



### Olá precious prayer partners,

**We write during our last days in Sydney, before we return to Portugal on December 30th. We thank God for the last 5 months on Home Assignment.** What a privilege it has been to be spurred on to serve the Lord in Portugal by those who have sent us, both individuals and churches. What a precious time it has been for Emily to spend with her family and friends and those who she feels known and loved by. What a reminder it has been of the gospel riches of Sydney, as we've fed from rich and theologically deep bible teaching at churches, bible colleges and conferences.

**As we leave to return for another term of service in Portugal, we are conscious of leaving these "riches" and a more comfortable life in Australia.** Some have asked, "Do you have to go back to Portugal?" and admittedly, sometimes we have asked that question too! When we fix our eyes on Jesus, whose incarnation we remember at Christmas, we are reminded of Jesus leaving the riches of heaven to become flesh and make his dwelling among us (John 1:14). **We choose to follow the example of the one who, out of loving obedience to the Father, emptied himself of the comforts of heaven to dwell amongst those he came to serve and save.** It is times like this that we feel the cost and pain of this, so do be praying for comfort and God's peace that transcends understanding (particularly for Em) in this time of moving back to Portugal.

We are so grateful to God for using your prayers and financial generosity to sustain us for another year. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Love, Em, Sam and Oliver.



With some brothers and sisters at Campsie Chinese Congregational Church



With Joshua Tree Church



At the November drop-in day



With a Northern Beaches Church bible study group



Our partner churches sending us out at our Commissioning Service

---

### **Returning To Portugal: What Stays the Same?**

- **Colossians 1:28-29 is still the key bible verse which shapes the goal and method of our ministry in Portugal.** That's why it's the one on our prayer card! "He (Jesus) is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me."
- **We will still be working with the University Bible Group (GBU) in Coimbra, pastoring, training and teaching them from the bible.** It remains a group of about 25 students that meet for regular bible studies, public bible talks, training and socials.
- **We will still be living in the same apartment in Coimbra.** Since marrying in 2020, we have not lived in the same place for more than a year, so we look forward to God willing, living in the same place for a few years! We look forward to building upon some of the relationships we've built with our neighbours and those in the community.



GBU Coimbra students reading the bible together

### **Returning To Portugal: What will be different?**

- **We will be moving to a church more local to us.** The church we had been a part of was a 30 minutes drive through the mountains, which we were happy to do for a season as we wanted to support the new minister (our brother-in-law) as he started his role and revitalisation of the church. We think it is now time to part of a church in our local community, to be able to invite and bring along people around us. We need wisdom from God about which church to be a part of, as there are lot of factors to consider.
- **Em will spend less time “formal” language learning, and more time on-the-ground with people and pursuing other projects.** Em is now at an “advanced” level of Portuguese and will still be chipping away at improving her Portuguese, but this will be done more through living rather than in the classroom in formal lessons as it was previously. This frees her up to meet with GBU students more and have other projects. Having recognised her need for more support as a mum, Em will be prioritising seeking and facilitating community with other young mums.
- **We will have another GBU staff-worker with us in Coimbra!** Shane is the ECM missionary from Ireland that has worked as our substitute while we’ve been on Home Assignment. Shane will be staying on as a GBU staff-worker in Coimbra part-time, praise God! What a provision to have a trusted colleague to work alongside!

---

### **Family Life in Pictures**



We've enjoyed Australian beaches a lot!

Oli turned 1 in October!



Oli meets cricket bat



We got to meet our new nephew (a kindness of God he came before we left)

---

## Prayer Points

- Praise God for an encouraging and refreshing time in Australia during our Home Assignment.
- Pray for comfort of Emily and her family as they grieve being apart again (even harder with Oli now!) Pray for God's peace which transcends understanding.
- Pray for Sam, Emily and Oliver as they each adjust to life in Portugal again. Pray for extra measures of grace, patience and understanding shown towards each other.
- Pray for a good reconnection with the GBU students and the student leadership team. Pray that we may be able to develop trust with the students and be able to lead them to God's word.
- Pray for the the development of good relationships with the local churches in Coimbra and for wisdom as we transition to be part of a church more local to us.

---

 [emilysamuelf@gmail.com](mailto:emilysamuelf@gmail.com)

 [ecmaustralia.org/loaferreira](http://ecmaustralia.org/loaferreira)



We are serving with European Christian Mission ([ECM](http://ECM)). ECM's vision is to share Christ's love in Europe through evangelism, discipleship and church planting in partnership with local believers.