



# Penrallt Baptist Church

**Newsletter: October 2018**

## **Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven...**

I was having a chat with Kelly, our Student Co-ordinator, the other day. She mentioned how so many university students suffer from some form of mental health issues as they endeavour to cope with a brand new life-style. This is now a hot topic if you are watching the news, universities acknowledging the issue of student mental health and establishing counselling services which they had cut down. Nearly a decade back, whilst working in the Business School I was asked to take on the university's student counsellor role; I could have written a book longer than War and Peace about the miseries I saw and dealt with! So, nothing has changed then? Doesn't look like it. How I wished then I could talk to the young people about the providential care and love of our Saviour! Of course I was not able to, in a secular world. But there again, this state of affairs does not just sit with the youngsters but it embraces everyone these days; Christians are no exception. Suffering of any description – illness, anxiety, depression, fear, worry, total lack of confidence, general inability to function, sexuality issues, relationship break downs – can be a hideous thing, frustrating, debilitating, an apparent waste of useful lives.

'Where have you gone, God?' Do you at all remember muttering these words in a blind fury and despair as you have gone through pain, loss and suffering? I have at times wondered if I was the only Christian who ever had these awful patches of spiritual darkness and doubt. As my faith grew I have come to realise that most of us go through them at some stage in our lives albeit in varying degrees. The very last thing we want right then, when we are feeling dried up inside, dazed by suffering and downright miffed with God, is someone telling us that God is love, someone writing an article about suffering and healing! How deeply those of us who love our Lord and wish to follow Him long for the strength to conquer the struggles and temptations of this broken world with ease and conviction! We would give anything to learn the secret of 'triumphant living', 'to run a good race', 'to gain the crown of glory' that Paul describes. But we fall upon the thorns of life...

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Dear reader, don't stop reading this, crunch the paper on which it is written and walk away... You will see that most of us have gone through 'dark nights of the soul'. But far from losing our faith we have come out at the other side, knowing and loving our covenant-keeping Saviour in a deeper way; we have experienced God; this personal experience leaves us able to understand others who are still trapped inside. Jesus promised that He would always be with us but He never said that we would always feel it. As Christians we know, in theory at least, that in the life of a Child of God injustice and sufferings are permitted by God; through such suffering He is able to refine us to reflect His true nature. So, we are often in the 'Low places', the valley of humiliation, rejection and sorrow.

Wouldn't we love to be sprinting up the mountain of life? Wouldn't we love to live in such 'high places' of love, care, success here on this earth; transform evil, sorrow and pain into something glorious and live in the Light of our Lord for ever? But the 'High places' of victory and oneness with our Lord can only be achieved by learning to accept the will of God – leaving self-will at the altar of sacrifice. Perhaps then the Lord will speak to comfort some of His loved ones who are stuck in the pit of sorrow, who walk in the darkness and have no light or find themselves tossed in the storms of life; remember the Light of the World is right there with us, if only we would let Him into our hearts, love Him with all our with all our heart, all our soul.

This is all great in theory but how do we achieve it? I have no magic formula to offer except to invite you to explore the steps of the journey back into the heart of God and healing from the desert of fear and anxiety and depression – realising where you are, wanting to escape and seeking help. See what the Psalmist says, "Some wandered in the trackless desert and could not find their way....They were thirsty and had given up all hope. Then, in their trouble they called to the Lord and He saved them from their distress. He led them by a straight road to a city where they could live". (Psalm 107:4-7) Most of us would have drifted into our deserts so gradually we did not realise it happening; no dramatic turning away from God, He just faded away in the horizon. There is no sin, no guilt, no shame, however big, that can go on separating us from God, once we are willing to repent and ask for forgiveness. God will use our failures to get our attention towards Him. He does not want us to run from them but to learn from them, to discover the difference He can make when we invite Him into all situations – good and bad. The more we realise God's love the greater the degree of healing from any sense of insecurity, any notion that life is something alien, something to be feared.

