



Newsletter: December 2023

It was for you that he came. For you to be who you really can be.

'See within a manger lies. He who built the starry skies.'

When you stop and think about it, it is incredible that the Almighty God, the creator and sustainer of the universe, should come to earth at a unique point in time in human form as a baby. Jesus — both fully human and fully divine (Hebrews 2v17, Col 2v9, John 1v1 etc).

Why did God do it? Yes, it was to complete his revelation to us. Yes, it was to teach us. Yes, it was to model true perfected humanity lived in perfect harmony with God. Yes, it was to enable us to know to God much more closely. Yes, it was the culmination of God's salvation plan for humanity. Yes, the good news of Jesus would rapidly expand to reach millions around the globe for two millennia. All these things are wonderful.

But most importantly to start with, it was for you. He wants to save you. To reconcile you to himself. He wants you to be in relationship with him. It was because he loves you... **John 3v16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son"**. And it was so that you might be the best that you can be — that you might live through him... **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 all lovely, love divine.

How should we respond? In worship and love for God and in love for one another.

1 John 4v7 "Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God... God is love."

Blessings,

John

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Information in this newsletter is correct, as far as possible, at the time of publication. Please see the website for up to date information, as details are subject to change.

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). *Please note that the office will be closed for Christmas after Friday 22nd December and will reopen on Tuesday 2nd January.*

Deadline for next month's newsletter: Wednesday 20th December.

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

Children's Birthdays in December

12th: Michelle Abeniji

15th: Elizabeth Bada

Service Videos

Recordings of sermons from morning services are available on our [YouTube channel](#) and our own [website](#). Please contact the [church office](#) if you would like a link to recordings of full services.

Giving

We take up an offering during our morning services. There is also a donations box at the back of the chapel which you can use 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 Cathy (treasurer@penrallt.org), who will be able to advise.

Morning Services

Morning services start at 10:30am on Sundays with an option to join on Zoom if you are unable to join us in the building (Zoom 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 – 17); crèche facilities are also available for younger children. For all-age services, the children and young people remain in the service but crèche facilities are still available if needed.

Sunday 3rd December (Advent Sunday)

Advent: Hope. Preacher: John Thompson.

Sunday 10th December

Nativity service led by our children and young people.

Sunday 17th December

Advent: Love. Preacher: John Thompson.

For Sunday school this morning, the children will be doing Christmas crafts together.

Sunday 24th December (all-age; communion)

Advent: Joy. Preacher: John Thompson.

Monday 25th December (all-age)

Informal Christmas morning service, lasting an hour or less.

Sunday 31st December (all-age)

Preacher: Martha Saleh.

Evening Services

Evening services begin at 6pm on Sunday evenings except where otherwise noted. Unlike morning services, these are not usually broadcast or recorded. There is no evening service on the first Sunday; instead we have our church lunch and fellowship event following the morning service (see next page). Services planned for the rest of the month are:

Sunday 10th December

Contemporary Style Christmas Café Service in the hall, with refreshments.

Sunday 17th December

Traditional Christmas Carol Service.

Sunday 24th December (4:30pm)

Christingle. See details on next page.

(Sunday 31st December: No service)

◇ **Christingle**

Sunday 24th December at 4:30pm at Penrallt. 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 sign up at <https://penralltbc.churchsuite.com/events/omeojugg> to help us prepare the materials for the service.

Helpers are required for the Christingle service too. Please speak to John (minister@penrallt.org) if you can help.

◇ **Christmas Offerings**

The money raised from the offerings during our carol service (17th December, 6pm) and services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day will be shared between local charities and Penrallt mission partners (details to be determined).

◇ **Church Lunch and Fellowship Events**

Our monthly church lunch and fellowship events take place on the first Sunday of the month; this month they will be on 3rd December. For lunch, please bring a plate of finger-food, enough for yourself and one or two others so there is enough to share with our visitors. The fellowship event will, like last month, be a woodland walk at Malltraeth, approx. 3km with some muddy / uneven ground not suitable for pushchairs. For more information or to request or offer a lift, please contact Jenny (fellowship@penrallt.org).

