



Penrallt Baptist Church

Newsletter: December 2021

A Divine Opportunity

Christmas is a gift. It is a divine opportunity. God is with us here on earth. Christmas is a key which opens doors into whole new areas of life. There is an opportunity to reconnect with family and friends. There is an opportunity to spend time in relaxing social environments with work colleagues. There is an opportunity to worship and have fun and fellowship. There is an opportunity to enjoy ourselves and to celebrate. And then to rest and recharge.

Christmas is also a challenge. The arrival of the light of Christ illuminates all the areas of our lives and our world. There is a unique openness in the Christmas season to talk about Jesus and what he means to us. This can be in our society and with our families, friends and work colleagues. There is the challenge of becoming more deeply connected personally with Jesus in prayer and study as we reflect on the wonder of the Christmas story. There is the challenge of how we follow the model of Jesus in blessing others – how we help the poor and the lonely. Also remembering those for whom this has been a really hard year – including our key workers. There is the challenge of being generous and making Christmas a positive time for all.

As a church, we are very excited to be running an Alpha course in late January. Please take the opportunity that Christmas provides to invite people to this which is on Sunday evenings starting on 30th January. If you've not done it before, why not do it yourself!

Penrallt will also be blessing teachers, school workers and some other key workers with chocolates this year. Please get involved in blessing others who you know too.

Penrallt Baptist Church, Holyhead Road, Bangor LL57 2EU

Tel: 07934 231788; Email: office@penrallt.org; Website: www.penrallt.org
Office hours: Mon–Fri 10am – 3pm; Administrator: Magnus Forrester-Barker

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

So let's be prayerful, mindful and intentional about who we are throughout the whole of the Christmas season. In every area of our lives. Let's seize the opportunities and the challenges in God's strength and in his Holy Spirit as he leads us. And let's allow the divine blessing of Christmas to fill us and overflow to others.

2 Corinthians 9v15: Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

John

Service of Remembering and Thanksgiving

There will be a service of Remembering and Thanksgiving at Penrallt on Wednesday 1st December at 6:30pm. This is a service where we will be remembering and giving thanks for those who have died and were close to us. This service may not be for all, but many in our church community and in our wider community may have lost loved ones over the past year. Some perhaps will have not had the opportunity to reflect on this or to process this as much as they would have wanted due to Covid restrictions. Others will find that the Christmas season whilst bringing joy, also brings difficult memories and feelings. Some may be acutely aware at this time of the loss of loved ones in recent years or long ago. There will be some readings and songs and a brief reflection to help us to reflect, to remember and to give thanks before God and in his presence. So please come if you would find this useful.

Children's Birthdays in December

23rd: Finley Lemon

Church Office

The church administrator, Magnus, can be contacted on office@penrallt.org or 07934 231788 during the church office opening hours (10am – 4pm Monday to Friday, except Bank Holidays). *NB Magnus is still working mostly from home at the moment, but the office hours still apply. He is usually in the office on Tuesday and Friday afternoons but it's as well to check before travelling in to see him.*

The office (physical or virtual) will be closed for Christmas from Thursday 23rd December and reopening on Monday 3rd January 2022. Please speak to one of the deacons if you need to get in touch.

Deadline for next month's newsletter: Thursday 16th December

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

Services This Month

Our services at the moment are all in a hybrid format, with a small congregation in the building and others joining us on Zoom, except where otherwise noted. It is not currently necessary to book places for the service but other Covid regulations remain in place and the situation could change at short notice so please keep an eye on our website (www.penrallt.org/services) for up to date information, as well as the link for the Zoom meeting and recordings of past services, where available.

Sunday services start at 10:30am. Children and young people go out part way through the service for Sunday school (Primary school / up to 11) or *Deeper* (Secondary school / 11 – 17); there are also crèche facilities available if you have very young children.

Wednesday 1st December, 6:30pm

Service of remembering and thanksgiving. See previous page for more details. Note that this service will not be broadcast.

Sunday 5th December

Advent: Love Is God's Message. Service with our mission partners Chris & Anna Hembury from Hull YFC.

Sunday 12th December

Nativity Service led by our Sunday school and young people.

Sunday 19th December

Advent: Joy Is God's Heart. Preacher: John Thompson.

Friday 24th December, 4:30pm

Christingle Service. See next page for more details. Note that this service will not be broadcast.

Saturday 25th December, 10:30am

Christmas morning service.

Sunday 26th November

Boxing Day service (website only).

Note that the communion that would usually take place on the last Sunday of the month will be postponed until our all-age New Year service on 2nd January 2022.

Prayer Meeting: Wednesday 8th December at 7:30pm in the chapel. For more details of this and our weekly Zoom prayer meetings, see Prayer Resources later in this newsletter.

Christmas is Coming

As well as the services mentioned on the previous page, our Advent and Christmas program will include the following events:

Friday 17th December: Cytûn Carol Singing at Morrisons for Christian Aid (6pm). We will be outside so wrap up warm. Please wear a facemask. Please do not come if you have tested positive for Covid, have symptoms or are a close contact of someone who has tested positive. Participants are encouraged to do a lateral flow test beforehand, in order to keep everyone safe. This event will be subject to Welsh government Covid restrictions in force at the time.

