



Penrallt Baptist Church

Newsletter: April 2020

Spring came early to my garden this year. 2020 had barely dawned when snowdrops emerged – clusters of them. These were followed shortly after by camellias – pinks and whites. By the middle of January, they were all in full bloom. Thrushes sang from the treetops, while the woodpecker, in the woodland behind, announced its presence. Even the fish in my pond surfaced several times, assuring me that they were still alive – all four of them!

I love Spring. It brings hope of new life, warmer weather and longer days. The poet Shelley, addressing the wind said, 'O wind, If Winter comes can Spring be far behind?'

As day follows night.

As Spring follows Winter.

As Easter follows Good Friday.

So, life follows death.

But this year, Spring has been accompanied by danger, fear, death and separation. While the flowers bloom, the birds sing and the lambs frolic in the fields, we find ourselves unable to have any control of our lives and our future. We realize our utter dependence on our creator God. Our country, particularly our politicians and our health service are faced with enormous challenges. We pray for life in the face of death.

Spiritually also, Easter brings challenges. The angel said to the women who were first at the tomb, 'Go and tell the disciples that Jesus is alive.' Jesus then met them and said the same thing. 'Go and tell my brothers...' These

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were the first words of the risen Christ. Jesus' last words before his ascension were the same. 'Go and tell all people...' GO is such a positive, impelling word. When I was young, I was involved a lot in athletics. At the starting line, the word, 'Go' produced an immediate response.

Physically now, we cannot go. With the fear of the spread of the Corona virus, we've been told to stay. So, in our present way of life, we also have the challenges of new ways of communication. But, in one sense, this has never been so easy.

We can spend our time looking inwards, regretting failures and our inability to be 'perfect' as we stumble over doctrine; but we are here to be missionaries – people with a mission – looking outwards and spreading the Good News.

Jesus also, of course, invites us to 'COME', to come to Him when we are burdened and bearing heavy loads. His promise following his 'GO', was, 'I will be with you always even to the end of the age.' For us individually, and as a church:

The Message of Good Friday, in the face of death is 'Come, Trust and Worship!'

The Message of Easter which will follow is, 'Go in peace and proclaim the Good News!'

Joan Beer

Minister

We are pleased to announce that the church members agreed by a large majority at our meeting on Sunday 15th March to call our moderator, Rev. John Thompson to be our minister and he has accepted the call. The appointment is with immediate effect, although John is also still the minister at Llanelwy Community Church for the next 3 months and will then continue in a reduced capacity supporting them in their search for their next minister. John will also continue in his role as Church Life Minister for the North Wales Churches in NWBA. He can now be reached by email to minister@penrallt.org as well as by phone on 07931 150697. Please note that Saturday is still John's regular day off, as when he was our moderator, so please do not contact him on Saturdays except in case of emergency.

Services This Month

As we are currently unable to meet physically we are holding online services. The structure may change but at present these are in the form of web pages with a mixture of videos and text. The pages will be available at www.penrallt.org/services/ and while the services can be followed at any time we recommend doing them at 10:30am on the Sunday morning if you can, for a greater sense of connection with the rest of the congregation.

We used Zoom for a post-service chat after our service on 29th March and intend to continue doing so week by week. Starting on 5th April, we also plan to run the Zoom chat during the service itself on the Sunday morning so that those who wish to do so can participate together. A link to join the chat for each service will be found on the page for that service.

5th April (Palm Sunday): Our preacher will be Arwel Jones from Capel Caersalem (Caernarfon), speaking on the question "*Is Christianity just a crutch for weak people?*" (Luke 5:27–32).

12th April (Easter Sunday): The preacher will be our former minister, Peter Cousins, on "*The Truth Above All Truths*" (John 20:1–21).

19th April: The preacher will be James Goodman, one of our deacons, and the subject "*Learning to pray the Jesus way*" (Luke 11:1–13).

26th April (Communion): The preacher will be our new minister, John Thompson, speaking on "*Jesus: Risen and Present*" (Luke 24:13-35). The service will include communion (bring your own bread & wine!)

Evening services and Prayer broadcasts

If you are missing an evening service, you are very welcome to use the Llanelwy Community Church service at lcc.org.uk where John Thompson preached on 29th March using the theme of isolation and will be taking the services on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday too.

The Baptist Union of Great Britain are producing a series of prayer broadcasts, which are available live at 7pm on Sunday and Wednesday evenings from https://baptist.org.uk/Groups/338268/Prayer_broadcasts.aspx (recordings of the broadcasts are available there afterwards too).

