



Penrallt Baptist Church

Newsletter: September 2022

The Gospel transforms society bringing hope

We have confidence in the good news of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus. We believe it is not only relevant to society, but it can transform society for good. Jesus brings hope to all. We can have confidence in this because God has done it before. So he can do it again.

As we start a new term we start a new series looking at how the Gospel came to the city of Ephesus. One of the largest cities in the Roman empire. We also look at parts of the letter that Paul later wrote to the Ephesians to encourage them to continue in faith. Paul told the people in Ephesus his compelling story of how he encountered the wonderful grace of God in Jesus. He proclaimed to the Ephesians that this grace was available to everyone. The love of God was available to everyone. To all of society — the rich and the poor. This is what we proclaim too. The gospel gives us peace. The gospel brings freedom from the things that oppress us and from the worries that would overcome us. It shows us a way to live in harmony with God — freeing us from guilt and giving us strength to live his way. To live the way we were created to be.

Paul also believed that as we take this truth into our society, society itself starts to be transformed. This is the hope that we have for our society. For our homes and workplaces. For our city and for Gwynedd and Anglesey — and even for our world. We believe that as we step out in faith, God acts to transform our world.

Blessings,

John

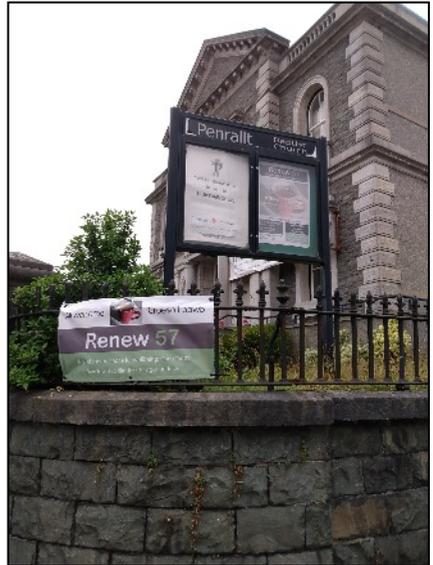
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Renew 57

Anyone and everyone is welcome to come to Penrallt on a Thursday morning, where the Canolfan (rear hall) is open from 10:30am to 12:30pm. Bring a hobby to share with someone else, have a cup of tea or coffee and some toast and a chat. There is a separate prayer space (in a different room) available throughout this time for quiet reflection with optional opportunities to be led in short gentle contemplative prayer in the prayer space at the beginning and the end. This is a place where it is "OK not to be OK". An opportunity to give some attention to our mental and spiritual wellbeing. This ran as a pilot until mid-July and we enjoyed it so much that we decided to carry on. Please continue to pray for the team. If you'd like to know more, speak to Adrienne (adrieferrada@hotmail.co.uk) or Magnus (office@penrallt.org) or, even better, drop in and see for yourself.



Alpha

Our next Alpha course will be running on Wednesday evenings from 28th September, between 6:30 and 8:30pm. The course will run for 12 weeks, including a Christmas party at the end; there's also an away-day in November. Please pray for Wendy B and the team as they prepare for it, and pray about who you might invite as a guest. The course is free and is open to all; it is a great way to explore the Christian faith for those who are new to it and those who want to consolidate their foundations.



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). *NB Magnus is often working from home; office hours still apply but you are advised to check before travelling to the building.*

Deadline for next month's newsletter: Sunday 25th September

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

Morning Services This Month

Our morning services continue to be in a hybrid format, in the building and on Zoom. Please see the website for up to date information about services and any Covid regulations which may be in force. The link for the Zoom meeting and recordings of past services, where available, are also on the website.

Morning services start at 10:30am on Sundays. Our service on 4th September is a all-age one, where the children will stay in throughout the service (though crèche facilities are available if needed). After this, we return to our usual service format, with children and young people going out part way through the service for Sunday school (Primary school / up to 11) or *Deeper* (Secondary school / 11 – 17); the crèche facilities also remain available.

Sunday 4th September

Back to School with God: The Golden Rules.

All-age service led by Becca Williams.

Sunday 11th September

The gospel is good news for Ephesus.

Acts 19:1–7 & 20:18–21. Preacher: John Thompson.

Sunday 18th September

The gospel is good news for all.

Ephesians 3:1–6. Preacher: John Thompson.

