



Newsletter: December 2024

Jesus: A gift to the people of God

It's lovely to think about Jesus being a gift to each one of us individually. Jesus is God's gift to me. This is so amazing for me personally. He is an 'indescribable gift (2 Corinthians 9v15). Jesus is immanent as well as transcendent. He is near to me and He can relate to me. He is the image of God for me as well as being beyond anything I can understand. He is unapproachably Holy. He is also a wonderful gift to me because he bids me to come to Him. Whatever state I am in, I can come to Jesus to seek forgiveness of my sin. He died on the cross in my place. My sins really are forgiven through believing and trusting in Him. I have the promise of eternity in heaven. What a gift!

However, Jesus also came to us as a people group. He came to us as the people of God. The people of God are those who worship God, know God, and seek to live in accordance with His ways. They gather together in faith. They are also the people of God as they encourage one another to live out their individual lives in faith.

In Luke 2, Mary is visited by the Angel who tells her that she will carry the Son Of God in her womb. Mary then prays prophetically. In her prayer Mary explains that "God's mercy extends to **all** those who fear him" and "he has filled the hungry with good things", "he has remembered his servant — [**the people of God**]." This means those who are redeemed by faith in Jesus Christ in all generations, cultures and nations.

Jesus is a gift to the church. A gift of mercy, a gift of provision and blessing, and a gift of intimacy. He came 2000 years ago in person, but He is also an eternal gift to the church. Jesus is still alive today in His risen power and by His Holy Spirit. So as we connect together throughout the Christmas season — in 2s or 3s or in larger numbers, let's pray that we see the wonder of the manifestation of Jesus together and individually. And let's pray that we experience and see the power of his Holy Spirit in our church to the glory of His name and out into the world.

Happy Christmas Penrallt!

Blessings,

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: Cathy Fooks; 07729 892303; 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 – 17); 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 1st December (All-age)

Advent: Hope

Preacher: Revd. John Thompson.

This service will be followed by our church lunch (see below).

Sunday 8th December

Advent: Love

John 17:20–26

Preacher: Jon Stammers.

Sunday 15th December (Nativity Service)

The Bright Light.

Please come and support our children and young people as they lead this service.

Sunday 22nd December: No morning service

Instead, please join us for our **carol service this afternoon at 4:30pm.**

Wednesday 25th December

Informal Christmas morning service, lasting an hour or less.

Sunday 29th December (Communion Service)

Stay in the boat

Luke 8:22–25

Preacher: Lesley Jackson.

Service Videos

Recordings of sermons from morning services (except all-age ones) 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.

We would ask you, please, to refrain from taking photos and videos during our services due to safeguarding concerns.

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 BMS World Mission Special Delivery Appeal. 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 8th December. The BMS Special Delivery Appeal is supporting essential medical care for newborns and their mothers at Guinebor 2 Hospital in Chad, where our mission partner Claire Bedford is based. This Christmas, you can ensure that babies are born safely and provide mothers with the care they need to raise a healthy family.

Evening Services

Sunday 1st December (3-5pm)

Messy Church: Christmas

This is a free family event where we will explore the theme of Christmas through crafts, games, activities and a meal. The activities are aimed at children aged between 3 and 11, but there is a crèche space for younger ones as well as games that teenagers will enjoy, so bring the whole family! **Please note: all under 18s will need to be supervised by an adult at all times for safeguarding reasons; similarly adults will only be admitted if accompanying children.**

It is helpful if you can sign up in advance for this (using the QR code or <https://penralltbc.churchsuite.com/events/jo8vzxop>) to give us an idea of numbers for providing craft materials and food. Messy Church is designed to be accessible to those who are not used to church, so invite your friends too!



Sunday 8th December (6pm)

Christmas movie night! Join us as we watch *The Chosen Christmas Special* and sing some Christmas songs and carols. This will last around an hour.

Sunday 15th December (6pm)

Communion and prayer service led by Revd. John Thompson.

Sunday 22nd December (4:30pm)

Carol service. This will be an ideal Christmas service to bring your friends to.

