



Penrallt Baptist Church

Newsletter: September 2021

Decluttering and praying hope for Afghanistan

We've been de-cluttering as we prepared to move. An interesting and challenging time. Memories rush back as I look again at cherished things from my childhood and a smile spreads across my face. Also, I am faced with the frustration of a few unfinished projects and some disappointments or regrets. I've been struggling with my temptation to keep everything 'just in case it is useful'! Avoiding waste, but also trying to be wise and realistic about what I should keep.

We are encouraged to bring all of what we are, all we have and all we are doing to God. We also bring to him all we have done, and feelings about things we have not done. In heaven, God will ultimately affirm what is good and transform what is not. He will even redeem things that were spoiled or marred. We get a glimpse of this now, today, in the present as God meets us. We see breakthroughs of this in our lives and in the lives of others today. And we yearn for the completion of that in heaven.

We also recognise that so many people struggle with greater issues. In the midst of our own busyness as a new term starts, we mustn't allow ourselves to be introspective. Over this last month we have seen people fleeing Afghanistan with what they can carry in their hands. Fleeing for their lives. Their hopes and dreams of a better tomorrow for their country are shattered. But God can make a difference even in those dire circumstances. Through Jesus, transformation is possible even there. We pray that God would move in that land. We pray for Christians there. We pray for justice, mercy and peace. With Jesus, there is always hope irrespective of our circumstances. Hope for eternity and hope for today.

Penrallt Baptist Church, Holyhead Road, Bangor LL57 2EU

Tel: 07934 231788; Email: office@penrallt.org; Website: www.penrallt.org
Office hours: Mon–Fri 10am – 3pm; Administrator: Magnur Forrester-Barker

Minister: John Thompson; 07931 150697; minister@penrallt.org
Secretary: Owen Lloyd-Evans; 07941 612868; secretary@penrallt.org
Treasurer: Averil Francis; 01248 421744; treasurer@penrallt.org

So we continue to learn how to love, trust and follow Jesus. To be thankful and to present hope in Jesus to all. We ask God once again for the transformational power of his Holy Spirit for us, for our church, for our communities and for our world.

Blessings,

John

Items for prayer

John's work with NWBA continues, as does his involvement with the Bangor University Chaplaincy (including a new venture in the form of an online Chaplaincy lecture on 29th September). Please pray for these things. Pray too for John as he prepares to speak at Bangor CU on 21st September, and for the deacons as they meet on 8th September and the Cytûn committee as they meet on 14th September.

Children's Birthdays in September

6th: Aoife Theobald
16th: Reuben Stevens
25th: Ned Allen

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). *NB Magnus is still working mostly from home at the moment, but the office hours still apply.*

Deadline for next month's newsletter: Sunday 26th September

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

Services This Month

Our services are now all in a hybrid format until further notice, with a small congregation in the building and others joining us on Zoom. It is not currently necessary to book places for the service but other Covid regulations remain in place and the situation could change at short notice so please keep an eye on our website (www.penrallt.org/services) for up to date information, as well as the link for the Zoom meeting and recordings of past services, where available.

Services start at 10:30am on Sunday mornings except where otherwise noted. Crèche and Sunday school (for children aged up to 11) are set to restart on 5th September and our new Sunday morning youth group (Deeper, for ages 12-17) will be starting on 12th September.

Sunday 5th September

Who do you say I am / Gaining the whole world but losing your soul

(Luke 9:18–27). Preacher: John Thompson.

NB if you are planning to travel in from Anglesey for the service, please be aware that the Menai Suspension Bridge and the road to Beaumaris will be closed this morning for the Anglesey Half Marathon; the Britannia Bridge should be open as normal.

Sunday 12th September

Wake up, Shape up and See the Glory

(Luke 9:28–36). Preacher: Peter Cousins.

Sunday 19th September

Driving out demons and being the greatest

(Luke 9:37–50). Preacher: John Thompson.

Sunday 26th September (Communion)

Ploughing a straight furrow

(Luke 9:51–62). Preacher: Lesley Jackson.

Communion will be served in a covid-safe manner to those in the building; those on Zoom will need bread and wine (or equivalent) to fully take part.

All this month's sermons are part of our ongoing series, [Love, Trust and Follow Jesus](#). Previous sermons in the series can be found on our website.

Tech Team

It takes a lot of work behind the scenes to make our services happen. We are very grateful to our small but dedicated tech team who do their best to ensure that you can see and hear what's going on. If you would like to join the team there is always room for more volunteers. Some technical competence is useful but prior experience of the technology we are using is not required as training can be provided. Please speak to Owen or Magnus if you can help.

◇ **Appeal for Items for Refugees from Afghanistan**

We have received a request, via Cytûn Bangor, from the community group Pobl i Bobl for items that they can use to help refugees arriving from Afghanistan. This request was emailed to our news mailing list recently but if you did not receive a copy or need another one, please contact the church office (office@penrallt.org)

◇ **Advance Notice: Church Members' Meeting**

Our next meeting for church members will be taking place on Monday 11th October. If you are not a member but would like to be in on the action, please speak to either John (minister@penrallt.org) or Owen (secretary@penrallt.org)

◇ **Building**

It is no longer required to book places to attend our services, but you must still wear a mask (unless exempt) and comply with other Covid regulations (see www.penrallt.org/services/index.php). If you need to enter the church building for any other purpose during the week, please contact the church office beforehand to obtain permission and arrange access.