Life can rob us of every familiar support. We then look for any fixed point, anything resembling what once sustained us. We look in vain until it dawns upon us that there God is... still loving, still guarding us. In a bewildering succession of circumstances we sense God's unchanging presence.

So, yes, God is a healing, restoring God; He does so according to His will. Why not to our will? Because He knows best; He loves us far beyond our comprehension.

May I suggest, if you are going through tough times, that you approach the throne of Christ through a fellow Christian/mentor/counsellor/whatever who would support you to go through the healing process. There is the Pastoral Care Team who would do just that, or find yourself your own friend in Christ, but do it and experience the all-embracing love of Christ; not an insurance against all suffering but the reassurance that He is in with us giving us strength and Hope!

God bless,

*Roshni*

(Roshni Verghese is a member of our Pastoral Care Team)

## ***Services This Month***

Our minister, Freddy Farias-Palacios, will be the speaker at all services except where otherwise noted below. Donald Poirot is a church member, as are all members of our Pastoral Care Team. Amy Burrows works with Gobaith Môn in secondary schools on Anglesey.

### **7<sup>th</sup> October**

- 10:30am All-Age Worship Service  
**Harvest** *Matthew 6:25–34*
- 6:00pm Communion Service  
**A Call to Praise the Lord** *Psalms 117*  
(Lessons from Psalms #13)

### **14<sup>th</sup> October**

- 10:30am **God invites you to become involved with Him in His work**  
(Experiencing God #8) *1 Samuel 3:10;*  
*John 5:17, 19–20*
- 6:00pm **A Call to Be Thankful** *Psalms 118*  
(Lessons from Psalms #14)

### **21<sup>st</sup> October**

- 10:30am **God speaks to us**  
(Experiencing God #9) *Hebrews 1:1–2*
- 6:00pm Café Church Service. Our Guest: Amy Burrows.

### **28<sup>th</sup> October** (*don't forget to put your clocks back!*)

- 10:30am Communion / Healing Service led by the Pastoral Care Team
- 6:00pm Speaker: Donald Poirot  
**Full Sail** *Hebrews 10:32–39*

## ***Dates for Your Diary***

<b>Saturdays</b>	8:30am	Prayer meeting in the Twrgwyn Room.
	2:30pm	Singing group rehearsal for carol service.
<b>Monday 1</b>	7:30pm	Church members' meeting.
<b>Wednesday 3</b>	10:30am	Men's prayer meeting followed by coffee.
<b>Saturday 6</b>	9:30am–12pm	Chapel open to receive donations of non-perishable food items for harvest display / Cathedral foodbank. Items can be also be dropped off during office hours (10am-3pm) earlier in the week.
<b>Sunday 7</b>	2:15pm	Service at Haulfre residential home in Llangoed (near Beaumaris).
<b>Wednesday 10</b>	<b>7:30pm</b>	<b>Monthly prayer meeting in the chapel.</b>
<b>Monday 15</b>	10:30am	Church Walk at Rhoscolyn.
<b>Saturday 20</b>	9:30am	Level 3 Safeguarding training session.
<b>Tuesday 23</b>	<b>7:30pm</b>	<b>Experiencing God</b> course continues (also on Thursday 25 <sup>th</sup> at 10am and 7:30pm).
<b>Monday 29</b>	7:30pm	Missions Group prayer meeting at Sarah Jackson's house.

*Please see the Noticeboard section of this newsletter for more about many of these events.*

## ***News of People***

Our condolences and prayers are with Susan Burt, whose father passed away last month. John Gilberthorpe, a former member of Penrallt, also died recently after a long struggle with ill health; our prayers are with his widow, Irina.

Sarah Swallow, Judy Stammers and our previous minister, Peter Cousins, have all been through surgery in the past month and are recovering well.

