



Penrallt Baptist Church

Newsletter: March 2021

"You may be the only Bible that some person ever reads"

This quote is generally attributed to William Thoms who lived in the 17th Century, but is also true for us today. As our society today tries to release itself from the grip of a global pandemic, many people are more interested in what our church has to say than ever before. For many people, the first Bible that they read will be us.

The full version of this quote is, "Be careful how you live. You may be the only Bible some person ever reads." In today's post-modern culture, it is true that people look at the way we do things and the way we are long before they will show any interest in what we are doing or why we are doing it. In a media driven society where things are often not what they seem, people are craving integrity and authenticity. This integrity and authenticity is so often lacking in our culture today, but we hope and pray that it will be found in our church, and in us. If people are going to find integrity and authenticity in us individually and corporately, and if they are going to be inspired to pick up the actual Bible, "our discipleship needs to include a radical re-entering into the life, teachings and ministry of Jesus" (to quote Andy Glover again. Andy heads up Fresh Streams).

In our current series we are studying the gospels — seeking to become more like Jesus. We are shifting our emphasis from "what would Jesus do" to "who would Jesus be". Ensuring that we seek to be like Jesus in our character as well as seeking to imitate his activities. Of course, both being and doing feed into each other and facilitate holistic growth in faith. Being and doing are both necessary and are like parallel train tracks. Both sides need to be laid down for the train of discipleship to be able to continue on powered by the steam of the Holy Spirit.

Penrallt Baptist Church, Holyhead Road, Bangor LL57 2EU

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Minister: John Thompson; 07931 150697; minister@penrallt.org
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As we approach Easter, we praise Jesus who never sinned, who lived the perfect life, and who died the perfect death. He who had no sin, took our sin upon himself so that we could be free from sin and could know God. So whilst we strive to be like him, we are always secure and at peace in the knowledge that God's love for us does not depend on our story but on His story.

Blessings,

John

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; **the office will be closed on Tuesdays until the end of March**). *NB Magnus is working from home at the moment but office hours still apply.*

Deadline for next month's newsletter: Wednesday 24th March

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

Children's Birthdays in March

15th: John Brindley

Services This Month

All our services remain online for the moment. All are open to everyone, including students. Please feel free to browse the online services — the service pages are available at any time once they are up (usually by the day before the specified date), but we recommended starting them at 10:30 on Sunday mornings, which should let you finish just in time to join us on Zoom for a chat straight afterwards at 11:30am (visitors are welcome and you can join without a camera if you prefer). More details and links will be found on our website: www.penrallt.org.

7th March:

Jesus – friend of sinners.

Luke 5:27–32. Preacher: Arwel Jones.

14th March: Mothering Sunday

Preacher: John Thompson.

21st March (Live on Zoom)

Jesus – the bridegroom at the party

Luke 5:33–39. Preacher: John Thompson.

Note: this service will be live on Zoom at 10:30 on Sunday morning. We are hoping to lead the service from the chapel and to record it so that it is available to watch later. We will edit the recording to ensure that only those leading the service appear in the video, so you don't have to worry about turning up in your Sunday best (though feel free if you want to). It will not be possible to have a congregation in the chapel, so please only turn up on Zoom!

Also on 21st March: We will be joining in an all-Wales prayer meeting organised by the South Wales Baptist Union, on Zoom at 7pm. See next page for details.

28th March: Palm Sunday

Communion service. Preacher: Peter Cousins.

The communion will be live on Zoom at 11:30am (followed by a chat as usual). You will need bread and wine (or equivalent) to fully take part.

Easter Services

Easter this year takes place at the very start of April. We are planning to have a morning reflection on Good Friday (2nd April; 10am, for 30 minutes). There will be an all-age service on Easter Sunday morning at 10:30am, as well as a service with the other Bangor churches at 8am; John Thompson will be preaching at both services. All these will be live on Zoom. Watch our website for further information, which should be available before the April newsletter comes out.

◇ **All-Wales Prayer meeting**

South Wales Baptist Association are organising an all-Wales prayer meeting for the evening of Sunday 21st March, at 7pm on Zoom. They have asked for the connection details not to be posted on websites or social media. We will circulate the information to our news mailing list when it is available; if you are not on the mailing list and would like the meeting details (or to go on the list) please email office@penrallt.org

◇ **Building**

If you need to enter the church building, please contact the church office beforehand to obtain permission and arrange access.

◇ **CAP Money Course**

The Christians Against Poverty (CAP) Money Course is a free course which teaches budgeting and money management. It is open to all and everyone can benefit from the skills it teaches. John Hay and Sue Eckersley are running this course for Bangor Cytûn, via Zoom, over three weeks starting on Wednesday 17th March 1:15 – 2:15, followed by Wednesday 24th and 31st March. Numbers are limited; please contact sue-eckersley@hotmail.co.uk or phone 07713225028 to book a place or for more details.

◇ **Children's Work**

Sunday school for 5–11s meets online every Tuesday at 6pm via Zoom, for about 45 minutes. There is a Facebook messenger group used by families in the church for general communication and support. We share information about church activities for children and families but also use it to support one another with whatever is happening.

Please contact the church office if you would like to join in.

◇ **Cytûn**

Cytûn (Churches Together in Bangor) is looking for a secretary from mid-April. If you are interested in serving the churches of Bangor in this role, please speak to Sarah Jackson.

