



Newsletter: December 2025

Jesus — heavenly joy and inspiringly “Down to Earth”

It's so lovely to see all the Christmas lights starting to be switched on. It brightens up this time of year enormously. It's great to celebrate Christmas and I love joining in the fun. Christians are likely to be among the most joyful people at Christmas! However, I'm not suggesting vacuously hyping things up. The real joy is actually quite grounded. It's in Jesus who is wonderful, heavenly joy and is coming “down to earth”.

Jesus is also a very “down to earth” saviour. He came down and stepped into the mess and detail of life on Earth.

Jesus shows amazing humility in his incarnation. He gives up eternity to embrace humanity. He gives up a place of honour to embrace rejection. He willingly gives up the safety and power of being enthroned to embrace the journey to the cross.

Then we look at the huge scope of his redemptive work on Earth. His redemption acted not only at his own time, millions who would come after him and millions who lived on earth before him in history are also redeemed through him. Also, it's not only humanity that is redeemed and given the opportunity of salvation, the whole of creation will be renewed. And not only in the physical realm, the work of Jesus has spiritual reach. On the cross Jesus wins an eternal spiritual victory.

Then there is the scope of his transformation. Jesus, although he is divine, isn't just for the great and powerful. His offer of redemption is open to anyone who will receive him. He doesn't then work only with and through those who are highly skilled. He gives gifts to all and works with the lowly and calls us all to be part of his work.

The LICC (London Institute for Contemporary Christianity — who prompted my reflections) have a reading plan to explore this more. They end by asking the question; what might it look like for us as individuals and for us as a church to go out into his world. Joining in his joy-bringing, down-to-earth mission?

Blessings,

John

Penrallt Baptist Church, Holyhead Road, Bangor LL57 2EU
www.penrallt.org

Minister: Revd. John Thompson; 07931 150697; minister@penrallt.org

Secretary: Jan Ablett; 07703 188632; secretary@penrallt.org

Treasurer: Cathy Fooks; 07729 892303; treasurer@penrallt.org

Administrator: Magnus Forrester-Barker; 07934 231788; office@penrallt.org (office hours: Mon – Fri, 10am – 4pm)

Morning Services

Sunday morning services start at 10:30am with an option to join on Zoom if you are unable to join us in the building (link on website). Usually, children and young people go out part way through the service for Sunday school (primary school / up to 11) or *Deeper* (secondary school / 11 – 18); a crèche is also available for younger children. After 7th December the Sunday schools and *Deeper* will take a break until the end of the year; the crèche space is still available.

Sunday 7th December

Advent: Peace

Preacher: John Thompson.

This service will include an all-age communion.

Sunday 14th December

Nativity service led by our children and young people.

Sunday 21st December: No morning service

Instead, please join us for our **carol service this afternoon at 4:30pm.**

Thursday 25th December

Informal Christmas morning service, lasting an hour or less.

Sunday 28th December (All-age)

Preacher: Peter Jones.

Service Videos

Recordings of sermons from morning services are generally available both on our [YouTube channel](#) and on our own [website](#). Please contact the church office if you would like a link to recordings of full services. *We would ask you, please, to refrain from taking photos and videos during our services due to safeguarding concerns.*

Christmas Offerings

The money raised from the offerings at our carol service, Christingle (see below) and Christmas Day service, along with our Christmas Card board, will be split evenly between Coed Mawr food bank (a local charity), Mercy Ships (international) and the Calverts (one of Penrallt's mission partners).

Christmas Cards

For your cards to the rest of the Penrallt fellowship, please consider sending just one card to the entire church instead of giving individual cards (and risk missing someone!) and donating the money saved to the recipients of our Christmas offerings. There will be space on a board in the Canolfan for your cards and an envelope for you to leave your donation. The board should be available to use from Sunday 7th December.

Evening Services

Evening services usually start at 6pm and last around an hour; unlike our morning services, they are not normally recorded or broadcast on Zoom. There is no evening service on the first Sunday of the month, when we have our fellowship walk in the afternoon. This month there is only one evening service:

Sunday 14th December (Baptismal Service)

Preacher: John Thompson.

Please come and support Holly as she gets baptised.

