



Penrallt Baptist Church

Newsletter for November 2013

"There can't be a God," he said, wrapping his hands around a hot chocolate and sinking back into the chair.

"Oh no?" I asked incredulously, "and how do you figure that out?"

"Well, take the cormorant," he replied, "it's a great underwater swimmer but its wings aren't waterproof. So it has to spend hours every day drying them out. It kind of looks at you and says 'So you think you've got problems?' God wouldn't make an underwater bird with non-waterproof wings!"

"Right," I said, sighing, "I was at the same Bill Bailey gig as you, and heard him use that very argument. In fact the cormorant is one of the most successful species on the planet. It's found all over the world. The old Japanese fishermen still use them for fishing. So successful in fact that the government in England licenses people to cull 2000 of them a year. There's a colony of hundreds of the birds on Puffin Island, not five miles from where we're sitting. Maybe they're getting as far from England as possible. Hardly a failure as a species is it? Seems to me that the design is working very well."

He thought for a few seconds. "Yeah, well it's functional. I'll give you that. But you wouldn't design it that way would you?"

"You mean, it's not perfect?"

"Right. It's not perfect."

"You're a smuggler!" I said.

"A smuggler?"

"Yeah, smuggling in a completely arbitrary idea of perfection into an argument about the existence of God. You're making up "perfection" as you go. You don't know what it means really."

"But the Bible says that God made the world perfect."

"No it doesn't. It says God made the world and said that it was good. Perfection is a human invention. A make-believe category dreamt up by human philosophers. I suspect the Greeks were to blame originally, although I'm not sure. They spent their lives trying to chisel perfect forms out of blocks of marble. They might have thought they'd achieved it too if the Venus de Milo's arms hadn't dropped off."

"But God would make the world perfect!" he whinged.

"By whose definition? By your definition of perfect. God is under no constraint to make a world to suit you. A real world, even a good one, is bound to be full of compromises and dangers. Like the cormorant's wings. Your idea of a

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perfect world looks like Legoland. It couldn't be real. It's so safe and predictable you'd hate to live in it. Risk and pragmatic solutions are what life is about. Ask an engineer!"

"God wouldn't make a dangerous world," he declared.

"And you a rock climber? Even the bits that are safe you make dangerous!" I laughed.

"Yeah, but it's hard on the cormorant."

"No it isn't. All life is hard, risky and messy. Next time you watch a cormorant drying its wings, digesting its fish supper and whiling away the time you're seeing a superb creature that brings joy to those of us who are bird watchers, and, I believe, joy to God who made this crazy, beautiful, edgy universe of ours. I'm just glad that I'm alive to share it with him."

God bless,
Peter

A big welcome to all students. Please collect a student pack from the door, and join in our activities, especially Faith Café on Sunday nights.

SERVICES IN NOVEMBER

November 3

10.30am ***God Opens Doors*** *Acts 5:12-42*

2.15pm Service at Bontnewydd

6.00pm Communion Service.

Faith Leads to Coping with change. *Genesis 12:1-9*

November 10

10.30am Remembrance Sunday

Learning what it means to follow 'The Way' *Acts 6:1-7*

6.00pm ***Finding God in Times of Injustice: There are no throw-away people*** *Genesis 16:1-15*

November 17

10.30am Geoff Birch ***Stewardship 3: Getting in on God's Miraculous Plan of Economy*** *Mark 12:41-44; John 8:1-8*

6.00pm Dave O'Brien

November 24

10.30am Communion service ***"Just when you think the church is being destroyed . . ."*** *Acts: 7:54-8:3*

6.00pm ***Finding God in Times of Crisis*** *Exodus 1:6-20*

Our Speakers in November

Peter Cousins is the minister of the church. **Geoff Birch** is a retired Baptist minister, member of Penrallt. **Dave O'Brien** is a retired Church Army Officer, a member of our congregation.

CHURCH LUNCH

We will host a church lunch on **Sunday November 3rd**. Please bring enough buffet style "finger food" for yourselves and one or two others.

