November 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 **10am** Worship - Pastor Yuri *(IDOP)* **11:15am** - Faith Formation *(Your SHAPE for God's Service)* **12pm** BBYOL	2	3 **7:30am** Men's Prayer Meeting **12pm** Women's Prayer Meeting	4 **6:30pm** English Conversation Class **6:30pm** Bible Study *(Romans)* **7:00pm** Prayer Meeting	5	6 **7pm** Youth	7 **1-4pm** Baking Club
8 **10am** Worship - Pastor Yuri *(Romans 12)* **11:15am** - Faith Formation *(Your SHAPE for God's Service)* **12pm** BBYOL	9	10 **7:30am** Men's Prayer Meeting **12pm** Women's Prayer Meeting	11 REMEMBRANCE DAY (OFFICE CLOSED)	12	13 **7pm** Youth	14 **1:00-2:30pm** Hospitality Team Training
15 **10am** Worship - Pastor Yuri *(Romans 12)* **11:15am** - Faith Formation *(Your SHAPE for God's Service)* **12pm** BBYOL	16	17 **7:30am** Men's Prayer Meeting **12pm** Women's Prayer Meeting	18 **6:30pm** English Conversation Class **6:30pm** Bible Study *(Romans)* **7:00pm** Prayer Meeting	19	20 **7pm** Youth	21 **7:30pm** UGM
22 **Communion** **10am** Worship - Neil Craton **11:15am** - Faith Formation *(Your SHAPE for God's Service)* **12pm** BBYOL	23	24 **7:30am** Men's Prayer Meeting **12pm** Women's Prayer Meeting	25 **6:30pm** English Conversation Class **6:30pm** Bible Study *(Romans)* **7:00pm** Prayer Meeting	26	27 **7pm** Youth	28 **10:00am** Men's Prayer Fellowship
29 ADVENT **10am** Worship - Pastor Yuri *(* **11:15am** - Faith Formation *(Your SHAPE for God's Service)* **12pm** BBYOL	30	1 **7:30am** Men's Prayer Meeting **12pm** Women's Prayer Meeting	2 **6:30pm** English Conversation Class **6:30pm** Bible Study *(Romans)* **7:00pm** Prayer Meeting	3	4 **7pm** Youth	5 **1-4pm** Baking Club

BUILDING INTO GOD'S FAMILY ONE PERSON AT A TIME
BETHESDA CHURCH

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Bethesda Church *Newsletter*

Congregational Letter — November 2026

"…since I have been longing for many years to see you, I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to visit you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there..." –Romans 15:23-24

November is missions month at Bethesda! If you're looking for some inspiration, I'd encourage you to find this short, inspiring video online that illustrates how the Gospel spread throughout the world over the last 2000 years (check it out here[1]): It shows—no matter how we may feel sometimes—that God is always on the move! He is dynamically engaged in world history. It doesn't always looks like success, though. The video clearly shows where and when Christianity has been overtaken or suppressed. Still, the overarching move suggests that what Jesus predicted shortly before he went to the cross is indeed coming to pass: "this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." (Matthew 24:14)

In the *Perspectives* course, I've been learning about the many factors that have contributed to the spread of Jesus' Way. Sometimes followers of this Way were forced (through oppression, famine, or disease) to leave their homelands. Others carried Jesus in their hearts along trade routes like the Silk Road, sharing the Good News along with their wares. Conquered Christian peoples clung to Jesus when they were sold into slavery to pagan masters. Soldiers trusted in him when they found themselves perilously stationed in far flung regions of the earth. Still, the Gospel was spread most effectively by people we call "missionaries": those who devote their lives to— often leaving family, friends, and comforts behind— sharing Jesus with those who have never known him. Some, like St. Patrick, were once runaway slaves who eventually felt love compel them to run back to their former tormentors and share Jesus with them!

Unfortunately, many churchgoers don't recognise the importance and urgency of supporting missionaries (let alone that God may be calling them to be missionaries themselves!) We may not say it out loud, but many of us grumble that if churches would only do their job properly, sponsoring missionaries would be unnecessary, that churches alone should carry out the Great Commission. But that's not the pattern we find in the Bible. While God certainly expects every one of us to be ready and eager to share the Gospel with everyone he brings across our path, he has always called large numbers of people to organise themselves into small groups for the more specialised task we call

[1] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Gp-_ZsUagc or search "spread of the gospel map" on Youtube

"missions". CY Yan, one of my instructors from the *Perspectives* course, compares the relationship between churches and missionaries to two chopsticks. While one moves around and the other one stays put, they are both essential if you want to efficiently bring food to your mouth!

