



Newsletter: December 2022

Christmas

The Christmas lights are on! For me it's a sign that Christmas is coming. We are waiting for Christmas, and preparing for Christmas. We need to be patient and impatient in our waiting.

We are called to be impatient with respect to injustice and evil. We are frustrated as we hear of those in Ukraine without light and without power. So we pray. We pray that Jesus would bring his light into dark places. We pray for an end to the war and for a just peace in Ukraine. We pray for justice and peace in all parts of the world and for those struggling in our own country too. And we pray for Jesus to come again and to bring eternal healing to our world.

We are called to be patient in respect of our own preparations. We can make such a big difference as we prepare for Christmas. We pray that we would display the hope, love, peace and joy of this Advent season to everyone we meet. And that we would be channels of these things. This can be a challenge at this time of year — but our witness to Jesus and his love depends on it.

However, the focus of Christmas is Jesus himself. The people of God were waiting for the messiah. God gave them a messiah and something infinitely greater too. He gave them his own Son who came to earth as a baby, as a gift to humankind. His divine presence was on earth. In His life Jesus taught us about God, displayed the glory of God and showed us how to live our lives in communion with God. In His death, Jesus opened a new way for us to be reconciled to God now and forever. There is a path back to God for all of us — praise God for his mercy and love. Jesus demonstrates God's divine love, he brings eternal peace and heavenly joy.

So we wait, we pray, we prepare and we rejoice. Blessings,

John

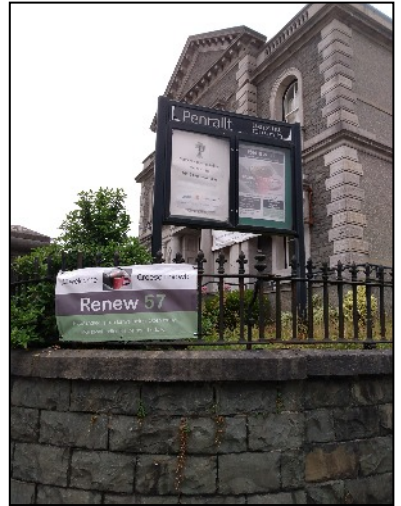
Penrallt Baptist Church, Holyhead Road, Bangor LL57 2EU

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Treasurer: Averil Francis; 01248 421744; treasurer@penrallt.org

Renew 57

Anyone and everyone is welcome to come to Penrallt on a Thursday morning, where the Canolfan (rear hall) is open from 10:30am to 12:30pm. Bring a hobby to share with someone else, have a cup of tea or coffee and some toast and a chat. There is a separate prayer space (in a different room) available throughout this time for quiet reflection with optional opportunities to be led in short gentle contemplative prayer in the prayer space at the beginning and the end. This is a place where it is "OK not to be OK". An opportunity to give some attention to our mental and spiritual well-being. Please pray for the team. If you'd like to know more, speak to Adrienne (adrieferrada@hotmail.co.uk) or Magnus (office@penrallt.org) or, even better, drop in and see for yourself.



Please note that we are intending to run Renew 57 over the Christmas period, although the sessions on 21st and 28th December may be slightly scaled down as several members of the team will be away.

Advance Notices for January

We will be running level 2 and 3 Safeguarding courses on Saturday 7th January.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2023:

- Wednesday 18th January, 7pm — service at Penrallt (with Mosaic)
- Friday 20th January, 7pm – worship at Our Lady & St James' Catholic Church
- Monday 23rd January, 7pm – service at St. John's (with Berea Newydd)
- Wednesday 25th January, 2pm – service at Emaus (with Quakers or Cathedral)

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). ***The office will be closed for Christmas from 23rd December to 2nd January.***

Deadline for next month's newsletter: Sunday 18th December.

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

Morning Services This Month

Our morning services continue to be in a hybrid format, in the building and on Zoom. Please see the website for up to date information about services and a link for the Zoom meeting, as well as recordings of past sermons.

Morning services start at 10:30am on Sundays. 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); crèche facilities are also available for younger children. On 18th December there will be craft activities for the children and young people together. There will be no Sunday school on Christmas Day.

Sunday 4th December

Strange Love: Messages from Places Unknown.

John 4:19. Preacher: Phil Wyman.

Phil is an American pastor currently based at Caersalem Welsh Baptist Church in Caernarfon.

Sunday 11th December

Nativity Service led by our Sunday school and young people.

Sunday 18th December

Heavenly Joy.

Preacher: John Thompson. This will be a communion service.

Sunday 25th December

Christmas morning service led by John Thompson. The offering in this service will be donated to [Digartref](#), a local charity working to alleviate homelessness.

Service Videos

Recordings of full services are no longer listed on YouTube or our own website. The recordings themselves are still available; please contact the [church office](#) if you would like a link to them. Videos of sermons will remain directly available and the services will still be broadcast on Zoom.

Evening Services This Month

Evening services begin at 6pm. There is no evening service on 6th or 25th December.

