



SUPPORTING UKRAINIAN REFUGEES IN THEIR UNEXPECTED JOURNEYS

BY REV. TIM KRICK, CONGREGATIONAL ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

MATTHEW 24:36-44 | KEEP WATCH AND PREPARE

ADVENT WEEK 1 | SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2022



LEARN HOW YOUR LOVE IS SHARED WITH UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

Since Russian invaded Ukraine in late February, the UN refugee agency estimates that nearly 18 million Ukrainians have been impacted, with 7+ million fleeing to other countries. Some 7 million more have been displaced internally within Ukraine, with 13 million people stranded in affected areas or unable to leave due to heightened security risks, destruction of infrastructure, and a lack of resources or information on where to find safety and accommodation.

Through Lutheran World Relief, your love has provided more than \$12 million to respond to this crisis. Because of your compassion, our Ukrainian neighbors fleeing violence are being comforted with housing assistance, food, LWR Mission Quilts and Personal Care Kits and other essential items. Medical teams in areas where there is a critical shortage of

health care are now able to take care of the ill and wounded. Ukrainian refugees in Poland are receiving emergency cash and vouchers for both immediate and longer-term needs. And for the most vulnerable, including women and children, sexual exploitation and abuse protection services are keeping people safe.

WATCH



lwr.org/advent1



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

LWR.ORG



DISCUSS

1. What captured your attention in the video?

2. Kristina describes the very different reactions she and her mother had when the war began. Her mom calmly put her boots on to go to work. Kristina decided they must leave immediately. Imagine yourself in this situation. What would you do?

3. When Kristina and her children arrived in Poland there were volunteers everywhere. Describe a time you've found yourself on an unexpected journey or in an unexpected situation. How did others welcome you?

4. After finding safety and receiving emergency cash assistance, Kristina shared, "We are in a good place. For the first time ... we can rest. We can exhale, after everything." If you were in a similar situation, what would you need in order to exhale and rest?



Thanks to your love, nearly \$1 million worth of LWR Quilts and Kits have been sent to our neighbors, like Nadia and her 2-year-old son.



BIBLE STUDY

For Christians all over the world, the four weeks leading up to Christmas are a time of preparation as we await the birth of Christ.

At home, we put up and decorate a tree and hang stockings. At church, we light the Advent candles and put on Christmas pageants. But we know these four weeks are much more than preparing to celebrate an event that has already happened. They are about preparing, or as Matthew says, "staying awake," for a future event, the return of our Lord.

On the surface, the gospel lesson for this week appears to be a proof-text for the rapture. But in fact, this Scripture serves as a call to the church that until Christ comes again, our work is not complete. We are not to be complacent and idle, since we know not the hour or day. It will be a glorious and unexpected return, and so we must work actively to prepare the world for it. Read together **Matthew 24:36-44**.

1. What captured your attention in the Bible reading?
2. What are unexpected things that have happened in your life? In the life of the church? How have you handled them?
3. In what areas of your life are you complacent? Why?
4. Matthew encourages his listeners to "stay awake." What do you think he was encouraging them to do? Be specific. What might it mean for you and me?



PRAY

God of the unexpected, we have hopes and dreams and expectations and want life to look a certain way. We often become complacent and ignore the world around us. Wake us up, for the sake of our neighbor, so we may be active participants in your kingdom today, and in the age to come. Amen.



SHARE YOUR LOVE

During this Advent season, we not only wait to celebrate the birth of Christ coming into the world, but we look forward to the day when Christ will return, and all will be made right. When you help our neighbors, like Kristina, through a partnership with Lutheran World Relief, you provide glimpses of the world that is yet to come. As we wait, you can participate in God's promised future today by sharing your love with neighbors like Kristina. Visit lwr.org/hope to make your gift and be a light in the darkness for someone in need.



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

LWR.ORG