



# Penrallt Baptist Church

## Newsletter for December 2011

The dam burst three weeks before Christmas. Ros slipped behind her desk at 8am and nodded the usual welcome to Bridget Bugle. That wasn't her supervisor's real name, of course, but she'd once played in a brass band and Ros imagined her standing on her desk at the start of every shift, blowing a stirring tune on a bugle and urging the staff to "Sell, Sell, Sell" for the good of the company. Ros sighed and murmured a greeting to Night-out Nigella, her desk companion. Poor Nigella's weekend bingeing had spilled over into midweek these days. Ros reckoned that if you put a wick into Nigella's mouth and hung her from the Christmas tree there'd be enough vodka in her system to illuminate the office decorations until January.

It was then that she noticed her Christmas card to the staff was missing from the window sill. On enquiring, Bridget Bugle informed her that it had been taken down because it was too religious. Apparently, the manger scene and words "Unto you is born this day a Saviour" could cause offence to non-Christians.

"And how offensive do you think I find it when you take Jesus out of Christmas?" demanded Ros.

"Don't be so sensitive" snapped Bridget.

"Don't you think, rather, that it is you who is being too sensitive? You're giving way to people's intolerance and prejudice when you should be defending my right to believe in Christ!" snapped back Ros.

"Oh, I couldn't care, myself," grumbled the bugler, "it's just a fairy story anyway."

"Oh Yes?" rallied Ros, rising to her feet. "And where's your proof that it's a fairy story? You have none do you?"

"Proof? Well no. But God coming to earth? Angels? Shepherds? Wise men? Virgin Birth? Come on . . ."

"How do you think God would come to earth, then?" retaliated Ros. "On a sleigh like Santa? With our company logo on the side? If God came to earth you'd expect a Virgin Birth, and angels. And opposition from people who don't want God to interfere in their little earth." Ros was already red in the face.

"Well if it gives you comfort to believe," began Bridget, trying to defuse an argument she sensed was slipping away from her.

"Comfort?" snorted Ros. "Comfort? Don't you dare patronize me or my Faith. Comfort? Have you any idea how much of your comfort is an indirect result of the Christian Faith? The first hospital complex in history was started by a monk. Your freedom to believe or not whatever religion you do or don't choose came from the sacrifices of my Baptist forefathers in the cause of religious freedom. The labour movement which guarantees your rights came out of radical Christian groups. You

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**Secretary:** Neil Rymer, 20 Brynteg, Llandegfan, Menai Bridge LL59 5TY (01248 713003)

**Treasurer:** Stephen Burrows, 39 Cil y Graig, Llanfairpwll, LL61 5NZ (01248 714048)

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look down your nose at my faith, while enjoying the benefits and comforts it's brought you. And it isn't as if you've got anything better to put in its place, have you? Well, have you?"

"There's no need to get upset."

"I want my card back on the windowsill by lunchtime or I'm entering a complaint about religious discrimination."

"I'll see," murmured the hapless supervisor.

"Oh, and by the way," continued the unstoppable Ros, "Yes it does give me comfort. It gives me hope that a lot of people don't possess, forgiveness they're too proud to accept, an awareness of a God you'd give anything to receive if you knew what he was like, a strength to face my problems and the absolute certainty that love is the key and that it's love that wins in the end."

"OK, OK" demurred the bugling boss, backing away from Ros who by now was glaring in defiance.

An awkward silence pervaded the office for five minutes, as she settled down into her seat and set about the task of selling, selling, selling. A silence that was only broken by Night-out Nigella whispering over the out tray,

"I don't suppose I could visit your church this Sunday, could I?"

Penrallt wishes you all a very happy Christmas and we invite you to our services. If you take Jesus out of Christmas you're left with an emptiness in your universe that no Argos catalogue will ever fill.

God bless,  
**Peter**

## ***SERVICES IN DECEMBER***

### **December 4**

10.30am ***Christmas in Egypt:***

*Genesis 49:9-12*

2.15pm Service in Bontnewydd

6.00pm Communion Service: ***Christmas in Jordan*** *Job 1:1-3; 42: 10-16*

### **December 11**

10.30am Sunday School Christmas Service

6.00pm Upper Bangor Community Carols by Candlelight Service

### **December 18**

10.30am Geoff Birch ***Joseph – the Unsung Hero of the Christmas Story***

*Matthew 1:18-25; 2:13-23*

5 – 8pm ***A Prayer Blanket For Jesus*** (See below for details.)

### **December 25**

10.30am Family Service (Children: please bring one present to show us all)

*There will be an offering for two local charities, GISDA and the Women's Refuge.*

No evening service.

