

# Heartbeat

## Changing Our Prayer Requests

By Pastor Scott Roberts

I am often struck by how material my prayer requests are. By material I mean the tangible, practical things of life – health, jobs, family, etc. In what I am about to write, I do not mean to imply that we should not pray about these things or invite others to pray with us in them. These items are important and should be prayed about alone and together. But there is more I should be asking others to pray about and more I should be praying about than simply the material. What about the spiritual component of life?

I have been convicted as I read through Paul’s prayers for the churches in which he ministered the gospel. In all these prayers, he asks for spiritual growth, not material blessings. He is praying for people to be conformed to the likeness of Christ, to walk in a way worthy of their calling, to know the hope that passes understanding, etc. As one example, from Philippians 1:9-11, we find a rich smorgasbord of intercessions for other believers.

*And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more,  
with knowledge and all discernment,  
so that you may approve what is excellent,  
and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,  
filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ,  
to the glory and praise of God.*

Philippians 1:9-11

(Continued on the next page.)



Hope In Christ Church  
710 East Sunset  
Bellingham, WA  
98225  
360-733-6177

### Inside this issue

---

Pastor Scott.....	1-2
NWHM.....	3
Calendar, Birthdays .....	4
China.....	5,6
Finances/Giving .....	6

## Changing Our Prayer Requests

(Continued from the previous page.)

In this prayer, Paul says he is praying for their love, knowledge, and discernment to grow so that these believers can rightly pursue that which is excellent in order to remain pure and blameless and filled with the fruit of righteousness. That may sound like a highly spiritual prayer that has little practical benefit for people in the “real world.” And while it is highly spiritual, it is also very practical.

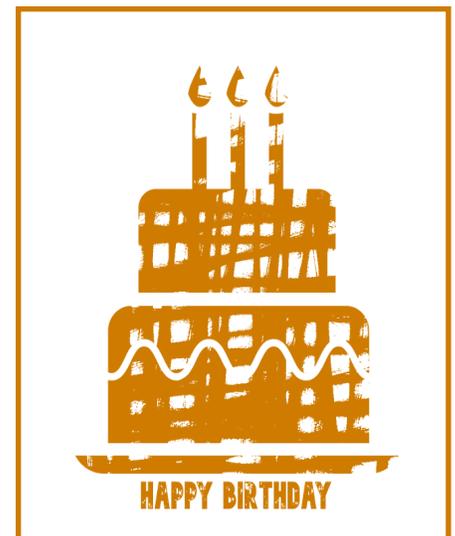
Consider for a moment with me, if one’s love for God and others was increasing would there be any desire to pursue sin and that things that sin offers? Would it not cause one to organize life in a way that many friends were made and, in those friendships, many would come around and serve one another in times of need? Or if the knowledge of God and his ways were increasing, would one not recognize that the material things of life are insignificant in comparison with the relationship one can have with the living God who created the heavens and the earth? And if discernment was growing, would one not recognize the plans of the evil one and so avoid being taken captive? Now in comparison to asking to be healthy, or to get another job, or whatever other material needs one has, Paul’s prayer outshines them all. Health will not bring one to a greater love for God and others. A job will not inherently bring about greater knowledge of God and discernment. But if we are seeking first God’s kingdom and his righteousness, then these other things rightly fall into their proper place.

So, I urge each of us to reconsider what prayer requests we ask others to pray for us. Furthermore, I ask that we reconsider how we pray for one another. Finally, I encourage each of us to study the prayers of Paul, and let our prayer lives be significantly re-aligned to match the heart of the apostle. This month, look at these scriptures and pray them for yourself, your family and friends, the church, and those whom you desire to come to faith: Phil 1:9-11, Ephesians 1:15-23, Colossians 1:9-12, 2Thessalonians 3:1-5, Philemon 6.

