

Travel Journal
of the
AMAA Medical Mission Trip
in Gyumri and Vanadzor, Armenia
with additional days prior in
Sisian, Armenia
and
Armenian Evangelical Church of Berd, Armenia
and
AMAA Camp Shoghig
in Hankavan, Armenia

June 22 – July 13, 2025

by
Christine Momjian

Sunday, June 22, 2025

Disclaimer: reflections shared on these emails are personal and do not reflect the full team of individuals coming from all over North America to serve. For blogs on behalf of the team, visit AMAA.org or check out AMAA's Facebook and/or Instagram posts. These emails are a result of many who are praying for us and wanted to pray specifically.

Aside from those coming from North America, staff and translators from Armenia will join us.

Dear praying partners,

Thank you for once again partnering with us and praying for our time while we serve with the AMAA medical mission team + other service opportunities in Armenia. Your prayers are integral to the success of this ministry.

Wilma auntie and I are departing from Newark airport. We have a longer stay over in Brussels, so Bruce got us a hotel room instead of waiting at the airport terminal.

Bruce needs to be in Switzerland for business. He will arrive in Yerevan early Saturday morning.

This year I'll just have one photo album instead of separate daily ones:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/kpKoEpiPCjk9vynR9>

Our Uber driver is Zorig, originally from Goris, Armenia. God is good! And is aware of all details.

I'm starting a new counted cross stitch piece on this trip. I found a woman who takes folk designs and makes patterns. She has done one Armenian piece. Very exciting, it's on 30 count aida cloth.

We took off 1.5 hours late from Newark. We've landed in Brussels. Bruce got us an airport hotel since we have a long layover. He's landed in Switzerland.

Hope to get some sleep in the hotel.



Christine

Monday, June 23, 2025

The walk from our gate to passport control was long, and early on, auntie was feeling it. We arrived at the line for non-EU passport control and it took us 1h15min to go through to exit the airport. While in line, there were staff walking with supermarket carts filled with bottled water handing it out to people.

The Sheraton is literally across the driveway from the airport. It was such a joy to see the sign as we got out of passport control.

We were in our room at 10:45 and got in bed!

Feel very refreshed from the few hours of sleep. Amazing how quiet the room is. You really feel it after you get out of the noise of an airport. Very relaxing.

Got an email from Chris that he and Barb have landed in Paris.

Bruce's status allows us lounge access, so we had a cup of good coffee and some snacks since it was between breakfast and lunch time.

Thank you to those who have already responded to my first email. Thank you for your prayers! I will try to respond individually, but as the days progress, I probably won't be able to.

Back at the airport, as we're in security and passport control, it's fun to hear Armenian being spoken by other travelers. There's also so many other languages. I try to make them out. A kind Turkish couple sees auntie and suggests we go in front of them in the passport security line. They are here visiting their adult son. Saves us some standing time.

I enjoy looking through the Belgian chocolate companies I'm familiar with at duty free as we walk through. I don't see my new favorite one - Elizabeth. I think they're too small a company.

We take off an hour over our scheduled time.

I work on the counted cross stitch and as it gets dark I finish watching the movie "Truman Show" by tablet. Highly recommend it. Lots of philosophical ideas there.

Lots of cranky children on this flight. For my children's sake, auntie said, "our kids never behaved like this. We've traveled a lot when they were little, I never remember them acting like this." 😊



Christine

Tuesday, June 24, 2025

This will be a longer post.

00:05 land in Yerevan! I've mentioned this in the years past, it is so inviting to see Armenian letters on signage.

Chris had arranged for Ara to pick us up at the airport. He was our driver when we did the short mission trip in December. Chris considers him his Armenian brother.



It was great to see him once we got out of the passenger area at the airport.

Since we're leaving this morning to Sisian, we are staying at the AMAA Baghramian center. A few years ago they built some hotel-style rooms to be able to house people who visit. We were in our rooms at 01:15.

Doctors Chris & Barb, and Edma and Lexi have landed in Yerevan as well!

Good to take a shower and I'm in bed at 02:00. We will be leaving here at 11:00 for the drive to Sisian, which is around 4 hours long.

I was looking forward to at least 8 hours of sleep, but I only got a total of about four. 😊

I'll take this time to explain why auntie and I are here a little earlier. The mission starts this coming Saturday, June 28th. This year we only have enough doctors to have one team. It was decided that the team would serve in Vanadzor and Gyumri. Chris felt the call to serve with a small group in Sisian beforehand. He asked if we would join.

Since auntie was going to be traveling with me, I gave her the option if she wanted to come alongside and serve, to see what the mission is about, or stay a week longer in Yerevan. She chose to serve in Sisian with us this week!

Meet with Anna and Nareg at the AMAA office.

Leave at 11:20. We have a clear view of Mt Ararat on our way. 🍑 Both peaks. We stop and get a few bags of fresh apricots which are being sold by vendors on the side of the street. So so so good! I stop myself at two.

