



Penrallt Baptist Church

Newsletter: January 2019

We are about to start a brand new year, 2019. Many of us start the new year with the intention of giving up something, or taking up something. Therefore, we make our 'New Year Resolutions' which, most of the time, dwindle after a few days or weeks.

What are your expectations for this year? Will it be just another year? Is there anything you have always wanted to do within the church, family or personal life that you have not had the *courage* to do?

One of my favourite Bible verse is the one that was given to me at my baptism, "*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and **courageous**. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.*" (Joshua 1:9)

Why did God tell Joshua that he needed to be courageous? What was Joshua going to face that was so difficult that he would need to be courageous? Besides being the leader of the nation of Israel God had given Joshua a project to complete. His first mission was to lead his army into Canaan and drive out the people who lived there.

There were seven nations living in Canaan, all of them larger and stronger than Israel. By all human standards Joshua was facing a difficult task. He had every reason to be fearful, and perhaps the desire to run away. That's why God encouraged him so many times: Be strong and courageous.

As we start 2019, just like Joshua and the nation of Israel, we may see ourselves facing challenging circumstances like illnesses and disabilities, broken relationships, financial hardships, the loss of a job, etc. There will be many times in our lives when we need to hear God's command to Joshua, "Be strong and *courageous*." Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go." God is going to use all the circumstances we might face in our favour.

I think we need to apply this principle not only in our personal life, but also in the life of our congregation. It would be very easy for us to look at Penrallt with only

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our human eyes and human understanding and say, "The world is changing, society is changing, and we are just too small and irrelevant to have any influence on the city of Bangor. There is not much we can do."

Would this be the right attitude?

In the Experiencing God course we talked about the members of the Church being the body of Christ, meaning that those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour become part of His body. No matter how little or how large, we each have a role within the church, as God uses every single one of us for His common purpose.

It was a blessing to have our Carols by Candlelight service, to see many taking part (the choir, musicians, singers, sound engineer, and many others). It was a joy to watch the Sunday School Nativity Service at Penrallt this year; each child, teenager and not-so-young person (like the 'Action Mouse'), having a role to play in bringing the nativity story together.

There are so many things we need to do in our church; prayer for example. There is so much we as a church need to be praying for:

Ourselves, the local churches, our community, the Government, young people etc. Make this year a year of change by doing something different; getting more involved in the church.

Perhaps you would like to be involved by being part of our weekly or monthly prayer meetings, or by joining one of the home groups. Have you considered being baptised or becoming a member?

This month in our Communion Service we will be receiving four new members. In the fourth Sunday morning service we will be welcoming two baptism candidates, who will come to be baptised and publicly declare that they want to commit their lives to Jesus.

Joshua succeeded because he was able to complete the task assigned to him by God. He followed His instructions; he was strong and courageous because he knew the Lord his God was with him wherever he went. Real success is not a matter of our strength and courage alone, but *strength and courage* that comes from the knowledge that God is walking with us.

This year, whatever your circumstances, take that leap of faith. Remember the principle used by Joshua to be successful, which is to be strong and courageous, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

If you have not been to church for a while, or are not a regular attender, come for a visit. We will always welcome a new face with a smile.

Merry Christmas and a Blessed 2019,

Freddy

Services This Month

Our minister, Freddy Farias-Palacios, will be the speaker at all services except where otherwise noted below. Donald Poirot and Roger Borlace are both church members; Roger is a retired Baptist Minister. *Please note that the morning communion service will be on the third Sunday as we have a baptism the following week.*

6th January

10:30am **"New Year" – The challenge to overcome by Faith**

Joshua 1:1–9

We will, as usual on the first Sunday of the month, have a church lunch after this service. Please bring enough buffet-style food for yourself and a few others.

6:00pm Communion Service, with testimonies and thanksgiving

13th January

10:30am **Tried Once & Failed. Jesus Christ the only hope for 2019**

Speaker: Donald Poirot

Hebrews 13:8

6:00pm **Love for God's Word** (*Lessons from Psalms #17*)

Speaker: Roger Borlace

Psalms 119:17–24

20th January

10:30am Communion Service

John 13:34–35

How can the church be united as one?

John 17:20–21

6:00pm Lessons from Psalms #18

Psalms 119:25–32

27th January

10:30am Baptismal Service

Luke 14:33

Reality 6: Adjusting your life to God (*Experiencing God #11*)

6:00pm Lessons from Psalms #19

Psalms 119:33–40

Deadline for next month's newsletter: Sunday 20th January.

Please send information to Magnus (office@penrallt.org; 01248 353355). All notices (including alterations to standing information) should be submitted in writing (preferably by email) as early as possible.