Sunday 25th September (Communion service)

The gospel is good news for society.

Acts 19:8–10; Ephesians 3:7–9. Preacher: John Thompson.

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 participate.

Becca is our youth and student worker. John is our minister.

Evening Services

We are still reviewing the various evening service formats we tried before the summer holiday and are intending to relaunch evening services in October.

◇ **Baptist Leaders Fellowship**

The September meeting of the Baptist Leaders Fellowship will be on Zoom only, on Monday 19th September from 10:30 to 12. The guest speaker is Marc Owen, minister of Moriah Baptist Church, Risca and a well-known leader in our denomination across Wales. His theme will be "*Staying close to Jesus when everything can seem to be pulling us away*" – exploring spiritual disciplines in ministry. This is open to anyone in any leadership role within the church; please contact the church office if you would like the Zoom link.

◇ **CAP (Christians Against Poverty) help with debt in Bangor**

There is a CAP centre (Menai Debt Centre) in Bangor. This helps people who are struggling with debt. The first step is to call the free help line number: 0800 328 0006 (Monday–Thursday 9:30–5:00, Friday 9:30–3:30).

◇ **Church Fellowship Events**

This month's fellowship event will be a trip to the beach at Rhosneigr (the one behind the Oyster Catcher) on Sunday 4th September, starting at around 1pm, for a picnic and some beach fun. All ages welcome. Parents are responsible for their own children — particularly if they enter the water. It is no longer necessary to book places for our fellowship events.

◇ **Foodbanks**

Bangor Cathedral Foodbank 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. To find out more please visit www.bangorfoodbank.org

Mosaic church also have a Foodbank at Coed Mawr Community Centre, which is open 9:30 – 11 on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday mornings. Contact Christine King on 07734 667011.

◇ **Giving**

We take up an offering during our morning services. There is also a donations box at the back of the chapel which you can use 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 Averil (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 that 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 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. There are groups on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings and on Tuesday and Friday mornings. Most groups meet weekly, though some are fortnightly and we have groups meeting in person and groups meeting online (or a combination of the two).

We also have 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. Please contact the church office if you are not part of a contact, care & prayer group or a homegroup and would like to be.

◇ **Men's Fellowship**

Our men's fellowship group are moving from the first Wednesday evening of the month to the first Monday, in order to avoid clashing with our new Alpha course. We are planning a trip to the Gazelle (on the road to Beaumaris) on 5th September at 7pm. Please contact Magnus (office@penrallt.org) if you would like more details.

◇ **Open The Book**

Cytûn have an 'Open the Book' team that goes into Hirael school to deliver the dramatized Open the Book Bible Stories, restarting in September after a two year break. Open the Book is an initiative by the Bible Society. This is a fun and effective way to support having a Christian presence in assembles at primary schools – especially as it has been agreed by educational authorities. This is also a great way for Penrallt to continue our links at Hirael. Please speak to Sarah or John if you are interested and we can put you in contact with the team leader (who is at St John's Methodist).

◇ **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/30262793231755)
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

www.facebook.com/penralltyouth

◇ **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 (07827 472637), Abi Penney (01766 890624); John Thompson (07931 150697). Please pray for the team.

◇ **Prayer Resources**

Send prayer requests, thanksgivings and testimonies to our email prayer diary via office@penrallt.org — use this address, too, to subscribe to the prayer diary, which goes out every week (usually on Mondays). We also have a more interactive Facebook prayer group (see above). To meet and 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 (they are also listed at the bottom of our email prayer diary each week). Our monthly prayer meeting in the church building on Sunday evenings will be back in October when we restart evening services.

◇ **Soul Sisters (Women's Fellowship)**

Our next meeting is on Saturday 10th September at 10:30 in the Canolfan, where we hope to learn a new craft, e.g. jewellery making, sewing, knitting etc.

A warm welcome is extended to all women, including family and friends. We would love to see you there.

◇ **Students**

We look forward to welcoming new and returning students this month. If you would like to know more about how you can fit into the Penrallt family or just want a friendly chat, our student co-ordinator, Becca (students@penrallt.org) would love to hear from you. More details of our student programme will be available soon.

