



# Penrallt Baptist Church

**Newsletter: December 2020**

The Bible is full of Hope in the midst of adversity. In a recent sermon, I quoted Martin Luther King who said, "We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope"

It has been a difficult and tragic year. We approach Christmas with a mixture of emotions. I find that my heart is lifted and gladdened by the lights and sounds of Christmas, but I'm also fully aware that there is also struggle and difficulty all around us. Many of us feel bereft in some way of our usual Christmas arrangements with friends and families. We also feel bereft of Christmas opportunities as a fellowship. Many of us are carrying the sadness of losses personally. Carrying bereavements or difficulties which have been brought on us by this awful pandemic or exacerbated by it. We acknowledge this. We recognise it and we wrap it up in the love of the God who sees us, walks with us, bears our burdens, promises never to leave our side, carries us and then takes the ultimate burden of our sin to the cross and dies for us in his eternal love.

Jesus was born into a context of oppression, poverty and danger. Jesus also brought hope to those living in that very context. Elizabeth says to Mary, "Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfil his promises to her!" Mary responds in song saying, "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour". A multitude of angels sing *glory to God* putting on a magnificent show to a group of poor and unheeded Shepherds. They respond and go to worship Jesus. Bewildered, yet thankful, hopeful and expectant.

It is not going to be possible to change all of our circumstances in time for Christmas, but it is possible to make the best of the opportunities that we have. We too 'must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope'. I believe that many people across the world will look at services who otherwise would not

---

Penrallt Baptist Church, Holyhead Road, Bangor LL57 2EU

Tel: 07934 231788; Email: [office@penrallt.org](mailto:office@penrallt.org); Website: [www.penrallt.org](http://www.penrallt.org)  
Office hours: Mon–Fri 10am – 3pm; Administrator: Magnus Forrester-Barker

Minister: John Thompson; 07931 150697; [minister@penrallt.org](mailto:minister@penrallt.org)  
Secretary: Owen Lloyd-Evans; 07941 612868; [secretary@penrallt.org](mailto:secretary@penrallt.org)  
Treasurer: Averil Francis; 01248 421744; [treasurer@penrallt.org](mailto:treasurer@penrallt.org)

have engaged with anything this Christmas. Many will look at the testimony of Penrallt online this Christmas as we proclaim that Christmas is special because Christ is special.

So do invite everyone you know (wherever they live!) to as much of our Christmas programme as you can. And we pray that our online programme at Penrallt and our personal and corporate witness to his love and light will reach people with the good news of the coming of Jesus and that this really will be a Christmas which ***brings good news that causes great joy for many people.*** We pray that people would find infinite hope this Christmas as we seek to share the arrival of hope, love, peace, joy and light in Jesus. We can also be 'thankful, hopeful and expectant'. But most of all we pray that individually and corporately, this Christmas we would bring glory to God.

Blessings,

*John*

### ***Christingle: Friday 24<sup>th</sup> December at 4pm***

Join us live on Zoom on Christmas Eve as we celebrate the arrival of Christ, the Light of the World. Register in advance to be sent materials to make a Christingle (please buy your own orange). We then light these together and have a brief service by candlelight. Ideal for families and the young at heart. An EventBrite link will soon be available on the church website; **please register by 16<sup>th</sup> December** so we have time to send you your Christingle Pack. *Please note that registration is required as this is an online event for children* (you don't need to have children in order to attend, but you do need to register).

#### ***Church Office***

The church administrator, Magnus, can be contacted on office@penrallt.org or 07934 231788 during the church office opening hours (10am – 3pm Monday to Friday, except Bank Holidays). *NB Magnus is working from home at the moment but office hours still apply. Even if you have his other phone numbers, please do not use them for work-related purposes except in case of emergency.* The office will be closed from 24<sup>th</sup> December and will reopen on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January.

#### **Deadline for next month's newsletter: Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December**

*Please send information to Magnus (office@penrallt.org). All items should be submitted by email as early as possible.*

## ***Services This Month***

All our Christmas services this year are online. All are open to everyone, including students. Please feel free to browse the online services or join the Zoom meetings with or without a camera. The Zoom meetings are at set times but the service pages are available at any time once they are up (usually by the day before the given date) – the listed time for these is the recommended time to start in order to be able to join us on Zoom for a chat straight afterwards. More details are (or soon will be) available on our website: [www.penrallt.org](http://www.penrallt.org).

