rekindle the flame that announces that among us there is room for the stranger, for the despised, for the foreigner and for all who are discriminated against...Fill us with the goodness of your Spirit of love that embraces and comforts the suffering and as a community we reflect compassion and brotherhood. Amen

*Rev. Raquel Itzel Villalvazo Moreno, Liturgist  
Universidad Madero - Iglesia Metodista de México A.R.  
Taken from the Liturgy for World Refugee Day of the European Methodist Council*



## NEWS FROM OUR LOCAL METHODIST CHURCHES



*Rev. Chapman with his wife Grace  
at Ponte Sant'Angelo Methodist Church*

The final worship service for the Reverend Daniel Pratt Morris Chapman, who finished his four-year term as the minister of the congregation, was held in Rome on Sunday, 11th May, at **Ponte Sant'Angelo Methodist Church**.

Many other people, alongside members of the congregation, were present at worship to bid farewell to Reverend Chapman. These included Bishop Philip Gillespie, Rector of Beda College in Rome, who preached, Bishop Ian Ernest, Director of the Anglican Centre in Rome, Reverend Mirella Manocchio, and Reverend Eric Noffke.

Reverend Chapman, accompanied by his family, will soon be in Africa, in Uganda more specifically, where he will continue to engage in his pastoral ministry.

We would like to dedicate part of our newsletter to our local churches, so if you would like to publish some important news about the life/activities/events/initiatives of your church in our next edition, please contact us: [metodismo@chiesavaldese.org](mailto:metodismo@chiesavaldese.org)  
The article must be concise, edited and publication-ready.

[Click here to view the notices of events and meetings organised by the \*\*Methodist Church of Parma - Mezzani\*\*](#)



*Rev. Hansen with Mario  
Colaiani in the synod hall*

The **Methodist Church of Gorizia** is pleased to announce that, on the occasion of the first service in Gorizia of the Reverend Jens Hansen, on Sunday 16th July the induction of the minister has taken place with the presence of the superintendent of the 7th Circuit Maria Paola Gonano. Moreover, to make the day even more joyful, a community lunch will follow to celebrate the arrival of the new minister.

# August 2023

## OPCEMI Office Hours

During the entire month of August, employees will be working remotely in smart-working mode, with the exception of employees on summer leave.



**Here we remind you of the duties, hours, e-mails and mobile phones:**

**Secretariat (OPCEMI website, FB page and Il Cenacolo)**

[metodismo@chiesavaldese.org](mailto:metodismo@chiesavaldese.org) | [cenacolo@chiesavaldese.org](mailto:cenacolo@chiesavaldese.org)

**Roberta Balducci** - on leave from 28/08 to 01/09

*Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:20 p.m. / mobile +39 3896543127*

**Stefanie Gabuyo** - on leave from 21 to 25/08

*Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. / mobile +39 3701566921*

**Administrative/accounting office (ministry fund, invoices, reimbursements...)**

[contabilita.opcemi@chiesavaldese.org](mailto:contabilita.opcemi@chiesavaldese.org)

**Pamela Farinola** - on leave from 07 to 25/08

*Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. / mobile +39 3701566920*

**Real estate revenue office (rents, condominiums, contracts, utilities, taxes)**

[dianagreco.opcemi@chiesavaldese.org](mailto:dianagreco.opcemi@chiesavaldese.org)

**Diana Greco** - on leave from 01 to 18/08

*Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. / mobile +39 3701566918*

**Building office (restoration, ordinary and extraordinary maintenance...)**

[vivianacastiglia.opcemi@chiesavaldese.org](mailto:vivianacastiglia.opcemi@chiesavaldese.org)

**Viviana Castiglia** on leave from 27/08 to 01/09

*Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. / mobile +39 3701566919*

## Digital Subscription - Il Cenacolo

Over the past few months, a digital subscription to our bi-monthly "Il Cenacolo" (The Upper Room in Italian) is available at a cost of € 10.00 for 6 annual issues. For 5 or more copies at the same address, you can get a 20% discount.

**Payments must be made to the postal account. n.**

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## NEWS OPCEMI WEBSITE



We are pleased to announce the launch of the **new OPCEMI website**, in Italian and English.

**[www.metodisti.it](http://www.metodisti.it)**