## **January 1**

10.30am Family Service

No evening service.

### ***A PRAYER BLANKET FOR JESUS* Sunday, December 18, 5.00 - 8:00pm**

An alternative Christmas experience for anyone tired of the Christmas stress. Bring some strips of cloth you can cut into 2cm strips (we can provide the cloth if you have none), write a prayer on each and join us in weaving a blanket for Jesus on our 2 metre loom. Then wander around the prayer stations at your own speed before joining us for mince pies in the hall. Come any time between 5 and 8pm and capture the true beauty of Christmas. If you have some extra cloth to donate for the event, please speak to Andrew March.

### ***COMMUNITY CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT* Sunday, December 11, 6.00pm**

Once again we have invited the community groups from the Canolfan to share the evening with us. This makes for a different style of service so please do not expect the traditional format. We will have two choirs performing, as well as our own ensemble. No belly dancers this year (they no longer meet in Penrallt but we are hoping for some Scottish Country Dancing. It is a wonderful evening. Don't miss it.

### ***CHURCH LUNCH***

We will host a church lunch on **Sunday December 4<sup>th</sup>**. Please bring enough buffet style "finger food" for yourselves and one or two others. (Please note that Church Lunch in January will be on Sunday January 8<sup>th</sup>.)

### ***Faith Café***

The last Faith Café before Christmas will be on December 4<sup>th</sup>. Faith Café is for students and young adults. Starting around 7:15 pm it is an evening of chat, interviews, music and discussions.

## ***SPECIAL DATES IN DECEMBER***

<b>Saturday 3</b>	Women's Retreat Day (See below for details.)
<b>Monday 5</b>	7.30pm Deacons' Meeting
	7.00pm Illustrated Talk ' <i>Bits of Bangor</i> ' by Peter Brindley in Canolfan Penrallt (organized by the Upper Bangor Society)
<b>Wednesday 7</b>	10:30am Men's Prayer Meeting.
<b>Thursday 8</b>	7:30pm Christian Union Carol Service in the Cathedral
<b>Monday 12</b>	7.00pm Bangor University Carol Service in the Cathedral.
<b>Friday 16</b>	6.00pm JAM Christmas Party
	6:30-7:30pm CYTUN Carol Singing for Christian Aid in Morrisons

## **WOMEN'S RETREAT**

**Saturday, December 3, from 10.30am**

There are a few places remaining for our Women's Retreat at The Coach House on the theme "The Light of Heaven come down to Earth". 10.30am coffee for 11am start. Free lunch provided. Come for as long or short time as you wish, but we will finish by 4pm. Directions and details available from Nancy Brook (422272) or Billy Elliot (372568). This is an opportunity to take time to draw aside from the business of the pre-Christmas season to be in God's presence – through worship, sharing, quiet meditation and creative prayer themes – preparing our hearts to bring the Light of Christ into our homes and communities.

## **Church Meeting**

The next meeting for Church Members will be on **Monday 9<sup>th</sup> January** at 7:30pm. As we will approve the budget at this meeting, it is absolutely essential that we are quorate. Please mark it in your diary now and make every effort to attend.

## **WEEKDAYS**

**Please check with the contact people when there are meetings this month.**

*HG = Home Group*

<b>Day</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Contacts</b>
<b>Tue</b>	8.00pm	HG, Nilgiri	Joan Beer (353874)
<b>Tue</b>	7.30pm	HG, Tyddyn Isaf, Menai Bridge	Magnus Forrester-Barker (717570)
<b>Wed</b>	10.30am	Men's Prayer Meeting	Peter Cousins (353878)
<b>Wed</b>	2.00pm	Carers' Home Group	Carol Morris (716953)
<b>Wed</b>	7.00pm	HG for young adults, Bangor	Danielle Fifield (07849935707)
<b>Wed</b>	7.30pm	HG, The Nomads	Jess & Seamus Adams (421185) Susan Cousins (353878)
<b>Wed</b>	7.30pm	HG, Bethesda	Jon & Deb Stammers (602868)
<b>Wed</b>	8.00pm	HG, Grŵp Cymraeg	Owen & Nia Lloyd Evans (352634)
<b>Thu</b>	10.30am	Post-Alpha Bible Study	Sue & Lawrence Moss (713793)
<b>Thu</b>	7.30pm	HG, Llanfairpwll	Sue & Lawrence Moss (713793)
<b>Thu</b>	7.45pm	HG, Lon-y-Deri	<i>Watch this space!</i>
<b>Fri</b>	10.30am - noon	Cheeky Monkeys	Joan Rymer (713003)
<b>Fri</b>	10.30 – 12.30pm	HG, 6 Maes y Dref	Anne Collis (353173) anne@collis66.freeseve.co.uk
<b>Sat</b>	8.30am	Prayer Meeting	

## ***NEWS OF PEOPLE***

We are pleased to report that **Mark Young** is now out of hospital. The family thanks everyone for their prayers and support. **James and Gill Goodman** will be moving to their new home in Anglesey at the beginning of December. **Jenny and Bob Powley's** move to the Leeds area is imminent. We wish them God's blessing in their new home.

