



Penrallt Baptist Church

Newsletter: June 2020

Some years ago on a walk to Aber Falls, I noticed a lamb on a rock above the Falls. It was in obvious distress, alone in an unfamiliar world. That image has remained with me. We are all, to a greater or lesser extent, like my lamb on the rock. Our world, at present, is a lonely one. A small, unknown and fearful virus has destroyed our entire way of thinking and living. We are all left vulnerable with our confidence and complacency shattered. Questions galore come to my mind in all this.

What is church?

How are we going to relate to one another?

Do we want to go back to our old world and ways?

What are the challenges for the days and months ahead?

What is the new 'role' of the church?

What is God saying to us?

The early church must have felt the same. Pentecost had happened, everything was exciting, alive and positive. Then came the murder of Stephen with the persecution that followed. Their world fell apart. Today, for me, their unquestioning faithfulness as we read it in the book of Acts, is inspirational. Philip in particular has recently interested me. He had been chosen to care for the Grecian Jewish widows, but God had wider plans for him. He went north to Samaria, then back down to the desert road near Gaza, then north again to Caesarea, preaching the Good News everywhere on the way. Philip the deacon became Philip the evangelist.

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Office hours: Mon–Fri 10am – 3pm; Administrator: Magnus Forrester-Barker

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Treasurer: Averil Francis; 01248 421744; treasurer@penrallt.org

On the Sunday before we were isolated, we agreed to ask John Thompson to be the minister of Penrallt and we thank him for agreeing to come to us. None of us knew then the challenges that lay ahead. As we now officially welcome John, he and all the deacons need our commitment in prayer and support. The questions again are many.

How do we gather together yet apart?

How do we worship together yet apart?

From being isolated in a circle centre "me", radius 2 metres, how do we live for others?

How can we be relevant to an unbelieving world?

How does the Kingdom of God come through us?

How can God's will be done through us?

For me, one answer to all these questions is 'prayer' – prayer together. It has been said that those who pray together stay together. We attempt to 'do' our recorded service each Sunday morning at 10:30 in order to feel together. For those not at work, the Zoom prayer meeting on Wednesdays at noon keeps us united in prayer. Several "Faith" communities have the "Call to Prayer" time, some 3 times, others 5 times each day. This daily routine is woven into their thinking and living. Can we in some way do the same?

At this time especially, I feel the Prayer Jesus gave us is perfect. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done.

Finally, when we think "church", let's think 'pray'.

Joan Beer

Deadline for next month's newsletter: Tuesday 23rd June

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

Services This Month

We continue to hold online services while we are unable to meet physically. These are in the form of web pages with a mixture of videos and text. The page for each service 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.

After each service, we hold a Zoom meeting for those who wish to join in a post-service chat, starting at 11:30am and lasting around half an hour. The link to join the chat is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/78366046217> (it will also be found on the page for each service).

7th June: *I am with you always* (Luke 24:13–31).

Preacher: Lesley Jackson

14th June: *The Voice of God* (John 10:1–21).

Preacher: John Thompson

21st June: *The Gospel in a Nutshell* (John 3:1–21).

Preacher: Donald Poirot

28th June: *Wisdom* (Proverbs 1:1–2:5; 1 Kings 3:3–14 Matthew 7:24–27).

Preacher: Michael Blok.

The service will include communion (bring your own bread & wine!)

Children's Birthdays in June

27th: Harvey Lemon, Ben Warnock

◇ **Church Office**

The church administrator, Magnus, can be contacted on office@penrallt.org or 07934 231788 during the church office opening hours (10am – 3pm Monday to Friday).

◇ **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**

We are running a weekly prayer meeting via Zoom at **noon on Wednesdays**, for around half an hour: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/201027611> (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).

◇ **News Mailing List**

We have set up a newsletter mailing list so that you can receive an emailed link to each month's newsletter when it is published, as well as other news announcements. If you would like to join (or leave) the mailing list, please contact the church office on office@penrallt.org – note that church members and other regular attenders for whom we have email addresses have automatically been added to the mailing list, though they will be removed on request.

◇ **Pastoral Contact**

At the present time it is more important than ever to stay in touch with one another. To facilitate this we have set up a system to try and ensure that everybody in our congregation is contacted on a semi-regular basis. Homegroup leaders have been asked to do this for members of their groups. Everyone else has been assigned to one of a number of Contact, Care and Prayer groups, each under the care of a deacon or a member of the pastoral care team. Please let Magnus know (office@penrallt.org; 07934 231788) if you are not contacted soon, in case we have accidentally missed you off the list. If you would prefer to be assigned to a different group, or not contacted at all, please tell your CCP person, or Magnus (as above) or Owen (secretary@penrallt.org).

