



Penrallt Baptist Church

Newsletter for January 2012

My twenty years with BMS World Mission in Brazil were generally happy ones. There were some dark times and more than a few minor irritations. One of the most regular annoyances was The Annual Report. The powers-that-be in the UK demanded that all missionaries should give an account of themselves every December. I suppose I should be glad that at least it wasn't someone else issuing an annual appraisal of my efforts, futile or successful, as a missionary in the land of samba. My team leader would start reminding me weeks beforehand that my annual report was due, then imminently due, then "by 2pm today". Somehow I'd manage to scribble something down. The year that my bosses drove me to despair was when, clearly disappointed with our meagre word-counts, they instigated The Questionnaire. Among the largely unanswerable inquisitions (life behind a desk in the UK never seemed able to grasp the complexities and messiness of life on the cross-cultural sharp end of world mission) was the one that said "Have you grown spiritually this last year?" My first draft was along the lines of "Why ask me? God would give you the real answer to that question." I forget what my final draft was, but it wasn't much clearer.

I am, decades older and wiser, still unable to respond intelligibly to that question. I've been made wary of such impossible-to-gauge measuring by a life-time in the pastorate. I've encountered super-spiritual believers who seem incapable of taking a single wise decision in their personal lives yet can pray for hours on end and quote scripture with fervour and accuracy. I've encountered practical followers of Jesus who will dig you out of any hole, but rarely seem to spend longer than a few minutes in prayer. In the absence of spiritual growthometer I can only say that I hope I've grown, but I must leave it up to God to decide.

So please don't be too specific in your expectations of our forthcoming series on *Spiritual Disciplines for Ordinary People*. We can only live our lives in the present. Maybe life is hard at the moment, and we're just hanging on by our fingernails. Perhaps we are desperately busy and dream of retirement. Some of us might be harassed by young children and longing for an adult conversation with our spouse, let alone time with God. There's no absolute scale for measuring spiritual growth. Rough guidelines are the best I can offer. Have you done something new for God this last year? Have you studied something fresh in the last twelve months? Have you survived a traumatic experience recently? Do you feel closer to God than in 2010? Have you had a few sharp corners knocked off your character? We won't answer yes to all those. Some of us might answer "no" to all of those and yet still have grown spiritually, while others, sadly, may have become colder and more distant in their faith.

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Ultimately God is our judge. His deep desire is for us to grow closer to him and be more like Jesus in our daily dealings with, at times, a very frustrating world. There are techniques, exercises and habits which will help us grow if we adopt them, and we'll spend a few months on Sunday mornings exploring them. Join us.

God bless,
Peter

SERVICES IN JANUARY

January 1

10.30am Family Service
6.00pm No service

January 8

10.30am ***Give Thanks*** *Colossians 3:12-18*
6.00pm ***Cleansing, Commanding, Completing*** *Matthew 8:1-17*

January 15

10.30am ***The Life You've Always Wanted: Time to Change***
6.00pm ***Into the Storm with Jesus*** *Matthew 8: 18-34*

January 22

10.30am ***The Life You've Always Wanted: True Spirituality***
6.00pm Roger Borlace ***I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*** *Matthew 9: 1-17*

January 29

10.30am Communion Service. Geoff Birch
The Life You've Always Wanted: Training versus Trying, or Both *1 Corinthians 9:24-27, 1 Timothy 4:1-15*
6.00pm ***The Workers are Few*** *Matthew 9:19-38*

The Life You've Always Wanted.

We are beginning a thirteen-part study on Spiritual Disciplines for Ordinary People, based on the book by John Ortberg *The Life You've Always Wanted*. We recommend that you buy the books and follow the studies week by week. It is on sale from the Welcome Desk in the hall for £6 (discount, cost price). There are group studies at the back of the book which will serve well for home groups to follow the series.

CHURCH LUNCH

We will host a church lunch on **Sunday January 8th**. Please bring enough buffet style "finger food" for yourselves and one or two others.

Faith Café

Faith Café will resume on January 8th. Faith Café is for students and young adults. Starting around 7:15 pm it is an evening of chat, interviews, music and discussions.