We stop for lunch at the same restaurant we've eaten at before en route. There's a river running by it and we ate the fish that was caught there. Delicious.

We are 13 people, including our driver Ara and our guide Gayane. Six of us are from the US. Drs Chris & his wife Barb, Edma, Lexi (a nurse from the clinic Chris works at), auntie and me. From Armenia we have Dr Levon (dentist), Sona (who served with us in December, she just got her medical degree), Shoushan (pharmacist), another Gayane, and Lilit.

The drive to the Syunik region is so beautiful. I will hold back from attempting to take pictures and just look out this year.

We arrive in Sisian at 16:15. We drop off our items at the hotel first so that Ara can go back to Yerevan. We won't need a vehicle here. Bruce and I stayed here for the first time in 2023 when we spent a week in Sisian. We have every room at Hotel Flamenco booked.

We walk to the church at 16:45 and amazingly the street has been paved!! It was a gravel dirt road since we were first here in 2023.

It is so good to see Badveli Arman and his wife Saida, and many of the women who we've gotten to know over the years. Saida works alongside her husband. They are a dynamic team, and doing the Lord's work in Sisian.

We set up the clinic. Auntie and Edma bond over preparing and numbering the urine cup containers! 😊

At 7p, the clinic is all set and we eat a delicious dinner prepared by the church ladies.

We will start with worship service at 9:30a. We are scheduled to see a total of 250 patients over two days! That's 125/day! It's a lot with two doctors. Let's see how it goes.

Chris and I stop by Lena's home which is one block from the church just to say hello. We are all tired and need our sleep.

Pictures:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/kpKoEpiPCjk9vynR9>



Christine

Wednesday, June 25, 2025

Had a great night's sleep!

We found out last night that there were 126 patients scheduled for today. 😬 Yikes. With a start time of 10:00, we were concerned how we'd do that. There was no way to move up that time since the patients were scheduled to arrive at 09:30.

We met for breakfast at 08:30 and then walked over to church. Had a team devotional time. I mentioned how Jesus says in the Gospel of John that apart from Him we can do nothing. The work we're doing here has kingdom value. I encouraged us as we looked at each patient to do so with compassion and to look to Him for strength.

We have a worship service for the patients, and us! I served as translator for Badveli Arman's message and prayers. Thankful to Lexi who shared her testimony.

We were able to see 60 patients in five hours with two doctors!!! Truly amazing.

Most of the cases deal with high blood pressure and diabetes issues. There were also enough women who are going through either depression or stress as a result of losing family members.

There was one gentleman who was complaining of his left side being numb and when we asked him some further questions they said it was because of an insult.

Pronounced it with a heavy accent. Pronounced as 'ihn-soolt'. We couldn't figure out what it was. It turns out they call a stroke an insult in Armenian.

We have Lexi serving as triage, and auntie is her translator. ❤️

We break for lunch after we are done and then start again. We see 66 patients in the afternoon. We finish serving at 19:30.

A few random stories.

From summer of last year, when we served in Sisian, a teenager named Mari, from the church, was Bruce's assistant in the lab. She was phenomenal. She has a vision to be a medical doctor. I found out from Badveli and his wife that her father died of a heart attack less than 40 days ago. He was the sole provider for the family. Mari has a younger sister. This will dramatically affect Mari's education. While she is very bright and has received a merit based college scholarship, she still needs to come up with her monthly expenses of rent and food. This would be in Yerevan. Badveli is trying to figure out how to manage help for her. He's thinking around 500 USD a month is what she'll need. Would you please pray that the Lord open opportunities for this bright young woman?

You may recall Tigran from last year, who is also a teenager from the church who helped. (Nancy, you'd remember him). He was from Artsakh and lost his father during the forced exodus by the Azerbaijani government. He's now living in Russia with his paternal uncle.

Shavarsh, who is a teenager from the church with the "what can I do to help" attitude and a smile wants to be a pastor. His family is moving to Yerevan. Badveli is concerned Shavarsh will get lost in the big city.

Actually, Sisian is full of youth with the "what can I do to help" attitude. Even the women who help are so willing and with a smile. Please pray for Badveli Arman & Saida as they continue to minister to this community.

I would think it's very hard for Badveli & Saida to continually be building up these young individuals and so many of them leave this area.

Dr Gor who oversees the AMAA medical mission planning from Armenia, came with a photographer and videographer. The videographer interviewed Barb and me separately. Let's see what gets in. 🎥 🎬

There was a mother who had two young children. A six year old little girl and her four year old brother. The little girl had an Armenian Christian book with her with a lot of text versus pictures. Long paragraphs. I asked her if her mother read this to her. She said no she reads it. And she opened up the page where it says, basically like an apologetics on who created everything. And she read it so beautifully! It warmed my heart. There's a picture of me with her and her brother.

