



Penrallt Baptist Church

Newsletter: May 2020

On 28th March, the BBC website ran a news story entitled: "The month everything changed".

In one sense this is true. Covid-19 has made life tragically different for many dealing with bereavement and loss. It has made life painful for many dealing with loneliness and isolation. For some it has meant the loss of a job or the loss of financial security. It has made life different for all of us in our social interactions and for many of us with different work patterns. This is all difficult to cope with.

It also might have resulted in change which is good. We might be better now at staying in contact with those whom we love. We might have got better at prioritising our time, or better at focusing on what is really important in life. Perhaps we have become aware of new opportunities, or aware of improvements that could be made to the ways that we work.

Or it might be that we feel like we have failed. Perhaps frustration, additional work or family pressures and cabin-fever have got the better of us and we need to ask God and others to forgive us and to seek to put it right and serve others in love.

But whatever has changed, it is not the case that "everything" has changed. God's love for us has not changed. The fact that we were created for relationship with God has not changed. The truth that we are saved by grace for relationship with God eternally has not changed. The reality that we have relationship with God through Jesus has not changed either.

March 2020 wasn't really the month that "everything" changed. The month, or rather the day that everything really changed was the day when Jesus Christ

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rose from the grave. This is the central event of history. Jesus is the one who changed everything for ever. The resurrection is proof that Jesus really is the Son of God – the Resurrection and the Life (John 11v25). That He really can forgive sin (Luke 5v24). That He really did die to reconcile us to God (Col 1v20). That we really are children of God who really can address God as Abba (Gal 4v6). That God really does love us and we really do have eternal life. (John3v16).

So in a time when it seems like every-thing has changed, and every-thing seems to be continually changing ... or about to change, I pray that we will know that actually, the-most-important-thing has not changed. That most-important-thing is Jesus. He is the prince of peace and He bids us to come to Him and know His peace. He offers to re-fill us with His Holy Spirit whenever we ask. Counsellor, Comforter and Advocate. The presence, power and indwelling of God.

Blessings,

John

Deadline for next month's newsletter: Thursday 21st May

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

Newsletter Mailing List

Starting this month, we are setting up a newsletter mailing list so that you can receive an emailed link to each month's newsletter when it is published, and also receive notification of any information updates that arrive after the newsletter is first published. If you would like to join (or leave) the mailing list, please contact the church office on office@penrallt.org

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).

3rd May: *What does God require of us?* (Micah 6:1–8).

Christian Aid Service led by Sarah Jackson (one of our deacons).

10th May: *Come to me, all you who are weary...* (Matthew 11:28–30).

Preacher: Hywel Davies (minister of Capel Cildwrn, near Llangefni)

17th May: *The Ascension* (Acts 1:1–11)

Preacher: John Thompson

24th May: *We believe in the Holy Spirit* (John 14:15–27; 15:26–27; 16:7–15).

Preacher: Andy Lewis (a member of our congregation).

30th May (Pentecost Sunday): *The Holy Spirit* (Luke 24:13–35).

Preacher: Siân Rees (director of Evangelical Alliance Wales).

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

Children's Birthdays in May

12th: Oisín Patton

◇ **Church Office**

Please note that the office will be closed on the bank holidays (Friday 8th May and Monday 25th May) but otherwise Magnus should be available to contact on office@penrallt.org or 07934 231788 during the usual office 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).

◇ **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).

◇ **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.

◇ **Prayer Resources**

The Evangelical Alliance are providing a weekly prayer on Thursdays, available at <https://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 https://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/338268/Prayer_broadcasts.aspx, as well as other resources at <https://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/337630/Coronavirus.aspx> and at <http://www.nwba.org.uk/> with encouraging articles and stories, encouragements to reflect on From Easter to Pentecost, and prayer broadcasts and reflections.

Thy Kingdom Come is an initiative across all churches, which originated in the Anglican church to pray every day during the 11 days between Ascension (Thursday 21st May) and Pentecost (Sunday 31st May) for 5 people who don't know the love of Christ and don't follow Christ. To pray for the Spirit to work significantly in those don't follow Christ, that they might encounter his love and peace and make the best decision anyone can ever make – become followers of Jesus. And that they in turn would come to give their lives in service of the Kingdom of God. More at: <https://www.thykingdomcome.global/>

◇ **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).