Dates for Your Diary

Saturdays	8:30am	Prayer meeting in the Twrgwyn Room.
Sunday 6	2:15pm	Service at Plas Garnedd residential home in Llanberis.
Monday 7	7:30pm	Church members' meeting.
Wednesday 9	10:30am	Men's prayer meeting followed by coffee.
Thursday 10	7:30pm	Monthly prayer meeting in the chapel.
18-25 January		Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
Saturday 19	9:30am	Bible Unzipped at Rhos on Sea URC.
Monday 21	11am	Church Walk, Parc Menai to Y Felinheli.
Tuesday 22/Thursday 24		Experiencing God course continues.
Monday 28	7:30pm	Missions Group prayer meeting at Sarah Jackson's house.

Please see later in this newsletter for more about many of these events.

Children's Birthdays in January

7th: Jeffrey Packwood

21st: Frank Bendall Jones

25th: Rebecca Gao

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Every January, churches around the world come together to pray for Christian unity. This year, we are following material put together by churches in Indonesia on the theme of *Only Justice* (Deuteronomy 16:18). The following events, organised by Cytûn, will be taking place in Bangor:

- Friday 18th January, noon till 2pm in Deiniol Shopping Centre – Meditation on Poverty focusing on Universal Credit, followed by refreshments & procession to Bangor Clock
- Friday 18th January, 7:30pm in Bangor Cathedral – Plygain (traditional Welsh carol service)
- Monday 21st January, 7:30pm at Eglwys Emaus – Main WPCU service
- Thursday 24th January, 12:30pm in Bangor Cathedral – Ecumenical Mindfulness Service
- Friday 25th January, 7:30pm in Church of Our Lady & St James – Concluding Taizé-style service.

Homegroups

Many of our folk meet in small groups during the week for Bible study, prayer and fellowship. We encourage you to join one of these groups if you are able to. *NB groups generally do not meet on the week of the monthly prayer meeting or the Experiencing God course and may not meet all other weeks – please check with the named contact. All landline numbers below have the 01248 area code.*

Day	Time	Group Name	Contacts
Mon	7:00pm	Delta	Brian Wheatcroft (602516) Pat MacKenzie (670948)
Tue	10:00am	Nilgiri	Joan Beer (353874)
Tue	7:30pm	Tyddyn Isaf (Menai Bridge)	Magnus Forrester-Barker (717570)
Wed	2:00pm	Carers	Carol Morris (208407)
Wed	7:30pm	Bryn Eithinog	Freddy Farias-Palacios (07506 710694)
Wed	7:30pm	Nomads	Pat & Roger Borlace (713146)
Thu	10:30am	Llanfairpwll (am)	Sue & Lawrence Moss (713793)
Thu	7:30pm	Llanfairpwll (pm)	Sue & Lawrence Moss (713793)
Thu	7:30pm	Ogwen Valley	Brian & Kate Wheatcroft (602516)
Fri	10:30am	The Lydias	Freda Birchall (371316) Lesley Jackson (680330)

◇ **Bible Unzipped**

Saturday 19th January 9:30am–12pm

We are pleased to announce that Bible Unzipped is restarting. This is a free theological learning community that meets monthly on Saturday mornings at Rhos on Sea URC Church. In a slight change from the previous format, we will now be meeting on the third Saturday of the month and there will be two studies per session instead of three. The sessions are interactive and there is a coffee break in between them; sessions are entirely free though donations towards costs are welcome. This month, Peter Cousins will take us into the rather troubled history of the Book of Jude and Rob Beamish will introduce us to apophatic (negative) theology. For more information, please speak to Roger Malone or Magnus Forrester-Barker.

◇ **Church Walk**

Monday 21st January 11am

We will meet in the National Trust car park in Parc Menai at 11:00. A later time because the walk is short. Enter Parc Menai and cross the roundabout onto Fford y Parc then turn left into Ffordd y Plas and continue past several bends and Vaynol buildings to the end of the lane where there is the Glan Faenol car park. The walk takes us through the Vaynol Estate with views of the Menai Straits arriving at Y Felinheli for lunch at the Swellies. A fairly new eatery. Highly recommended! After a relaxing lunch we will stroll back. The trees should provide good shelter from the wind if it is a cold day. More details from Pat and Roger (01248 713146)

◇ **Monthly Prayer Meeting**

Thursday 10th January 7:30pm

Our monthly mid-week prayer meetings are for the whole congregation and all are warmly encouraged to attend. The meetings usually take place in the chapel, and last about an hour. The next two meetings after this one will be on Tuesday 12th February and Wednesday 13th March.

◇ **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; Gwen Hicks (353648); Geoff Moore (410582); Lawrence Moss (713793); Helen Thomas (600174); Roshni Verghese (07967 320048).