Sunday 29th December: No evening service

Christmas Offerings

The money raised from the offerings at our carol service, Christingle (see below) and Christmas Day service will be split evenly between CAP (Christians Against Poverty, a national charity) and Anna and Chris Hembury, our mission partners in Hull.

Children's Birthdays in December

7th: Simon Masih 10th: Deuel Wulengme 12th: Michelle Abenji

13th: Oluwajoba Awoyemi 15th: Elizabeth Bada

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.

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.

Other Events in December

◇ Church Lunch: Sunday 1st December

We will have our usual church lunch on the first Sunday of this month, after the morning service. To comply with best practice and government regulations we are asking that everybody who brings food should read and follow the food handling guidelines that were recently circulated to our news mailing list. If you did not receive a copy and would like to bring food to share, please contact the church office.

There will be no fellowship walk this month. Instead, we have our Messy Church event on the afternoon of 1st December (see previous page for details). We are planning a walk to Penmon Point on Sunday 5th January.

◇ Bangor YFC Prayer Meeting: Wednesday 4th December, 7:30pm

Penrallt will be hosting a prayer meeting on Wednesday 4th December at 7:30pm in order to meet and pray with the new Bangor YFC worker, Grace Anderson. You are welcome to join us.

◇ The Joys of Giving: Saturday 7th December, 12–3pm

Following on the lovely Clothes event held here in September, Penrallt are holding THE JOYS OF GIVING pop-up on Saturday 7th December (12–3pm).

Christmas can be a difficult time especially in the current economic situation so we are hoping to lighten that gloom a little with the opportunity for needy people to do some Christmas shopping 'without money and without cost.' Enabling them also to share in The Joys of Giving to their families and friends.

We will be glad to receive small good quality items suitable as gifts for men, women and children in the first week of December. *Items can be brought to the morning service on 1st December, or dropped off during the week between 11am and 4:30pm each day or up to 7:30pm on Tuesday and Friday.*

Our desire is to bless people without any requirement whatsoever for payment. If anyone has a particular desire to donate any money we will transfer it discreetly to one of the local food banks, simply because our aim is to totally remove any pressure to pay for the items; we have a strong sense that this is on our Father's heart.

Thank you for sharing The Joys of Giving! Any queries should be directed to the church office and will be passed on to the Joys of Giving team.

◇ University Carols & Concert: Thursday 12th December, 7pm

This will take place in the Pritchard-Jones Hall at the Bangor University Main Arts building, followed by mulled wine and mince pies.

◇ Soul Sisters: Saturday 14th December, 10:30am

Our meeting on Saturday 14th December at 10:30 – 12 will be Carols around the Christmas tree with refreshments at Averil's home. (If you need directions please contact 01248 421744/francishac3@aol.com). All ladies welcome to join us for a social gathering.

Please note our meeting in 2025 will be the third Saturday of every month apart from February (which will be on the second Saturday).

◇ **Cytûn Carol Singing: Saturday 14th December, 10:30am**

Cytûn will be carol singing at Morrisons at 10:30am on Saturday 14th December and collecting for Christian Aid. Please come and sing out the good news of the birth of Jesus to the shoppers of Upper Bangor. There will be mince pies!

◇ **Art Exhibition: Saturday 14th December, 2–5pm**

There will be an exhibition, “Landscapes from around the World” by the Artist Peter Bousfield during the month of December at the Canolfan in Beaumaris. On Saturday 14th December 2–5pm there will be a special viewing of the exhibition when refreshments will be available. Any proceeds will be divided between the Canolfan and Mental Health Charities.

◇ **Christingle: Tuesday 24th December**

Tuesday 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 using the QR code or visit <https://penralltbc.churchsuite.com/events/4qzqj2mc> to help us know how many to expect so we can prepare the materials for the service.



There has to be more to Christmas than parties, presents and food. Yes, it is Jesus, but why is he important to our own life story? Alpha

is a great place to explore this. Starting Monday 13th January for 11 weeks in the church hall. A course for everyone from those wanting to explore and ask questions, or for those who want to reset their walk with Jesus. Sign up through the QR code or the church website.

