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

July – August 2026 Prayer Letter

Dear Friends and Family,

Here we go again! It never surprises me what life will throw at you. The blessing is that we know what the Bible says: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28) As you will read below, God continues to work all things together for His purposes in our lives.

Ministry News

July was a very busy time for us. We hosted a wonderful group from Greater Portland Baptist Church in Portland, Oregon. Pastor Scott McFeters came with a large group from his church to be a blessing and help to us. We had a couple of projects that we needed to complete, and they did a wonderful job of helping with them. We now have risers on our mezzanine to seat another 80 or so people for when we have large conferences, and work was done on advancing the drywall on the walls of the large auditorium.

Several of their pastors came and preached multiple times in our main church and annex ministries. It was a joy to have Pastor to the Deaf Bob Boyd come down as well. He was a great encouragement to our Deaf.

In addition to their visit, we also held our 3rd annual Music Camp in the first week of August. What a great encouragement and blessing that was! Over 60 participants came to learn instruments, voice and music during this intense camp. Our Pastor of Music, Joan Zamora, did a great job directing and leading the camp. He and his wife Merle have been a tremendous blessing to our church. Several teachers came from the States to help. Missionary Ronnie Vice from H.E.L.P. Ministries and his dear wife Wanda came down; Mrs. Wanda helped teach piano in the camp while Bro. Vice visited their H.E.L.P. Ministries missionaries here in Lima and preached for us as well.

Our work on reestablishing our high school program for the Deaf continues to move forward. We are praying that we will be able to officially open again for the next school year.

Missionary JT Gorham and his family, as well as his pastor, Kenric Barnett from West Orlando Baptist Church, came down and visited with us in preparation for the Gorham family moving to Peru to train and work with us here at Efata. We are so excited about them coming and being part of our team, with a specific emphasis in Deaf ministry and missions. They are planning on moving down in the latter part of November. In addition, a young man from our home church in Florida, Michael McCray, has been here for three months, and God has called him to come back and work with us here in Peru, especially in the area of education in our Bible college and institutes. He has his Master's in Theology and is working on his doctorate. He is in the process of applying with a mission board to become a missionary. The Gorham family is now with Macedonia as well.

Family News

Back to "here we go again": I have not been feeling well the last few months, and when I was in the States in May to visit my cardiologist, he wanted to do a heart cath. I was unable to do it at the time due to plans to return to Peru with my home church group that came down, so I set an appointment for August 21st. The heart catheterization showed another 78% blockage in the same descending aorta where the last stent was placed back in March of 2025. This blockage was above the last one. The first stent was doing well. They placed the second stent on the 21st. Unfortunately, I still do not feel "renewed" like I did after the first stent was put in. My cardiologist says my heart is strong and my rhythms are good. I will see him again in six months.

A month ago my father had a severe heart attack and is recovering. He had a 100% blockage, and they put in his 7th stent. However, the heart attack damaged his heart, and the lower portion is only working at 40%. He is 83 and has decided to retire from his work as an X-ray technician at Tampa General Hospital. My heart issues are genetic—lots of family history. I am thankful that God has allowed me to live in a time when these issues can be treated and cared for, so I can resume my work for Him as soon as possible. I'll not be running any marathons or becoming a power lifter, but I can sure serve the Lord!

We just dropped Jessica off at Pensacola Christian College to begin her nursing studies. She is so excited about this new chapter in her life. She is happy to have some great MK roommates from Spanish-speaking countries. Pray for her as she works and studies and deals with her recurring unique health issues.

So, we are down to just four of us at home: Joel, 20, Jennifer, 16, Lisa and I. We miss not having Jessica at home, just as we have missed all of our children who have moved on into their journeys of life (of course, we do get some great grandkids out of the deal—17 so far with two on the way, so no complaints there!). All are doing well, and we are thankful for each one. "Happy is the man that hath his quiver full…" (Psalm 127:5)

Our schedule to return to Peru will depend on a couple more doctor's appointments. I have two mission conferences and several preaching engagements while I am here in the States. Please continue to pray for us and the work we are doing. We should be back by mid-November, Lord willing.

We truly are very thankful for the love, care, prayers and financial support from you, our faithful friends and family. It is greatly appreciated and much needed.

Blessings,

Joe & Lisa
Joel, Jessica, Jennifer