



Penrallt Baptist Church

Newsletter: March 2015

From the Minister:

Stephen Fry sighed and laid his head back onto the soft down pillow he'd bought in the Harrods' sale. It had been a good day. Headlines, re-tweets, a viral outburst against God.

'Why should I,' he'd asked the interviewer on Irish TV, 'respect a capricious, mean-minded, stupid God who creates a world that is so full of injustice and pain?' How the media had loved that! A contented, satisfied sleep overtook him until he awoke, startled, in the early hours. A strange human shape stood quietly at the foot of his bed, haloed by the light from the Humanist Society's commemorative alarm clock on the dressing table.

"Who are you?" asked Stephen in a worried tone.

"Teresa" replied the woman softly.

The actor looked closely. The veiled head. The slight physique. The East European accent. A strange idea passed across his mind.

"Not Mother Teresa?"

"Yes."

"But you're dead!"

"Well, technically I'm 'The Ghost of Mother Teresa.'

"Oh come on! Not an Ebenezer Scrooge kind of ghost? Like Marley's ghost?"

"More or less. And it's not even Christmas is it?" said the apparition with the hint of a smile.

"I'm not going to recant. I'd tell God what I thought of him. I'd despise him!"

"No gratitude then?"

"Gratitude?"

"Yes. Gratitude. Thanking your creator for your existence. Appreciation for all the good moments of your life. You've lived with wealth, fame and comfort. The respect of millions. You've watched the sun rise on 21,000 days in which you've been blessed with

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friends, sunlight, air to breathe and a superlative mind to exercise on the finer things of life. I admit you haven't always made the best of it and you've struggled with your darker side and thoughts. But it seems to me you've got a lot to be thankful for."

"That's nothing to do with God."

"As a matter of fact if God's your creator it's everything to do with God."

"He's a monster!"

"If he's blessed you with all that, he's hardly a monster!"

" Ah but what about all those who die young of cancer? Who suffer painful illness? Grinding poverty? Rejection?"

"You can hardly blame God for poverty or human rejection."

"But disasters? Disease?"

"Have you ever sat and held the hand of a man dying of cancer on the streets of Kolkata? Watched a child die of hunger and disease in your arms? Bathed the wounds of a leper?"

"You know I haven't."

"I have. You've done many good things, Stephen. Your charity work is to be admired. But forsaking comfort to live in poverty and care for the marginalised was never your calling. Strange thing though, I've not heard the poor speak like you. They appreciate the touch of love and the care of a Missionary of Charity in the name of God. But I do feel the sadness and pain. From both sides. Sadness and pain."

"Both sides?"

"Yes, Stephen. From people and from God. I've met God. I've contemplated him on the cross. Felt his pain, shared his sadness."

"I don't believe in God."

"Of course you don't," said the woman softly. " The way you describe him neither do I. The God you talk about doesn't exist. You invented him in your head. The real God is nothing like you imagine."

"You're not going to convince me!" challenged the celebrity.

"I didn't expect to. I came to bless you and tell you that you're loved by your creator."

Sleep slipped over the eyes of the man in the bed, as the figure in white dissolved slowly into the ethereal quiet of the room.

God bless,

Peter

(Note: Peter is currently on sick leave for six weeks)

Services This Month:

1 March

- 10:30am Speaker: Neil Rymer. **Yet More Hope**
6:00pm Communion Service. Speaker: Jon Stammers.
The worst of sinners? *2 Chronicles 33:1-20; Romans 3:21-26*

8 March

- 10:30am Speaker: Kathy Russell. *Micah 6:6-8*
Justice mission work with BMS in Mozambique
6:00pm Speaker: Kathy Russell. *Isaiah 58:1-11*
Call, life and work of a lawyer assisting with justice mission

15 March (Mothering Sunday)

- 10:30am Speaker: Diane Holmes.
Gentleness - is it underrated? *Matthew 11:25-30*
6:00pm Speaker: Roger Borlace.
The Wife of Noble Character *Proverbs 31:10-31*

