



Newsletter: March 2024

This is how we know what love is

The idea of self-sacrifice is less popular than ever. Today we are in danger of becoming a self-focused culture. Yet in many of the best films and books we still see a celebration of self-sacrifice. People sacrificing their time and resources for others. Self-sacrifice is probably the most beautiful form of love that there is. 'The ultimate sacrifice' is a phrase used when someone lays down their life for others.

In the story of Jonah, Jonah confesses before God and others that he is guilty, and he sacrifices himself to save the others in his boat. There are some parallels but also some major differences as we see love perfected in Jesus. Jesus was innocent, yet He sacrificed himself to save you and me. This is divine love. We are the guilty ones who are saved by the sacrifice of His guilt-less life. 1 John 3v16-18: "This is how we know what love is; Jesus Christ laid down his life for us". Or, as the Passion Translation says; "This is how we discover 'love's reality'". Or; "This is how we've come to understand and experience love", as the Message puts it. 1 John 3 then goes on to say that we should love others in the same way.

Jesus in Matt. 12v38 praised the Ninevites who responded to the preaching of Jonah and the sign of Jonah. Jonah was brought out of the belly of a fish after 3 days to preach to people who were the enemies of his nation and they were reached with the great compassion of God. How will we respond this Easter? Will we respond to God's love sacrificially and worship God with our lives? Will we love others sacrificially? Let's reach out to all with the wonderful message of forgiveness and love in Jesus.

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.

World Day of Prayer: 1st March

This year's World Day of Prayer is on the theme "I beg You, bear with one another in love" (Ephesians 4:2b), using material prepared by Palestinian Christian women. Services in Bangor take place on Friday 1st March at 10:30am in Berea Newydd (Welsh) and 2pm at St. John's (English). All are welcome.

EASTER CRACKED

Saturday 16th March, 2 – 4pm. A free family event that explores the story behind Easter, with activities for primary-aged children (parents or guardians must stay to supervise). There is space for 100 children at this event so please register your children at <https://penralltbc.churchsuite.com/events/giqszwgm> to enable us to keep track of numbers.

Cytûn Easter Events

We will be joining the other churches of Cytûn Bangor (Bangor Churches Together) for two events over Easter:

Good Friday, 29th March: Passion Play, starting 11:30am at Tan y Fynwent (the gardens behind the bus stops) and going via the War Memorial (Glanrafon), the Cathedral and the High Street to finish on the Debenhams plaza (near the town clock).

Easter Sunday, 31st March: Service on Roman Camp, 7am, followed by breakfast at Penrallt. Contact the office if you need directions to Roman Camp.

Don't forget that the clocks go forward 1 hour on Easter Sunday morning, as this coincides with the start of British Summer Time!

Children's Birthdays in March

12th: Joshua Salako

15th: Diamond Oyelakim

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 March

Hidden in Plain Sight

Philippians 2:5-11. Preacher: Magnus Forrester-Barker.



Sunday 10th March (all-age)

Mothering Sunday service led by Wendy Lemon.

Sunday 17th March

International service. Preacher: John Thompson.

Sunday 24th March (all-age)

Palm Sunday service led by John Thompson & Wendy Lemon.

Sunday 31st March (all-age, communion)

Easter service led by John Thompson.

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 March

Prayer service, led by Ama Eyo.

Sunday 17th March

Contemporary service led by James Goodman.

Sunday 24th March

Holy Week communion service led by John Thompson.

Easter Sunday, 31st March

No evening service (but don't forget the Cytûn service at Roman Camp, starting at 7am — see previous page for details).

◇ **Baptist Leaders Fellowship**

The next meeting of the BLF will be on Monday 18th March in Princes Drive Baptist Church, Colwyn Bay, with coffee from 10am and a soup and bread lunch after. No speaker this time, but instead a discussion together enabled by Deb Stammers on the subject of The Shadow of Ministerial Burnout. The BLF meetings are open to anyone involved in church leadership at any level.

◇ **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 March. 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 walk will be at the Dingle in Llangefni. Please contact Jenny (fellowship@penrallt.org) for further details or to offer or request a lift.

◇ **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 the office will be closed from 4th to 7th March as Magnus is on annual leave.*

◇ **Fairtrade Coffee Morning**

A special fair trade coffee morning will be held at Emaus on Saturday 2nd March, from 10am until midday, supporting Transform Trade's "Big Brew" campaign. This year the campaign is raising money to set up small community shops in Bangladesh. Come to socialise over cake and a coffee. Remember to bring ready cash with you!