◇ **Youth: Ignite and Deeper**

Our main youth activities are a Thursday night group called *Ignite* (usually meeting in the Canolfan at 7pm) and a Sunday morning group, *Deeper* (during our morning services). Ignite is open to all, and is a social evening with games and activities. Deeper provides opportunity to find out more about the Christian faith. Find out more on our youth website, www.penrallyouth.org, as well as our [Penrallt Youth Facebook page](#) and [Instagram group](#). Contact our youth worker, Becca (youth@penrallt.org), for more information.

Focus on...

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

The following is an extract from the Hemburys' latest prayer letter. Please contact the office if you would like the full version (with a few more photos).

What we do: Sharing life with people on the margins and supporting them to connect with themselves, each other, the planet and God.



Dear friends,

Caravan of love

One of the triumphs of good community development for us is when it is impossible to mark out where the edges are – lots of different people come together to make something happen and it's hard to define who to give the credit to. In May, the Friday bunch at Selby St mission, the Matt's House residents and the wonderful women from Orts all helped make our third Caravan of Love happen: a mini neighbourhood festival which aims to bring people together, shine a light on some of the hidden treasure in our community, have a laugh and a dance and share good food. It was the first big gathering since the long COVID-19 hiatus, and the togetherness felt like a collective remembering of who we are, deep in our bones. From thin air a running order emerged for the open mic, with singing, storytelling and poetry; there were sets from local musicians and a truly incredible magic show from someone we only previously "knew" because they came to Selby St for food and the clothes bank. Turns out we didn't know them at all, and had once again fallen into the trap of projecting a small and pathetic caricature on those who come through the doors of the mission, rather than getting to know their personhood and glimpse their glory. (*I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.* Romans 8:18) A lesson we keep needing to re-learn.

Please pray for us and the folk at Selby St mission, that we would more readily see people as people, God's glory-bearers, and not just labels of "poor", "vulnerable", "marginalised", etc.

Not a fashion show

One of the elements that made up the Caravan of Love this year was a "Not a Fashion Show" by Orts. What started as a fun idea soon became a profound and ongoing conversation about body image, identity, hurtful words, what we fear and what we want to celebrate about ourselves, creativity and courage. The outfits that emerged were playful and brave, often speaking out something previously held hidden in the wearer, each



representing an individual journey. "Strutting our stuff" didn't come easily to most of us, but going public was somehow an essential part our continuing inner transformative experience. In a way it felt like witnessing a baptism – letting old prescribed identities die, accepting our true identity in Christ (though not all would name or frame it that way), and a public declaration of inner change before the community.

Here are just some of the things the women said of their experience: "terrifying... but wonderful!" "freedom" "joy" "release of creativity" "solidarity in our struggles" "mutual building of our self-esteems" "loving our bodies and ourselves, doing it together, couldn't have done it on our own" "coming into and out of ourselves".

Thank God for the journey all those at Orts are on, and pray we will recognise Christ at the centre of our liberation.

Circuit break

For many years, Chris has held thoughts of running a fitness session for men. He gained a black belt in karate when he was in his mid twenties, encouraging and training others as part of his own discipline, and so has been used to running classes and encouraging people to live a healthy lifestyle.

Last year somebody gave us a good sum of money (while we were visiting one of our supporting churches and told us we would know what to do with it. At the time we didn't but knew that God would show us. Around that time, Chris's circumstances changed in that CMS were able to give him some more hours, enabling him to dream a bit. A seed of an idea came to mind, and was planted and watered with prayer: a time for men to get together, look after their physical fitness with a short, undaunting circuit training session and a safe space in which to get honest about their lives, relationships and mental health.

So we bought some equipment and got started. And here began a journey of physical and mental discovery for a group of men of wide-ranging ability. This talented bunch consists of present and past youth club members, asylum seekers, refugees, as well as some guys in ministry and other jobs. Together we train, eat, share our week and reflect on a Bible passage, which is really like a thought for the day that anyone can bring. Our time together is many things: it's fitness, it's encouragement, it's about our relational, spiritual and mental health.



In real terms it's a circuit breaker in the same way the wiring works in our house – if it gets overloaded the breaker kicks in, averting a possible disaster. We are encouraged that the group is growing a deepening friendship and look forward to having some trips out and social times over the coming months.

Thank God for continually supplying our needs; pray for those in the group and ask God to lead us to others who would benefit from being a part of it.

Shalom,

Anna and Chris