Barb and Gayane are serving at the urine station. Lots of laughs with them to lighten the day.

Levon (pediatric dentist) is giving tutorials to the children. He had some ideas on how to create perfume....

I'm serving as crowd control. Since we're a small team, we do not have a lab station, but we have EKG.

Today is Lena's 35th birthday. We were invited to their home for dinner. It was Chris Barb, Edma, auntie and I. We got there after we finished with the patients at 20:00.

It was auntie's first visit to Sisian. On our walk to Lena's home, they live around the corner from the church, auntie said if the Lord gives her the strength and if Bruce and I are willing to bring her back next year, she wants to come and serve a full week. She's really loving doing this.

We had a wonderful evening with them. Lena's parents were also there. We were able to video chat with Bruce, and he saw everyone. It's a shame he's not with us.

Sevag wanted to make tea in the samavor in honor of Bruce. But it was already past 23:15 and we needed to head back.

We have a long day tomorrow. 124 patients scheduled with an earlier start. We then have to tear down the clinic.

I have told the team that there are many back home who are praying for us. Barb was saying she and Gayane were having dreams last night that the timers they use for the urine station did not work properly. She said it must be from the prayers that they never had an issue. (It's true that the timers are finecky).

Thank you for your prayers!

Pictures

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/kpKoEpiPCjk9vynR9>



Christine

Thursday, June 26, 2025

Laura (my daughter-in-love) and Nancy (her mom) are on their way departing from Newark airport. Well, I wrote that line around 01:00, but I'm not sleeping well tonight and I caught messages and talked to Matthew (my son) that their flight keeps getting delayed. There's concern that they'll miss their connection in Brussels to Yerevan. As the day moved along, they were able to fly out and they'll be able to land in time to make their connection. Thank you Jesus.

While I was trying to sleep, I was thinking about something. When we are in heaven, we are in our perfect bodies. Is it safe to assume a perfect personality? God calls us to be perfect and to be holy while we are living here on earth. Matthew 5:48 You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.
1 Peter 1:16 since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

I started to think about the different parts of my personality and what each of those would look like if they were in their perfect form in heaven? How can I get closer to that since Christ calls me to live perfect and holy now? Something to pray over.

I forgot to mention, one of my roles is to encourage those who can't give a urine sample by having them drink water, giving words of encouragement about the importance of water, walking along with them, (getting some movement), so that they can give us a sample.

Also, at the dinner at Sevag & Mari's home last night, many toasts were made (very common in Armenia) with glasses of fruit compote. 🍷

For those who were reading along on our December trip, I'd mentioned that Sevag's 3-year-old niece was bit by a mosquito who was carrying a parasite and developed visceral leishmaniasis. She was in the hospital for a while on seven rounds of heavy IV antibiotics. She's doing very well. Unfortunately, one of Sevag's friend's one and a half year old child died of the same issue. These two children were bit, at separate times, in Goris!

During breakfast, Shoushan shows us pictures of her family's home in Aleppo. It's been vandalized and ruined. Very tragic. What is left of her home you could see would have been beautiful. With a huge yard. Her parents live in Yerevan while her father dreams of returning to Aleppo but can't due to poor health. One sister stayed behind in Aleppo.

After breakfast Chris and I see a man selling chickens out of his car - for eating or for laying eggs!

We start with worship at 09:00. We had several car/van loads from Goris . Badveli Sarkis gave the short message on Psalm 133 which I translated:

Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!

It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes!

It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion! For there the Lord has commanded the blessing, life forevermore.

Chris and I had the chance to talk to Badveli Sarkis and ask him about the status in Goris since the U.S. state department had said no travel to Goris and east of that area. He said yes, you hear firing each night in the villages around Goris.

We had a shorter worship time since we had so many patients again today. We start seeing patients at 09:15. We are scheduled to see 124 patients today!

At times certain stations get very busy. That needs some management.

There were many people yesterday and today who complained about joint pains. Chris says it's early arthritis from all the manual labor that they do.

Some various stories of patients:

One woman came in to be seen, and also brought her 8 year old son. Her 8 year old son has a lazy blinking right eye. (I'm unsure if that's the proper name). I don't think we were able to do anything for that. She became a widow six years ago. Has three children. Works to support her family. Very hard.

One woman looks so much older than she is. She works 12-hour shifts 6 days a week washing dishes. She was complaining about numbness in her hands and her feet. Her husband is paralyzed, when she goes home she has to take care of him. She works from 05:00 to 17:00 washing dishes.

One woman is a street sweeper using a broom. Her body is hunched over.

