



Penrallt Baptist Church

Newsletter: March 2014

From the Minister:

"With or without religion, you would have good people doing good things and evil people doing evil things. But for good people to do evil things, that takes religion."

Steven Weinberg, quoted in The New York Times, April 20, 1999

It's one of those shallow anti-religion sound bytes that gets retweeted and repasted around the internet. In fact it's pretty tame. Try this one for measure:

"You miserable religious experts! Hypocrites!

You travel over sea and land to make one convert.

But when they've been converted, they become twice the child of hell you are."

Now that's plain talking. No, it wasn't said by Weinberg (a physicist) but by Jesus (the Saviour; see Matthew 23:15). Truth is that Jesus hated it when religion is used to manipulate people.

But unlike Weinberg he didn't simplistically divide the human population into the good people and the bad people. He recognised that we are all a mixture of both good and bad. We are all part of the problem. In the West we have carved out a clever and stable world where we don't have to fight to protect our property, fight to protect our land, or fight to protect our interests. We pay police, army and politicians to fight the battles for us. But we are still a strange mixture of good intentions and bad outcomes. We leave too many people hurt in our wake as we forge through life's stormy seas.

Sure, you can use religion as an excuse to beat someone. You can use anything: a political ideal, the colour of the skin, a tribal ethnicity, an accent, colour of hair, a football team, a sexual orientation, the school attended, the postcode lived in. Once you've created an 'us' and a 'them' you have the beginnings of so-called good people doing bad things. Religion has no worse a track record than atheism in inventing inquisitions. And we are all capable of bullying, hurting, snubbing, and sniping. Jesus said all that is evil comes from the human heart. Don't go looking for external explanations and don't be fooled by the veneer of civility that our society has artificially created. All atrocities are committed by people who might otherwise be good neighbours, generous to charities and kind to dumb animals.

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What Weinberg cannot do is change the human heart. He cannot persuade the rich, contented, comfortable middle classes (to which he belongs) to sacrifice their comfort, their wealth, their careers to help the poor, the victims, the voiceless. Jesus can. Because it is following Jesus that motivates people to see the presence of God in the eyes of the desperate and serve them.

Weinberg's philosophy is bleak. He whines: "*The effort to understand the universe is one of the very few things that lifts human life a little above the level of farce, and gives it some of the grace of tragedy.*" So get your A-level Science and pretend that life has meaning. Or follow Jesus and discover that God's love will turn the evil in you to the good. Your choice.

God bless,

Peter

Services This Month:

2 March

10:30am Speaker: Andy Wilson.

Growing into the 'new life'.

1 Peter 1:13-2:3; John 15:9-17.

2:15pm Service at Bontnewydd.

6:00pm Communion Service. Speaker: Andy Wilson.

Transformation and Ministry.

Romans 12.

9 March

10:30am Speaker: Archdeacon Paul Davies.

6:00pm **Hanging on to God.**

Genesis 22:22-32.

16 March

10:30am and 6pm *The services today will be led by Roger Jones and team (see below).*

23 March

10:30am **Decisive Moments.**

Acts 13:13-15, 42-52.

6:00pm **Slowing down and eyeing the target.**

Psalms 1:1-3.

30 March

10:30am Communion Service.

Acts 14:1-28.

A tale of three towns: don't expect growth without trouble.

6:00pm Speaker: Roger Borlace.

The Importance of Listening to God.

John 14:15-27.

Our Speakers

Peter Cousins is the minister of the church and is the speaker except where otherwise noted. **Roger Borlace** is a retired Baptist Minister, member of Penrallt. **Andy Wilson** is a member of Penrallt and a graduate of Bangor University who now works as a campaigner for Tearfund, the Christian relief agency. His parents, Ellen and Jack, are regular members of our congregation. **Archdeacon Paul Davies** is a good friend of Penrallt, whose children are members of our JAM club. **Roger Jones** is a musician and an Anglican lay reader from Birmingham. He will be here with his team for the weekend, leading our *Worship Works* day on the Saturday (see Noticeboard, below, for details) as well as our Sunday services.

Church Lunch

We will host a church lunch on **Sunday March 2nd**. Please bring enough buffet style 'finger food' for yourselves and one or two others.

Faith Café

After church on Sunday evenings we host Faith Café for teenagers, students and other young adults. Starting around 7:15pm it is an evening of chat, interviews, music and discussions. There is a short programme at around 7:40pm after which you are free to leave or stay and chat.

