



Penrallt Baptist Church

Newsletter: October 2015

A Farewell From the Minister:

"So this is it. The last time," I say to my two companions as we sit side by side in the bird hide at the Spinneys.

"Absolutely," agrees Lady Wisdom, while my friend the angel just slurps noisily on his strawberry smoothie, more to his angelic taste than the coffee in which I've been trying to interest him. Lady Wisdom is watching a flock of redshank needling their beaks into the muddy shores of the Menai Straits. She puts down her binoculars and turns to me.

"Not quite the way you'd expected is it, laddie?"

"Not really," I reply.

"*Many are the plans of a human heart, but it's the Lord's purpose that prevails,*" she pronounces before picking up her binoculars again and concentrating her stern looks on a red breasted merganser as it slides beneath the murky surface of the inlet.

"I just worry a bit about the future of the church." I confess, and turning to my friend the angel I ask "Could you give me the insider's edge on this one?"

He takes the straw out of his mouth, hiccups slightly and shakes his head.

"Naah. All that kind of stuff is restricted information. You know."

"Peter, bach," interrupts Lady Wisdom, "*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he'll make your path straight.*"

"Yes, but seventeen years is a long time to invest in the life of a church."

"No it isn't" chorus the angel and Lady Wisdom together.

"It isn't?"

"No," explains the angel, "it only seems like it to you. You're an eternal creature, granted eternal life by the grace of God. You and Jesus have a lot of mileage together still to come. That goes for Penrallt too."

For a brief moment I imagine Jesus at the wheel of a lorry labelled 'Penrallt' bumping down the road in Upper Bangor. He sounds the horn and smiles. Passers-by look up, surprised. It's a pleasant thought.

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Despite the fact that Lady Wisdom is just a poetic creation of the Biblical writer of Proverbs and my pal the angel only ever existed in my head, the three of us sit quietly waiting for the migratory birds to return home from northern climes to our coast.

But I have to confess one last burden of my heart.

"It's just that I totally hate goodbyes."

The flock of redshank suddenly take to the air in a piping flurry of brown and white feathers.

I look up, startled.

I'm alone.

Time, then, to bid the church farewell.

My thanks to you all for seventeen exciting and challenging years. Special thanks to all the deacons and pastoral care team members who have worked closest to me down the years, to the musicians who have produced such a wonderful score to accompany the story of Penrallt, and to our youth and children's teams who have helped adorn the church with young lives. Indeed, thank you all for your support and hard work. We will miss you.

And a final mention to Susan, my wife, who has worked harder than I have in the church and coped with me at the same time. I nominate her for a medal.

To you all, goodbye and God bless,

Peter

(The parts in italics above are quotations from the book of Proverbs, 19:21 and 3:5)

THANK YOU

Our house looks like a florist's, there are so many cards we cannot get them all on the shelves and ledges in one go, we have enough chocolate for a thousand sweet teeth, and we are talking animatedly about buying something special for our new house with your gift so that we will always remember you when we relax on the sofa.

And we have been blessed.

Blessed by the prayers of the children in the book they made for us (and flattered by their portraits of Peter and Susan);

Blessed by the best wishes and prayer of so many people by phone, letter, card and in person;

Blessed by the book of memories to keep us thinking of you even as our memories fade with age.

God has answered so many prayers in Penrallt over these seventeen years that we must insist the growth and vitality of the church has stemmed from his grace.

Yet it has been a privilege to share in your hard work and dedication, and to see the fruit of our labour.

And it all seems so worthwhile when we come to thank Penrallt for its generosity last weekend.

So many hours of planning, activity and clearing up must have drained you all.

So thank you.

It is not easy to leave, especially as the new intake of students begins to fill the seats left vacant by those who left in June. Believe us when we say that our hearts long to stay, get to know them, feed them and enjoy their company.

And we long to stay and enjoy your company too, sharing in your worship, being uplifted by our prayers, seeing God performing miracles and, well, just hanging out with you as friends.