SPECIAL DATES IN NOVEMBER

| | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|---|
| Friday 1 | 2.00pm | Pastoral Care Team Meeting |
| | 7.30pm | Penrallt Musicians (See 'Noticeboard') |
| Monday 4 | 7.30pm | Deacons' Meeting |
| | 7.30pm | CICC meeting in Old Colwyn (see below) |
| Tuesday evenings | | The Alpha Course continues throughout November. |
| Wednesday 6 | 10.30am | Men's Prayer Meeting followed by coffee in Options. |
| Saturday 9 | 9.30am-1.00pm | Bible Unzipped in Rhos on Sea (see below) |
| | 2.30pm | North Wales English Baptist Union Meeting in Old Colwyn (see below) |
| | | This is also the Alpha Away Day |
| Wednesday/Thursday 13/14 | | North South Encounter in Penrallt. Hosts required. (see below) |
| Saturday 23 | 10.30am-2.00pm | Penrallt's Christmas Fair (see below) |
| Monday 24 | 7.30pm | Cytun Meeting |

***CICC Meeting: Sure Hope Church, Colwyn Bay,
Monday 4th November, 7.30pm***

To be or not to be - THE Question! The challenge of choices about dying. What are appropriate Christian responses to those drawing near to the end of their natural lives? With people living so much longer, and technological advances making the unbelievable possible, the many decisions about dying, and the end of our earthly life, are becoming more and more confusing, especially for ordinary Christians, who have always viewed birth and death as sacred, sacrosanct.

Speaker: Dr Idris Baker is a medical consultant in the care of those who are dying. Idris is the son of Penrallt's previous minister Patrick Baker.

***Bible Unzipped: Rhos-on-Sea Presbyterian Church
Saturday 9th November from 9:30am - 1pm***

Bible Unzipped is run by a group of local ministers who have a passion for Biblical Theology. Its aim is 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 we usually use. This week will include a study on the Book of Micah led by Peter. The event is free, and we can arrange a lift for you from Bangor. Please talk to Peter if you want to come.

***North Wales English Baptist Union: Autumn Meeting:
Saturday 9th November***

This will be held from 2:30pm in Old Colwyn Baptist Church. More details to follow.

Hosts Required 13th and 14th November

We are hosting a meeting of Baptist ministers from across Wales on 13th and 14th November. We are looking for hosts on the Wednesday night (13th). You would be required to collect your guests from the Jade Village restaurant in Menai Bridge, give them a bed and breakfast and deliver them to Penrallt by 9 on the Thursday morning. Speak to Peter or Susan if you can help.

We would also appreciate a little help on the Wednesday and Thursday lunchtimes to serve soup and sandwiches lunch to some 30 people. Speak to Susan if you are available.

Christmas Fair Saturday 23rd November 10.30am-2.00pm

There will be a variety of stalls (crafts, cakes, bric-a-brac, etc.) and a Created Stall (Tearfund) selling Fairly Traded gifts and Christmas Cards. Refreshments, including light lunches, will be available. All proceeds will go to support two of our missionary couples: Chris and Anna Hembury (Hull Youth for Christ) and Trudie and Duncan Tough (Papua New Guinea, Wycliffe). Please come and support our missionaries and enjoy a panad and fellowship together.

We need ***Volunteers*** to help with the stalls, in the kitchen and with fun activities for children. We would, of course, welcome any new fundraising ideas. Please contact Jan Jones or Mari Kelso.

NEWS OF PEOPLE

Our condolences to **Gwyneth & Peter Brindley** on the death of their daughter-in-law after a very long illness. We think of **Helen Thomas** and **Ian Kelso** both facing surgery this month. **Gill and Mick Jamison** are in Peru to work on a "hospital boat" on the Amazon for a short time this month. **Roshni Verghese** is visiting Nigeria on behalf of Street Pastors. Those of you who remember **Jenny Holder** will be pleased to hear that she has just got engaged to Fabian Meinsen.

Children's Birthdays in November:

4th: Rio Penny; **8th:** Rebekah Collis; **10th:** Jonathan Retallick; **24th:** Mika Owen; **30th:** Aaron White

WEEKDAYS

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 | 10.30am | Men's Prayer Meeting | Peter Cousins (353878) |
| Wed | 2.00pm | Carers' Home Group | Carol Morris (208407) |
| Wed | 7.00pm | Students' Homegroup (in Peter's office) | Ben Bowden-Pickstock (07872 531601) |
| Wed | 7.30pm | HG, The Nomads | Jess & Seamus Adams (421185) Susan Cousins (353878) |
| Wed | 7.30pm | HG, Bethesda | Jon & Deb Stammers (602868) |
| Wed | 6-9pm | HG, Maes Y Dref | Bryan & Ann Collis (353173) |
| Wed | 8.00pm | HG, Grŵp Cymraeg | Owen & Nia Lloyd Evans (352634) |
| Thu | 10.30am | Post-Alpha Bible Study | Sue & Lawrence Moss (713793) |
| Thu | 7.30pm | HG, Llanfairpwll | Sue & Lawrence Moss (713793) |
| Fri | 10.30am - noon | Cheeky Monkeys | Joan Rymer (713003) |
| Fri | 10.30 - 12.30pm | HG, 6 Maes y Dref | Anne Collis (353173) anne@collis66.freeseve.co.uk |
| Sat | 8.30am | Prayer Meeting | |