SPECIAL DATES FOR JANUARY

Wednesday 4	10.30am	Men's Prayer Meeting
Monday 9	7.30pm	Church Members' Meeting
Tuesday 10	7.00pm	Start of course <i>Cognitive Behaviour Therapy in a Christian Context</i>
Monday 16	2.30pm	Pastoral Care Team
	7.30pm	HGV meeting
Tuesday 17	10.30am	Penrallt Walking Group (see 'Noticeboard' for details)
Tuesday 24	12.00 – 2.00pm	Week of Prayer for Christian Unity meeting in Penrallt (bring and share lunch – we will provide tea and coffee).
	7.00pm	Alpha Reunion and Alpha Supper for Alpha Lite course
Monday 30	7.30pm	Missions Meeting
Tuesday 31	7.00pm	Alpha Plus group begins. Also, Alpha Lite starts.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: 19th – 25th January

It is a joy to have a Churches Together group (called CYTUN) in Bangor which works well together and achieves much. Every year we participate in the internationally observed Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. There will be various meetings during this week, and we encourage everyone to try and get to at least one.

Thursday 19	7.00pm	Penuel
Friday 20	7.30pm	Our Lady and St. James
Monday 23	7.00pm	St. Peter's, Penrhosgarnedd
Tuesday 24	12.00-2.00pm	Penrallt (bring and share lunch)
Wednesday 25	t.b.c.	

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy in a Christian Context* **10 January*

Dr. Paul Hebblethwaite is offering this short course over four consecutive Tuesday evenings from 7.00pm to 9.15pm starting 10th January 2012. This course is for individuals who wish to learn something about CBT and how it can be utilised to help them and others to develop more truthful and balanced thinking and beliefs and how this can work alongside their Christian faith. Paul has run two of these courses to date for church members and they were well received. No knowledge of CBT is required. Places are limited so please sign up now on the list which is on the noticeboard in the porch.

Alpha Evening* **7.00pm** **Tuesday 24 January*

Are you interested in learning more about the Alpha Course or were you on the last course? If the answer is yes to either question this evening is for you.

A new Alpha Course will be starting on 31st January. If you are interested to find out more please come along on the 24th or contact Lawrence Moss or Margaret Griffiths for more details. This evening is a combined function and will also be the re-union of the Alpha Autumn 2011 group. Please bring a plate of finger food to share.

Looking forward to seeing you.

Alpha Team

Church Meeting

The meeting for Church Members will be on **Monday 9th January** at 7:30pm. As we will approve the budget at this meeting, it is absolutely essential that we are quorate. Please mark it in your diary now and make every effort to attend.

ADVANCE NOTICE

A date for your diary: 10/11th March

A barn dance is to be held on Saturday evening 10th March in aid of Tearfund. Andy Wilson, a member of Penrallt who works for Tearfund, will be speaking at both services on Sunday 11th March. More details later.

WEEKDAYS

Please check with the contact people when there are meetings this month.

HG = Home Group

Day	Time	Details	Contacts
Tue	8.00pm	HG, Nilgiri	Joan Beer (353874)
Tue	7.30pm	HG, Tyddyn Isaf, Menai Bridge	Magnus Forrester-Barker (717570)
Wed	10.30am	Men's Prayer Meeting	Peter Cousins (353878)
Wed	2.00pm	Carers' Home Group	Carol Morris (716953)
Wed	7.00pm	HG for young adults, Bangor	Danielle Fifield (07849935707)
Wed	7.30pm	HG, The Nomads	Jess & Seamus Adams (421185) Susan Cousins (353878)
Wed	7.30pm	HG, Bethesda	Jon & Deb Stammers (602868)
Wed	8.00pm	HG, Grŵp Cymraeg	Owen & Nia Lloyd Evans (352634)
Thu	10.30am	Post-Alpha Bible Study	Sue & Lawrence Moss (713793)
Thu	7.30pm	HG, Llanfairpwll	Sue & Lawrence Moss (713793)
Thu	7.45pm	HG, Talwrn	Gill & James Goodman (751074) <i>(phone not active until 7th Jan)</i>
Fri	10.30am - noon	Cheeky Monkeys	Joan Rymer (713003)
Fri	10.30 – 12.30pm	HG, 6 Maes y Dref	Anne Collis (353173) anne@collis66.freerve.co.uk
Sat	8.30am	Prayer Meeting	

NEWS OF PEOPLE

Malcolm and Barbara Thomas have asked us to say that they would like to thank everyone at Penrallt for their prayers and kindness over the recent weeks of their operations and hospital visits.