Children's Birthdays in April

11th: Sam Adams 14th: Isabelle Capper 25th: Logan Griffiths

◇ **Church Office**

Magnus, the church administrator, is now working from home. He can be reached by email to office@penrallt.org as usual. There is also now an office mobile phone number (07934 231788) that will be active during the office hours 10am – 3pm, Monday to Friday (NB the voicemail on this phone won't be regularly checked so please send an email or text message or try again later if you can't get through).

◇ **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. With the current lockdown and living in an area whose economy is dependent on tourism some of our members may suddenly find themselves in financial difficulty. If that is you or someone you know, do tell 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).

◇ **Midweek Prayer Meetings**

Following a successful small-scale trial at the end of March, we are intending to run a short weekly prayer meeting via Zoom at **noon on Wednesdays**. To join the meeting visit <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/607843025> (this link will also be circulated on the prayer diary and Facebook prayer group; note that the link will only be active while the meetings are running).

◇ **Pastoral Contact**

We are working hard to get in touch with each member of the congregation on a semi-regular basis, but are open to the fact that we are missing people. As this is all happening so quickly it is more than likely that we are missing people. If we have missed you can you prod us by emailing the office (office@penrallt.org) and that will be passed on to those who are co-ordinating. Forgive us if we have missed you, we are learning as we go.

◇ **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; Magnus Forrester-Barker (07890 109645); Gwen Hicks (353648); Geoff Moore (410582); John Thompson (07931 150697).

◇ **Pray for Penrallt Every Day**

We believe in prayer and encourage people to pray. You can send prayer requests, thanksgivings and testimonies to our electronic diary via office@penrallt.org – email this address, too, to request to receive the prayer diary, which is emailed out every week (usually on Monday afternoon). For more immediate and interactive sharing of prayers, search on Facebook for *Penrallt Prayer Point* and send a request to join our group.

A message from John Thompson

This is a short note to say thank you to the members at Penrallt for appointing me as Minister. Also, to say thank you to the members and the wider congregation and the wider community of Penrallt too for the many encouragements and welcomes that both I and Lisa have received. I consider it a privilege and I look forward to working with all of you increasingly as my involvement gradually grows over the next 3 months or so. I am inspired by the opening of Colossians, and I hope and pray that we also will be known for our faith in Christ Jesus, our love for one another, and our love for all God's people. I also pray that the gospel will grow and bear fruit to the glory of God in Bangor, in the surrounding towns and villages where the Penrallt congregation and community live out their daily lives, and beyond throughout the 'whole world' where Penrallt has influence in outreach, mission, evangelism and proclamation. (Col. 1v3–6).

Church Secretary

From this month, Neil will be handing on the role of Church Secretary to Owen. Neil will be undergoing treatment at hospital over the coming months so it is important that we begin this transition now. We will remember Neil in our prayers. As the current minister of Penrallt it is my privilege to thank Neil for serving God and the Church in the role of Church Secretary. Thank you Neil for all your hard work and faithful service over the last 3 years and particularly over the last year and through the additional demands which come when a Church is in pastoral vacancy. We are delighted that Owen is willing to take on this role. Please pray for Owen and offer him your support.

Blessings,

John

Focus on...

Our Mission Partners

It has not been possible to provide a full Focus article for this month's newsletter, but we encourage you to pray for our mission partners around the world who are all affected by the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Mark and Susanna Barrell, with daughter Lizzie, serving with BMS World Mission in Maputo, Mozambique – returned to the UK at the end of March, but trying to continue to support their respective ministries from a distance.
- Liz and Sergio Vilela, with children Chloe and Joshua, serving with BMS World Mission in Beira, Mozambique.
- Claire Bedford, serving with BMS World Mission in Guinebor II Hospital in Chad – staying put and on the front line providing healthcare. Schools, colleges, restaurants, churches and mosques all closed.
- Rachel and Peter Calvert with daughters Anna, Sophie and Inès, serving with France Mission in Blois, France – currently in lockdown.
- Catherine and Colm Ó Brolcháin serving with Operation Mobilisation in Roscommon, Ireland – currently in lockdown.
- Chris and Anna Hembury, with teenagers Elijah and Kavita, serving with Church Mission Society at Hull YFC – also in lockdown.
- Amy Burrows, serving with Gobaith Môn on Anglesey – has been furloughed, but doing some online outreach for the young people on a voluntary basis.
- Phil McKelvie serving with Yorkshire Camps – no residentials, but continuing to work on site and creating resources.
- Bangor University Christian Union – the last few weeks of teaching this academic year will be online and the vast majority of students have already left Bangor.
- Open the Book and Street Pastors' patrols suspended until further notice.

Deadline for next month's newsletter: Wednesday 22nd April

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