### **6<sup>th</sup> December:**

- \* 10:30am *How the arrival of Jesus brings love.*  
Preacher: Siân Rees (Evangelical Alliance Wales).

### **13<sup>th</sup> December:**

- \* 10:30am Nativity Service led by our Sunday Schools.
- \* 6:30 – 7:30pm Café Church. An interactive informal service on Zoom with a brief Christmas reflection, discussion in smaller breakout groups and some more contemporary music. Also includes a “best looking home baked mince pie” competition. Particularly popular with students and young people.

### **20<sup>th</sup> December:**

- \* 10:30am NWBA Carol Service. We will be joining in with the service for the North Western Baptist Association. This is also available afterwards online. (*NB the time was originally advertised as 10am*)
- \* 4pm Penrallt Carol Service. On Zoom, hosted at Penrallt Church. This is also available afterwards online.

### **24<sup>th</sup> December:**

- \* 4pm Christingle Service. On Zoom, hosted at Penrallt Church. See the previous page for details.

### **25<sup>th</sup> December:**

- \* 10:30am Christmas Day service. An informal 30 minute service live on Zoom.

### **27<sup>th</sup> December:**

- \* 10:30am Communion service.  
*I wish it could be Christmas every day?* Preacher: Bob Woods.  
Communion will be live on Zoom at 11:30am, led by Lesley Jackson. You will need bread and wine (or equivalent) to fully take part.

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

23<sup>rd</sup>: Finley Lemon

### ◇ **Advent Reflections**

If you have not already obtained a copy, our Advent devotional guide is available to download from our [website](#). We encourage you to use this to help prepare yourself for Christmas.

### ◇ **Bags of Blessing**

This Christmas we will be blessing various community groups and organisations (such as the hospital, nursing / care homes with which we have connections, police stations and fire stations etc.) with chocolate and other good things, in thanks for the hard work they have done this year and as a token of our love, and our Heavenly Father's love, for them. We will be praying for these groups in our carol service on 20<sup>th</sup> December. If you would like to help share the blessing please contact the church office.

### ◇ **Building**

We are hoping to be able to restart some activities in our building soon but for the moment please do not enter unless absolutely necessary and even in that case please contact the church office beforehand.

### ◇ **Café Church: 13<sup>th</sup> December at 6:30pm**

Our monthly Sunday evening Café Church is an informal, interactive service taking place on Zoom. This month's service will be suitably festive, with a brief Christmas reflection, discussion in smaller breakout groups and some more contemporary music, as well as a "best looking home baked mince pie" competition. A link will be available on the church website.

### ◇ **Cytûn Christmas Trail: In Search of Christmas**

From 12<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> December 2020. Starting at the St Vincent de Paul shop window in Bangor High Street (opposite WHSmith book shop), follow the trail around Bangor town centre and scan the QR code at each location to see short videos that tell the Christmas story.

### ◇ **Fellowship Walk: Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December**

We hope to have a walk on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December along the sea front at Dinas Dinlle, meeting at 1:30pm. Due to covid restrictions places are limited and must be booked in advance at [www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/penrallt-fellowship-walk-december-tickets-129661875159](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/penrallt-fellowship-walk-december-tickets-129661875159)

### ◇ **Foodbank**

Bangor Cathedral Foodbank is open 2 – 3pm every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, operating from Tŷ Deiniol (the Diocesan Centre) next to Bangor Cathedral. A referral from another service is normally required to access the foodbank but they are able to give people up to two emergency food parcels without a referral. To find out more about how you can access or contribute to the foodbank please visit [www.bangorfoodbank.org](http://www.bangorfoodbank.org)

### ◇ **Giving**

We quite understand that financial difficulties may impact your ability to give to the work of the church at this time. Please do not place yourself under additional financial strain. However, if you normally give to the weekly cash offering and would like to explore other ways of giving to the work at Penrallt, please speak to Averil, our Treasurer, who will be able to advise (treasurer@penrallt.org).

