Newsletter: December 2026

At Christmas God wrote himself into the play

Hamlet wouldn't be able to find Shakespeare by looking around inside the play, wrote CS Lewis. Hamlet is a character that Shakespeare has created. The signs which reveal Shakespeare's existence, character and purpose are around Hamlet, but Hamlet would not be able to know Shakespeare personally unless Shakespeare can somehow enter into his reality. Whilst this is a limited analogy, we too can only know God because of the signs, information and experiences that God has given to us. But God did something incredible because of his compassion and love for us who he created. At Christmas God stepped into space-time at a cosmic moment in history. God wrote himself into the play.

God created the entire universe. He is above it and beyond it. Transcendent. Yet, because of his love, we read in John 1v14: "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." God became a human being. He was incarnated and immanent. He became flesh and He can be known to us personally in an amazing way.

Jesus not only makes God known to us, he came to save us. Jesus came not only to show us the way to God, he came to make it possible for us to know God. He came to lay down his life for us. Jesus sacrificially paid the debt for our sin. A debt that we would never be able to repay. He gave us the opportunity to be reconciled to God.

1 John 4v9: "This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him."

Love came down at Christmas. Love so lovely, Love divine. Love was born at Christmas. Stars and Angels gave the sign.

John

Penrallt Baptist Church, Holyhead Road, Bangor LL57 2EU
www.penrallt.org

Minister: Revd. John Thompson; 07931 150697; minister@penrallt.org
Secretary: Jan Ablett; 07703 188632; secretary@penrallt.org
Treasurer: Grace Adeola; 07769 764389; treasurer@penrallt.org
Administrator: Magnus Forrester-Barker; 07934 231788; office@penrallt.org
(office hours: Mon – Fri, 10am – 4pm)

Morning Services

Sunday morning services start at 10:30am with an option to join on Zoom if you are unable to join us in the building (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 – 18); a crèche is also available for younger children. The children and young people stay in for all-age services; the crèche is still available.

Sunday 6th December Preacher: Peter Jones
Peace & Love

Sunday 13th December
Nativity service led by our children and young people, with Wendy Lemon.

Sunday 20th December
No morning service. Instead we will have a service of carols and Christmas worship at 4:30pm (see below).

Thursday 25th December
Christmas Day service led by John Thompson. This informal service will last around an hour.

Sunday 27th December (Communion) Preacher: John Thompson
Colouring sheets and activities will be provided for children in the service.

Service Videos

Recordings of sermons from morning services are generally available both on our YouTube channel and on our own website. Please contact the church office if you would like a link to recordings of full services. *We would ask you, please, to refrain from taking photos and videos during our services due to safeguarding concerns.*

Carols and Christmas Worship

Sunday 20th December, 4:30pm

Instead of our regular morning service, we will be meeting in the afternoon to celebrate Christmas with a mix of readings, traditional carols and contemporary Christmas worship songs. This will last around an hour and there will be refreshments served in the hall beforehand, from 4pm.

Evening Services

We usually hold one regular evening service each month, a communion service on the second Sunday at 6pm. This month there are no additional evening services.

Sunday 13th December (Communion) Preacher: Peter Jones
Christian living that points others to Jesus

Christmas Offerings

The money raised from the offerings at our carol service, Christingle (see below) and Christmas Day service, along with our Christmas Card board, will be split evenly between a local charity, an international one (both to be confirmed) and the BMS Christmas Appeal.

Christmas Cards

For your cards to the rest of the Penrallt fellowship, please consider sending just one card to the entire church instead of giving individual cards (and risk missing someone!) and donating the money saved to the recipients of our Christmas offerings. There will be space on a board in the Canolfan for your cards and an envelope for you to leave your donation. The board should be available to use from Sunday 6th December.

Other Events in December

◊ **Cylch Penrallt Tots: Wednesdays, 9:30–11am**

This is our group for pre-school children and their parents/carers, running during the school term on Wednesday mornings from 9:30 to 11am, with access from 9:15am. £1 per adult (with up to 3 children). Toys, fun play and activities. Snack, tea and coffee. Songs for tots in English and Welsh. Come along for a good space to safely play, to have fun, and to enjoy some good company together. *Note that the group will not run on 23rd or 30th December.*

◊ **Bangor YFC prayer meeting: Wednesday 2nd December, 7pm**

We will be hosting a prayer meeting for Bangor Youth For Christ in the Twrgwyn Room at Penrallt (please use the side door to come in). This is a space for us to come together across churches, backgrounds, and generations to pray with one heart and one purpose: to see the lives of young people in Bangor transformed by the love of Jesus. All are welcome.