Our hope is that your new minister will arrive soon and be well received and greatly encouraged, and that in the meantime you will grow and prosper in God's presence.

We will miss you, but expect to meet you from time to time.

May you know the length, breadth, height and depth of the love of God in Jesus his Son, and may the Spirit of God fill you with power, compassion and courage.

Peter & Susan

A call to honour God our Father:

There you have it; farewell from Peter and Susan.

They have gone; off into the glorious sunset, hand in hand, entering a new phase of peace and calm. But they will remain friends with us. Right now we must rejoice for their selfless ministry over the past seventeen plus years (what a ministry it has been) and let them go; we too must move on.

So, where does that leave Penrallt to move on to?

Dear brothers and sisters, this is not the end of God's plans for Penrallt – rather a different phase; He calls us to rest on His promise that He will be with us no matter what. That is a promise not a 'maybe' or 'let me see'. He is the great 'I am.' We are a blessed church, God's church, a church that He bought with His precious blood – that is how important we are to Him. So, do we need to get dejected, negative and feel that things are about to fall apart without a minister, now that Peter has gone? We will not; this is an opportunity for us to get up, count our blessings, assess our talents and gifts and come together in oneness with the Spirit. We are God-reliant not minister-reliant and Peter would have been the first to say that. Let God do His work among us. We need a new minister, God has already anointed one for us but we have to wait with patience for God's timing and revelation – we all know this. The farther we roam along the path of anxiety the harder it is to remember that God is with us; it takes us away from awareness of His presence. Our path right now might feel rather rocky but trust in the Lord and He will make it straight. 'Therefore do not lose heart, ...we are being renewed day by day' (2 Corinthians 4:16)

Please will you trust your deacons – they are of your prayerful choice – who are working really hard behind the scenes, let them guide you, they are not about to run away with all decision making without your input. During this pastoral vacancy period will you pray for wisdom for all, will you provide support to one another, will you do an extra bit in the church life, will you accept the absence of a minister and few inconveniences with grace, for God grieves when grace erodes.

Communication will alleviate anxiety. Therefore, If you have any concerns, issues or personal worries, please do not hesitate to contact me any time – mobile 07967320048 or mail me on vergheseroshni@hotmail.com or secretary@penrallt.org.

The Pastoral Care Team is always available to you as is the church office and all deacons; we might not have instant answers but we can listen and together find answers to most problems.

God bless you all

Roshni

Services This Month:

4 October

10:30am A Service of Praise and Thanksgiving. Leader: Geoff Birch.

6:00pm Communion Service / Thanksgiving Meditation. Speaker: Diane Holmes.

Today

Luke 4:14-22

11 October

10:30am Speaker: Rob Beamish. *New Beginnings #1: Acts 9:1-19*

6:00pm Speaker: Jon Stammers. *Gifts of the Spirit #1: 1 Corinthians 12:12-26*

Your worst nightmare: a church full of people exactly like you!

18 October

10:30am Speaker: Bob Woods.

Up on the roof

New Beginnings #2: Acts 10:1-23

6:00pm Speaker: Delvin Varghese. *Gifts of the Spirit #2: 1 Corinthians 12:27-31*

Spiritual Gifts: What are they and who are they for?

25 October

10:30am Communion Service. Speaker: Geoff Birch.

God Desires Our Best

New Beginnings #3: Acts 13:1-12

6:00pm Speaker: Roger Borlace.

The Most Excellent Way

Gifts of the Spirit #3: 1 Corinthians 13

Our Speakers in October:

Rob Beamish is the minister of Prince's Drive Baptist Church in Colwyn Bay and is our interim moderator while we are between ministers. **Delvin Varghese** has recently left Bangor to start a PhD in Newcastle. The other speakers are all members of Penrallt.

Welcome to Students:

If you're a student we welcome you to Penrallt. Please collect a student pack from the door, and join in our activities, especially Faith Café on Sunday nights from 27th September. Matt Dawson (07908 613758; students@penrallt.org) is our Student Coordinator and he will be happy to tell you what's happening and to invite you to our student home group.

