



Newsletter: April 2024

An Awesome Easter Surprise

The sense of delighted surprise is wonderfully tangible in the gospel accounts when the disciples meet the risen Jesus. They are genuinely elated and thrilled as well as being awestruck.

This kind of beautiful 'Surprise' is something that often seems to characterise the Christian faith and the Christian experience.

Nicky Gumbel writes: "'Surprised by joy' is how C.S. Lewis described his conversion from atheism to faith in Jesus Christ. He had never expected that there was any connection between God and joy. If anything, he had thought it would be the opposite: 'For all I knew, the total rejection of what I called joy might be one of the demands'. To his great surprise he found that following Jesus was the very opposite to what he expected. He experienced great joy through his new-found faith. He discovered that 'the heart of reality' is to be found in a Person. He was surprised by joy."

I can also testify that I have often found surprises of great joy as I have gone deeper into faith and deeper in my personal relationship with Jesus. This is not to say that faith is always easy, but there is often surprisingly great joy to be found along the way.

1 Cor 2v9: "What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived: [these are] the things God has prepared for those who love him"

... so God has surprises prepared for us!

I hope and pray that we know more and more of the surprising joy of meeting the risen Jesus as we rejoice and celebrate in His resurrection.

Blessings,

John

Penrallt Baptist Church, Holyhead Road, Bangor LL57 2EU
Tel: 07934 231788; Email: office@penrallt.org; Website: www.penrallt.org
Office hours: Mon – Fri, 10am – 4pm; Administrator: Magnus Forrester-Barker

Minister: John Thompson; 07931 150697; minister@penrallt.org
Secretary: Jan Ablett; 07703 188632; secretary@penrallt.org
Treasurer: Cathy Fooks; 07729 892303; treasurer@penrallt.org

Information in this newsletter is correct, as far as possible, at the time of publication. Please see the website for up to date information, as details are subject to change.

Children's Birthdays in April

28th: Alice Onwusa

Service Videos

Recordings of sermons from morning services are available on our [YouTube channel](#) and our own [website](#). Please contact the [church office](#) if you would like a link to recordings of full services.

Deadline for next month's newsletter: Thursday 25th April.

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

Morning Services

Morning services start at 10:30am on Sundays with an option to join on Zoom if you are unable to join us in the building (Zoom link on website). Children and young people go out part way through the service for Sunday school (Primary school / up to 11) or *Deeper* (Secondary school / 11 – 17); crèche facilities are also available for younger children. For all-age services, the children and young people remain in the service but crèche facilities are still available if needed.

Sunday 7th April

Preacher: Arwel Jones.

Arwel is a member of the leadership team at Capel Caersalem in Caernarfon.

Sunday 14th April

Service with our mission partners Catherine & Colm Ó Brolcháin (OM Ireland).

Sunday 21st April

Christians Against Poverty: Saving people from debt

Service with Ruth Godding, manager for the CAP Menai debt centre.

Sunday 28th April (Communion)

Preacher: John Thompson.

John is Penrallt's minister.

Evening Services

Evening services begin at 6pm on Sunday evenings except where otherwise noted. Unlike morning services, these are not usually broadcast or recorded. There is no evening service on the first Sunday; instead we have our church lunch and fellowship event following the morning service (see next page). Services planned for the rest of the month are:

Sunday 14th April

Prayer walk around Bangor, 2-4pm. After a break for lunch there will be a short time of prayer and worship at Penrallt from 1:30pm before the walk itself. We will finish with a short informal service to reflect and share our experiences and to sing and pray, from 4pm.

Sunday 21st April

Communion service led by John Thompson.

Sunday 28th April

Details TBC – please check the website / Facebook.

◇ **Bangor Street Pastors Coffee Morning**

Saturday 27th April , 10am – 12pm at Berea Newydd, with various stalls in aid of Bangor Street Pastors. For more information, please contact Eleri Jones (01248 364665).

◇ **Church Lunch and Fellowship Events**

Our monthly church lunch and fellowship events take place on the first Sunday of the month; this month they will be on 7th April. For lunch, please bring a plate of finger-food, enough for yourself and one or two others so there is enough to share with our visitors. The walk will be at the Bethesda woods and slate quarries; park at the Pantdreiniog (John Street) car park. Please contact Jenny (fellowship@penrallt.org) for further information.

