



Olá precious prayer partners,

As the year draws to a close, we give thanks to God for his work in Portugal this year. As you will read in this newsletter, there are a lot of things to give God glory for! You, as our partners in the gospel, have played a central role in this work, and we wanted to use the words from excellent book, *Expectations and Burnout: Women Surviving the Great Commission*, to express our gratitude.

"How thankful we are for those who give, who pray and send so that those who've never heard the gospel and are not a part of the kingdom of God have the opportunity to join the body of Christ. One day we will all gather around the throne to worship the King of Kings and Lord of Lords: those who sent missionaries, the missionaries and those who responded to the gospel message. We will all stand amazed at the grace of God in allowing us to come into His presence and spend eternity with Him. Only then will we see the full strategic influence of those who have prayed and sacrificially given so that the gospel could go to those who needed to hear it. With eternity in view, may churches continue to pray, give and send out missionaries; may missionaries be faithful to their call and the mandate of the church; and may the Savior of the world be praised."

Merry Christmas! May it be a joy-filled time celebrating the coming of Jesus our Saviour and Lord.

With love in Christ,
Emily, Samuel and Oli.



Flyering in our neighbourhood for our church's Christmas events
(Oli enthusiastic about a handyman business card he picked up from the floor)

GBU Students Maturing in Christ

With the semester drawing to a close and students entering exam period after Christmas, we wanted to share with you some highlights from the semester- **contexts where we have seen students be “matured in Christ”** (Words from Colossians 1:28 that, as we shared in our last newsletter shape our vision and purpose with the GBU).



- GBU weekly Bible talks have really great, exploring why Jesus is good news. A highlight was the talk on "Why Jesus is Good News for My Money" (Pictured above). It was a bit of a misleading title because, as Sam explained from the Parable of the Shrewd Manager in Luke 16, it's not actually our money, but God's money that he's given us to faithfully steward with eternal vision! Money is quite a taboo topic in many churches, one student commented afterwards "I've never heard a bible talk on money!"



- A highlight for Emily has been reading the book of Colossians one-to-one with 3 women (including Miriam, a medicine student, pictured above). It's been a privilege to see them deepen their understanding of Christ's supremacy and wrestle with what it means to live for Him in different areas of life. Next, they will explore Ecclesiastes together, with two of them reading it for the first time- looking forward to some existential discussions!



- Our 9-part interactive Bible study series on God's Big Picture has been used by most GBU groups across Portugal this semester, with very positive feedback from students. Pictured above are Arts students of GBU Coimbra doing the studies. We've even heard of two students sharing these studies with their local church youth group. Praise God that through these studies, students are growing in biblical theology, seeing the Bible as one big story of salvation centered on Jesus.



- A ministry to international students was launched this semester under the leadership of Shane, a fellow ECM missionary that is serving with GBU Coimbra. A group of 4 students (3 from Japan, 1 from China) have been regularly participating in easy Portuguese conversation classes, using bible texts in Portuguese as the basis for discussion. Do pray for their hearts to soften towards Jesus, and for deepened relationships between the international and local GBU students.

"Rethink" Mission Week 2026

Looking ahead to next year, GBU Coimbra will be running a Mission Week from March 9-12. It will be a week of heightened evangelism on the topic "Rethink", with public bible talks, debates and other events at the university where the goal is for the gospel to be clearly and compellingly presented. This has been driven by the students, which is extremely encouraging! Pray for wise planning of the student committee responsible, that the proclamation of Jesus will remain the centre of it's purpose, and that non-Christians will come and respond in repentance and faith!

Church Life

This month, our local church which started off as a church-plant, turned 2 years old! **In God's kindness, the church has grown since it's beginnings and we have outgrown our current space.** It has been difficult for the leadership to find a suitable space within budget. Would you pray for God to provide a space?



The monthly women's evangelistic "crafternoons" Em is involved in have been steadily growing in attendance, with the number of visitors outnumbering the number of church members the past two months! Pictured is a candle-making workshop where we had 16 visitors and 6 church members in attendance. Wisdom is needing to know how to meaningfully connect with women from diverse backgrounds, and how to point them to Jesus whilst seeking to establish trust and friendship.

Christmas in Portugal



Oli (now 2 years old!) enjoying the last of the autumn leaves before winter comes in a few days!



Pretty Christmas lights are up in downtown Coimbra.



Freshly picked chestnuts from Sam's grandparents' farm! Roasted, they are a classic Portuguese treat this time of year.



No Portuguese Christmas meal is complete without bacalhau (salted cod). Sold in large, pungent slabs, it's rehydrated and cooked in many ways, often with cabbage and potatoes.



Poster for GBU Coimbra's last event of the year, a Christmas dinner, this Wednesday 17/12.
Emily will be giving a short talk based on Luke 2:8-11.

Prayer Points

- **Praise God for the way we have seen GBU students mature in Christ this semester through public bible talks, bible studies and one-to-one bible reading.**
- **Pray for the 4 international students** that have been involved in the GBU International ministry, that their hearts soften towards Jesus.
- **Pray for the GBU Mission Week in March 2026** - that the proclamation of Jesus will remain the centre of its purpose and that people will come and respond in repentance and faith!
- **Praise God for the growth of our local church. Pray for the provision of a bigger space**, and that many in the community come to Christmas events and encounter the hope of Jesus.
- **Praise God for a diversity of non-Christian women coming to church 'crafternoons'**. Pray that church women may wisely point them to Jesus whilst

seeking to establish trust and friendship.

- **Pray for faithful preparation and responsive hearts as Emily and Sam teach from the bible** in the next month- Emily on 17/12/25 at GBU Christmas dinner and Sam on 25/1/26 at church.

 emilysamuel@gmail.com

 ecmaustralia.org/loaferreira



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