It will be joyful, free and you get an evening meal. For more details chat to Peter Jones (07906 761181).



Other Information

◇ **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 Cathy (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 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 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.

◆ **Men’s Breakfast**

Our men’s fellowship group usually meet on the last Saturday morning of the month for food and friendship at Ian Ablett’s home in Caernarfon. All men are welcome. We won’t be meeting for breakfast in December but aim to meet as usual on 25th January. Please contact the church office or Ian (ianablett57@gmail.com; 07759 718931) for more details, or to offer or request a lift.

◆ **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); Geoff Moore (01248 410582); Monica Morris (07827 472637), Abi Penney (01766 890624), John Thompson (07931 150697). Please pray for the PCT as well.

◆ **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/302627593231755), a private group to share prayer requests and encouragements; *Penrallt Students* (www.facebook.com/groups/195300234272943), fairly self-explanatory!

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 an Instagram account:

- www.youtube.com/@penralltbaptistchurch
- www.facebook.com/penralltbc www.facebook.com/penralltyouth
- www.instagram.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 (provided any items for it have been received). 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. Note that the Wednesday prayer meeting will not take place on 25th December or 1st January, and the Saturday prayer meeting will not be running on 28th December.

◇ 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. We are hoping to offer prayer at most services. This is often at the end of the service, sometimes during communion or at other times, but 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 and 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. We also have a Pastoral Care Team who 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.

◇ Renew 57 Weekly Drop-in

Renew 57 is a space for the whole community, on **Thursday mornings, 10:30am to 12:30pm in Canolfan Penrallt** (our rear hall/community centre). 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 Adrienne (adrieferrada@hotmail.co.uk) or drop in and see for yourself. *NB we will (God willing) be running as usual on Boxing Day, Thursday 26th December.*

◇ 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 get in touch with our student co-ordinator, Holly Redding (students@penrallt.org). Also, don't miss our Penrallt Students Facebook group.

◇ Youth: Ignite and Deeper

Ignite (usually meeting in the Canolfan at 7pm on Thursdays) is a social evening with games and activities, open to all youth (11–17), that we run in conjunction with Mosaic church. *Deeper* (during our Sunday morning service) provides opportunity to find out more about the Christian faith. For more information see our youth website, www.penrallyouth.org, as well as our Penrallt Youth Facebook page and Instagram group, or contact our youth worker, Becca Jackman (youth@penrallt.org).

Focus on...



Tearfund

Tearfund is a Christian charity whose mission is to follow Jesus where the need is greatest, responding to crises and partnering with local churches and organisations to help people lift themselves out of poverty.

Thousands of people needlessly suffer and die every day because of poverty. But that's not God's plan for the world. And God is calling us – all of us – to reach out to people in greatest need.

For over 50 years, Tearfund has worked directly, and/or alongside local partners and churches, in underserved communities to tackle complex poverty in three main ways:

- Humanitarian response: responding quickly to disasters and conflicts, supporting those in greatest need throughout the recovery process.
- Community development: mobilising resources and empowering communities to lift themselves out of poverty.
- Advocacy and influencing: helping individuals and churches speak out on issues of poverty and injustice, and challenging unjust policies and practices at a local, national and global level.

Tearfund's vision is to see people freed from poverty, living transformed lives, and fulfilling their God-given potential. As they pursue this vision, they have four main focuses:

- Meeting emergency needs: responding quickly to meet immediate needs when crises and disasters hit vulnerable communities.
- Mobilising churches: envisioning, empowering and equipping churches to play their part in the development and transformation of their communities.
- Transforming communities: supporting communities to become resilient to shocks and stresses and work towards a better future for themselves and others.
- Changing society: seeking to influence and change social, political, and economic systems and policies so that the poorest communities can get the services and opportunities they need to thrive.

Tearfund seeks to be Christ-centred, compassionate, courageous, truthful and servant-hearted in everything they do.

For more information, please see <https://www.tearfund.org/>

We are looking for a new Tearfund Rep. Please speak to Sarah Jackson for more information about this role.

Deadline for next month's newsletter: Thursday 19th 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.