

# A SEASON OF HOPE

## SERMON STARTERS

Advent is a season of preparation and waiting in anticipation. As you await the birth of Jesus with your congregation in this season, consider how Christ comes to us and to our brothers and sisters around the world today and every day. In this coming season of Advent, the Old Testament lessons in the lectionary come from the prophet Isaiah. Through these lessons, the prophet proclaims beautifully the coming Kingdom of God. Swords will be turned into plowshares; God will decide equitably for the meek; the eyes of the blind will be opened: these are just some of the many strong images that Isaiah uses to describe the reign of God.

This Advent resource focuses on the Old Testament lessons in the lectionary, offering the preacher and teacher stories and pictures from the work of LWRIMA that will bring Isaiah's images to life. Through your four Advent services, journey around the world with your congregation as you explore how your gifts to Lutheran World Relief bring you into relationship with people in need.

### FOR EACH WEEK THERE IS:

1. A story of Lutherans at work in the world with LWR,
2. A brief reflection that ties the story into the week's Old Testament text, and
3. An image which corresponds with each story to share during your sermon.

### THANK YOU FOR JOINING LWR IN A SEASON OF HOPE!



#### ADVENT 1

##### Isaiah 2:1-5 | Peace

*"He shall judge between the nations and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks." Isaiah 1:4*

##### Lebanon Story:

<https://lwr.org/story-hub/greenhouses-unite-syrian-refugees-lebanese-farmers>

On this first Sunday of Advent, we hear the Good News that the Savior is coming soon. Isaiah proclaims that day of coming when conflict between nations will be transformed into a time of peace on earth. Through this story of the Lebanese and Syrian farmers, we hear how farmers from war torn countries come together to turn their swords into plowshares.



## ADVENT 2

**Isaiah 11:1-10 | Justice**

*“But with righteousness he shall judge the poor and decide with equity for the meek of the earth.” Isaiah 11:4*

**Bihar story:**

<https://lwr.org/blog/2019/women-bihar-find-strength-and-voice-numbers>

On this second Sunday of Advent, we are told of a new beginning for us all. We hear of the righteous judge who will “decide with equity for the meek of the earth.” Through the story of the women of Bihar we catch a glimpse of the kind of justice our Savior has come to bring.



## ADVENT 3

**Isaiah 35:1-10 | Healing**

*“Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped.” Isaiah 35:5*

**Tanzania story – Sophia:**

<https://imaworldhealth.org/sightsaving-surgery-a-family-story-2/>

On this third Sunday of Advent, we wait with patience for that day when the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. In the life of Sophia, we see that the prophesy of Isaiah is already being fulfilled. The eyes of the blind are being opened today.



## ADVENT 4

**Isaiah 7:10-16 | Hope**

*“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel.” Isaiah 7:14.*

**South Sudan story:**

<https://imaworldhealth.org/lack-of-maternal-deaths-at-south-sudan-clinic-hailed-as-a-three-year-miracle>

On this fourth Sunday of Advent, the Word proclaims that God has come to dwell with us as one of us. This one shall be called Immanuel. Through the ministry of maternal healthcare, Immanuel, God with us, has already come for the families of South Sudan to bring them joy and peace.