



# Anna Sims

Link Letter no. 30 | October 2024



**Location:** Peru



**What I do:** Work alongside the local church to build community and share Jesus in creative ways in urban Lima

Dear friends,

“But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.”  
Jeremiah 29:7 ESV

At the beginning of 2021, when Peru had slightly relaxed some of the COVID restrictions, I spent a couple of nights in a fancy hotel in Lima to have a change of scenery and have some intentional rest and time with God. (You may remember that I was stuck in my flat alone for the majority of COVID due to the strict restrictions at the time.) During my stay, I felt that God spoke to me about the importance of seeking the welfare of and praying for Lima. As I looked out across the cityscape of Lima from my hotel room, this verse kept coming to mind.

So when, at the end of June this year, a group of us were gathered at the Inti Ayllu restaurant in Pamplona for a dedication event and Francis (the pastor of iCafe church, where I have been going since 2019) used this verse for his reflection, I was comforted about a difficult decision I had taken earlier in the year. This was to shift the focus of what I am doing in Peru and to step back from full-time prison ministry when I return to Lima at the end of October.

You may remember that when I first came to Peru, art was part of my calling. Never did I imagine, when I arrived in Peru 11 years ago, that I would have ended up serving in a prison ministry; but God did. It has been an amazing adventure, as I have grown in ways I never envisaged and seen how so much of my giftings and personality have been used beneficially throughout my time serving with the Walking in Liberty ministry.

Some of the challenging times over the last couple of years have led me to spend time prayerfully reflecting on what day to day ministry looks like and, as you are aware, I returned to Lima in January 2023 on a shorter term to explore if it was right to stay in Peru or not. This was to make sure my ministry is sustainable for me to keep serving into the future. During the past 18 months, God has been opening doors through my church, iCafe, for me to be involved with the Inti Ayllu ministry in Pamplona. I feel that I am going back to my creative roots and that this home assignment is a logical point to move from one thing to another. Inti Ayllu (Community of Light) is the vision of Waiki and Sarah, a couple from iCafe



*Looking out over Lima.*

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**With Jesus  
With each other  
To the edges**



church who moved to Pamplona during the pandemic with the dream of opening a restaurant and art space to bless the neighbourhood where Waiki had grown up.

On my return, I will still visit Santa Monica until the end of December, when our passes expire. I was able to visit all the mums and new babies in our group of ex-offenders before I returned to the UK, including baby P whom I wrote about in my last link letter and who is now back home and doing well.

Going forward, I will continue to assist the British male inmates with care packages a few times a year, and also carry on visiting the Peruvian in Maximum prison, but my main focus will be at iCafe church. The leadership of iCafe and myself are still discerning what my new role will look like practically (it is impossible to accurately plan until I get back, but we have a few areas that we're exploring). I will be splitting my time between the internal iCafe family and the Inti Ayllu ministry in Pamplona, which I have been involved with since Easter 2023.

Both iCafe and Inti Ayllu seek to reach people on the edges with the hope that Jesus brings. iCafe focuses specifically on artists and people on the fringes of traditional church settings and is located in the creative district of Lima. Inti Ayllu is based in a pueblo joven ("young town" – it would have been a shanty town in the 80s) built on one of Lima's many sand dunes for people in the surrounding neighbourhood, which is literally on the border of opposing gangs. As well as providing a safe space for the local community, one of the aims of the Inti Ayllu restaurant is for Waiki to offer training opportunities to young people at risk of joining the gangs, so they have alternative opportunities in cooking and front of house.

The next phase will be opening an art and community area in the space adjacent to the restaurant, where Sarah and I will run creative workshops and activities, responding to the needs and wants of the community. The building has already had two murals painted on the side of it (one as part of a collaborative community event in December, and the other by a local artist) with more murals planned, in the hope of bringing more colour and beauty into the area. Inti Ayllu's aim is to use all forms of art to create safe spaces and reflect God's light and love in the community. I am very excited to see how this is falling into place and that so many of my previous contacts and experience are linked to these next steps.

So, at the start of this new and exciting chapter in my time in Peru, please join me to pray for the welfare of Lima and that God's kingdom would continue to come to this part of earth in new and abundant ways.

All my love,

Anna x



*Photos from top to bottom: Mural at Inti Ayllu; with Sarah and Waiki; prayer board for Inti Ayllu; Waiki cooking.*



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**Jesus never gives up. Neither should we.** We live in a fractured, hurting world. It can be tempting to give up: on hope, on people, on the idea that things can ever change. Yet, Jesus invites us to follow him on a journey to the edges. Find out more at [churchmissionsociety.org/jesus-never-gives-up](https://churchmissionsociety.org/jesus-never-gives-up)

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