22 March

- 10:30am Speaker: Deb Stammers.
6:00pm Baptismal Service. Speaker: Peter Cousins

29 March (Palm Sunday)

- 10:30am Communion Service. Speaker: Peter Cousins. *Mark 4:35-5:20*
6:00pm Speaker: Peter Cousins. *Joshua 7:1-26*

Our Speakers in March

Kathy Russell grew up in Australia and came to the UK where she worked for 16 years as a lawyer. She is now using her skills in Mozambique as an advisor seeking to develop the justice and advocacy ministries being spearheaded by the Association of Mozambican Christian Lawyers and churches. She is one of the overseas workers Penrallt supports through its mission links. Our other speakers are all members of Penrallt. **Neil Rymer** is a retired mathematics lecturer from Bangor University and has served as both treasurer and secretary of Penrallt. **Jon Stammers** has a PhD from Bangor University, maintains links with the college and shares household duties with his wife **Deb Stammers**, who is a social worker and one of Penrallt's deacons. **Diane Holmes** is a Baptist minister who has recently come to live near Brynsiencyn. **Roger Borlace** is a retired Baptist minister who recommends the retirement life on Anglesey. **Peter Cousins** is our minister and is currently on sick leave but is due back in time for our baptismal service on 22nd March.

Faith Café

After church on Sunday evenings we host Faith Café for teenagers, students and other young adults. Starting around 7:15pm, it is an evening of chat, interviews, music and discussions. There is a short programme at around 7:40. There is no set time to finish so stay and chat if you wish. Faith Café will be running on Sundays 1st, 8th, and 15th March. There will be refreshments after the Baptismal Service on the 22nd.

Serving the people of God elsewhere:

Roger Borlace will be preaching at Menai Bridge English Presbyterian on Sunday 22nd March. Please remember him in your prayers.

If you will be ministering to other congregations and would like to be included in this list in future months, please send details to Magnus in the church office.

Dates For Your Diary:

| | | |
|--------------------|------------|---|
| Sunday 1 | 2:15pm | Service at Haulfre residential home. |
| Wednesday 4 | 10:30am | Men's prayer meeting followed by coffee in Options. |
| Saturday 7 | 6:30pm | The Love Wales team return to Anglesey for another "Breakthrough Prayer, Praise and Proclamation" event at Llangefni Town Hall and to join with the many folk who are believing for a spiritual breakthrough on the island. (Refreshments from 5:30pm.) |
| Monday 9 | 7:30pm | Deacons' meeting. |
| Thursday 12 | 2pm | Pastoral Care Team meeting. |
| Saturday 14 | 9:30am-1pm | <i>Bible Unzipped</i> at Rhos on Sea URC. |
| Monday 16 | 10:30am | Church Walk led by Roger and Eve Malone. |

Further details of some of these events can be found in the Noticeboard section later in this newsletter.

News of People:

We are sad to report the death of **Andrew Browne** in Lincoln. Andrew was a much loved member of Penrallt for many decades before moving with Jean to be nearer family a year or so ago. There will be a memorial service for him in Penrallt (date to be confirmed).

Our minister, **Peter Cousins**, underwent surgery on February 10th. **Will Lewis** is anticipating knee surgery early in March.

Paul and Elaine Green are in the process of transferring to the Baptist Church in Holyhead. There will be a formal farewell to them in the morning service on 12th April.

Children's Birthdays in March:

8th: Molly Wheatcroft

12th: Nicola Wheatcroft

13th: James Howie

14th: Ted Goodwin

15th: John Brindley

Weekday Events:

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 | 2:00pm | HG, Carers | Carol Morris (208407) |
| Wed | 7:30pm | HG, Bethesda | Jon & Deb Stammers (602868) |
| Wed | 7:30pm | HG, Maes y Dref (pm) | Anne Collis (353173) |
| Wed | 7:30pm | HG, Nomads | Susan Cousins (353878) |
| Wed | 7:00pm | HG, Students | Delvin Varghese (07528 958150) |
| Thu | 10:30am | HG, Llanfairpwll (am) | Sue & Lawrence Moss (713793) |
| Thu | 7:30pm | HG, Llanfairpwll (pm) | Sue & Lawrence Moss (713793) |
| Fri | 10:30am-12pm | Cheeky Monkeys (parent/toddler group) | Joan Rymer (713003) |
| Fri | 10:30am-12:30pm | HG, Maes y Dref (am) | Anne Collis (353173) |
| Sat | 8:30am | Prayer Meeting | |

Noticeboard:

◊ **Bible Unzipped**

Saturday 14th March 9:30am-1pm

Bible Unzipped aims to unpack Scripture with those interested in learning more than can be offered in a Sunday sermon. It also equips those leading in the church with some tools for studying and teaching from the Bible. We meet monthly on the second Saturday morning at Rhos-on-Sea URC from 9:30am to 1pm. Each morning includes three sessions which develop a theme through the term. The course is free. This month: *Revelation, Part 3* (taught by Julia), *Struggling with Difficult Bible Passages* (by Rob Beamish), *The Synoptic Gospels, part 2* (by Phillip Nye).

◊ **Car Parking**

Free parking is available on Sundays in Fron Heulog (The School of Healthcare Sciences) behind the Catholic church. The car park next door to the church is now pay and display with no special rates for the disabled. Morrisons is happy for you to park there on Sunday mornings and do your shopping after the service provided you register your car registration number at their information desk beforehand. Morrisons say that they switch the cameras off to make the car park available to us on Sunday and weekday evenings after 6pm.

◊ **Church Lunch**

We will host a church lunch after the morning service on **Sunday March 1st**. Please bring enough buffet style 'finger food' for yourselves and one or two others.

◊ Church Walk

Monday 16 March

This month's walk is due to be led by Roger and Eve Malone. Further details were not available at the time of going to press. Please see the weekly news sheets for information.

◊ Getting your prayer life into gear

We believe in prayer and encourage people to pray. You can send prayer request to our electronic diary via office@penrallt.org (there are also prayer cards in the church porch that you can fill in). Better still, you can receive the prayer diary straight to your inbox every Monday by emailing the office now and requesting to be put on the list. And for more immediate sharing and response in prayer why not search on Facebook for *Penrallt Prayer Point* and send a request to join our group dedicated to prayer.

◊ Men's Prayer Meeting

Wednesday 4 March

10:30am

Time spent in prayer will be followed by coffee in Options. All are welcome to join us.

◊ **Pastoral Help**

If you have pastoral concerns please contact one of the members of the Pastoral Care team:

Pat Borlace 713146 Adrienne Ferrada Geoff Moore 410582

Dave O'Brien 671848 Judy Stammers 364394 Helen Thomas 600174

Peter is expected to be off work for six weeks.

◊ Penrallt Railway Group (PRG)

Wednesday 25 March 7:00pm

The group exists to encourage folk to engage with others in the church beyond attendance on Sundays in a non-threatening environment and to build a model railway layout (N gauge) that will bless everyone.

Everyone has a gift or skill and we hope to draw these out; we can use photographers, engineers, woodworkers, electronics buffs, researchers, model makers... Everyone is welcome.

If you think this might be for you, please speak to Lawrence Moss (01248 713793) or Andrew March (01286 871630). We meet once per month, at the moment on the fourth Wednesday at 7pm in Lawrence's house because we do not have a venue at present where we can assemble the whole layout (that will be some way down the line, although we will need to find somewhere soon so if you have any ideas, please let us know).

◊ 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.

◊ Spring Harvest

We have one place for a female to join us at Spring Harvest in Minehead, Somerset from Saturday 28th March to Thursday 2nd April. Cost £246.50. Please contact Sarah Swallow 01407 720237 / 07712729043 / sarah_swallow@hotmail.co.uk for more details.