As part of her Baptist ministry training course, Deb Stammers has begun a placement to Holyhead Baptist church, currently without a pastor, as their part-time Minister in Training. Jon and the children have gone too in order to be part of the life of the church there together as a family. Please do pray for them all as they begin this next phase of their journey. If you would like to receive an occasional email update with specific prayer requests, or to support them financially, please contact Deb on [deb.stammers@btinternet.com](mailto:deb.stammers@btinternet.com). Their last Sunday in Penrallt was 2<sup>nd</sup> September, although they will be back to visit from time to time!

## ***Homegroups***

Many of our folk meet in small groups during the week for Bible study, prayer and fellowship. We encourage you to join one of these groups if you are able to. *NB groups generally do not meet on the week of the monthly prayer meeting or the Experiencing God course and may not meet all other weeks – please check with the named contact. All landline numbers below have the 01248 area code.*

<b>Day</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Group Name</b>	<b>Contacts</b>
<b>Mon</b>	7:00pm	Delta	Brian Wheatcroft (602516) Pat MacKenzie (670948)
<b>Tue</b>	7:30pm	Nilgiri	Joan Beer (353874)
<b>Tue</b>	7:30pm	Tyddyn Isaf (Menai Bridge)	Magnus Forrester-Barker (717570)
<b>Wed</b>	2:00pm	Carers	Carol Morris (208407)
<b>Wed</b>	7:30pm	Bryn Eithinog	Freddy Farias-Palacios (07506 710694)
<b>Wed</b>	7:30pm	Nomads	Pat & Roger Borlace (713146)
<b>Thu</b>	10:30am	Llanfairpwll (am)	Sue & Lawrence Moss (713793)
<b>Thu</b>	7:30pm	Llanfairpwll (pm)	Sue & Lawrence Moss (713793)
<b>Thu</b>	7:30pm	Ogwen Valley	Brian & Kate Wheatcroft (602516)
<b>Fri</b>	10:30am	The Lydias	Freda Birchall (371316) Lesley Jackson (680330)

## ***Children's Birthdays in October***

7<sup>th</sup>: Anna Warnock;  
20<sup>th</sup>: Micah Adams;

15<sup>th</sup>: Joanna Burt;  
31<sup>st</sup>: Catrin Gwilliam

***Deadline for next month's newsletter: Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> October.***

*Please send information to Magnus (office@penrallt.org; 01248 353355). All notices should be submitted in writing (preferably by email) as early as possible.*

## ***Noticeboard***

### ◇ **Bank Account**

Please note that, to satisfy new regulations from the Charity Commission, our bank account name has been changed to "Penrallt Baptist Church, Bangor". Any cheques to Penrallt should be made out in this name (it is not necessary to amend existing standing orders, as the account number and sort code remain the same).

### ◇ **Bible Unzipped**

We are pleased to announce the recommencement of Bible Unzipped on January 19<sup>th</sup> in Rhos on Sea URC church. A number of Penrallt people have expressed their desire for it to restart, so we are inviting you to join us and bring along others who would appreciate it. For those who are not acquainted with it, Bible Unzipped is a theological learning community of people from different churches who want to look deeper into the Bible and the debates around it. It is free and a lot of fun. We hope to have sessions on the third Saturdays of January, February, March, May, June and July. The only change in format from previous years is that there will be just two seminars instead of three and the mornings will run from 9:30 to 12:00 with the usual coffee and cookies in the middle. Mark the dates in your diary and a full programme will be available soon.

### ◇ **Café Church**

*Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> October 6pm*

This is a time when we can meet together in fellowship in our church, but instead of sitting in rows we have a café. You can enjoy relaxing with your friends and chatting about God and related issues. It's a time for everyone from all walks of life, and we welcome you in. Our programme will vary from month to month with live musicians, games, storytelling, video... You name it, we'll try it!! This month our guest will be **Amy Burrows**. Amy needs no introduction to most of us as she has been attending Penrallt for most of her life and is the daughter of our treasurer, Stephen. Amy currently works with Gobaith Môn, sharing the gospel in secondary schools on Anglesey.