Carols and Christmas Worship

Sunday 21st December, 4:30pm

This will take the place of both our morning and evening services for the day and will be an ideal Christmas service to bring your friends to. Tea, coffee and mince pies will be served in the hall afterwards.

Information in this newsletter is correct, as far as possible, at the time of publication. Please see the website for up to date information, as details are subject to change.

Other Events in December

♦ **Cylch Penrallt Tots: Monday afternoons**

This is our group for pre-school children and their parents/carers, running during the school term on Monday afternoons from 1 to 2:30pm. £1 per adult (with up to 3 children). Toys, fun play and activities. Snack, tea and coffee. Songs for tots in English and Welsh. Come along for a good space to safely play, to have fun, and to enjoy some good company together.

♦ **Bangor Youth For Christ Prayer Meeting: Wednesday 3rd December, 7pm**

We will be hosting a prayer meeting, led by Bangor YFC Centre Director Grace O'Boyle, at Penrallt. This is a space for us to come together across churches, backgrounds, and generations to pray with one heart and one purpose: to see the lives of young people in Bangor transformed by the love of Jesus. All are welcome.

♦ **Renew 57: Every Thursday, 10:30am–12:30pm**

Renew 57 is a space for the whole community, on **Thursday mornings, 10:30am to 12:30pm in Canolfan Penrallt** (our rear hall/community centre), free of charge (including refreshments). Bring a hobby to share with someone else or simply sit and chat over a cup of tea or coffee and some toast. A separate prayer space is available for quiet reflection, with optional opportunities to be led in short gentle contemplative prayer at the beginning and end of the session. 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. To find out more, please speak to Simon (s.lambourne565@btinternet.com) or Magnus (renew@penrallt.org) or drop in and see for yourself. Note that we will not be running on Christmas Day but will instead be **open on Boxing Day, Friday 26th December** at the usual time. We will be running on New Year's Day as normal.

♦ **Praying and Prophesying together and for one another — A practical session open to ALL within the Penrallt Community: Thursday 4th December, 7pm**

John 10:27 — “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me.”

A safe, healthy and scripturally sound space for listening to God and hearing from him for each other and for our Church Community. Spend some time in His presence together. Develop your prophetic spirituality and bless and encourage one another and the church as we tune into the voice of our Good Shepherd. This will take place in the chapel. For more details, contact Abi Penney (07776 270399).

♦ **Fellowship Walk: Sunday 7th December**

We will have our monthly fellowship walk as usual on the first Sunday after the morning service. This month we will, weather permitting, be walking along the old Nant Ffrancon road, at the base of the Ogwen Valley, starting at Ogwen Bank (near Bethesda). It's a hard surfaced, non muddy route at the bottom of a valley, approx. 5km, with beautiful mountain views and possibly chance to see some snow from afar. Some up and down bits in the path but we will take it at a pace that suits everyone. It's a there and back again walk. Please contact Jenny (fellowship@penrallt.org) for more information, or to request or offer a lift. You are welcome to bring a packed lunch to eat together in the hall before the walk, even if you are not planning to go on the walk.

♦ **Pizza and Purpose: Sunday 7th December, 6pm**

Pizza & Purpose is a discipleship gathering for the young people of Penrallt (13–18) on Sunday evenings. Our initial sessions were in November and we continue on 7th December, led by Grace O'Boyle of Bangor YFC. It's a space to explore faith, identity, and calling. We believe every young person is created on purpose and for a purpose, and this is a place to discover what that means.

♦ **University Carols & Concert: Wednesday 10th December, 7pm**

This will take place in the Pritchard-Jones Hall at the Bangor University Main Arts building, followed by mulled wine and mince pies. Please register on the university website (<https://www.bangor.ac.uk/events/christmas-carol-service-0>) if you are planning to attend

♦ **Cytûn Carols at Morrisons: Saturday 13th December, 10:30 – 11:30am**

Cytûn will be carol singing at Morrisons at 10:30am on Saturday 13th December and collecting for Christian Aid. Please come and sing out the good news of the birth of Jesus to the shoppers of Upper Bangor.