Dates For Your Diary:

- Sunday 4** 2:45pm Service at Plas Garnedd Residential Home in Llanberis.
Wednesday 7 10:30am Men's prayer meeting followed by coffee in Options.
Monday 12 7:30pm Church members' meeting.
Saturday 17 9:30am-1pm *Bible Unzipped* at Rhos-On-Sea URC (NB this is a week later than usual!).
Monday 19 10:30am Church walk at Capel Curig.

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

News of People:

Congratulations to **Joan Beer** on becoming a great-grandmother. **Michael Hogg** is unwell and has been off work. **Phil McKenna** has had another stroke but is at home. **Lyn Isak** is back in the UK after a visit to Japan where she received good medical treatment. **Mandy Shanks** continues to receive treatment for the consequences of her major cancer surgeries, but sadly she and Martin have broken off their engagement just a month before the wedding.

Trudie and **Duncan** will be back before Christmas for the birth of their child in February.

Best wishes to **Averil Francis** as she takes up the offer of early retirement from the bank and seeks new challenges.

Children's Birthdays in October:

5th: Evangeline Goodwin 7th: Anna Warnock
20th: Micah Adams 21st: Gwilym Davies 23rd: Scott Jones
26th: Hannah Howick 31st: Catrin Gwilliam

From the Church Office

Please note that from 1st October the church office will be open for an extra hour each day. The opening hours will now be 10am to 3pm, Monday to Friday. We will endeavour to notify you via the weekly and monthly news bulletins if there will be occasions when the office is closed during the normal hours. ***The office will be closed between Thursday 29th October and Wednesday 4th November.***

Weekday Events:

Please check with the contact people when there are meetings this month.

HG = Home Group

| Day | Time | Details | Contacts |
|------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Tue | 7:30pm | HG, Nilgiri | Joan Beer (353874) |
| Tue | 7:30pm | HG Tyddyn Isaf (Menai Bridge) | Magnus Forrester-Barker (717570) |
| Wed | 2:00pm | HG, Carers | Carol Morris (208407) |
| Wed | 7:30pm | HG, Bethesda | Jon & Deb Stammers (602868) |
| Wed | 7:30pm | HG, Nomads | Pat & Roger Borlace (713146) |
| Thu | 10:30am | HG, Llanfairpwll (am) | Sue & Lawrence Moss (713793) |
| Thu | 7:30pm | HG, Llanfairpwll (pm) | Sue & Lawrence Moss (713793) |
| Fri | 10:30am-12pm | Cheeky Monkeys (parent/toddler group) | Ceri Walker (07581 452098) |
| Fri | 10:30am-12:30pm | HG, Maes y Dref | Anne Collis (353173) |
| Sat | 8:30am | Prayer Meeting | |

Noticeboard:

◇ **Bible Unzipped**

Saturday 17th October

9:30am

Bible Unzipped aims 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 meet monthly, usually on the second Saturday morning but this month a week later than usual, at Rhos-on-Sea URC from 9:30am to 1pm. The course is free and each morning includes three sessions. This month: *Philippians 2* (Julia Bartholomew); *The Image of God in 1 Corinthians 12* (Diane Holmes); *The Garden Tomb in Jerusalem* (Richard Meryon). Please note that Bible Unzipped next month will take place on 14th November here in Penrallt, not in Rhos.

◇ **Car Parking**

Free parking is available on Sundays in Fron Heulog (the School of Healthcare Sciences) behind the Catholic church. The private car park next to Penrallt is now pay & display with no special rates for the disabled; it often shuts at 6pm. Morrisons are happy for you to park in their car park on Sunday mornings and do your shopping after the service provided you register your car registration number at their information desk beforehand; they say they switch the cameras off to make the car park available to us on Sunday/weekday evenings after 6pm.

◇ **Church Lunch**

We will host a church lunch on **Sunday 4th October**. Please bring enough buffet style 'finger food' for yourselves and one or two others.