Sunday 11th December

Contemporary worship service led by Abi Penney.

Sunday 18th December

Carol service, starting with mince pies and tea/coffee in the hall at 6pm.

Christmas Events and Notices

University Carol Service

Monday 5th December, 7pm at the Assemblies of God Church, Princes Road, Bangor.

Cytûn Carol Singing

Friday 16th December outside Morrisons, 6 – 7pm, to raise money for Christian Aid. Cytûn brings together churches from different denominations across Bangor.

Christingle

Saturday 24th December at 4:30pm at Penrallt. This is an all-age activity service, celebrating Jesus as the Light of the World, and is a great event to invite your friends and neighbours to as it provides a gentle introduction to what Christmas is all about. Note that it will not be recorded or broadcast.

Bags of Blessing

As in recent years we are going to take the opportunity to say thank you to those who serve the community at Christmas. If you'd like to do this too cards with a message from Penrallt and with our new logo are available from the Office.

Christmas Cards

Rather than giving individual Christmas cards to everyone in the congregation, you can send one card to the whole congregation. The cards will be displayed on a board in the hall, with a place to put a donation of money that you would have otherwise spent on individual cards. The young people's group have prepared the board and have chosen to split this year's donations between the Lighthouse Community in Llandudno, led by Mark Young, and the BMS Afghanistan Christmas Appeal.

Rev Mark Young is a Baptist Pioneer Minister developing missional communities in Llandudno focused on reaching the least, the last and the lost. This is at the Lighthouse Community café church at the Haven Café in Madoc Street and at the Lighthouse Community building on the west shore of Llandudno collaborating with two partners 'Hope Restored' and Sanctuary Trust. The work includes foodbanks, clothes banks and work to help the homeless and refugees. Mark and his wife Eve are former members of Penrallt's congregation.

BMS World Mission (formerly the Baptist Missionary Society) strive to make Jesus known and share the full life he brings, working in around 30 countries across the world. Their Christmas appeal this year is to give agricultural support and training to farmers in rural Afghanistan. For more information about this appeal, see

<https://www.bmsworldmission.org/appeal/afghanistan-christmas-appeal/>

◇ **BMS Harvest Appeal**

Our harvest appeal raised £447.50 — thank you to everyone who donated to support the remote community in Nepal.

◇ **Fellowship Walks**

After the morning service on **Sunday 4th December** we will have a walk from Port Penrhyn down the cycle path behind Maesgeirchen (and back). The walk will start at 1:30pm. You can have lunch before you come or arrive a little earlier for a picnic at Port Penrhyn.

We are planning to have a New Year's walk at Llanfairfechan on the afternoon of Sunday 1st January. Details to follow.

◇ **Foodbanks**

Bangor Cathedral Foodbank is open 2 – 3pm every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, operating from Tŷ Deiniol (the Diocesan Centre) next to Bangor Cathedral. They are able to give people up to two emergency food parcels without a referral from another service. To find out more please visit www.bangorfoodbank.org

Mosaic church also have a Foodbank at Coed Mawr Community Centre, which is open 9:30 – 11 on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday mornings. Contact Christine King on 07734 667011.

◇ **Giving**

We take up an offering during our morning services. There is also a donations box at the back of the chapel which you can use if you would like to give financially towards the work of Penrallt, our mission partners and other projects we support. To explore other ways of giving, please speak to Averil (treasurer@penrallt.org) who will be able to advise.

◇ **Hardship Fund**

The church has a small fund 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. 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. There are groups on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings and on Tuesday and Friday mornings. Most groups meet weekly, though some are fortnightly and we have groups meeting in person and groups meeting online (or a combination of the two).

We also have "contact, care and prayer" to enable people to stay connected even if they are not in a homegroup. This is where a member of the pastoral care team would contact you every 3 weeks or-so to ask how you are and if you'd like to receive prayer support. Please contact the [church office](#) if you are not part of contact, care & prayer or part of a homegroup and would like to be.

◇ **Kindle Kid's Club**

Kindle is a (free) fortnightly kids' club on Fridays from 6 to 7pm. All primary aged children are welcome and there is a space for parents to stay and chat over a panad while the club is on. Dates this month **2nd December** and **16th December**; we will restart in the New Year on **20th January**. For more information, contact Becca (youth@penrallt.org).

◇ **Men's Fellowship**

Our men's fellowship group usually meet on the first Monday evening of the month. We will be going for a Christmas curry in Menai Bridge on 5th December. Please contact Magnus (office@penrallt.org) if you would like to join the mailing list for future events — all men are welcome.

◇ **Open The Book**

Cytûn have an *Open the Book* team that goes into Ysgol Hirael to deliver dramatized Bible Stories. Open the Book is an initiative by the Bible Society and is a fun and effective way to have a Christian presence in assembles at primary schools, especially as it has been agreed by educational authorities. This is also a great way for Penrallt to continue our links at Hirael. Please speak to Magnus (office@penrallt.org), who is a member of the team, if you are interested.