◇ **Church Members' AGM**

Our Annual General Meeting for Church members will take place in the church building and on Zoom on Wednesday 17th April at 7:30pm. Papers and Zoom details for the meeting will be emailed to members in due course.

If you are not a member and would like to find out more about membership, please contact John (minister@penrallt.org) or Jan (secretary@penrallt.org)

◇ **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.

◇ **Flowers**

Judith says: "If anyone would like to help me with the flowers they would be very welcome. Similarly if anyone would like to do some for a special occasion just let me know." (Contact Judith on judithmbousfield@gmail.com or 01248 490956)

◇ **Foodbanks**

Bangor Cathedral Foodbank (www.bangorfoodbank.org) 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.

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

◇ **Giving**

We take up an offering during our morning services, or you can use the donations box at the back of the chapel 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 Cathy (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 Cathy Fooks (treasurer@penrallt.org).

◇ **Homegroups / Contact, Care & Prayer**

We encourage you to join a homegroup 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 to Thursday evenings and on Tuesday and Friday mornings. Groups meet weekly or fortnightly, in person, online or a combination of the two. We also have "contact, care and prayer" to enable people to stay connected even if not in a homegroup. A member of the pastoral care team would contact you every 3 weeks or so to ask how you are and if you'd like to receive prayer support. Please contact the [church office](#) if you are not part of contact, care & prayer or part of a homegroup and would like to be.

◇ **Kindle Kids' Club**

Kindle is our fortnightly Friday night club (6–7pm) for primary school aged children. To find out when Kindle will be running in April, contact Becca (youth@penrallt.org) or check the website/Facebook.

◇ **Men's Breakfast**

Our men's fellowship group usually meet once a month on Saturday mornings for food and friendship at Ian Ablett's home in Caernarfon. All men are welcome. Due to illness we are unsure when the next breakfast will be. Please contact the church office (office@penrallt.org) or Ian (ian.ablett@open.ac.uk; 07759 718931) for confirmation of the date or for more details or to offer or request a lift.

◇ **Mission Prayer Meeting**

The Penrallt mission group will be meeting on Zoom at 7:30pm on Wednesday 24th April to hear updates from our mission partners around the world and to pray for them. Please contact the church office for the Zoom details.

◇ **Open The Book**

As invited guests in school, storytelling teams use the *Open the Book* programme to prepare and present a 10 to 15-minute scripted Bible story to a school assembly, involving the children as much as possible. This is a fantastic opportunity to share Bible stories with children who would otherwise never hear them. For more information see <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/get-involved/open-the-book/> and speak to Sarah Jackson or Magnus.

◇ **Penrallt on Facebook, Instagram 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 to share prayer requests and encouragements
- *Penrallt Students* (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, and now also an Instagram account:

- www.youtube.com/@penralltbaptistchurch
- www.facebook.com/penralltbc www.facebook.com/penralltyouth
- www.instagram.com/penralltbaptistchurch/

◇ **Pastoral Help**

If you have concerns about your own or someone else's welfare, please contact a member of the Pastoral Care team: Ian Ablett (07759 718931); Jan Ablett (07703 188632); 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 PCT as well.

◇ **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 (*Penrallt Prayer Point*). To 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 (also listed at the bottom of our email prayer diary each week).

◇ **Renew 57**

Thursday mornings, 10:30am to 12:30pm, in Canolfan Penrallt. A space for the whole community, where you can bring a hobby to share with someone else or simply sit and chat over a cup of tea or coffee and some toast. A separate prayer space is available throughout this time for quiet reflection, with optional opportunities to be led in short gentle contemplative prayer at the beginning and end of the session. This is a place where it is "OK not to be OK", an opportunity to give some attention to our mental and spiritual well-being. Please pray for the team. To find out more, please speak to Adrienne (adrieferrada@hotmail.co.uk) or Magnus (office@penrallt.org), or drop in and see for yourself.

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

All ladies are invited to come along and join us for a Recipe Swap Morning. Prepare and bring your favourite dish (salad/chutney/smoothie/biscuits/anything you like) together with a copy of the recipe to share with one another. If you need any further details, please contact Averil or Ellie.

