

To all friends of Penrallt Baptist church.

We live in interesting times! Usually a church such as Penrallt would spend some time discussing and talking amongst its members and congregation before calling a Church Meeting and coming to a decision on any change to the way we do things. The current situation with the spread of the coronavirus and the statements coming out from government mean that we cannot take such a leisurely approach.

Rev John Thompson and the deacons have been in communication by phone and e-mail over the last couple of days and the upshot is that we must make the following announcement.

In line with the action of other churches and denominations Penrallt will close to all services for the foreseeable future. In particular there will be no services next Sunday, 22nd March and no organised meetings thereafter until further notice.

We should emphasise that "Church is a community, not a building". The closure of the building does not mean the end of Penrallt, as a family of Christians who work and witness and worship God. Far from it. Over the coming days the leadership will be developing ways in which we can contact each other, support each other, and pray with and for each other.

So, watch this space – wherever you saw it – and expect to hear from us again about networking and live-streaming and making sermons and addresses and prayers available by electronic means. We have not worked out the details. We may not be able to deliver all that we would wish but our desire is to keep the love of God alive and burning in each heart so that no-one feels forgotten. There will be some of our congregation who depend on the fellowship of a Sunday service to help with their loneliness and isolation. This virus will only make it worse. Let us individually try to ensure that people are not left out. Phone and chat and also pray with them.

We would ask you all to be patient with us and one another. It might be that we try things and they don't work. We are certain to find that we can do things better as we go along. So please forgive us if things don't go well at the start and help us to learn.

Finally, as you can see, these changes throw up all kinds of needs. If you see a need and have the time and energy and ability to help solve it do please offer your services. Please contact the office to say what you will do.

As we batten down the hatches to face the coming storm, remember Tony Mason's favourite phrase "keep checking your compass". SO let's turn to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith and demonstrate the presence of God's Holy Spirit in us by our love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Let's pray with Moses. "May the Lord bless us and keep us, and make his face shine upon us and be gracious to us, May the Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon us and give us peace"