A woman came in and wanted to talk to me before she brought her husband in who is going to be seen. She said he has stage 4 lung cancer, but doesn't know it. Apparently he's gone through 40 rounds of radiation. A bit odd as to how he still doesn't know. She wanted him to be seen so that we could give him things to make him comfortable since he's in constant pain. But we were not to tell him that he had

cancer. So basically, hospice. He has no appetite. Very weak. While he was sitting for his turn, he took his hands with the palms up and just kept banging them against the top of his legs. When I asked him why he's doing that, he said it helps to lessen the pain. 😞 Please pray for his wife as well. It was very clear all of this was a huge strain on her.

We had a very unusual case by a couple from Artsakh. It took us a while to understand the situation. So in 2023, he ate a jingilov hats (pronounced hahts) https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhingyalov_hats.

He said that in the hats, there was a thorn like piece of greenery / stem that got lodged in his throat. It started to create an infection and was there for a while. The infection ended up going from his throat area to his intestines. He eventually vomited the item. He's been to multiple doctors, has had multiple tests, and nobody can figure out how to help him feel better.

This couple came from Artsakh during the last forced exodus. His wife had breast cancer and was undergoing treatment. She ended up coming to the church in Sisian, asked for prayers by Badveli Arman and Saida. They placed their hands on her and prayed and felt something. Her next scans showed the cancer had disappeared. She committed her life to Christ and was baptized in February. She's very involved in the women's committee, children's ministry, and is the sole provider since her husband is now unable to work. They have three children and their middle child developed an unusual skin problem on her palms and the bottom of her feet from the stress of being in Artsakh during the siege and then exodus. The details of the wife's status and their daughter I found out from Badveli Arman. She was not seen as a patient.

Seems we as a people are continually in a state of exodus?

There was one case where the patient couldn't even be triaged since she only spoke Russian. So we had her talk to Badveli Arman (who also knows Russian), he translated to Armenian, and then it was translated to English for Lexi!

One patient told Barb as she was at the urine station "you very long!" 😊 Barb is very tall.

There's two gentlemen who have come together. They attend this church. They play backgammon/tavluh outside instead of waiting inside. Sweet set.

We see 61 patients before lunch. I send triage up to lunch at 13:30, while Drs & pharmacy don't get to go until 14:30.

One of the items for lunch is a delicious chicken rice soup. I just have that, it is so tasty.

Barb always has a smile and a laugh! At one point, I was laughing so hard, I lost it. I was crying. I think being tired contributed to me laughing so hard. I can't remember the last time I've laughed that hard!

We start again at 15:10, and we see 62 patients in the afternoon! We finished at 20:00! That's a total of 123 patients for today!

Everyone is exhausted.

At 15:40, when we reached patient number 200, I wanted bells so we could ring them. Almost like the bells that volunteers ring for the Salvation Army, or better yet, church bells! 🔔

We tore down parts of the clinic as we finished that section.

We got our team picture and ate a delicious khorovats (bbq) in the back yard of the church. The potatoes here are so so soft and sweet!

Saida video chatted with Mari so I could see her and talk to her. It was a brief call since she was at work.

Back in our rooms around 23:00.

The medical team was definitely needed in Sisian and I'm so glad Chris was obedient to the nudging of the Holy Spirit when he heard the Holy Spirit tell him to go. I'm so glad I was able to be part of it.

We leave Sisian tomorrow morning.

Pictures:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/kpKoEpiPCjk9vynR9>



Christine

Friday, June 27, 2025

God is so good all the time!

Look at God's timing in this. The thought about being perfect in personality in heaven and what that may look like on Earth came to me, as I said, while I was trying to fall asleep. Badveli Nerses responded to me that he is preaching on that in some ways this coming Sunday. He had taken the time to not only read my email but to respond to it with his sermon notes so beautifully! That's only God. God used a brother in Christ to minister to me via email. Badveli Nerses has been preparing on that passage, and he took the time to respond to me. Thank you Nerses! Isn't God good? If you want to know what he said, please listen to his sermon that he's preaching this Sunday. 🙌 You can find it through the church's website.

<https://www.pilgrimchurch.com/>

Laura & Nancy have arrived! They are in Yerevan.

We had breakfast, and Ara had arrived and we filled the large van by 09:00. We left towards Noravank, which is on our way. I've been to Noravank before, but it still

amazes me how they built this monastery on top of these mountains in the 13th-14th century.

While inside St Stepanos church, you could see one beam of light coming in from the opening above. But in the picture, the one strong beam becomes three!! I have no idea how. Father, Son, & Holy Spirit? 😊

We then continued towards Yerevan. It was about another 2 hour drive. Along the roadside, there were many people selling just picked apricots. I was sitting next to Gayane on the ride and I really enjoyed getting to know her. She's the travel agent who handles all the details for the mission group while we are in Armenia. She's a dynamic person.

We arrived at Anteb restaurant around 14:00. Gayane had picked this as our place for lunch and I love their mante. She had ordered ahead. We each had a bowl of mante - so delicious! I think I could eat this every day and not get sick of it. We also had family style fresh bread, jajough, hammos, moutebbel, faht-toush salad, chicken kebab with toom, and kounefe. We were all so full.