◊ **Renew 57: Every Thursday, 10:30am–12:30pm**

Renew 57 is a space for the whole commmunity, on **Thursday mornings, 10:30am to 12:30pm in Canolfan Penrallt** (our rear hall/community centre), free of charge (including refreshments). 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 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. To find out more, please speak to Simon (s.lambourne565@btinternet.com) or Magnus (renew@penrallt.org) or drop in and see for yourself. ***Renew 57 will run as usual on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.***

◊ **Cytûn Carol Singing: Saturday 5th December, 11am**

We will be joining other Bangor churches at Morrisons to sing carols and raise money for Christian Aid at 11am on Saturday 5th December, for around an hour. Please come and sing out the good news of the birth of Jesus to the shoppers of Upper Bangor.

◊ **University Carol Service: Wednesday 9th December, 7pm**

This will take place in the Pritchard-Jones Hall at the Bangor University Main Arts building, with performances by the University's Chamber Choir and a chance to join in some of your favourite carols. The event is free but registration is required; please register at https://www.bangor.ac.uk/events/christmas-carol-service-1 if you are planning to attend.

◊ **Soul Sisters: Saturday 12th December, 10:30am**

Soul Sisters is Penrallt's women's fellowship group, that meet once a month for a varied programme of activities to which all ladies are welcome. This month they are meeting in Canolfan Penrallt (our rear hall) to make Christmas flower decorations for their homes and sing carols. Everyone is very welcome to have a go. For more information, please contact Averil (francishac3@aol.com/01248 421744).

◊ **Christingle: Thursday 24th December, 4:30pm**

An all-age Christingle activity service on Christmas Eve celebrating Jesus as the Light of the World. We'll make our Christingles and then light them during a short service including a couple of family-favourite carols. All materials provided free. All welcome.

Please visit https://penralltbc.churchsuite.com/events/5pab1ihi or us the QR code to sign up in advance, as this will help us know how many to expect so we can prepare the materials for the service.

◊ **Men's Breakfast**

Our men's fellowship group usually meet on the last Saturday of the month for food and friendship at Ian Ablett's home in Caernarfon. We will not be meeting in December but look forward to restarting in January.

Future Events

◊ **Church Members' Meeting: Wednesday 13th January, 7:30pm**

The next meeting for church members will take place in the building and on Zoom on Wednesday 13th January. Papers will be circulated to members before the meeting.

If you are not a church member and would like to know more about membership, please speak to either John (minister@penrallt.org) or Jan (secretary@penrallt.org).

◊ Alpha

Our next Alpha course at Penrallt will start on Tuesday 26th January and run on Monday evenings, 6:30–9pm, for 11 weeks with a break over Easter. This is a great way to explore the Christian faith and ask the big questions about life, or to reset your walk with Jesus. Each session includes a free meal, a video and a group discussion. Sign up through the QR code or the church website. For more details chat to Mike (alpha@penrallt.org).

Other Information

◊ 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. Note that he sometimes works from home or is out for meetings, so you are advised to check before travelling in to the church building. *Please note that the church office will be closed from Wednesday 23rd December and will re-open on Wednesday 6th January.*

◊ 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 Grace (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 who 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 Grace Adeola (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 relationships with the Lord and with one another. There are groups on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings and on Tuesday and Friday mornings, meeting weekly or fortnightly in person, online or as a combination of the two. We also have "contact, care & prayer" to enable people to stay connected even if not in a homegroup. A member of the pastoral care team (see below) would contact you every few weeks to ask how you are and if you'd like to receive prayer support. Please get in touch with the church office if you are not part of contact, care & prayer or a homegroup and would like to be.

◊ Mission Co-Ordinators

Owen Lloyd-Evans and Nia Evans are our Mission Co-ordinators and may be contacted by email on missions@penrallt.org for more information about our mission partners around the world. The Focus article at the back of the newsletter each month also shines a spotlight on one of our mission partners or some other mission-related activity.

◊ 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); Pat MacKenzie (07594 419979), Geoff Moore (01248 410582); Monica Morris (07827 472637), Abi Penney (07776 270399), John Thompson (07931 150697). Please pray for the PCT as well.

◊ Penrallt on Social Media

Announcements about Penrallt events, and other things that may be of interest to our congregation, can be found on our Facebook page, *Penrallt Baptist Church* (www.facebook.com/penralltbc). We also have 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 to share prayer requests and encouragements.

