

PROVIDING BETTER FUTURES IN PERU

BY EMMA WAGNER, CONGREGATIONAL ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

MATTHEW 3:1-12 | FINDING HOPE IN THE WILDERNESS

ADVENT WEEK 2 | SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

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LEARN HOW YOUR LOVE IS GIVING CHILDREN IN PERU A HOPEFUL FUTURE

Lutheran World Relief has been working since 2011 to improve food security, strengthen livelihoods and support health and nutrition in Castrovirreyna, a remote Andean region of Peru. Through your love, LWR works to increase yields of nutritious food by training indigenous farmers on organic production methods, including seed banks, post-harvest storage and family greenhouses. By strengthening small livestock rearing and the availability of natural iron supplements, not only do families have greater access to meat but childhood anemia is also decreasing. Farmers are also trained to market their organic potato and vegetable crops — for example, selling to organic potato chip markets in Europe — and manage their farm income.

LWR coordinates with educational institutions and health facilities to promote social and behavioral change that advances good nutrition and hygiene habits. Home visits raise

awareness about anemia and parasites, teach children about the importance of hand washing and improve household hygiene practices. For children, anemia blocks correct brain development, limiting their learning and opportunities in the future. Your generosity means the children of Castrovirreyna will grow up strong and healthy, thriving in their homes and leading their communities in the future.

WATCH



lwr.org/advent2



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DISCUSS

1. What captured your attention in the video?
2. What did you learn about the Castrovirryena community in Peru?
3. How would your life be different if you had one road in and out of your community?
4. Deysi hopes that her baby grows up to be kind and happy. What are the hopes and dreams you have for yourself and your family (immediate, extended and/or church family)?



BIBLE STUDY

In today's gospel, John the Baptist appears in the wilderness and proclaims, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

His voice cries out in the wilderness, an unexpected place to hear God's word. John was considered a wild man — eating locusts and honey, living on the margins of society, called to live a different way. When we think of repentance, we often think of feeling sorry for things we've done wrong. And that's certainly part of repentance, but John is inviting us to think more deeply. Repenting is a chance to turn away from the values of this world which leave us dissatisfied — status, wealth, power — and allows us to reframe our thinking in preparation for Jesus' birth.

In Advent, we are called to make room for Jesus to enter our lives. We hear John's message of repentance and confession in preparation of the coming Savior and are reminded that his is a message for us as well. We too are called to repent and confess our sins so that Christ's love can come into us and transform our lives for the sake of the world. Jesus is coming not to condemn us for our sins, but rather to help us to see his face in our neighbor's. This Advent, we have an opportunity to think differently about how we help bring Jesus' promise of a better future to our communities, whether here in the U.S. or in places like Peru. Read together **Matthew 3:1-12**.

1. What captured your attention in the Bible reading?
2. John preached boldly in the wilderness and lived a lifestyle outside of the norm for that time. Think back to a time when you needed to act boldly in your life of faith. What did you do and how was it received?
3. What is one thing in your life that you would like to change? Share, as you feel comfortable, where God might be calling you into a different way of living and serving.
4. What are some things you are hopeful for in the coming year? How can you reframe your thinking to allow for the kingdom of God to flourish?



LWR Peru Program Director Jorge Huapaya first met Deysi when she was a young girl. Because of your love, Deysi is thriving and has a healthy baby girl Alice — and big dreams for the future.



PRAY

Holy One, your voice cries out to us from the wilderness, beckoning us to repent. As we navigate the wilderness spaces of our lives, and the wildernesses we have created for others, let us be guided by your voice. Turn us back from our sins and selfishness and turn us back towards you. Give us hearts filled with hope and expectation for the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. 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 Deysi, 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 Deysi. Visit lwr.org/hope to make your gift and be a light in the darkness for someone in need.



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