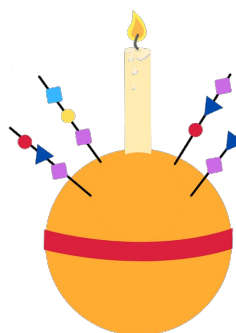
♦ **Soul Sisters: Saturday 13th December, 10:30am**

Soul Sisters is Penrallt's women's fellowship group, that meet once a month for a varied programme of activities. This month they will be joining in the Cytûn carol singing at Morrisons (see above) and will follow up with refreshments in the café.

♦ **Cytûn Christmas Festival Outreach: Saturday 13th December, 2 – 4pm**

The churches of Bangor Cytûn will be participating in the Bangor Christmas festival. The plan is to have a gazebo in the Cathedral grounds with activities including children's crafts, a family photo booth with nativity costumes, carol singing, an Open The Book drama and a short Christmas message.

♦ Christingle: Wednesday 24th December, 4:30pm



An all-age Christingle activity service on Christmas Eve celebrating Jesus as the Light of the World. We'll make our Christingles and then light them during a short service including a couple of family-favourite carols. All materials provided free. All welcome.



Please visit <https://penralltbc.churchsuite.com/events/txpzaoee> or use the QR code to sign up in advance, as this will help us know how many to expect so we can prepare the materials for the service.

Future Events

♦ Church Members' Meeting: Wednesday 14th January, 7:30pm

The next meeting for church members will take place in the building and on Zoom on Wednesday 14th January. Papers will be circulated to members before the meeting.

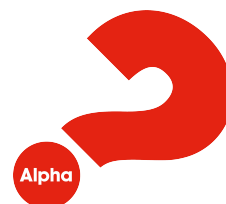
If you are not a church member and would like to know more about membership, please speak to either John (minister@penrallt.org) or Jan (secretary@penrallt.org).

♦ Alpha

Our next Alpha course at Penrallt will start on Monday 26th January and run on Monday evenings, 6:30–9pm, for 11 weeks with a break over



Easter. This is a great way to explore the Christian faith and ask the big questions about life, or to reset your walk with Jesus. Each session includes a free meal, a video and a group discussion. Sign up through the QR code or the church website. For more details chat to Peter Jones (07906 761181).



Other Information

♦ 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. Note that he sometimes works from home or is out for meetings, so you are advised to check before travelling in to the church building. Please note that the church office will be closed from Monday 22nd December and will re-open on Friday 2nd January. However, please do continue to contact the pastoral care team if you have a pastoral need during this time (see Pastoral Help below).

♦ Foodbanks

Bangor Cathedral Foodbank (www.bangorfoodbank.org) 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. Mosaic church have a Foodbank at Coed Mawr Community Centre, open on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday mornings, 9:30 – 11am. Contact Christine King on 07734 667011.

♦ Giving

We take up an offering during our morning services, or you can use the donations box at the back of the chapel 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 Cathy (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 who 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 Cathy Fooks (treasurer@penrallt.org).

♦ Homegroups / Contact Care & Prayer

We encourage you to join a homegroup if you are not already in one, as they are invaluable in helping us to deepen our relationships with the Lord and with one another. There are groups on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings and on Tuesday and Friday mornings, meeting weekly or fortnightly in person, online or as a combination of the two. We also have “contact, care & prayer” to enable people to stay connected even if not in a homegroup. A member of the pastoral care team (see below) would contact you every few weeks to ask how you are and if you’d like to receive prayer support. Please get in touch with the church office if you are not part of contact, care & prayer or a homegroup and would like to be

♦ Men’s Breakfast

Our men’s fellowship group usually meet on the last Saturday morning of the month but will be taking a break in December.

♦ Pastoral Help

If you have concerns about your own or someone else’s welfare, please contact a member of the Pastoral Care Team: Ian Ablett (07759 718931); Jan Ablett (07703 188632); Magnus Forrester-Barker (07890 109645); Geoff Moore (01248 410582); Monica Morris (07827 472637), Abi Penney (01766 890624), John Thompson (07931 150697). Please pray for the PCT as well.

♦ Penrallt on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube

We have three Facebook groups — *Penrallt* (www.facebook.com/groups/2402772192) is a general group for information and social interaction; *Penrallt Prayer Point* (www.facebook.com/groups/302627593231755) is a private group to share prayer requests and encouragements; you can probably guess the target audience of *Penrallt Students* (www.facebook.com/groups/195300234272943)!