Our YouTube channel, containing videos of sermons from our morning services, is also called *Penrallt Baptist Church* (www.youtube.com/@penralltbaptistchurch).

◊ Prayer Resources

Send prayer requests, thanksgiving and testimonies to our weekly email prayer diary via office@penrallt.org — use this address, too, to subscribe to the prayer diary, which usually goes out on Mondays, or Tuesdays in the event of bank holidays. 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 12pm** and on **Saturdays at 8:30am**; please contact the church office if you need the connection details for either meeting. *Note that the Wednesday prayer meeting will take a break on 23rd and 30th December; the Saturday prayer meeting will take a break on 26th December (to be confirmed).*

◊ Prayer Team

We would love to pray for you and pray with you. We believe that God transforms people's lives. Praying for people and regularly asking God to fill them with the Holy Spirit is a key part of this for many people. We have a team available for personal prayer, wearing blue "Prayer Team" lanyards, at most services. This is often at the end of the service, sometimes during communion or at other times; if you would like prayer please find a member of the team at any time and they will be able to offer to pray with you in an appropriate space, often as a pair.

If you are a church member and would like to be on the prayer team please speak to John or Jan. Our Pastoral Care Team are able to offer a further level of support (see *Pastoral Help* above). Please don't hesitate to approach John or another member of the Pastoral Care Team.

◊ Students

We love to welcome students as part of our church family. For more information about activities for students, or just for a friendly chat, please feel free to drop us an email to students@penrallt.org

◊ Youth

Our mid-week youth group, *Youth.*, is run by Bangor YFC with volunteers from Penrallt, Mosaic and other churches. This runs on Thursday evenings at Penrallt during term-time, from 7pm to 8:45pm, and is open to all youth (11–18). It features games and activities, with a gentle presentation of Christian values and principles. Registration is required, and can be done at https://tally.so/r/n0qO4Z. *The last session this term is on 17th December and it is planned to restart on 14th January.*

Our Sunday morning youth group, *Deeper*, takes place during the morning service with the young people (11–18) going out part way through the service to study the Bible and apply it to their lives.

For more information, email us at youth@penrallt.org.

Notices for Sunday Mornings or the Monthly Newsletter

The notices in morning services are collated by Magnus in the church office, so if you would like a notice included please send it by email to office@penrallt.org by no later than noon on the Friday. All notices are included at the discretion of the duty deacon who presents them at the start of the service.

The deadline for next month's newsletter is Thursday 17th December. Please send information to Magnus at the church office. All items should be submitted in writing, preferably by email, as early as possible.

News Mailing List

Sign up to receive email notification (and a PDF link) when the newsletter is published each month, as well as other news updates from time to time. To join or leave the list please send an email to office@penrallt.org.

Focus on...

Penrallt's Mission Partners

The Penrallt Missions Group is just a group of people who want to support people who are specifically working in the Mission field. Are these special people? They would probably say "not really". They are just working in particular jobs in particular places. It is arguable that we are all in the Mission field. We would all hope that people would see something of Jesus in us through us our lives. So what makes these people different? We are directly supporting many of them financially and in prayer. Penrallt gives 15% of our income (from your pocket) to support those in the Mission field.

Here they are.

- **Paul & Sarah Brown** work with BMS in Thailand, teaching and providing pastoral care at the Siloam Bible Institute in Chiang Mai.
- **Peter & Rachel Calvert** work in France with Perspectives (Peter) and A Rocha (Rachel).
- **Chris & Anna Hembury** work in Hull with the Church Mission Society.
- **Mark & Eve Young** work with the Light House Community in Llandudno.
- **Bangor Street Pastors** are dedicated to showing God's love on the streets of Bangor.
- **Gobaith Môn** work in secondary schools on Anglesey. *Gobaith* is hope in Welsh and *Môn* is Anglesey.
- **Bangor Youth For Christ** is part of the YFC network, which has a vision for "Seeing Young People's lives changed by Jesus"
- **Open the Book** is a Bible Society initiative that takes God's Word into primary schools through dramatised presentations of Bible stories.
- **Bangor University Christian Union** are committed to sharing the gospel with their fellow students in Bangor.
- **Baptist Union Home Mission** is the Baptist family purse and provides support for church projects around the UK. Penrallt has been supported by Home Mission, as are the English Baptist Church in Holyhead and the Light House Community Church in Llandudno now.
- **Christian Aid** is a global movement of people, churches and local organisations that exists to create a world where everyone can live a full life, free from poverty.
- **Tearfund** is a Christian charity working in more than 50 countries where conflict, climate disaster and injustice push millions of people into extreme poverty.