Dates For Your Diary:

Monday 3	7:30pm	Deacons' Meeting.
Tuesday 4	7-9pm	Pastoral Care Course (see below).
Wednesday 5	10:30am	Men's Prayer Meeting followed by coffee in Options.
Saturday 8	9:30am-1pm	<i>Bible Unzipped</i> in Rhos on Sea URC Church (see below).
Monday 10	2pm	Pastoral Care Team meeting.
Saturday 15	10am-4:30pm	<i>Worship Works</i> with Roger Jones and team (see below).
Monday 17	10:30am	Church Walk (see below).
Saturday 22	10am-4pm	Fresh Expressions Vision Day at The Management Centre, Bangor University (see below).
Friday 28	7pm-1am	Half Night of Prayer (see below).
Saturday 29		<i>The 8.30 am prayer meeting will be cancelled because of the half night of prayer.</i>

Further details of the events noted can be found in the Noticeboard section later in this newsletter.

News of People:

Congratulations to **Siân and Tim Whitton** on the birth of Afan Hedd Aethwy last month, weighing 7lb 3ozs, and to Tim on obtaining his PhD. Congratulations to **Nichola Peet** on her engagement to Neil.

Our condolences to **Ellie and Giles** on the death of Brian.

We have had a card from Helen, daughter-in-law of **Marilyn and Geoff**, and her family thanking Penrallt for praying for over the last year.

Children's Birthdays in March:

8th: Molly Wheatcroft **12th:** Nicola Wheatcroft
13th: James Howie **14th:** Ted Goodwin

Weekday Events:

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

HG = Home Group

Day	Time	Details	Contacts
Tue	8:00pm	HG, Nilgiri	Joan Beer (353874)
Tue	7:30pm	HG Tyddyn Isaf (Menai Bridge)	Magnus Forrester-Barker (717570)
Wed	2:00pm	HG, Carers	Carol Morris (208407)
Wed	7:00pm	HG, Students	Ben Bowden-Pickstock (07872 531601)
Wed	7:30pm	HG, Bethesda	Jon & Deb Stammers (602868)
Wed	7:30pm	HG, Cymraeg	Owen & Nia Evans (352634)
Wed	7:30pm	HG, Maes y Dref (pm)	Anne Collis (353173)
Wed	7:30pm	HG, Nomads	Susan Cousins (353878)
Thu	10:30am	HG, Llanfairpwll (am)	Sue & Lawrence Moss (713793)
Thu	7:30pm	HG, Llanfairpwll (pm)	Sue & Lawrence Moss (713793)
Fri	10:30am-12pm	Cheeky Monkeys (parent & toddler group)	Joan Rymer (713003)
Fri	10:30am-12:30pm	HG, Maes y Dref (am)	Anne Collis (353173)
Sat	8:30am	Prayer Meeting	

Noticeboard:

◇ **Bible Unzipped**

Saturday 8 March

9:30am-1pm

Bible Unzipped aims to unpack Scripture with those interested in learning more than can be offered in a Sunday sermon. It also equips those leading in the church with some tools for studying and teaching from the Bible. It meets monthly on a Saturday morning at Rhos-on-Sea URC from 9:30am to 1pm, usually on the second Saturday. Each morning includes three sessions which develop a theme through the term. The themes this month are: Mark's Gospel, Bible Translation and The Time Traveller's Guide to the Reformation (Merrie England). The course is free and we may be able to offer you a lift. Talk to Peter if you are interested. About 9 members of Penrallt attend.

◇ **Church Walk**

Monday 17 March

Geoff and Marilyn Birch will be leading the March walk which will start from their village of Brynrefail. Park on the street or in Caban car park. We will see how the weather is as to which route we take to and around Llanberis. The walk will be approximately 5 miles and reasonably easy walking and will start at 10:30am. Any queries, ring Geoff and Marilyn on 01286 870944.

◇ **Evening Service Welcome Team**

As numbers are increasing at the Sunday evening service we are thinking of getting a team together to welcome people at the door. We are hoping this will be done on a rota basis. If you are interested in becoming part of this team, please speak to Eve Malone (phone: 01248 431296 / 07522 120000; email: malone.eve@gmail.com)

◇ **Free Lent Bible Study for Home Groups or individuals**

Looking for a good Lent study for your home group?