◇ **Church Meeting**

Our next church members' meeting will take place on Wednesday 10th January 2024 at 7:30pm in the chapel and on Zoom. To find out more about church membership, please speak to John (minister@penrallt.org) or Jan (secretary@penrallt.org).

◇ **Church Members' Away Day**

Reminder that we will be having an away day for members on Saturday 27th January as we prayerfully make plans for the Church moving forwards. Including Bible study and talks, Worship, Discussion and Prayer. 10am–3:30pm. Venue TBC.

◇ **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.

◇ **Hardship Fund**

The church has a small fund to help people in need. If you find yourself in financial difficulty or know someone else that 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 Cathy Fooks (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 relationship with the Lord and with one another. There are groups on Monday to Thursday evenings and on Tuesday and Friday mornings. Groups meet weekly or fortnightly, in person, online or a combination of the two. We also have "contact, care and prayer" to enable people to stay connected even if not in a homegroup. A member of the pastoral care team would contact you every 3 weeks or so to ask how you are and if you'd like to receive prayer support. Please contact the [church office](#) if you are not part of contact, care & prayer or part of a homegroup and would like to be.

◇ **Kindle Kids' Club**

Kindle is our fortnightly Friday night club for primary school aged children. The last session for this term will be on 8th December, 6–7pm. To find out more, contact Becca (youth@penrallt.org).

◇ **Men's Breakfast**

Our men's fellowship group usually meet once a month for food and friendship at Ian Ablett's home in Caernarfon, but we are taking a break in December and the next breakfast is due to be on Saturday **January 6th**. Contact the office (office@penrallt.org) or Ian (ian.ablett@open.ac.uk; 07759 718931) for more details.

◇ **Open The Book**

Volunteers urgently needed. Another local primary school has asked the churches in Bangor to provide an Open the Book team to come and share Bible stories with children. As invited guests in school, storytelling teams use the *Open the Book* programme to prepare and present a 10–15-minute scripted Bible story to a school assembly, involving the children as much as possible. This is a fantastic opportunity to share Bible stories with children who would otherwise never hear them. For more information see <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/get-involved/open-the-book/> and speak to Sarah Jackson or Magnus.

◇ **Penrallt on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube**

We have three Facebook groups:

- *Penrallt* (www.facebook.com/groups/2402772192)
a general group for information and social interaction
- *Penrallt Prayer Point* (www.facebook.com/groups/30262793231755)
a private group to share prayer requests and encouragements
- *Penrallt Students* (www.facebook.com/groups/195300234272943)

We also have a YouTube channel and a Facebook page (both called *Penrallt Baptist Church*), as well as another Facebook page for our young people, and now also an Instagram account:

- www.youtube.com/@penralltbaptistchurch
- www.facebook.com/penralltbc www.facebook.com/penralltyouth
- www.instagram.com/penralltbaptistchurch/

◇ **Pastoral Help**

If you have concerns about your own or someone else's welfare, please contact a member of the Pastoral Care team: Jan Ablett (07703 188632); Magnus Forrester-Barker (07890 109645); Geoff Moore (01248 410582); Monica Morris (07827 472637), Abi Penney (01766 890624); John Thompson (07931 150697).

◇ **Prayer Resources**

Send prayer requests, thanksgivings and testimonies to our email prayer diary via office@penrallt.org — use this address, too, to subscribe to the prayer diary, which goes out every week (usually on Mondays). 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 11:30am** and on **Saturdays at 8:30am**; please contact the church office if you need the connection details for either meeting (also listed at the bottom of our email prayer diary each week). *Note that both prayer meetings will take a break over Christmas; there will be no Zoom prayer meetings on 23rd, 27th or 30th December.*

◇ **Renew 57**

All are welcome to come to Penrallt on a Thursday morning, where the Canolfan (rear hall) is open from 10:30am to 12:30pm. Bring a hobby to share with someone else, have a cup of tea or coffee and some toast and a chat. There is a separate prayer space available throughout this time 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. Please pray for the team. If you'd like to know more, speak to Adrienne (adrieferrada@hotmail.co.uk) or Magnus (office@penrallt.org) or drop in and see for yourself. Note that we are intending to be open as usual on 28th December.