We then drove to our hotel, the Ani Grand in Yerevan. Said goodbye to our driver Ara. I don't think I'll see him again this time. 😞 In room at 15:40.

I put together the gifts I had brought and then went back down to sit with auntie and wait for Kegham Keri (my mother's and Wilma auntie's brother) and his wife Dalo.

While we waited, Laura and Nancy returned from vernissage and surprised me with a cup of fresh squeezed juice from the vendor we love on the corner near the hotel. Auntie with great excitement told them about some of the patients we took care of in Sisian, and her overall impressions.

While we were talking, Karina walked in with her siblings and father! We met on the trip last year and I just loved working with her. It was great to hug her. I'm eager to spend the week with her. They've been visiting Armenia as a family this week.

While we were talking Chris came and surprised me with two pomegranates that he had purchased while he went on a walk. He knows how much I love them! ❤️ So kind of him.

Barb joined. Then Kegham Keri and Dalo auntie arrived. Auntie said her goodbyes to Chris & Barb and also to Edma and Lexi. Auntie and Lexi bonded this week as well.

Before heading to the restaurant for dinner, Karina's mom Nancy arrived. It was wonderful to get caught up with her on their plans. We also had some fun conversations as a group about shoes at entryways 😊 and gold.

We started walking towards Abu Hagop restaurant. Vartan (my first cousin, Kegham's son) had parked somewhere and met us on the walk along with his wife Sevan and Paleny. (Vartan and his family moved here from Syria during the war there). When Paleny saw us, she went through our group and not finding Bruce, was extremely disappointed.

While auntie and I were not hungry, the others were. We asked Vartan to order family style. Laura was looking forward to kofte. I was excited about chee-kofte. Vartan ordered fresh bread, hammos, moutebbel, faht-toush salad, kofte, chee-kofte, spring rolls type dough stuffed with cheese, another meat dish, 3 types of warmed cheese sandwiches, one plain, one with erishgid, one with hot peppers, chicken & lamb & beef kebab.

We then walked to where we had ashta (Arabic style ice cream) last summer, Froze. It was permanently closed. 😞 We then walked to our favorite gelato place, Sorriso on Northern Ave. I ended up getting a non-alcoholic drink made with mango gelato that was so refreshing. Catherine, you would have loved it.

Paleny will be 9 in two weeks and will attend Camp Shoghig in Hankavan from this Tuesday to Monday. Unfortunately, she will not be there the week we're helping. It's

her first time at camp. If you would be interested in sponsoring a child for camp, please visit:

<https://amaa.org/summer-camps-in-armenia-artsakh/>

She's also a very bright student at the Avedisian school in Yerevan:

<https://amaa.org/khoren-and-shooshanig-avedisian-school/>

The walks gave us an opportunity to have various groupings of conversations. We got back to the hotel. I gave auntie her luggage. Gave the gifts, and then we said goodbyes. In room after 22:00. Bruce has arrived in Frankfurt and is on his flight to Yerevan.

Pictures:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/kpKoEpiPCjk9vynR9>



Christine

Saturday, June 28, 2025

Bruce lands around 03:00, but has to wait for the other arrivals. He doesn't get in the hotel room until 05:00! We are to start at 09:30 with a team meeting.

Two things I've forgotten, while we were in Sisian, Dr Levon (dentist), ran an educational and treatment program for the children. You may have already seen the pictures. He gave each child a fluoride varnish, and taught them the importance of proper dental care. They also receive gifts: toothbrush, toothpaste and some goodies. We've been doing this for several years now and are seeing a tremendous improvement in dental health. 🙌 Most of the older people have many missing teeth, or gold teeth due to care under the Soviet Union.

Also, as I was getting gifts for people here, I happened (I can only understand this to the Lord's leading) to go through a box of family pictures. I found at least a dozen

3x5 pictures from Aleppo. My maternal grandmother (also Kegham Keri's mother) and my mother were regular letter writers when my family moved to the US in 1974. I know that was hard on my parents, to be far from family, but my parents felt the Lord calling them to move. Plus my older brother Hratch and sister Jessy were already in the US.

After that backstory.... As my grandmother sent letters, she sometimes would include a picture. She would also write something on the back of the picture. Sometimes speaking in first person or third, or on behalf of the person in the picture. As I came across these pictures, I thought it would be better to share them with Kegham Keri, Vartan, and his siblings. They left Aleppo very quickly, with what they could take in two suitcases.

These pictures that I gave them meant more than the gifts I had brought! It was very emotional for all of them.

Back to today.....

Last night Laura, Nancy and I had planned to meet for breakfast at 08:30. The Ani Grand has a buffet breakfast. Great to see some people from previous years and the leaders Dr Al & Sue Phillips. Our team meeting was at 09:30 and by 10:15 we were on our way. Today is a day of sightseeing and team building.