St John's (Methodist) Church warmly invites friends from Cytûn to join these groups during Lockdown:

- Telling Tales at Teatime on Thursdays. A story telling group once a month, 4pm on Thursdays.
- Singing for Fun. Every second Tuesday, 7:15 to 8pm. Singing all sorts of songs!

Contact Sue for Zoom details (sue-eckersley@hotmail.co.uk).

◇ **Fairtrade Fortnight**

This year's Fairtrade Fortnight is running from 22nd February to 7th March. To mark this, there will be a virtual coffee morning on Saturday 6th March, 10–11am; bring your own coffee! There will be short talks from Bangor students (Dawit from Ethiopia, Zeb from Pakistan, Ayo from Nigeria) about how Fair Trade is helping farmers in their countries, and information about Traidcraft and about Fair Trade in Malawi. A link should be available soon on our website. For more about Fair Trade see fairtradewales.com/

◇ **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**

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. 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). 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); 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 Students* (www.facebook.com/groups/195300234272943)

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

- www.facebook.com/penralltbc
- www.youtube.com/channel/UCwK0_IPqAVqGKwQREg6JhHg

◇ **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, 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 resources for prayer and reflection at www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/338269/Prayer_and_reflections.aspx, as well as other resources at www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/337630/Coronavirus.aspx and at www.nwba.org.uk/ with encouraging articles and stories, prayer broadcasts and reflections.

◇ **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).

◇ **St Patrick's Vision**

Every year, OM Ireland (including our mission partners Colm & Catherine Ó Brolcháin) use the context of St Patrick's Day (17th March) to remind the people in Ireland of the message that St. Patrick brought to the country long ago and its relevance today. They are not letting minor details such as a global pandemic stop them this year, though they are having to take a different approach. The programme will consist of online meetings (for 1.5 hours from 7pm) each evening between Sunday 14th and Friday 19th March. The cost is £10 and it is open to anyone aged 18+; you must register by 3rd March to take part. To do so, or to find out more, visit www.uk.om.org/st-patricks-vision-online-opportunity

◇ **World Day of Prayer**

The annual World Day of Prayer is Friday 5th March and this year's service uses material prepared by the Christian women of Vanuatu. The churches of Bangor will be hosting services on Zoom in [Welsh](#) at 11am (meeting ID: 829 5282 0554; passcode: 913701) and in [English](#) at 2pm (meeting ID: 868 4669 7262; passcode: 016269). All are welcome to the services.

◇ **Youth Work**

We are delighted to announce the appointment of Rebecca Williams as our new youth worker. Becca is currently a student at Bangor University, and the secretary of the Christian Union, and will be taking up the post in the summer once her course has finished.

In the meantime, we have a series of youth events on Thursday evenings, taking place on Zoom between 7 and 7:30pm (deliberately kept short to reduce Zoom fatigue!). There is a Bake Challenge on 4th March and a Classic Online Games Night on 11th March, both open to anyone aged 11 – 18. To find out about future events, see the [youth page](#) of our website or email youth@penrallt.org

Focus on...

Claire Bedford **servicing with BMS in Chad**



Claire Bedford has been in N'Djamena in Chad, West Africa since January 2016, following a year of French language study in France. Claire is working for BMS at Guinebor II hospital.



In the UK Claire worked as a hospital pharmacist and latterly as a prescribing advisor for GP practices.

Claire's role in Chad is to continue the development of the pharmacy service at Guinebor II hospital, which is primarily a maternity hospital. As well as having supervisory oversight of the pharmacy and the lab, Claire has been doing some administrative tasks alongside the Chadian administrator and another long-term mission worker. Claire has also been involved in overseeing building projects.

The working language of the hospital, between the staff, is French. However, not many Chadians speak French. In order to be able to interact directly with the patients, Claire has been trying to learn to speak Chadian Arabic.

Claire reports that the hospital is currently extremely busy, more so than usual, due to staff at the government hospitals being on strike over pay. Cases of Covid in Chad remain relatively low but have slowly crept up over the past month or so. An Ethiopian mission worker at the hospital recently shared an update of his team's work in the hospital and surrounding community. Exciting things are happening, many people are enquiring about their faith and there are increasing numbers of people coming to faith. It is exciting that there are people trusting in Jesus as their Saviour, but it is often not without challenge and persecution if they 'go public'.

Claire came back to Devon for Christmas with her family, but due to Covid-related travel restrictions has not yet been able to return to Chad. She is supporting the Senior Management Team at Guinebor II Hospital as much as she can remotely, and is continuing to learn Chadian Arabic.

Claire has sent us the following prayer points:

- That Covid numbers will remain low in Chad and the government will have wisdom in managing Covid, including in deciding when to allow travel into Chad from the UK
- Energy, stamina and wisdom for the Senior Management Team and hospital staff team as they manage the increasing numbers of patients coming through the doors
- That Claire will have an increasingly good grasp of Chadian Arabic
- Patience as Claire waits in the UK while really desiring to be back in Chad
- The chaplaincy team and others at the hospital as they speak to people about Jesus and that wise counsel will be given to those who accept Christ.

For more information: <https://www.bmsworldmission.org/people/claire-bedford/>