Sunday 19th December: Joint carol service with Capel y Ffynnon, Mosaic and Ebenezer at 5pm, location TBA (please check the church website, where this will be posted as soon as possible).

Christingle service

Friday 24th December at 4:30pm (NB this will be in the building only, with no recording or broadcast). This is an all-age activity service, and is a great event to invite your friends and neighbours to as it provides a gentle introduction to what Christmas is all about.

Christmas Blessings with Chocolate

This Christmas we will be blessing the teachers and other staff of our local schools with chocolate 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. If you would like to give a gift to another organisation please speak to your homegroup leader or the church office.

Christmas Cards

As in previous years, there will be the opportunity to send one Christmas card to the congregation and to donate the money that you would have otherwise spent on cards to go to charities that we support as a congregation. The cards will be displayed in the hall, with a place to put your donation. If you'd like to do this please bring your card any time – either drop it in to the office (please check with Magnus when he is going to be in each week) or better still, bring it with you on a Sunday. You can then read the cards from others on Sunday mornings in the hall. The young people's group have looked at the charities that we already support and chosen two that help very young children in very poor areas – the [Vilelas](#) working with BMS in Mozambique and Christian Aid's [Christmas Appeal](#) to help mums in developing countries" – for the money to go to this year; they will also be decorating a tree to put the cards around, along with more information about the charities.

◇ **Advent**

We have lightly revised the advent devotional that we produced last year, so if you missed it or would like to use it again you can do so. A copy is available on our website at <https://www.penrallt.org/PenralltAdventDevotional.pdf>
Also, the North Western Baptist Association (NWBA) once again have an advent calendar with a series of readings, reflections and recordings from churches and individuals across the NWBA community. A different feature will appear each day throughout advent at <http://www.nwba.org.uk/advent/index.php>

◇ **Alpha Helpers**

We are planning to run an Alpha course at Penrallt on Sunday evenings from 30th January until around Easter. More information and invitations for guests will be available soon but we are also looking for helpers. If you would like to help, please speak to John (minister@penrallt.org). Please pray for this outreach too.

◇ **Building**

You don't need to book places to attend our services, but you must still wear a mask (unless exempt) and comply with other Covid regulations (see www.penrallt.org/services/index.php). If you are coming to the church building during the week, please contact the office to check whether anyone is there.

◇ **Church Fellowship Events**

This month's fellowship event, on Sunday 5th December at 1pm, is a walk from Tregarth towards Bethesda and back, along the tarmac path, suitable for all abilities (including prams). Booking is required for Track & Trace purposes; more details on the booking page: www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/december-penrallt-fellowship-walk-tickets-215248613397

◇ **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

◇ **Giving**

At present we are not taking up an offering during our services but if you would like to give financially towards the work of Penrallt, our mission partners and other projects we support, there is now a donations box at the front of the chapel (near the ramp) which you can use for that purpose. If you 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. The groups currently meet on Zoom and other online platforms on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday evenings and on Tuesday and Friday mornings (most groups meet weekly), although some groups are beginning to return to physical meetings. 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; 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); Gwen Hicks (01248 353648); Monica Morris (01407 840439), John Thompson (07931 150697).

◇ **Penrallt on Facebook and YouTube**

We have three Facebook groups:

- *Penrallt* (www.facebook.com/groups/2402772192)
a general group for information and social interaction
- *Penrallt Prayer Point* (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 Student Fellowship* (www.facebook.com/groups/195300234272943)

We also have a YouTube channel and a Facebook page (both called *Penrallt Baptist Church*), as well as another Facebook page for our young people:

- www.youtube.com/channel/UCwK0lPqAVqGKwQREg6JhHg
- www.facebook.com/penralltbc
- www.facebook.com/penralltyouth

◇ **Prayer Resources**

Send prayer requests, thanksgivings and testimonies to our email prayer diary via 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, as well as prayer meetings via Zoom on **Wednesdays at 11:30am** and **Saturdays at 8:30am**; please contact the church office if you need the connection details for either meeting (which are also posted in the prayer diary every week). We also have a monthly prayer meeting in the church building, which this month will be on **Wednesday 8th December at 7:30pm**.

The Baptist Union have resources for prayer and reflection at www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/338269/Prayer_and_reflections.aspx and at www.nwba.org.uk/ with encouraging articles and stories, prayer broadcasts and reflections.

◇ **Students**

We are delighted to welcome students to Penrallt. You are encouraged to take part in church activities and join a homegroup. For more information about student activities and how Penrallt can support you, and vice versa, please contact John on students@penrallt.org or see our [Penrallt Student Fellowship Facebook group](#).

Focus on...



Gobaith Môn is a Christian youth initiative run by the churches of Anglesey, aiming to bring hope to the young people on the island through the work they do in local schools, youth clubs and events.

Amy Turner (née Burrows) has put together a video to update us on what Gobaith Môn are up to at the moment: https://youtu.be/4s8_cmaLiOc