◇ **Church Walk**

Monday 19th October

Meet at 10:30am in the free car park behind the shops at the junction of the A5 and A4086 at Capel Curig (toilets 20p). The walk consist of undulating terrain with some stiles and wonderful views (weather permitting) and approximately 4 ½ miles. Walking boots desirable. Bring picnic lunch. Café at end of walk. For any further details contact Geoff and Marilyn: 01286 870944.

◇ **Men's Prayer Meeting**

Wednesday 7th October

10:30am

Time spent in prayer will be followed by coffee in Options. All are welcome to join us.

◇ **Pastoral Help**

If you have pastoral concerns please contact a member of the Pastoral Care team: Pat Borlace (713146); Adrienne Ferrada; Geoff Moore (410582); Judy Stammers (364394); Helen Thomas (600174).

◇ **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**

We believe in prayer and encourage people to pray. You can send prayer request to our electronic diary via 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 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**

The church's policy is not to give money directly to the rough sleepers in Upper Bangor. Be warned that some of them can be aggressive. You will find brown envelopes in the porch for a gift that will buy meal vouchers which are distributed to rough sleepers by the Cathedral. So far Penrallt has contributed £5,855 to this scheme.

◇ **Sunday Afternoon Services**

We visit residential homes in the area once a month on a Sunday afternoon, alternating between Haulfre (in Llangoed, on Anglesey, starting at 2:15pm) and Plas Garnedd (in Llanberis, starting at 2:45pm), usually on the first Sunday. This month we are due to visit Plas Garnedd on **Sunday 4th October** (please see that week's news sheet or check with the church office for confirmation).

As you may be aware, Haulfre is currently under threat of closure. A decision is due to be made on 19th October and we are hoping to arrange a prayer walk around the perimeter of the grounds before this date. Please watch the weekly news sheets for further information, or contact the office if you would like to be notified directly.

Deadline for next month's newsletter: Sunday 25th October.

Please sent information to Magnus (office@penrallt.org; 01248 353355).

All notices should be submitted in writing (preferably by email) as early as possible.

Focus on...

The Youngs at Hebron School (India)

Mark writes:

We had a very refreshing time in North Wales and have returned ready for a new academic year.

As expected, life has immediately become busy. We really hit the ground running. The main reason for the busyness has been visa issues with many UK staff not getting visas, so the academic year started with the school short-handed, particularly at the level of senior management. As a result almost everyone had to take on extra responsibilities to ensure that all needs were met. Give thanks that the visa situation has now been resolved and the remaining members of staff have been able to arrive at the school.

New Principal, Howard Oldcorn, has had a challenging start to the semester but his leadership has been excellent and he has got us all through.

There have been many encouragements, however, not least that we managed to recruit a large group of International Guests (short-term volunteers who help to support various departments), who found themselves with much greater responsibilities than normal at the start of this term.

Euan seems to be settling into reception class well and Luke is enjoying having his brother in school with him. They both seem to be appreciating the friends they have made here and the Junior school environment. They will be losing some friends at Christmas however as a couple of families with young children are returning to their home countries at this time.

Eve has made a great start to the year leading the languages department although with 3 unqualified teachers she has her work cut out with guidance and professional development.

I have begun leading the Geography department and I have a good team of teachers. GCSE Geography is new to me and I am still developing lessons for the A level course so it is keeping me quite busy. My tutor group complete their A levels this year and they are making plans for life after Hebron. This is an exciting, frightening and often overwhelming time for them. I have one extremely talented girl in my year group who unfortunately has a Nigerian passport and parents with low income. This limits her options dramatically and it has been distressing to see how discouraged she is at the moment, while others have many more options.

Please pray for us.

- Praise God for our new Principal and pray that God will sustain his heart, mind and soul.
- Praise God for the IGs and pray that they will settle in well.
- Pray for the right people to fill current and future staff vacancies in Physics; Music; English; Geography; Biology and Modern Languages.