### ◇ **Hardship Fund**

The church has a small fund overseen by the minister to help people in need. If you find yourself in financial difficulty or know someone else that is struggling, please speak with Sarah Jackson (sarah.jackson.home@gmail.com) or John Thompson (minister@penrallt.org) in confidence. And if you are in a position to add to the hardship fund, please speak to Averil Francis (treasurer@penrallt.org).

### ◇ **Homegroups / Contact, Care & Prayer**

We encourage you to join one of our homegroups if you are not already in one, as they are invaluable in helping us to deepen our relationship with the Lord and with one another. While we are unable to meet physically, the groups are meeting on Zoom and other online platforms on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday evenings and on Tuesday and Friday mornings (most groups meet weekly). Contact the church office to find out more or be put in touch with a group.

There are contact, care and prayer groups to enable people to stay connected and receive prayer support even if they are not in a homegroup; unlike the homegroups these groups do not meet together but each one has a designated person to contact the other group members regularly. Once again, please contact the church office if you are not part of a contact, care & prayer group or a homegroup and would like to be.

### ◇ **Pastoral Help**

If you have issues of concern about your own or someone else's welfare, please contact a member of the Pastoral Care team: Magnus Forrester-Barker (07890 109645); Geoff Moore (01248 410582); Monica Morris (01407 840439), John Thompson (07931 150697).

## ◇ **Penrallt on Facebook**

We have three Facebook groups:

- *Penrallt* ([www.facebook.com/groups/2402772192](http://www.facebook.com/groups/2402772192))  
a general group for information and social interaction
- *Penrallt Prayer Point* ([www.facebook.com/groups/302627593231755](http://www.facebook.com/groups/302627593231755))  
a private group (as defined by Facebook, i.e. request to join)  
specifically to share prayer requests and encouragements
- *Penrallt Students* ([www.facebook.com/groups/195300234272943](http://www.facebook.com/groups/195300234272943))

## ◇ **Prayer Resources**

Send prayer requests, thanksgivings and testimonies to our email prayer diary via [office@penrallt.org](mailto:office@penrallt.org) – email this address, too, to subscribe to the prayer diary, which goes out every week (usually on Mondays). We also have a Facebook prayer group (see above) which allows more interactive sharing of prayer requests and updates, and prayer meetings via Zoom on Wednesday lunchtimes at noon and Saturday mornings at 8:30am (please contact the church office if you need the connection details for either meeting).

The Baptist Union have prayer broadcasts on Wednesday evenings at [www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/338268/Prayer\\_broadcasts.aspx](http://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/338268/Prayer_broadcasts.aspx), as well as other resources at [www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/337630/Coronavirus.aspx](http://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/337630/Coronavirus.aspx) and at [www.nwba.org.uk/](http://www.nwba.org.uk/) with encouraging articles and stories, prayer broadcasts and reflections.

## ◇ **Prayer Service**

We are intending to hold a prayer service in the chapel on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December. On this occasion it is only open to church members, who will receive the details separately, but we hope to have further meetings early in the new year which will be open to the wider congregation.

## ◇ **Shopping**

Do you need help with shopping? Or does someone you know need help with shopping? We would love to help. We have a small team of volunteers able to shop for those cannot get to the shops themselves. If you would like to use this service, or join the team, please contact the church office ([office@penrallt.org](mailto:office@penrallt.org)).

## ◇ **Tearfund Big Quiz**

A big thank you to everyone who assisted, participated and contributed to the Tearfund's Big Night Quiz. Penrallt raised over £500 plus Gift Aid.

£393 raised will pay for 300 households to receive vital farming training so they can learn new skills to feed their families and lift themselves out of poverty.

*Focus on...*

## Gobaith Môn



Gobaith Môn is a Christian youth initiative run by the churches of Anglesey. Their aim is to bring hope to the young people on the island through the work they do in local schools, youth clubs and events. This month's Focus article describing the current work of Gobaith Môn is brought to you in a YouTube video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qgt28-LFzm0>

Please watch it.

Here are a few pictures to supplement the video:



*Keren, Amy & Ellis*



*Message Trust Higher Tour (February 2020)*