◇ **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).

◇ **Penrallt on Facebook**

We have two groups on Facebook, which you are welcome to join: *Penrallt* (www.facebook.com/groups/2402772192) is a general group for information and social interaction, while the aptly named *Penrallt Prayer Point* (www.facebook.com/groups/302627593231755) is specifically to share prayer requests and thanksgivings / testimonies.

◇ **Prayer Resources**

We believe in prayer and encourage people to pray. You can send prayer requests, thanksgivings and testimonies to our electronic prayer 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).

The Evangelical Alliance are providing a weekly prayer on Thursdays, available at www.eauk.org/what-we-do/prayer-centre/coronavirus-prayer, along with other useful articles on their website.

The Baptist Union have prayer broadcasts on Sunday and Wednesday evenings at www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/338268/Prayer_broadcasts.aspx, as well as other resources at www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/337630/Coronavirus.aspx and at www.nwba.org.uk/ with encouraging articles and stories, prayer broadcasts and reflections.

◇ **Shopping**

During this lockdown period, Penrallt would like to be able to offer a shopping service to housebound members and possibly others who are unable to do their own shopping. We have a small number of volunteers; anyone else who would like to join the team can contact the church office (office@penrallt.org). All volunteers need to be DBS checked and to provide a reference. It is important that our volunteers are not themselves in any of the "at risk" groups and if they have any symptoms of cough or fever themselves should not do the shopping. Volunteers will also be requested to strictly observe the social distancing rules.

If anyone is not presently catered for and would like to avail themselves of this service, please contact the church office (office@penrallt.org).

◇ **Website**

We are currently working on an overhaul of the Penrallt website (www.penrallt.org). If you have any suggestions of features you would like to see, or things that you think work particularly well or particularly badly on the current website, please let us know by email to office@penrallt.org or webmaster@penrallt.org

Focus on...

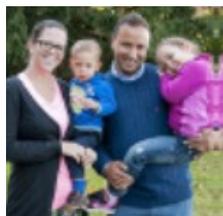


Liz & Sergio Vilela ***Serving with BMS World Mission***

Liz and Sergio are located in Beira, Mozambique. They are working alongside the Mozambican Baptist Convention where Sergio is helping to build capacity in mission training for nationals. Liz and Sergio met in Brazil whilst Sergio was a mission worker with YWAM. After marrying, they worked in Brazil for a year before being called to work in England. They spent three years as youth pastors at Saffron Walden Baptist Church, which is now their sending church. Liz and Sergio had always felt a call to mission overseas, so when their time at their church ended, they sought opportunities to work with BMS. They moved to Mozambique in 2013. They have two children, Chloe and Joshua.

Liz is involved in PEPE, a pre-school initiative started by BMS. The initiative is being run by churches in 60 disadvantaged areas across the country. Over 3,500 children from poor backgrounds have the opportunity learn basic lessons like colours, numbers and the alphabet in creative, interactive ways, preparing them for a good start in school. They are also introduced to stories about Jesus, so are growing in their knowledge of him, too.

Sergio has been helping with the rebuilding of various PEPE buildings following the cyclone of March 2019.



Currently, during the Covid-19 pandemic, Mozambique has closed schools, places of worship and places of entertainment. Face masks are mandatory while out in public. So far, only 270 cases have been confirmed across the country. with just one death to date. Although Mozambique is not in strict lockdown, Liz and Sergio's work in schools, PEPEs and institutes has stopped temporarily. However, the BMS team in

Beira are involved in some prevention projects, such as the distribution of masks, soap and information and teaching how to wash your hands and what the symptoms are, but also how to help overcome this difficult moment.

Pray that God will give the Vilelas the grace and wisdom to walk and help others in this time of despair, that they will shine the light of Jesus in any way possible so that in times of difficulty, people have hope. Pray also that God would protect the people of Mozambique against the coronavirus – as one of the poorest countries in the world, the pandemic is accompanied by other devastating consequences such as increased hunger. About 70% of Mozambique's population literally works today to eat tomorrow and social isolation is a luxury that most people cannot afford.

For more information see: www.bmsworldmission.org/people/liz-and-sergio-vilela/