◊ **Sunday Afternoon Services**

We have resumed visiting residential homes in the area once a month on a Sunday afternoon. We are alternating between Haulfre (in Llangoed, on Anglesey, starting at 2:15pm) and Plas Garnedd (in Llanberis, starting at 2:45pm), usually on the first Sunday. Please see weekly news sheets for confirmation. In March we are due to visit Haulfre on Sunday 1st (please check the weekly news sheet or ask for confirmation).

◊ **Urgent Job Vacancies in Penrallt - *STILL vacant!!!!***

If you are a Church Member would you please consider offering yourself for one of these two posts, currently vacant.

Cytûn Representative: Cytûn is the Churches Together organization in Bangor. Increasingly we are working with the other churches in our city and it is vital to have a representative on the Cytûn committee. You will represent Penrallt in the meetings (about six a year) and report to the church. You will be involved in events like the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, the Good Friday Walk of Witness and the Easter Sunday service on Roman Camp. Penrallt is an enthusiastic supporter of Cytûn so expect plenty of support.

Health and Safety Officer: Penrallt has adopted a Health and Safety Policy but it needs to be implemented. Please be the one who ensures that the users of our building stay safe by our having a robust scheme in place. We are not aware of any major problems at the moment, but the Policy does need to be fully implemented in certain areas.

◊ **Rough Sleepers**

The church's policy is not to give money directly to the rough sleepers in Upper Bangor. Be warned that some of them can be aggressive. You will find brown envelopes in the porch for a gift that will buy meal vouchers which are distributed to rough sleepers by the Cathedral. So far Penrallt has contributed £5,455 to this scheme.

From the church office:

We are pleased to report that Peter's operation went ahead as scheduled last month. Please continue to pray for him as he recovers, and for Susan as she looks after him. He is due back towards the end of March.

Advance Notice: *The church members' AGM will take place at 7:30pm on Monday 13th April in the Canolfan. Please make every effort to attend.*

Anniversary Photos: If you have any photographs from the 10th Anniversary Celebration weekend in January, we would love to see them and perhaps have a copy. Please contact Magnus in the church office.

Deadline for next month's newsletter: Sunday 22 March.

Please send information to Magnus (office@penrallt.org; 01248 353355)

All notices should be submitted in writing (preferably by email) as early as possible.

Focus on...

Home Mission Fund

Penrallt has not always been this strong. There was a time when we were struggling to support a minister. However, the Baptist Union of Great Britain stepped in with a "Home Mission Fund" grant for a few years until the church had grown strong enough to be self-sustaining. Needless to say we feel very grateful for the help we received and do not hesitate to contribute 4% of our income to this fund. Home Mission is all about helping Baptist churches and individuals to reach their mission potential and bring the love of God to their communities. By giving to Home Mission you are helping transform the lives of people across the country.

The money is distributed around England and Wales. Some of it sustains the ministry of regional ministers like Phil Jump who preached here last month. The biggest segment of the money goes in grants to church initiatives, working on the cutting edge of mission. That could be inner city or rural, new expressions of church or the regrowth of a church which had fallen on hard times.

In our region the Baptist Church in Holyhead receives a Home Mission grant as it works slowly to being self-sustaining. Further south, Tywyn Baptist Church has recently received help to take on their first minister, Suzanne Roberts. They have extended and modernized their premises as the congregation and its community involvement have grown, welcoming several new families into the church.

Altogether more than 200 grants are distributed.

- In 2003 Fernhill Heath Baptist Church near Worcester appointed a minister in training on 25% Home Mission support. By 2013 they were sustaining themselves and employing a full-time minister.
- Burgh Baptist Church is close to the holiday resort of Skegness. Besides their own outreach to the vulnerable elderly and to those struggling with debt, they have received a Home Mission grant to employ a Parish Nurse who works in the community offering consultations in a drop-in session every week for those concerned with their health.
- Pastor Gadalla is the newly accredited minister of the Arabic Community Church, based in Brighton. Originally from Egypt, he is working among the large international community of people from the Middle East in that town.

This year we need to raise over £4m to continue the work that Home Mission makes possible. That sounds like a lot of money – but Penrallt plays its part and the Baptist Union thanks you all.