NOTICEBOARD

- ***Friday Night Sessions for Penrallt Musicians 1 November 7.30pm***
This month we are beginning a series of sessions on Friday evenings, led by Ian Walker, for anyone who plays an instrument or sings in Penrallt. The sessions will be an opportunity to explore contemporary Christian worship music, to develop as band members, and to pray together. The first three sessions will be at Penrallt on the following dates: 1st November, 22nd November and 6th December. For more information, speak to Ian Walker or Deb Stammers.

- **Men's Prayer Meeting** **Wednesday 6 November** **10.30am**
The men will meet for prayer as usual on Wednesday morning October 2nd. Time spent in prayer will be followed by coffee in Options. All are welcome to join us.

- **Penrallt Walking Group** **Tuesday 19 November** **10.30am**
We shall be walking the Nefyn peninsula on the Llyn. Follow the A499 Pwllheli road from Caernarfon. Just past Trefor, at a roundabout, turn right onto the B4417 for Nefyn. In the centre of Nefyn turn right at a mini roundabout, posted Aberdaron, also with a brown golf club sign. Into Morfa Nefyn and just past the old Claremont Garage (on the left) fork right for golf club, traeth and Porth Dinllaen. At the end of the houses, opposite 'Caffi Porth Dinllaen', turn right into the National Trust car park. Parking is free to Trust members, but £4 for others. There is a toilet at the Caffi and at Porth Dinllaen, 20 minutes into the walk. The walk is very gentle, partly on the coastal path and is just under 5 miles. Meet at 10.30 a.m. as usual and bring a picnic. Geoff and Marilyn are leading the walk: 01286 870944.

- **Assemblies of God Church, Bangor**
The AoG have asked us to publicise a concert by Godfrey Birtall in their church on Sunday evening 17th November at 6.30pm.

- **Festival** **Saturday 30 November**
Bangor Multicultural Festival with a full programme from 10.00 am until 6.00pm. See local press for more details.

- **News from the Deacons**
Please note the revised structure of the diaconate. This was proposed and approved by the church meeting on Monday 8th October. The details are on the diagram on the right hand side wall as you enter the church. Please familiarise yourselves with the roles and responsibilities of the deacons so that you know who to contact in case you need to discuss any issues.

- **Cottage for rent**
One-bedroom fully self-contained cottage for rent near Penmon, Anglesey (8 miles from Bangor) for about three months (two people max). Would suit post graduate student or short term visitor to the University (may be able to extend for a further period). Rent negotiable. Contact Paul on 01248 490581 or paul.hebblethwaite@virgin.net

- **Penrallt on Facebook**
Do you know there is now a Penrallt Page? Go to Penrallt Baptist Church. If you 'like' it, then you will be updated with any events/news etc. 120 people are signed up to it. Join us.

➤ **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 vouchers which are distributed to the homeless by the Cathedral via St Mary's Shelter.

➤ ******* Looking Forward to Christmas in Penrallt *******

| | | |
|---|---------|---|
| Saturday November 23 | 10.30am | The Penrallt Christmas Fair |
| Sunday December 8: | 6.00pm | Interactive event in the Evening Service (no Faith Café, but mince pies afterwards) |
| Sunday December 15 | 10:30am | Sunday School Christmas Service |
| Sunday December 15 | 6.00pm | Upper Bangor Community Carols by Candlelight Service in Penrallt. |
| Wednesday December 25 | 10.30am | Christmas Service |
| Sunday December 29 | 10.30am | Family Communion Service. |
| Wednesday 1st January | 1.00pm | New Year's Day Walk if there is interest in it. |

Are You Artistic?

Every year we paint a large backdrop for the Carol service. Can you paint? Would you like to help (in the week 9th-14th December)? Speak to Peter

➤ **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.

➤ **Pastoral Help**

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

Pat Borlace 713146; Judy Stammers 364394; Geoff Moore 410582
Helen Thomas 600174

Peter and Susan will be away on holiday from Friday 15th November for a week.

Deadline for next month's newsletter Sunday 17 November
Please send information to Gwyneth (gwyneth@brindley-wales.com or 352682)