Joan Mason

Joan Mason died peacefully on Sunday 19th April. Before moving to Tenterden, Joan (with her husband Tony) was a long-standing member in Penrallt (since 1997) who had contributed massively to the life of our church as a whole and to the lives of very many individuals within that family in the most practical of ways over many decades. I know that she was excited to move to Tenterden and saw it as a new lease of life to serve God.

It is not my place to be writing any obituaries, but I have collated some thoughts from various people who knew her well.

"Joan – softest of hearts, fiercely loyal, an indomitable spirit. Always had our back so we could look forward with confidence. She loved Jesus; a dutiful daughter of God (gone home to be with her Father)."

"If there was one consistent theme running through Joan's life it was 'other people'. She had a heart for people who were overlooked and under appreciated. She had a polite, but strong nature that was tempered with a genuine warmth. She was loving, constant and supportive, self-sacrificial in her caring for Tony, her husband in his last years. She had a mind of her own and wasn't afraid to show it at times – a formidable lady! But her greatest love was for the Lord and her desire to serve Him, in whatever way she could. We take solace in knowing that she has been able to do that in her last year and she was happy, re-united with Tony and safe in the arms of her Lord and Saviour. I have this wonderful vision of her conducting a choir of angels into song!"

"My first memories of Joan are of the warm hospitality that she and Tony used to show to me and some of my friends, regularly inviting us to Sunday lunch with them in Amlwch (and continuing for some time after they moved to Llandegfan). I particularly remember Joan's wonderful roast potatoes!"

"When Joan asked, you did not say no! Ah, and the fudge! Lovely Fudge!!"

"We have lost a true friend a loving Christian and a fellow servant of the Lord. We are sad, and we shall miss her dearly, but we know she is with her Lord and Saviour."

Matt. 25:23 (NKJV): "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you a ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord."

Owen

Joan's funeral service will be held at Charing Crematorium, New Court Wood, Charing, Ashford TN27 0EB on Monday 11th May 2020 at 3:15pm.

Focus on...

Christian Aid Week

10-16 May 2020

Christian Aid Week 2020 goes digital

Think of Christian Aid Week and you might picture red envelopes through doors, plant sales, banners in front of churches, special services and much more. In 2019 Christian Aid Week raised over £7.5m through a combination of church collections, house-to-house, delivery-only fundraising and events such as Big Brekkies.

Since 1957 the week has brought communities together in action and prayer and while the coronavirus pandemic means that Christian Aid Week 2020 (May10–16) will be different, churches across the UK are being invited to stand in solidarity with the world's most vulnerable people in new and innovative ways.

With daily quizzes and live-streamed worship, supporters can be involved from their own homes and could also take part in the 300,000 steps in May challenge which will be run through Facebook or send an electronic donation envelope – an 'e-envelope' – to friends and family.

Christian Aid Week manager Sophie Brightwell said: "Coronavirus is teaching us what it feels like to feel vulnerable, to fear, to be separated and experience scarcity.

"It is at times like these – testing and painful times – that we recognise we are all in this together. Coronavirus impacts everyone, but love unites us all. Christian Aid Week has always been a joyful celebration of what we can achieve together for the world's poorest people and in this time of global crisis Christian Aid's work is needed as much as ever before.

"The most vulnerable and marginalised people are at the greatest risk from coronavirus. In Sierra Leone there are no ICU beds and in Malawi there is one ICU bed for every one million people. In refugee camps, people are not able to keep socially distant from one other and 40% of the world's population do not have access to soap and water.

"Christian Aid was established after the Second World War when people across this country had lost so much but knew that refugees across Europe had were in a desperate situation. As we mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day at the start of Christian Aid Week, my hope is that we can show that same compassion and resolve as we saw in a different time of crisis as together we show that love never fails."

For more information about the online activities, please go to the Christian Aid web site: <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christian-aid-week>