◇ **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 (or occasionally on Tuesdays) 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**

We do not recommend giving money directly to the rough sleepers in Upper Bangor. You will find labelled envelopes in the porch for a gift that will buy meal vouchers which are distributed to the homeless by the Cathedral; this certainly would be a more meaningful form of help.

◇ **Sunday Afternoon Services**

We usually visit local residential homes on the first Sunday afternoon of the month, alternating between Haulfre (in Llangoed, near Beaumaris) and Plas Garnedd (in Llanberis). The services start at 2:15pm and last roughly half an hour. This month we will be going to **Plas Garnedd** on **6th January**.

◇ **Tea/coffee rota for Sunday mornings**

There are 11 teams for this duty which is great – thank you to everyone who is involved. However it would be helpful to have another couple of people as spares who could help on an occasional basis. Please speak to Eunice or contact Magnus in the Church Office if you are interested.

◇ **Used stamps for Baptist Missionary Society**

can raise funds by selling used postage stamps. Please trim leaving about 1/8 inch of envelope showing all round, but perforations must be intact. Packets, clearly labelled "Stamps for BMS", may be left in the Church Office. BMS are also interested in coins, medals, postcards, especially old ones, cigarette & tea cards and pre-1950 greetings cards.

Focus on...

Street Pastors ***Shepherds of the Street***



Just over 15 years ago, in 2003, 15 volunteers in two London boroughs started going out in order to try and make the streets safe against the gun and knife crimes rampant on the streets of London. Closely following a model that was established in Jamaica for the same purposes, the Street Pastor initiative across the UK and the wider world is masterminded by Rev Les Isaac, CEO of Ascension Trust, the umbrella body that governs and administers the entire operation. From 15 volunteers, the UK number has grown to over 14,000, while the number of Street Pastor initiatives has increased from two to over 150, within the UK and around the world, including Nigeria, the US, Jamaica, Antigua, Australia. The numbers and geographical spread are still growing.

Operating on the strict basis of the 'urban trinity' – the Church, The Local Government and the Police – street pastors build bridges between individuals in times of conflict or need, often brought on by excessive drinking or drug usage. They are Christian volunteers who can approach others in a non-judgemental way, listen without forming preconceived ideas and, by helping and caring, demonstrate the good news of Jesus Christ; they are ambassadors for Christ. They work totally independently, but in cooperation with the police and other emergency services,

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door staff, Local Authority services, educational establishments and any others involved in the night time economy.

Training street pastors is a priority for Ascension Trust. The training is practical, presenting the ethos of the initiative and preparing teams for appropriate and relevant relationships on the streets, with sessions about understanding Christianity in the context of contemporary culture. The training takes about 42 hours, and there are regular refresher sessions for experienced street pastors.

Street pastors have to be ready for anything – they operate in the night-time environment, around people partying, drinking and soaking in the 'club' culture. Street pastors often have to respond to situations where a night out has not gone as planned, where there is aggression or anti-social behaviour; emotions are often running high, fuelled by drink, drugs or often both. Over the last 15 years the street pastors have made significant inroads in reducing street crime; this is not a vain claim but supported by accurate statistics gathered from all initiatives.

All street pastors know the value of prayer underpinning all that they do. They are supported by prayer pastors, who have a less public role but are nonetheless integral to the work of the street pastors. These days the landscape of the streets is sadly reverting back to what it used to be, with homelessness, drug/alcohol abuse, mental health issues, etc. making the streets rather dangerous to work on – the knives and guns are back, their usage often lethal. Street pastor training is revised to accommodate the changing scenery; however, they have no weapons or law enforcement powers, they stand firm on faith, love and acceptance; their very vulnerability and voluntary status gives them street credibility; the power of prayer protects them, the Holy Spirit guides them. This service has become so vital for the safety on the streets, especially of young or vulnerable people that more and more demands are placed on them from the much reduced public services. The work has diversified to school pastors, college pastors, rail pastors, response pastors (specially trained to handle trauma, as seen at the scenes of Grenfell Tower and the Manchester Arena). The sustaining power for all this is prayer; so please pray for the pastors.

If you are interested in joining as a street or prayer pastor please talk to Magnus, Roger Borlace, Gill Jamison, Andy Lemon, Lawrence Moss, Freda Birchall or myself – all street/prayer pastors. The work no doubt is hard but extremely rewarding as a ministry. Maybe you will feel called and join us?

God bless

Roshni

P.S. In the last two months Paul Rowlinson has stepped down as the Co-ordinator of Bangor Street Pastors after 8 years of dedicated service (though he continues to serve as a street pastor) and has been replaced by Mark & Carina King (both fairly new members of the SP team). Please pray for them during this time of transition.