### ◇ **Church Lunch**

*Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> October*

We will, as usual, have a church lunch on the first Sunday of the month. Please bring enough buffet-style food for yourself and a few others.

### ◇ **Church Walk**

*Monday 15<sup>th</sup> October*

October's walk will be led by Roger and Eve Malone. Meet at the beach car park (Borth Wen) at Rhoscolyn on Holy Island at 10:30am. The walk is approx. 3hrs, 30 mins. Some rough terrain, but not too hilly. Bring a packed lunch, drinks afterwards at the White Eagle. Toilets at the car park; parking fee is £4 for 4 hrs, but Roger says "I have a plan to get that down to a quid for each driver! (So don't buy a ticket until I reveal all)". For more information contact Roger on 01248 431296.

◇ **Harvest Service**

*Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> October 10:30am*

We will be celebrating harvest with an all-age worship service. This will include a display of non-perishable food items, subsequently to be given to the Cathedral foodbank. If you would like to contribute items for the display please drop them in to the church office between 10:30am and 3pm Monday to Friday during the first week of October or bring them on Saturday morning, 6<sup>th</sup> October, between 9:30am and 12 noon.

◇ **Monthly Prayer Meeting**

*Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> October 7:30pm*

Our monthly mid-week prayer meetings are for the whole congregation and all are warmly encouraged to attend. The meetings usually take place in the chapel, and last about an hour. The next two meetings after this one will be on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> November and Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> December.

◇ **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: Adrienne Ferrada; Gwen Hicks (353648); Geoff Moore (410582); Lawrence Moss (713793); Helen Thomas (600174); Roshni Verghese (07967 320048).

◇ **Pray for Penrallt Every Day**

We believe in prayer and encourage people to pray. You can send prayer request to our electronic diary via [office@penrallt.org](mailto:office@penrallt.org) (there are also prayer cards in the church porch that you can fill in). Better still, you can receive the prayer diary straight to your inbox every Monday (or occasionally on Tuesdays) by emailing the office now and requesting to be put on the list. For more immediate and interactive sharing of prayers, search on Facebook for *Penrallt Prayer Point* and send a request to join our group.

◇ **Rough Sleepers**

We do not recommend giving money directly to the rough sleepers in Upper Bangor. You will find labelled envelopes in the porch for a gift that will buy meal vouchers which are distributed to the homeless by the Cathedral; this certainly would be a more meaningful form of help.

◇ **Sunday Afternoon Services**

We usually visit local residential homes on the first Sunday afternoon of the month, alternating between Haulfre (in Llangoed, near Beaumaris) and Plas Garnedd (in Llanberis). The services start at 2:15pm and last roughly half an hour. This month we will be going to **Haulfre** on 7<sup>th</sup> October.

*Focus on...*

## **Claire Bedford** **servicing with BMS in Chad**

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

Claire is a pharmacist, originally from North Devon. She trained at the University of Bath and Torbay Hospital. In the UK Claire worked as a hospital pharmacist and more recently 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 is learning to speak Chadian Arabic.

Government-employed teachers and healthcare workers are currently on strike over pay and conditions, as many haven't been properly paid in months. The strikes have rendered all government schools, hospitals and health centres closed. The knock on effect at Guinebor II Hospital is that they continue to be extremely busy. Being classed as a private hospital means they are not on strike and so they continue to offer the best healthcare they can at a price people can afford. However, the situation regarding accessing good quality medicines and medical sundries (like cannulae, urinary catheters, plaster of Paris, bandages) locally continues to be a struggle.

Claire is on Home Assignment in the UK during September and October.

Claire asks us to pray for:

- The ongoing strike situation with government health and education workers.
- For the Chadian hospital staff, safety on the roads as they travel to and from the hospital and that they will work well together.
- Wisdom for Claire's Chadian pharmacist colleague, Audrey, as she endeavours to ensure that medicines and medical supplies are available at the hospital in a timely and cost-efficient way.
- For Claire's health, that she will get good rest and quality family time while at home, and for safety as she travels to visit supporting churches in the UK.

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