### ***Children's Birthdays in December***

**8<sup>th</sup>**: Evan Young; **14<sup>th</sup>**: Lowri Brook and Alun Hughes;  
**19<sup>th</sup>**: Jordan Evans; **29<sup>th</sup>**: Anna Walker

## ***NOTICEBOARD***

➤ ***Men's Prayer Meeting Wednesday 7 December 10.30am***  
The men will meet for prayer as usual, followed by coffee in Options.

➤ ***Walking Group Tuesday 20 December 10.30am***  
We are meeting at Paul and Ruth's home on Anglesey. Head to Llangoed on the A545 and drive straight through the village up the hill to the T-junction at the top. Turn left and then take the second right. Continue a short way along a narrow lane with cottages on the left and where it widens out go to the right down a bumpy track, marked "Private Road". You will pass the farm house on your right at the bottom of the hill, go straight ahead where you can park in front of the barn. A circular walk is planned from two to five miles depending on the weather (bring a packed lunch). On our return to the barn there will be an opportunity to view photos taken during our first year of walking and to enjoy some seasonal refreshments. Any queries telephone Paul and Ruth on 01248 490581 or email paul.hebblethwaite@virgin.net

➤ ***Bangor Community Church Christmas Lunch***  
Every year it is our privilege to help Bangor Community Church provide Christmas Day lunch for about 50 guests who would otherwise be on their own on that day. Please give your donations of money to Colin and Christine King, 11 Deiniol Road, Bangor. 01248 352457.

➤ ***Advance Notice of Course: Cognitive Behaviour Therapy in a Christian Context***  
Dr. Paul Hebblethwaite is offering this short course over four consecutive Tuesday evenings from 7 pm to 9.15 pm starting **10<sup>th</sup> January 2012**. This course is for individuals who wish to learn something about CBT and how it can be utilised to help them and others to develop more truthful and balanced thinking and beliefs and how this can work alongside their Christian faith. Paul has run two of these courses to date for church members and they were well received. No knowledge of CBT is required.

➤ ***Recommended Book To Accompany Sermons***

From January 16<sup>th</sup> the morning services will follow the thirteen chapters of John Ortberg's excellent book *The Life You've Always Wanted: Spiritual Disciplines for Ordinary People*. We recommend that you buy the book and use it in your private spiritual devotional along with the sermons. The book also contains very good study guides for home groups. We hope to be selling the book from the Welcome Desk in coming weeks.

➤ ***Special Christmas Gifts***

Check out Bible Society's website for 10% off all your Bible-based gifts.  
<http://shop.biblesociety.org.uk/shop/filter/Christmas/>

➤ ***Penrallt on Facebook***

100 people are signed up to Penrallt's Facebook site. Join us.

➤ ***Volunteers***

Volunteers are needed to help in a work with children to be held in the Cathedral on the day of the Bangor Christmas event, Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December from 11-2pm. Please get in touch with the Cathedral staff if you are interested.

➤ ***Homeless in Bangor***

We do not recommend giving money to the homeless. Instead, £5 in one of the brown envelopes from the table in the porch of the church (placed in the offering) will buy a hot meal for them through the St. Mary's Hostel scheme. So far Penrallt has contributed £2755 to the fund.

➤ ***The Prayer Room...***

...is open before and after the service for quiet prayer. Penrallt is a place of prayer, so make use of this sacred space.

➤ ***Pray for Penrallt Every Day***

Sign up to receive our prayer diary by e-mail every Monday morning by sending your request to: [office@penrallt.org](mailto:office@penrallt.org).

If you have some subject for prayer, either send it in by e-mail, or fill in one of the pink cards, which are available in the porch, and place it in the visitors' cards box or give it to Peter or Magnus.

➤ ***Pastoral Help***

If you have pastoral concerns please contact Peter or one of the other members of the Pastoral Care team:

Geoff Birch 01286 870944      Pat Borlace 713146,      Eunice Smith 713296,  
Judy Stammers 364394      Geoff Moore 410582

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***Deadline for next month's newsletter***      Sunday 18 December

Please send information to Gwyneth  
([gwyneth@brindley-wales.com](mailto:gwyneth@brindley-wales.com) or 352682)