◇ **Soul Sisters (Women's Fellowship)**

Our Christmas Fayre raised £427.15 so many many thanks to all who contributed, assisted and supported this event.

The meeting on 9th December is lunch at the Four Crosses, Menai Bridge at 12pm; you can choose from the Christmas or standard menu. If you could advise Averil via email Francishac3@aol.com or phone 01248 421744 with your selection before 3rd December please. A warm welcome is extended to all ladies.

◇ **Students**

We love to welcome students as part of our church family. To learn more about what activities are available, or just for a friendly chat, drop our student co-ordinator, Becca (students@penrallt.org) a line. Also, don't miss our *Penrallt Students* Facebook group.

◇ **University Carol Service**

A group from Penrallt will be participating in the University Carol Service at Neuadd Pritchard Jones on Tuesday 5th December at 7pm. All are welcome to attend this event, which will include a mixture of traditional and contemporary music.

◇ **Youth: Ignite and Deeper**

Our main youth activities are a Thursday night group called *Ignite* (usually meeting in the Canolfan at 7pm) and a Sunday morning group, *Deeper* (during our service, except for all-age services). Ignite, a social evening with games and activities, is open to all. Deeper provides opportunity to find out more about the Christian faith. Find out more on our youth website, www.penralltyouth.org, as well as our *Penrallt Youth Facebook page* and *Instagram group*. Contact our youth worker, Becca (youth@penrallt.org), for more information. *Ignite will take a Christmas break after 21st December and restart on 11th January.*

Focus on...

Street Pastors

Serving around the UK and beyond

Back in January, our [Focus article](#) was about the work of Bangor Street Pastors. This time we will take a slightly broader look at Street Pastors and related initiatives around the world.



There are a number of Street Pastor initiatives across the UK and further afield, all working under the banner of the Ascension Trust, a Christian charity that has been operating for 30 years to promote effective engagement of the Church with society.

There is probably no such thing as a typical SP initiative, as they operate in a wide variety of different situations, ranging from inner cities to rural villages, and adapt themselves to local conditions. What they have in common is that the members of the team are volunteers from local churches (at least 4 churches are required to work together to form any SP initiative), dedicated to impartially showing the love of God to their communities through listening, caring and helping. Generally the work takes place on the streets, usually at night time, but in some places they go into pubs, clubs or other places to chat to people and help them as needed and sometimes they operate during the day.

In addition to street pastors, Ascension Trust run several other initiatives such as School & College Pastors, Rail Pastors and Response Pastors. The first two of these are probably quite obvious from the names, as they work respectively in schools and colleges or on trains (though actually School/College Pastors do most of their work outside the school gates and Rail Pastors work in stations as well). As with street pastors they would generally have fairly regular patterns of when and where they operate. Response Pastors are slightly different, as they are trained to be able to offer an extra level of physical and emotional support in times of crisis or disaster.

A number street pastors from around the UK took part in extra patrols in London to help support the crowds present for the coronation of King Charles earlier this year. None of the Bangor team joined in directly with that, but Magnus was one of many more street pastors and prayer pastors forming a remote prayer team to receive real-time updates (via WhatsApp) from the patrol teams and to pray for them as they worked. Things generally seemed to run smoothly but the teams were able to help several people, including at least two families with missing children (one of them was later reported as safely found, no further news was given of the other one).

Prayer is, of course, a key to all that Street Pastors and related initiatives do (and all that we do as Christians). So please pray for them.