# November 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 12:15 p.m. <b>Zoom Prayer</b> 6:30-8:30p.m. <b>Manuscript Bible Study</b> 6:30-8:30 p.m. <b>Boer/Hop Small Group</b>	2 11:45 a.m. <b>Elders Meeting</b>	3 6:30 a.m. <b>Men's Group</b> 4:30 p.m. <b>Men's Hop Heads United</b> 7 p.m. <b>Deacons Meeting</b>	4	5 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. <b>ActsNOW Conference</b>
6 8:20 a.m. <b>Prayer</b> 9:30 a.m. <b>Worship/ Communion</b> 11 a.m. <b>Congregational Meeting</b>	7 6:30 p.m. <b>G.E.M.S.</b>	8 12:15 p.m. <b>Zoom Prayer</b> 6:30-8:30 p.m. <b>Manuscript Bible Study</b>	9 9:45 a.m. <b>Women's Bible Study</b> 7 p.m. <b>Council Meeting</b>	10 6:30 a.m. <b>Men's Group</b> 4:30 p.m. <b>Men's Hop Heads United</b>	11	12 <b>Youth Hike</b>
13 8:20 a.m. <b>Prayer</b> 9:30 a.m. <b>Worship</b> 11 a.m. <b>Sunday School/Vitality Team</b> 5 p.m. <b>Jesus Gathering</b> 6-8 p.m. <b>Youth Group</b> 7-9 p.m. <b>Laninga Group</b>	14 7:00 p.m. <b>Friendship Class</b>	15 12:15 p.m. <b>Zoom Prayer</b> 6:00 p.m. <b>Ladies' Dinner Out</b> 6:30-8:30 p.m. <b>Manuscript Bible Study</b> 6:30-8:30 p.m. <b>Boer/Hop Small Group</b>	16	17 6:30 a.m. <b>Men's Group</b> 4:30 p.m. <b>Men's Hop Heads United</b>	18	19
20 8:20 a.m. <b>Prayer</b> 9:30 a.m. <b>Worship</b> 11 a.m. <b>Sunday School</b> 12 p.m. <b>Vitality Team</b> 6-8 p.m. <b>Youth Group</b>	21 9:45 a.m. <b>Retired Women's Coffee</b> 6:30 p.m.	22	23	24 9:30 a.m. <b>Thanksgiving Service</b>	25	26
27 8:20 a.m. <b>Prayer</b> 9:30 a.m. <b>Worship</b> 6-8 p.m. <b>Youth Group</b> 7-9 p.m. <b>Laninga Group</b>	28 7:00 p.m. <b>Friendship Class</b>	29	30			

2 Nathan B	16 Grace R
3 Evelyn K	17 Karen S
5 Marilyn K	18 Clara S
8 Dave D	20 Deloris P
11 Zeke R	21 Mike B
13 Lou K	21 Amber O
14 Mitch S	28 Elisha S



# Northwest Hispanic Ministry Report for October 2022

By Pastor Joe Strong

It was a wonderful Sunday morning in August, with the sun brightly shining, we sat on the shores of Lake Padden and witnessed the baptisms of 13 people. After the baptisms, one person after the other stood up and gave their personal testimonies of how God changed their lives. Many of these people had arrived in our community in the last 2 or 3 years. Several had endured some pretty tough times making it from their home country into our country and then adjusting to life here. Thank God they found our church, they experienced the grace of God and accepted Jesus into their lives.

This is part of the testimony of Brenda who came overland from Venezuela. "God gave us strength, He gave us peace, He gave us direction, God accompanied us throughout the trip. We had boats, buses, where the engine failed or where the brakes did not want to do their job and in those moments God manifested himself and miraculously we arrived safely at our destination. God placed people of blessing in our lives, who accompanied us and helped us in everything. No one was robbed, no one harmed us. God protected us."

Nearly every Sunday our church is so full, that people have to come early to get seats. For the last several Sundays, we have introduced new people who are coming to church. One Sunday we had 10 new people, another 6 another 5. Our church Amor Viviente in Lynden, is becoming the hub of the community for new people of Hispanic heritage. This is exciting and a lot of work. Our people are busy helping newcomers with finding lawyers, finding apartments, finding clothing, finding work etc. Because our church family has many young people, we also are experiencing weddings and babies being born.

There are still 14 people studying in the Reformed Seminary in Spanish, preparing for Ordination in the Christian Reformed Church. We have good solid leaders. Many are putting their studies into practice. I am trying to step back more and more and allow the new people to lead. That does not mean that we don't have problems. It just means that there are different problems. I thoroughly enjoy this time in ministry. Thank you for supporting Northwest Hispanic Ministry.



## CHINA'S GREAT LEAP BACKWARDS By Elizabeth Kendal



Submitted By Rebekah Roberts

The 20th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) will commence on Sunday 16 October. This Congress is immensely significant as it is expected to mark a definitive break with the post-Mao era fashioned by Deng Xiaoping. In the 1980s, to avoid the return of a Mao-style personality cult, Deng introduced presidential term limits – limiting Presidents to two five-year terms. He also introduced collective leadership – ensuring power was shared and rotated between the CCP's two factions: the Shanghai Faction/Gang (which represents China's wealthy coastal cities) and the Chinese Communist Youth League (CCYL, which represents China's poor rural hinterland). Insisting the CCP should get its legitimacy not from ideology but from its ability to deliver prosperity, Deng set China on a path of openness and free market reform.

After the Tiananmen Square protests and 4 June 1989 military crackdown, the CCP realized it needed a new narrative. A new school curriculum was written in which Marxist ideology was replaced with Chinese nationalism. According to the new narrative, China was long the greatest nation on earth. However, from 1839, China endured 100 years of national humiliation at the hands of hostile foreign powers. Since taking power in 1949, the CCP has been leading China on a 100-year marathon to national rejuvenation which will see China regain global supremacy by 2049. The generation raised on this narrative (virtually all mainland Chinese aged 30 and under) tends to view the CCP as China's savior, defender and trailblazer, much to the horror of the older generation, particularly those aged over 70, who lived through the terrors of the CCP's Cultural Revolution.

