

THE KOTVAS FAMILY

Missionaries to the Deaf and Hearing— Peru, South America & Beyond

Sending Church: Emmanuel Baptist Church – 1819 Hill Ave. Ft. Myers, FL 33901 – (239) 936-4252 – Pastor Bob Ossewaarde



January – February 2025 Prayer Letter

Dear Friends and Family,

It has been an incredibly busy and eventful first couple of months of 2025. There is much to share. We are grateful to God for all of His care. He reminds us that he does in 1 Peter 5:7 when he says: “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” How wonderful it is to know that He truly loves and cares for us.

NOTICE: We are officially on Medical Furlough. We hope it will not be more than six months as we have a great deal of work to do in Peru. God has given me a great staff of men and women whom we have trained for ministry, who are able to maintain the work as I manage from here for now. More details are in the family news section.

Ministry News

In January we had the privilege of hosting the R.O.M.A. mission board’s international training conference for their missionaries and missionary candidates. We are grateful for the facilities that we have here at Efata that allow us to serve other ministries as well as our own.

In February we had several things going on. We co-hosted our annual Fires of Evangelism conference in coordination with International Baptist Church. That was a great blessing. While this was going on, International Baptist was having their youth conference, and we were able to accommodate both conferences at the same time. There were over 500 in attendance for these.



At the same time, our Efata Deaf members went to camp. It was a great time for them. In all of this, there were souls saved, and decisions made.

During this time, we had our mass evangelism events in the northern city of Piura. Twice in two different weeks, members of Efata under the leadership of our asst. pastor Victor Ocampo traveled to Piura and partnered with local pastors and churches to distribute gospel tracts, Bibles, and New Testaments. Pastor Victor and others did evangelism training for the participating churches. Several hundred thousand pieces of material were distributed, and many were saved.

As well, we had our annual vacation Bible school. Our staff did a great job under the leadership of asst. pastor Jose Ugaz and his wife.



Family News

Unfortunately, I was not able to personally participate, as I had to come to the US for medical checkups. During these routine checkups, I was found to have a large blockage in my upper aorta above the heart. It was a very large blockage and would have translated to a heart attack at any time. I had been having strong symptoms of fatigue, loss of breath and no stamina for moderate work. I mentioned this to my doctor (just thinking it was part of getting old and not being in shape). He ordered a stress test, which they had to stop after one minute and a half. They sent me for a heart catheterization and found the blockage, fixed it with a stent during the same procedure, and after an night in the VA hospital, sent me home with follow-ups etc. In addition to all of this, I still need to get scheduled for cataract surgery in April.

Also, our daughter Jessica has been having swelling around her left eye since September. It was only once a month until December, and now it is every week. Sometimes her eye is swollen shut. In the past two months, Jessica has been hospitalized for five days, seen every kind of doctor and several specialists, has had multiple MRIs, Cat scans, Sonagrams, and blood tests checking for allergies, viruses and parasites, all to no avail. Thus, we have come home as a family to seek out help for her.

I want you to be aware that we will not be doing a great deal of traveling to churches during this medical furlough. It has been approved by my pastor and mission board; as opportunities arise and if we find ourselves in your area, I will try to reach out to you for a visit and update. Thank you for your understanding.

Please pray for all of this as we ourselves pray for wisdom and for God to connect us to the right doctors or hospitals for Jessica and that He will care for all the costs that are involved with all she will need. I am so grateful for the care I receive as a Navy Veteran from the VA. It amazes me to know that God has guided me in my life with decisions that have made it possible for me to get the care I have needed.

Lisa, Joel and Jennifer are doing great. We are so blessed to have wonderful prayer and support partners like all of you.

Blessings,

Joe & Lisa
Joel, Jessica, Jennifer