Thrilled to see our driver is Arman, he was our driver in Sisian during the summer 2024 mission. He remembered me. 🥰

Perfect view of Mt Ararat as we drive. Both peaks are very visible. Many storks are visible in their nests along the roads.

Our first stop was to Khor Virab which was about an hour drive from Yerevan. For those who may not know, Khor Virab was a pit which Gregory was put in for 14 years. He later was named St Gregory the Illuminator. I did not know Gregory was not Armenian as Gayane is giving us so much history on the bus.

We are at Khor Virab for about an hour and then head out. It's hot, but not as hot as last summer. Last night, my family was saying that it was a cooler summer. Thank you Lord. Bruce and I have been here a few times, and have gone down to the pit. We decided to climb the hill to get a better view of the church and Ararat Valley.

Gayane gives us a bit more information on St Gregory and the early church. Apparently there's a statue of St Gregory on the door at St Peter's basilica in Rome.

Sue had sent an email to me four days ago asking if Bruce and I would lead the daily team devotionals. I somehow missed it, and when she asked if I would, I said sure. This is less than 10 min time in reading a passage and discussing it, singing a song, and prayer with the team before the corporate worship service. Please pray that I have some time with the Lord to hear His leading.

From Khor Virab we went to have lunch. There are many sour cherry trees - pal (Paleny names after that) at the restaurant. It's an open garden with a waterfall and fresh fish which we ate.

On our drive to Garni temple, Bruce goes to the back of the bus and lays down for a nap. There's many apricot trees along the way. Lots of apricots on trees! Also saw some grape vines with bunches of grapes.

Summer great conversations on the bus.

Then by 17:30 we leave Geghart monastery. At 19:00 we are back in Yerevan, we will walk the short walk to the restaurant.

We eat at Rehan Garden, an Armenian Lebanese restaurant. Gayane has called ahead and ordered: hammos, mouteb-bell, lehmejune, faht-toush salad, taboule, mante and halawet el jibneh! I'm very excited about that and Bruce shares his piece with me.

We decide to walk back to the hotel instead of the bus. Karina joins us and we stop at Sorisso gelato on North St. Thankful for this time to get caught up with her. Bruce's inner child comes out and he is drawn to touch the colored mini water fountain.

The streets of Yerevan are packed.

Pictures:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/kpKoEpiPCjk9vynR9>



Christine

Sunday, June 29, 2025

Had a great night's sleep.

I woke up to find messages from three of my children that if I was awake to please call home, it was important. If I got separate messages from all three, I knew it was serious. I was concerned about a family member. To make a longer story short, our beloved cat of almost 20 years, Gadoo, needed to be euthanized. 💔 She was a joy to us and it was hard for all of us. Bruce had dreamed about her this night.

<https://momjian.us/main/news/2025.html>

We got on the bus to leave at 09:30 and we found out that a team member's grandfather had died. 💔💔

We have the Armenia team with us, including the translators, so the bus is full.

We visited Etchmiadzin, and being a Sunday, heard parts of the badarak.

On our way to Gyumri. I finally am able to get a picture of a stork in its nest.

The drive is beautiful. Mountainous, green. Gyumri is the second largest city and considered the cultural city of Armenia. The volcanic stones here are black, therefore the buildings are black versus Yerevan was pink/orange.

14:30 we have lunch at Alexandrovski restaurant. Then drive to the Armenian Evangelical church in Gyumri.

It was wonderful to see Badveli Aram waiting for us and Garen from the AMAA. We set up the clinic after getting a feel of where each station would be. I helped to get the EKG area private and set up 200 urine cups, numbered, ready for tomorrow.

After dinner at church, at 19:15, we headed to the hotel.

We are scheduled to have 292 patients over 2 days of clinics with 5 doctors.

Bruce, Laura and I take a walk. The hotel is right by the center of the city. One of the two churches in the center is open. Lots of frescos inside. No pictures allowed inside. We return, the "young ones" go for a walk.

Pictures:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/kpKoEpiPCjk9vynR9>



Christine

Monday, June 30, 2025

Thank you for making the time to read my emails and pray and respond. I pass on your greetings to the team, and you are a big part of this ministry. The prayer support is so critical.

Thank you for your concerns about our beloved Gadoo.

Yesterday on the bus ride to Gyumri, Bruce and I talked about what we would share for our team devotional. We have a theme on the greatest commandment.

We gathered for our circle outside of the church and Dr Al gave a meditation on the 10 lepers who were healed by Jesus and only one came back, the Samaritan. We then had our time, and we read John 17:13-24 and focused on verse 23, "I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me." How magnificent it is that Jesus says God loves us, as much as God loves Jesus. Takeaway for today was to be assured of the Father's love for each one. We sang the hymn "O the Deep Deep Love of Jesus".