Our friend John Weaver has prepared one for free download off the South Wales Baptist Association website: <http://www.southwalesbaptistassociation.org.uk/lent-studies/>

◇ **Fresh Expressions Vision Day**

Saturday 22 March

9:45 for 10am – 4pm

What is the future for the Christian Church in the UK? A day of studies and optional workshops: interactive learning with presentations, interviews, stories, activities and questions. Learn how fresh expressions of church are developing and can develop in your context.. It will be held at the Management Centre, College Road, Bangor. The day is **free** but bring your own packed lunch or use the on-site facilities. For more information or to book: Tracie Darke admin@cwmeurope.org 01295 817621. (Fresh Expressions is a national movement begun in 2004 by the Anglicans and Methodists.) We highly commend this day to you.

◇ **Gardener Wanted**

Andrew Metheringham has worked hard over the last few years in tending to and maintaining the garden and grounds around Penrallt. He has decided to hang up his gardening gloves and we would like to thank him for the excellent job he has done and for the enjoyment he has provided to all those who use and walk past Penrallt.

We are therefore on the look out for some new green-fingered helpers! If you are able to spare some time to help maintain the garden then please see/contact Andrew Lemon (01248 353743; lemonandy@hotmail.com).

◇ **Half Night of Prayer** *Friday 28 March* *7pm-1am*

The aim of this prayer evening is to support and surround the direction, leadership and activities of Penrallt in prayer before God. Please contact Andrew March (01286 871630; dtp4you13@gmail.com) to find out more or to supply information for prayer. The event will take place in the sanctuary (aka. the chapel) and you are welcome to come for the whole thing or drop in or out at any time.

◇ **Men's Prayer Meeting** *Wednesday 5 March* *10:30am*

The men will meet for prayer as usual this month. Time spent in prayer will be followed by coffee in Options. All are welcome to join us.

◇ **Pastoral Care Course** *Tuesday 4 March* *7-9pm*

By popular request we have extended the Pastoral Care Course by one week to include the topic *What Could I Say to Someone With Dementia?* This will be delivered by Rev Dr Diane Holmes who is a specialist in this area. Even if you missed our previous evenings you are welcome to attend this one.

◇ **Penrallt on BBC Radio Wales** *Tuesday 1 April* *7-9:30pm*

The BBC have asked us again to produce two services to be broadcast on Easter Sunday and Pentecost Sunday. These will both be pre-recorded on the same evening. Please can we ask you ring-fence this in your diary and be present, with loud voice, to lead our nation in praise!

◇ **Worship Works** *Saturday 15 March* *10am-4:30pm*

This will be a day of teaching and workshops at Penrallt on the theme of worship. This will be led by Roger Jones and his team from Christian Music Ministries in Birmingham. Sessions include *The Worship Seeker*, *Planning and Leading Praise*, and *Prophetic Worship - Sing a New Song*. The day will cost £5.00 (no need to book in advance, just pay at the door); tea and coffee will be provided but please bring a packed lunch. This should be a very inspiring and encouraging day — please spread the word to friends in other churches.

Roger's team will also be leading our services on Sunday 16 March.

WANTED: People who would be willing to host members of the team for 3 nights from Friday 14 to Monday 17 March. Speak to Deb Stammers if you can help.

◇ **Homeless in Bangor**

Please do not give money directly to the homeless in Upper Bangor. We have found in the past that it has encouraged aggressive begging on the church premises by people who have a history of violence. You will find brown envelopes in the porch to put your gift in. This will buy meal vouchers which are distributed to the homeless by the Cathedral.

◇ **Pastoral Help**

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

Pat Borlace 713146
Judy Stammers 364394

Geoff Moore 410582
Helen Thomas 600174

◇ **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.

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. Please note that in addition to the pink prayer request cards, there are also blue testimony/thanksgiving cards and yellow "Listening to God" cards that can also be filled in and submitted for the prayer diary.

From the Church Office: Advance Notices

Further details of these events will follow. Please note the dates in your diary:

◇ **Passover Meal**

Thursday 17 April

We are planning to hold a Passover meal in Canolfan Penrallt on Maundy Thursday evening. There will be limited places available so please watch out for further information regarding tickets.

◇ **A Good Friday Reflection**

Friday 18 April 5-7pm (time TBC)

There will be an opportunity to drop in to Penrallt on the evening of Good Friday to prepare yourself for Easter with a time of prayer and meditation.

Deadline for next month's newsletter: Sunday 23 March.

Please send information to Magnus (office@penrallt.org; 01248 353355)

NB email is the preferred way to submit information for the newsletter, if possible (and it is strongly recommended that you don't rely on verbal requests for items to be included)!