◇ **Church Fellowship Events**

We will meet in Rhiwlas at **12:30pm on Sunday 5th September** for a walk to Tregarth (weather permitting); approx. 5 miles/3 hours. All are welcome but booking a (free) ticket is essential. More details on the booking page: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/penrallt-fellowship-walk-tickets-166861931529>

For next month's fellowship event, on Sunday 3rd October, we are planning a walk from Brynrefail to the lagoons in Llanberis (approx. 45 minutes each way on a tarmac path suitable for prams, buggies, scooters and bikes. Watch our website or the [Penrallt Baptist Church](#) Facebook page for more information and an Eventbrite booking link nearer the time.

◇ **Children's Work**

Sunday school for 5–11s is restarting on Sunday 5th September — now that we are back to using our church building for services we are now moving from Zoom meetings on Tuesday nights to actually meeting on Sundays for Sunday school! There will also be crèche facilities available for younger children.

◇ **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 Student Fellowship* (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/channel/UCwK0_IPqAVqGKwQREg6JhHg
- www.facebook.com/penralltbc
- <https://www.facebook.com/penralltyouth>

◇ **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 **Wednesdays at 11:30am** (note that this is a new start time, half an hour earlier than before) and **Saturdays at 8:30am**; please contact the church office if you need the connection details for either meeting (which are also posted in the prayer diary every week). Both these meetings should continue running throughout the summer holiday season.

The Baptist Union have resources for prayer and reflection at www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/338269/Prayer_and_reflections.aspx and at www.nwba.org.uk/ with encouraging articles and stories, prayer broadcasts and reflections.

◇ **Students**

We look forward to welcoming new and returning students this month and we encourage you to pray for them as they prepare to travel to Bangor and as they settle in.

Our main student activity this term will be following a programme called *Faith: One Eight*, that is based on Acts 1:8 and Joshua 1:8. Its aim is to discover, discern and discuss gospel principles and apply them to our lives to foster individual faith, engage with the wider Christian community and develop evangelistic skills. For more information, contact our student co-ordinator, Ryan (students@penrallt.org) or see our [Penrallt Student Fellowship](#) Facebook group.

◇ **Youth Events**

Our youth activities are restarting this term with a Thursday night group called Ignite (usually meeting in the Canolfan at 7pm) and a Sunday morning group called Deeper (taking place during our morning services). Further details will be on our new youth website, due to launch soon, as well as our [Penrallt Youth Facebook page](#) and [Instagram group](#). Contact our youth worker, Becca (youth@penrallt.org), for more information.

Focus on...

Chris & Anna Hembury **Serving with CMS in Hull**

Hello!

We are aware that although we have a long relationship with Penrallt, going back some 30 years, many of you will have no clue who these “random people acting like we’re family” are! So, in a nutshell, we live and work in a lively and treasure-rich part of Hull, which sadly also suffers very real problems and multiple deprivations. We are mission partners with CMS, called to share life with those on the margins, supporting people to connect with themselves, with each other, with the planet and with God. We are so grateful for Penrallt’s longstanding support and partnering with us - diolch yn fawr iawn!



In July, we took part in a sponsored walk across the Humber Bridge and back. We know, it’s not really that far (2.8 miles in total)! But we were walking with families from the Breakfast Club (still going after 22 years; we started it in 1999 with 8 children!), to raise money to secure our heavily vandalised community garden, and there were a lot of very little legs taking part.

We stopped for a “halfway” picnic lunch on the other side of the bridge in a lovely spot by the Humber. Heading back to the bridge, one of the children, let’s call him Ben, wandered near an algae-covered natural pond surrounded

by reeds. Ben is naturally curious as well as generally oblivious to much of what most of us pay attention to. Chris knows this, so gave him a friendly heads up:

“Just step back from there a bit Ben, that looks like solid ground but it isn’t.” Five seconds later... splosh! Ben disappeared under the film of green! Nice one! Thankfully, his head popped back up, looking startled but fine, and Chris was able to stretch out and haul him back onto dry land.

Alongside being relieved that Ben was fine, it’s fair to say Chris was possibly at least as relieved he didn’t have to dive into the murky waters to rescue him!



More times than we'd probably care to admit, if we're honest, we have been reticent about doing the right, potentially life-saving thing. It's easy for people to look at the track record of our ministry and put us on a pedestal, extolling our self-sacrificial virtues. And that happens a lot. But the truth is we often hide our "Jonah syndrome" well. We hadn't really planned on getting our trainers muddy or our jeans wet today. Surely someone else will step up to the plate soon enough? How desperately are we needed, really?!

Thankfully, God knows us and still chooses to use us, perhaps not despite ourselves but actually because we are interminably fallible, often reluctant and even petulant, sometimes unnervingly likely to think of what's in it for us before we commit to doing what Jesus would do / is doing. Our inadequacy as heroes is a huge encouragement to us, and we encourage you to let yours be to you! God calls us to His mission — half-hearted *as we are*, not as He sees our potential to be, warts and lack and all. God uses us to give others a helping hand onto solid ground. Our limitations, God's limitless love.

"But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us."

(2 Corinthians 4:7)

Chris & Anna Hembury