We attended the worship service in the sanctuary, and God is good! We opened with the long doxology! For those who may not know, I love singing the long doxology, and I don't get to sing it often in corporate worship. To me it feels like heaven on earth as we sing. This is all I could find (somewhat quickly) on search if you don't know it.

<https://youtu.be/FsXgHrwbw3k?si=8lcoQGafnxrwpjY>

Nancy gave her testimony on "who am I?" (I am a child of God). The assistant pastor gave a message about Lazarus' death. My takeaway was, what is the stone that covers my tomb?

A bit after 09:30, we started our stations. Sue had me in crowd control on the first floor. The clinic is over two floors. Bruce was in the lab. At times it was very busy, and at times it felt slow. We saw 45 patients in the morning, more in the afternoon for a total of 125 patients.

I found out that the young man helping in the urine station - Julian - is Badveli Berdj Djambazian's grandson. That was very exciting for me.

For the afternoon worship, Ari gave his testimony in Armenian! I got to translate for him to English. He talked about the impact his grandmother's faith has had on him.

It started pouring in the afternoon and we finished early around 17:00. During the afternoon time, there were several children in the waiting area and at times it got very loud.

Around 15:00 I was feeling very sleepy. I didn't sleep much last night. We were all very hungry for dinner tonight.

After getting to the hotel, a few of us went out for a Gyumri specialty dessert, bonjik. (See pictures) It's all air! (Hahaha)

Everyone is feeling tired today.

Badveli Nerses shared the link for his sermon if you're interested. I'll be listening on my return home.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/SwhEDqqNP00?feature=shared>

Pictures:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/kpKoEpiPCjk9vynR9>



Christine

Tuesday, July 1, 2025

Today is our last day of full clinics in Gyumri. Some of us have different roles, I will stay on crowd control on the first floor. On the first floor crowd control manages accepting patients, keeping them in the order of their appointment, directing them to vitals, then urine, and then triage and sometimes lab, and then upstairs. I try to engage with the patients as much as possible using their name and a smile.

The second floor is the Dr rooms, EKG and ultrasound.

Pharmacy is back on the first floor.

Devotional for our team was the point that Jesus desires that we all be united.

Lauren gave a beautiful testimony during the morning service ending with if you haven't made a decision for Jesus Christ today is the day. A God match, since Badveli Aram's message was from Lamentations on "there is a time for.... Today is the day to put your faith in Christ."

Had a full morning.

After a quick lunch, Hanna gives the testimony for the afternoon worship service. She mentions how her faith became her own after the death of her youth pastor, Matt Silverman.

We finish up a bit after 17:30, and we need to break down the stations and pack everything up and take it out and load the truck.

As we were wrapping things up, I talked to Gohar, the Dr doing the ultrasounds. She said she did 43 over the two days and there were many serious cases.

Dr Al mentioned how he had a few very rare illnesses.

We finish up with dinner and head back to the hotel. The church staff cook for our meals on the days of the clinics.

We feel like family.

Bruce and I will not be going out tonight as some from the team go out for bonchig.

Pictures:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/kpKoEpiPCjk9vynR9>



Christine

Wednesday, July 2, 2025

We are broken up by pods, 😊 2 rooms consist of a pod. Whenever we're moving from one location to another, especially by bus, we need to make sure we have our pod. 😊 Our pod is Bruce & I and Laura & Nancy.

We leave our hotel at 09:00 headed to Vanadzor. It's about a one hour ride. It had many factories during the Soviet times. They're all closed now since independence. It's in the Lori region. More rainy here. It's 1.5 hours from Georgia, as well as Yerevan. Levon who was born in Vanadzor gives us some info. Huge textile company, Gloria, provides clothing for an Italian company Montclair. Products are made in Armenia, but the tag reads Italy.

Gayane gave us some history about the situation in Armenia right after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Each country was designated as to what they could produce for the Union. All the wheat was grown in Ukraine. After the fall of the Union, it was very difficult years. These are her childhood years, she's in her early 30s. But she said she had no idea about the magnitude of problems since she was in a loving family and had a loving childhood. There's so much to be thankful for!

During the earthquake, some shipping containers which were sent with supplies from overseas were made into homes. They call them "domic" and some are still used today.

I shared that the AMAA played a significant role in providing relief and aid following the devastating earthquake in 1988. Arpi added that the AMAA is a very transparent organization with their funds.

Gayane mentions Hovhannes Shiraz (Հովհաննես Շիրազ; April 27, 1914 – March 24, 1984) was an Armenian poet taken care of in an orphanage in Gyumri. He finds his mother years later. He's written many poems about mothers.

We arrive in Vanadzor and I recognize many of the helpers here and staff from previous years.

We have a quick lunch and start with the worship service. More contemporary songs are sung here.

We saw 110 patients in just the afternoon clinic today with 4 doctors. About 40 children were seen by the dentists.