Another modern church leader put it this way: *The mission of the church is missions; and the mission of missions is the church.* That's the conviction that I want us to take to heart this month as we celebrate the work of missions. In other words, I want us to do more than merely celebrate missions: I want for us to take seriously the implication that *success in global missions is linked to success in the local church* and, conversely, that to be lukewarm about God's work abroad likely reveals that we are also lukewarm about what he is doing in our neighborhood, perhaps in our very own hearts! Throughout November, we will continue to talk about "spiritual gifts", but we will do so with the end that Paul, as a missionary himself, hoped his readers would have in mind: to consider how we can use our spiritual gifts for the work of God's mission around the world, specifically "giving, "teaching", "encouraging", and "serving" (Romans 12:7-8).

Perhaps you are unconvinced that this is in fact the biblical pattern. Perhaps you think that Paul was unique and that when Jesus called him to his ministry "among the Gentiles" it was a one-off. Paul and Barnabas were certainly "set apart" by the church at Antioch "for the work to which God called them" (Acts 13:2), but is this the pattern that the Lord still intends for *us* to follow? Are all churches supposed to devote a significant amount of their resources and attention to the work of missionaries? Absolutely! The passage above supports this. Because Paul's purpose—when he sat down in Corinth to dictate the letter we know as "the book of Romans"—was as much practical and strategic as it was theological.

By the time Paul wrote to the Roman church, he had gone on missions to many places, being supported not only by the church in Antioch but by all the churches he had founded since he left. But what about churches that had no previous agreement with him, no personal stake in his work? What, indeed, about churches like the one at Rome? Did they have an obligation to help him?

Paul had "fully proclaimed the gospel [...] from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum"(that is, modern day Albania). Now he was preparing for a trip to Spain. His calling was "to preach the Gospel where Christ was not known" (Romans 15:19-20), and the church in the imperial capital was already well-established. Still, for a variety of reasons he considered it the perfect place to stop over on the way to his planned destination. So Paul writes to Rome, though it was not the church that commissioned him, nor had it supported him up to that point. But Paul didn't write them just to be friendly! He was not simply letting them know that he was coming for a visit! He composed his request carefully and politely, but he clearly expected that they would feel obliged to "assist me on my journey"!

We don't know if Paul ever made it to Spain. Some ancient sources tell us that he did, others say he didn't. Regardless, he felt justified in asking for "assistance" in his missionary activities from an established church, even though he didn't know many of them well, even though they no doubt had their own goals and challenges to concern themselves with.

In what ways did Paul expect the church at Rome to help him?

First of all, he expected them to pray for him. In this very chapter he asked the Romans to "join me in my struggle by praying to God for me" (verse 30).

How else? Financial aid. While this is more obvious in other letters (and the money he asked for was typically not for himself but for other, poorer, churches) he clearly considered giving money a legitimate form of missionary support (see 1 Corinthians 9:3-14). He describes Phoebe, the prominent lady who delivered this letter to Rome, as "a patron of many and of me myself"[2] (Romans 16:1-2)

Which brings us to the hands-on forms of support that Paul received from members of the various churches he visited. Like Phoebe, they provided logistical support, and some even *went with him* for varying lengths of time! So, Paul would have expected members of the church at Rome not only to give him a place to stay as well as supplies, and practical advice about travelling to this unfamiliar region. He probably had it in his mind that some of them would actually accompany him to Spain. How do we know this? Paul's band of missionaries usually included quite a few people from the churches he started. Right after he wrote the book of Romans he set out for Jerusalem, and we are told that he was travelling with at least eight believers from all over Greece and modern day Türkiye (Acts 20:4-5). Some certainly considered themselves to be missionaries themselves (e.g. Timothy, as well as Luke and other "companions", Acts 16:1-3,6,10). Others came to Jerusalem with him, at the very least demonstrating unity between Gentile and Jewish Christians (Luke, Trophimus "the Ephesian", etc. Acts 21:15-20,25). But however they thought of themselves, Paul certainly thought of them as missionaries. As Paul travelled, he would send them (or leave them behind) to accomplish various "side quests" related to missionary work: encouraging the churches he had just established (Silas and Timothy, Acts 17:14), giving/receiving news and/or instructions (Timothy, 1 Thess 3:2,6 and Tychicus & Onesimus, Colossians 4:7-9), offering correction and/or taking a collection (Titus and another "brother", 2 Cor 12:18), bringing various items he needed (2 Timothy 4:13), even establishing new congregations in places he had not spent any time (or at least not much) (Titus, Titus 1:5, and Crescens, 2 Timothy 4:10).

We might not all be able to go, or even to give. But just like the churches that supported Paul, we should all be deeply engaged with God's work around the world. How? I've hinted at a few ways above. The missions organisation OMF (formerly China Inland Mission) lists six (that don't even include giving!): Learn, Pray, Go, Send, Welcome, and Mobilise. For more information, check out their video playlist explaining each of these terms:

NB: The Advent season starts on the last Sunday of "Missions Month" (Nov. 29), so we will continue with the theme of "Gifts of God's Grace" as a way to prepare our hearts for Christmas, when we celebrate Jesus, the Greatest Gift of All!

Pastor Yan

[2] Translation from commentary by James Dunn