◇ **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/30262793231755)
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)

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/@penralltbaptistchurch

www.facebook.com/penralltbc

www.facebook.com/penralltyouth

◇ **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 (07827 472637), Abi Penney (01766 890624); John Thompson (07931 150697). Please pray for them.

◇ **Prayer Resources**

Send prayer requests, thanksgivings and testimonies to our email prayer diary via office@penrallt.org — use this address, too, to subscribe to the prayer diary, which goes out every week (usually on Mondays). There are also prayer cards in the church porch that you can use to submit items for the prayer diary.

We also have a more interactive Facebook prayer group (*Penrallt Prayer Point*: www.facebook.com/groups/30262793231755). To pray with others, you are welcome to join our weekly Zoom prayer meetings on **Wednesdays at 11:30am** and on **Saturdays at 8:30am**; please contact the church office if you need the connection details for either meeting (also listed at the bottom of our email prayer diary each week). *The Saturday prayer meeting will take a break on 24th and 31st December, and the Wednesday prayer meeting will take a break on 28th December. There will be no monthly prayer meeting in December.*

◇ **Soul Sisters (Women's Fellowship)**

Our next meeting is on Saturday 10th December between 10:30 and 12:00 in the Canolfan, on the theme of "Preparing for Christmas" with the emphasis on the emotional and spiritual as opposed to the practical. A warm welcome is extended to all women, including family and friends. We look forward to seeing you there.

◇ **Students**

We love to welcome students as part of our church family. If you would like to know more about what activities are available, or if you just want a friendly chat, our student co-ordinator, Becca (students@penrallt.org) would love to hear from you. Also, don't miss our student Facebook group: *Penrallt Students* (www.facebook.com/groups/195300234272943)

◇ **Tearfund Big Quiz**

A Big Thankyou to everyone who supported the quiz night last month. We had 5 teams, with "Should have gone to Specsavers" team winning. It was an evening of fun and delicious cakes. We raised £253.

◇ **Youth: Ignite and Deeper**

Our main youth activities are a Thursday night group called *Ignite* (usually meeting in the Canolfan at 7pm) and a Sunday morning group, *Deeper* (during our morning services). Ignite is open to all, and is a social evening with games and activities. Deeper provides opportunity to find out more about the Christian faith. Find out more on our youth website, www.penralltyouth.org, as well as our *Penrallt Youth Facebook page* and *Instagram group*. Contact our youth worker, Becca (youth@penrallt.org), for more information.

Focus on...

The Vilelas

Serving with BMS World Mission



Liz and Sergio are located in Beira, Mozambique. They are working alongside the Mozambican Baptist Convention where Sergio has been helping to build capacity in mission training for nationals. Liz and Sergio met in Brazil whilst Sergio was a mission worker with



YWAM. After marrying, they worked in Brazil for a year before being called to work in England. They spent three years as youth pastors at Saffron Walden Baptist Church, which is now their sending church. Liz and Sergio had always felt a call to mission overseas, so when their time at their church ended, they sought opportunities to work with BMS. They moved to Mozambique in 2013. They have two children, Chloe and Joshua.

This year, Sergio has been teaching at the Bible Institute of Sofala, which is a community of disciples of Jesus who know Him as Saviour and Lord and who want to grow towards spiritual maturity. The school aims to promote Christian character, knowledge of the Scriptures, and the development of skills to serve the Church, empowering them to exercise the Christian ministry, thus contributing to the growth of the Evangelical Church in Mozambique. Sergio considers it a privilege to teach these young people because however many people he reaches, they can reach even more and the positive long-term impact they will make on the Mozambican church will be significant.

Liz has been running 'introduction to trauma' courses, comprising weekly sessions over 8 weeks. When Liz first began the course, she was aiming it at people who work with children to learn more about trauma informed environments, but it has evolved as the need for understanding and processing personal traumatic experiences was evident. In a recent group, half of the participants attended in order to gain personal support and the others participated to help them with their work with children.

In August, Liz also travelled to Zimbabwe to complete her training program with Jacaranda Communities of Hope. She co-led the two weeks of training as practice, to be able to lead the training alone in Mozambique next year. The first week involved teaching the adults about healing play – the benefits for children when we spend time with them and give them the control when the adult is led by the child, and when the adult is giving their undivided attention to the child. By the end of the week, 19 adults were trained and were ready for the 4 day children's event. The children had already arrived by 8:30am on Monday morning; the adults were a little nervous but ready to go. The week was filled with games, singing, laughter, play, stories, and food, and the children were prayed for and given a gift on the last day. The aim of the Jacaranda program is that the adults won't just use the skills they learnt that week but that they would continue to use their healing play toys with the children in their community and continue to practise the 5 Ps – Prayer, Patience, Presence, Posturing, and Partnering.

While Liz was in Zimbabwe, Sergio travelled to South Africa for an operation on his foot. Healing has been a slow process, and he has been in quite some pain.

For more information see: www.bmsworldmission.org/people/liz-and-sergio-vilela/