Children's Birthdays in January

1st: Ben Thomas; **3rd**: Belle Owen; **18th**: Jay Mapatac; **19th**: Sian Snyman;
20th: Miriam Harmens; **25th**: Amy Owen; **30th**: Luke Hearth

NOTICEBOARD

- ***Men's Prayer Meeting Wednesday 4 January 10.30am***
The men will meet for prayer as usual, followed by coffee in Options.
- ***Walking Group Tuesday 17 January 10.30am***
Please meet in Pringles Car Park in Llanfairpwllgwyngyll, adjacent to the railway station. A circular walk is planned of about 6 miles taking in part of the Anglesey Coastal path. Some parts of the walk are across fields and part of the walk is on minor roads. We will never be far from Llanfair PG so that the route of the walk can be altered depending on the weather. On our return, we can replenish our reserves at one of the local pubs. Any queries, telephone Sue and Lawrence on 01248 713793 or email lemos@btinternet.com
- ***Baptismal Service***
We are beginning to consider holding another Baptismal Service some time in the New Year. If you are considering this, would you talk to Peter about it please
- ***Penrallt on Facebook***
100 people are signed up to Penrallt's Facebook site. Join us
- ***Volunteers***
Volunteers are needed to help in a work with children to be held in the Cathedral on the day of the Bangor Christmas event, Saturday 10th December from 11-2pm. Please get in touch with the Cathedral staff if you are interested.
- ***Homeless in Bangor***
We do not recommend giving money to the homeless. Instead, £5 in one of the brown envelopes from the table in the porch of the church (placed in the offering) will buy a hot meal for them through the St. Mary's Hostel scheme. So far Penrallt has contributed £3010 to the fund.
- ***The Prayer Room...***
...is open before and after the service for quiet prayer. Penrallt is a place of prayer, so make use of this sacred space.
- ***Pray for Penrallt Every Day***
Sign up to receive our prayer diary by e-mail every Monday morning by sending your request to: office@penrallt.org.
If you have some subject for prayer, either send it in by e-mail, or fill in one of the pink cards, which are available in the porch, and place it in the visitors' cards box or give it to Peter or Magnus.
- ***Pastoral Help***
If you have pastoral concerns please contact Peter or one of the other members of the Pastoral Care team:
Geoff Birch 01286 870944 Pat Borlace 713146, Eunice Smith 713296,
Judy Stammers 364394 Geoff Moore 410582

Deadline for next month's newsletter Sunday 22 January
Please send information to Gwyneth
(gwyneth@brindley-wales.com or 352682)

FOCUS ON...

Bangor and District Women's Aid Cymorth i Ferched Bangor a'r Cylch

- 112 women are killed by their male partners or former partners per year, on average – that's one woman in Britain killed every 3 days.
- It is estimated that a third of women experience domestic abuse in their lifetime.
- In Britain, police receive a complaint about domestic abuse every minute.
- On average, a woman is assaulted 35 times before she seeks help.

Bangor and District Women's Aid/Cymorth i Ferched Bangor a'r Cylch provides a safe refuge for women and children fleeing domestic violence. It supports women who wish to stay safely in their own home and supports children who have seen or heard abuse or violence at home. Bangor Women's Aid can provide information on housing and benefits, put women in touch with solicitors and other agencies, offers free and confidential help and information, and time to talk and think situations through. It also works with schools in teaching teenagers about healthy relationships.

Bangor Women's Aid provides a fully bilingual 24 hour service to all women, regardless of age, culture, language or sexual orientation. Support is offered for women suffering all types of domestic abuse, not just violence. Domestic abuse includes humiliation, forced isolation, coercion, threatening behaviour and emotional, verbal and economic abuse.

Penrallt Baptist Church recently supported two fundraising clothes swap events that raised over £200 for Bangor Women's Aid. The money is being used for activities for children supported by Bangor Women's Aid and to refurbish a private drop-in room at the office.

If you would like to find out more, including about becoming a volunteer or a trustee, please contact the Bangor Women's Aid office on 01248 679052 or speak to Jane Hodgson at church or on 07900 570317.

Wales Domestic Abuse 24 Hour Helpline 0808 80 10 800