We also have a YouTube channel and a Facebook page (both called *Penrallt Baptist Church*):

- www.youtube.com/@penralltbaptistchurch
- www.facebook.com/penralltbc

♦ Prayer Resources

Send prayer requests, thanksgiving and testimonies to our weekly email prayer diary via office@penrallt.org — use this address, too, to subscribe to the prayer diary, which usually goes out on Mondays, or Tuesdays in the event of bank holidays. We also have a more interactive Facebook prayer group ([Penrallt Prayer Point](#)). 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. *Please note that the prayer meetings will not be running over the Christmas period (23rd – 31st December).*

♦ Prayer Team

We would love to pray for you and pray with you. We believe that God transforms people's lives. Praying for people and regularly asking God to fill them with the Holy Spirit is a key part of this for many people. We have a team available for personal prayer, wearing blue "Prayer Team" lanyards, at most services. This is often at the end of the service, sometimes during communion or at other times; if you would like prayer please find a member of the team at any time and they will be able to offer to pray with you in an appropriate space, often as a pair.

If you are a church member and would like to be on the prayer team please speak to John or Jan. Our Pastoral Care Team are able to offer a further level of support (see *Pastoral Help* above). Please don't hesitate to approach John or another member of the Pastoral Care Team.

♦ Students

We love to welcome students as part of our church family. For more information about activities for students, or just for a friendly chat, please feel free to drop us an email to students@penrallt.org. Also, don't miss our Penrallt Students Facebook group.

♦ Youth

Our mid-week youth group, *Youth.*, is run by Bangor YFC with volunteers from Penrallt, Mosaic and other churches. This runs on Thursday evenings at Penrallt during term-time, from 7pm to 8:45pm, and is open to all youth (11–18). It features games and activities, with a gentle presentation of Christian values and principles. Registration is required, and can be done at <https://tally.so/r/noq04Z>.

Our Sunday morning youth group, *Deeper*, takes place during the morning service, with the young people (11–18) going out part way through the service to study the Bible and apply it to their lives. We are also running *Pizza and Purpose*, a discipleship course for those aged 13+ on (some) Sunday evenings — see above under Other events in December for more details about this.

For more information, email us at youth@penrallt.org.

Deadline for next month's newsletter: Wednesday 17th December. Please send information to Magnus at the church office. All items should be submitted in writing, preferably by email, as early as possible.

News Mailing List: Sign up to receive email notification (and a PDF link) when the newsletter is published each month, as well as other news updates from time to time. To join or leave the list please send an email to office@penrallt.org.

Tearfund

Tearfund is a Christian charity whose mission is to follow Jesus where the need is greatest, responding to crises and partnering with local churches and organisations to help people lift themselves out of poverty.

Thousands of people needlessly suffer and die every day because of poverty. But that's not God's plan for the world. And God is calling us – all of us – to reach out to people in greatest need.

For over 50 years, Tearfund has worked directly, and/or alongside local partners and churches, in underserved communities to tackle complex poverty in three main ways:

- Humanitarian response: responding quickly to disasters and conflicts, supporting those in greatest need throughout the recovery process.
- Community development: mobilising resources and empowering communities to lift themselves out of poverty.
- Advocacy and influencing: helping individuals and churches speak out on issues of poverty and injustice, and challenging unjust policies and practices at a local, national and global level.

Tearfund's vision is to see people freed from poverty, living transformed lives, and fulfilling their God-given potential. As they pursue this vision, they have four main focuses:

- Meeting emergency needs: responding quickly to meet immediate needs when crises and disasters hit vulnerable communities.
- Mobilising churches: envisioning, empowering and equipping churches to play their part in the development and transformation of their communities.
- Transforming communities: supporting communities to become resilient to shocks and stresses and work towards a better future for themselves and others.
- Changing society: seeking to influence and change social, political, and economic systems and policies so that the poorest communities can get the services and opportunities they need to thrive.

Tearfund seeks to be Christ-centred, compassionate, courageous, truthful and servant-hearted in everything they do.

For more information, please see <https://www.tearfund.org/>

We are looking for a new Tearfund Rep and a new Missions Co-ordinator for Penrallt. Please contact the church office (office@penrallt.org) if you are interested in taking on either of these roles or would like more information about them.