◇ **Flowers**

Judith says: "If anyone would like to help me with the flowers they would be very welcome. Similarly if anyone would like to do some for a special occasion just let me know." (Contact Judith on judithmbousfield@gmail.com or 01248 490956)

◇ **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 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 (6–7pm) for primary school aged children. Kindle will be running on 1st March and 15th March. To find out more, contact Becca (youth@penrallt.org).

◇ **Men's Breakfast**

Our men's fellowship group usually meet once a month on Saturday mornings for food and friendship at Ian Ablett's home in Caernarfon. The next breakfast will probably be on **April 6th** from 9am (the March one was cancelled due to illness). All men are welcome. Please contact the church office (office@penrallt.org) or Ian (ian.ablett@open.ac.uk; 07759 718931) for confirmation of the date or for more details or to offer or request a lift.

◇ **Open The Book**

As invited guests in school, storytelling teams use the *Open the Book* programme to prepare and present a 10 to 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: 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.

◇ 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 there is no prayer meeting on Wednesday 6th March.*

◇ Renew 57

Thursday mornings, 10:30am to 12:30pm, in Canolfan Penrallt. A space for the whole community, where you can 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 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. To find out more, please speak to Adrienne (adrieferrada@hotmail.co.uk) or Magnus (office@penrallt.org), or drop in and see for yourself.

◇ **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.

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

Our next meeting on Saturday 9th March falls one day after International Women's Day and we will be reflecting and sharing stories of inspirational women that have inspired us over the years. We meet at the rear of the Church between 10:30 and 12:00. All ladies welcome and bring a friend. If you need any further details, please contact Averil or Ellie.

◇ **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.

◇ **Wedding**

We are looking forward to celebrating with Becca, our youth and student worker, and Sam as they get married at Penrallt on Saturday 23rd March at noon. Becca and Sam extend a warm welcome to anyone who would like to come, but please note that it's a large wedding and most downstairs seating will have to be reserved for invited friends and family that have travelled a long way. Therefore, if you plan on coming, please could you sit upstairs in the balcony (if able). Timing wise, please aim to arrive at 11:30am — if you arrive after 11:45am, you won't be able to come in as preparations for the bride's arrival shall begin!

◇ **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.

Deadline for next month's newsletter: Sunday 24th March.

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

Focus on...

Claire Bedford **Serving with BMS in Chad**

Claire Bedford has been in N'Djamena in Chad, West Africa since January 2016, following a year of French language study in France. Claire is working for BMS at Guinebor 2 hospital.



In the UK Claire worked as a hospital pharmacist and latterly as a prescribing advisor for GP practices. Her role in Chad is to continue the development of the pharmacy service at Guinebor 2 hospital. As well as having supervisory oversight of the pharmacy and the lab, Claire is part of the Senior Management Team (SMT) alongside other long-term mission workers.

Much time was taken up with preparing for the annual hospital governance meetings that were held at the end of January. Fortunately, colleagues Cleopas and Valerie have the pharmacy under control which has freed Claire up to do other work.

A new BMS mission worker arrived mid-January and she will be working with the administration team on all things finance and projects. So Claire will be able to hand over some of the management work she's been doing since her previous BMS colleague, Gareth, left. This will allow Claire to focus more on training of the pharmacy staff and also the management tasks that are still hers to do as part of the management team.

Claire reports that a huge answer to prayer came early January 2024 – a new 4x4 ambulance was given to Guinebor 2 by the Chadian Ministry of Health! The hospital had requested and campaigned for this for at least 5 years, if not longer, and finally their patience paid off! It is anticipated that this new vehicle will have a very positive impact on the patients, especially during rainy season when the "road" turns to mud and puddles.

Talking of the road to the hospital, Claire reported in December that moves were afoot for it to be tarred. Things have moved slowly but they are moving, and work is underway again on this. Let's pray that it's finished before rainy season starts mid-May. Having a tarred road all the way to the hospital will be a game-changer in terms of accessibility to patients, especially in rainy season.

Claire has sent us the following prayer points.

Thank God for:

- New colleague, Lucia
- A renewed Chadian driving licence
- The new 4x4 ambulance given to the hospital and the indication this is of how the hospital is appreciated by the Chadian authorities
- Work has resumed on tarring the road to the hospital
- Good board of governance meetings

Please pray for:

- Wisdom to know how and when to handover some of my managerial work to Lucia and the administration team
- Energy, strength and grace, as January was especially draining
- Safety for driver Saleh in the new 4x4 ambulance
- That work will continue on tarring the road and be finished before the rains start

For more information: <https://www.bmsworldmission.org/people/claire-bedford/>