Originally a member of Jiang Zemin's Shanghai Faction, Xi Jinping has diverged from Jiang in assessing that China's growth is unsustainable and slowing. Consequently, the CCP will not always be able to deliver prosperity. As Xi sees it, if the CCP is to complete the 100-year marathon to national rejuvenation and global supremacy, the CCP will need to sacrifice growth and return to Mao-style total control of both the economy and the masses. After becoming president in 2013, Xi Jinping moved quickly to establish his own faction and shore up his own power. In March 2018 the CCP's purged legislature approved an amendment to the constitution, removing presidential term limits, paving the way for Xi Jinping to be re-appointed for a third (and fourth and possibly fifth) five-year term.

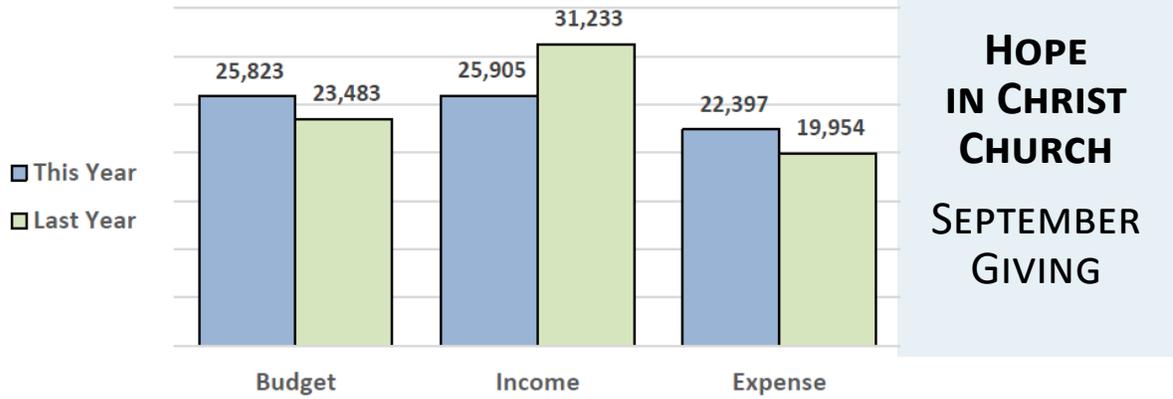


China's President Xi Jinping in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, 16 Sept 2022. (Photo by Sergei Boblylov)

Xi has secured enormous power through political purges executed under the cover of 'anti-corruption' and through escalating levels of social control. Xi's social control includes the establish-

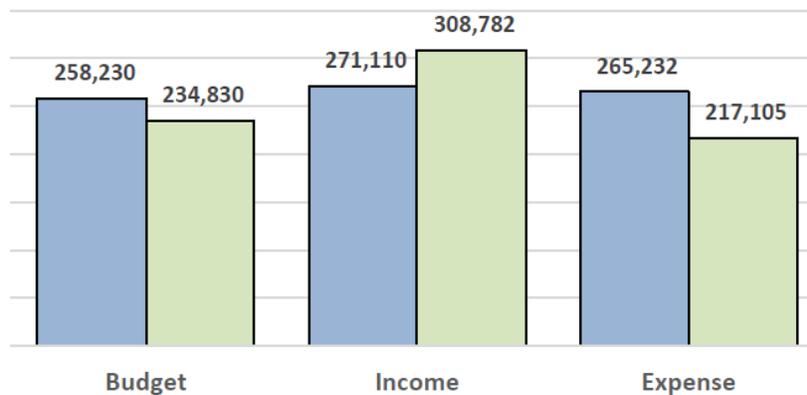
(Continued on the next page.)

Monthly Financial Update – September



**HOPE  
IN CHRIST  
CHURCH  
SEPTEMBER  
GIVING**

Ten Months – December to September



**CHINA’S GREAT LEAP BACKWARDS**

(Continued from the previous page.)

ment of the People’s Armed Police (PAP) tasked with ‘stability maintenance’, lawfare under the cover of new ‘Administrative Measures’ and repressive legislation, the use of blanket surveillance using cameras loaded with world-leading facial recognition software and Artificial Intelligence to drive the CCP’s punitive Social Credit System, to extraordinarily cruel Zero-COVID measures through which the CCP has demonstrated it can turn an apartment block or even a city into a lethal prison literally overnight. [See China Insights: ‘New wave of strict lockdowns across China’, 16 Sept 2022.] Using Zero-COVID measures, Xi has managed to rein in the private sector, stifle unsustainable growth, punish the Shanghai Faction and return the masses to a state of fearful submission and dependency. While some analysts surmise Xi might relax the Zero-COVID measures after the Congress, others are not so sure.

This nightmarish environment forms the context of the escalating persecution of the Church in China. In pursuing its goal of global supremacy, the CCP demands and requires a ‘united front’. Dissenting voices will be silenced. The persecution ahead will be just as severe as Mao Zedong’s Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) – albeit more high-tech. The day is surely coming when the LORD will judge the CCP: he will ‘cut it down’ and ‘cast it out’ (Ezekiel 31). But that will only happen in God’s perfect time, according to God’s perfect plan, when everything is in place. When that day comes, the Chinese Church will be freed to change the world. Until then, the Church in Church needs our prayers.