◇ **Students**

We love to welcome students as part of our church family. To learn more about what activities are available, or just for a friendly chat, drop our student co-ordinator, Becca (students@penrallt.org) a line. Also, don't miss our *Penrallt Students* Facebook group.

◇ **Working Party**

We are planning to have a working party on the morning of Saturday 20th April (9:30 to 12:20 approx.; bring some lunch to share afterwards if you are able to stay) to do various maintenance tasks that need doing in and around the church building. There will be a variety of jobs available for all levels of skill and experience, including:

- painting
- fixing things (door hooks, chair fabrics, mounting a TV on the wall)
- gardening

Are you aware of something that you think could be improved at the work day? Please speak to John or a member of the building committee (Owen, Magnus, Ben, Crystal, Luke) to get it considered.

◇ **Youth: Ignite and Deeper**

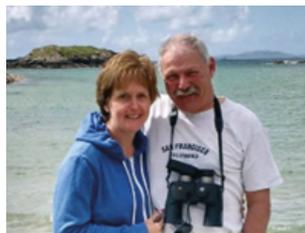
Our main youth activities are a Thursday night group called *Ignite* (usually meeting in the Canolfan at 7pm) and a Sunday morning group, *Deeper* (during our service, except for all-age services). Ignite, a social evening with games and activities, is open to all. Deeper provides opportunity to find out more about the Christian faith. Find out more on our youth website, www.penralltyouth.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...

Catherine & Colm Ó Brolcháin

Serving with OM Ireland

In 1957, George Verwer and two friends took a mission trip to Mexico. What began with three men who deeply desired to share God's love with those around the world who did not know it multiplied into a global movement of believers with the same passion. Originally called Send the Light, it became known as Operation Mobilisation in 1981. Today, more than 5,000 OM workers representing 134 nationalities are serving or in partnership in over 147 countries, in addition to onboard OM's ships.



Former members of Penrallt, Catherine and Colm now serve with OM Ireland, the headquarters of which is based at Lacken House, in County Roscommon, the very heart of the country. OM in Ireland officially launched in 2002 with the goal of supporting the Irish church. The vision of OM is to see many more vibrant communities of Jesus followers across the world. In Ireland, the number of people with an active faith is very small (estimated at 1.5% Operation World). To see this vision become reality, they offer training and resources to support small churches. Their other ministry emphasis is to give opportunities for people to receive practical training in Evangelism through a one- or two-week outreach in towns around Ireland. This enables participants to experience thought-provoking, creative, interactive training, then join an international team to share the message of the Gospel in word and action, together with local Christians.

There is also an annual timetable of regular outreaches at events like the National Ploughing Championships, the Irish Boat Festival, the traditional National music festival the 'Fleadh Cheoil' and the Appleby Horse Fair. One such outreach is around St Patrick's Day. This year, OM Ireland were joined by an amazing team of 12 people from five different countries to share the love of Jesus with others there in Ireland.

For more than two decades, the Big Red Bus, driven by Colm, has been an integral part of the ministry at OM Ireland. Its bright red exterior, banner of international flags, and vivid display of John 3:16 have been seen everywhere from Cork to Donegal, from Wales to England, and all places in between. But every ministry tool has its season and it has come time to say goodbye to the current Big Red Bus. Colm says, "The team will continue with our outreaches in the local towns/ communities, while working with churches and training people to spread the Good News. We are confident that the God, we serve, "who will never leave us or forsake us" has great plans for something special to replace the Big Red Bus. This will enable us to use the training, experience, knowledge, and time spent in meeting, ministry, and outreach, over the years, to effectively proclaim His Kingdom with whatever tools He provides for us!". OM Ireland are now in the exciting phase of looking for a new vehicle, to continue with a 'mobile' ministry, but it may not be a bus!

Catherine continues serving part time in Pastoral care, as well as supporting the team through the ups and downs of life on mission. If there is any time to spare, she gets stuck into anywhere there is a need like cooking and cleaning for the outreaches!

Catherine and Colm will be joining us on Sunday 14th April in the morning service to share some of what God is doing over in Ireland.