I'm doing crowd control on the first floor and Bruce starts in the lab. He ends up in crowd control by pharmacy as the day goes on.

One woman, who was 32 years old, came in with an infant. Maybe 3-4 months old? She gave the infant to one of my teenage helpers as she needed to get her vitals and go through the clinic. The baby started to cry since he was hungry. The mother gave a bottle of tea for the baby to drink! 🙄 The poor thing drank the tea and then fell asleep. I got the mom's name. I will try to find out if she's a member at this church. Maybe there can be some help through the AMAA Armenian children's milk fund:

<https://amaa.org/armenian-childrens-milk-fund-amaa/>

I talked to one Dr and he said most of the cases in Gyumri were cancer issues, and in one day here he's seen lots of arrhythmia. One woman needed to go to the hospital, but she refused.

We eat dinner at the church around 19:00. The ladies have cooked for us.

It's been raining for a few hours.

We arrive in our new hotel, Laguna Hotel, a bit before 20:00. We're in room 115. Gets confusing changing room numbers every 2-3 days!

If this reading isn't enough 😊 the AMAA Facebook page has more:

https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid02PLVYTA35sGrQSzWBX62apYuTVtrTi3x5e6Mk1w2TXZE2sx7KN3qGUChg8cPVRWDI&id=100064768565748

as well as this blog:

<https://armeniamedicalmissions.wordpress.com/>

Pictures:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/kpKoEpiPCjk9vynR9>



Christine

Thursday, July 3, 2025

Today after breakfast at the hotel, we left at 08:30. It's a few minutes' ride to the church. We had our team devotional inside the church since it was raining. Today's focus was from John 17:17-18 & Matthew 28:18-20. Just as the Father had sent the Son, Jesus sends us in His name. We are to represent Jesus. What a privilege.

We are to see 170 patients today. It will be a very full day with 4 doctors. I believe we end up seeing 189.

We had two beautiful testimonies today from Alina and Mathew during the morning and afternoon services.

At one point during the morning, we had a surprise visit from Aren and Narek of the AMAA. It was great to see Aren, we had seen Narek on our first day in Yerevan. We had a quick chat. They brought a young gentleman with them who asked to see his brother Chris, who is with us on the trip as a counselor. I asked him if he was interested in joining his brother on the mission trip next year, and he said he was an in-care student with the AEUNA! So exciting. I've seen his name, Nico, in the reports by Badveli Ron (field pastor of the AEUNA) and the ministry committee of the AEUNA. So exciting to meet an in-care student I've been praying for.

There was one woman who had a BP reading of over 200 for her systolic, and over 160 for her diastolic. Mathew took it several times and then manually. At the end of

triage Nancy mentioned that the woman was complaining of a headache, was feeling weak and did not think she could go upstairs to see the Dr. We were concerned about a stroke. I went upstairs and Lucineh came to examine her at triage. She worked on her for a while, they called her son, the Dr suggested that she needed to go to a hospital. About 30 min later, to make a long story short, we called for her son and we felt she needed to go to the hospital. She was given Nifedipine, BP came down to around 190, she, or her son on her behalf, refused to go to the hospital and went home. As Arpi says, she's a ticking bomb.

There are plenty with very high blood pressure or diabetes. Lucy, a nurse who also teaches at universities, gives classes on how to manage high BP and/or diabetes. If a nurse feels the patient can benefit from the class, they go to see her. I believe she taught around 70 people today.

I continued at crowd control on the first floor. Bruce switched between lab and crowd control at the pharmacy. He said you need to be very firm at pharmacy. They come in with their scripts and they have to sit and wait for it to be filled, but are anxious and don't stay seated.

It was a long and tiring day today. Everyone is feeling it. But very fulfilling.

It's a shame the weather has been rainy. We're unable to go for walks after we return to the hotel.

Lost power at 18:30, and we start dinner at 19:30.

Back at the hotel at 20:15.

There's small pockets of good conversations with team members. 🤗

Pictures:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/kpKoEpiPCjk9vynR9>



Christine

Friday, July 4, 2025

Happy birthday Laura!

Happy July 4th to those back home. There's so much to be thankful for.

Three things I forgot yesterday:

Some of us are feeling the side effects of eating apricots. 🙄

In previous years when a team has come to Vanadzor, the week is split between Vanadzor and Stepanavan. Yesterday there were two large van loads with the pastor from Stepanavan. Bruce and I were last three in 2023. It was good to see the pastor and some of the people from that time.

And lastly, there was a group from Berd, which is our sister church with my home church of AMCC (Armenian Martyrs' Cong. Church in Havertown, PA). I recognized the pastor from two years ago when they came with a carload. Bruce and I will be going to Berd next week.

This morning we will check out of the hotel at 08:30, this is #5 for me, and leave Vanadzor after a half day of clinics.

Our team morning devotional was from Matthew 25:31-40. We then attended the worship service in the sanctuary and Dr Chris gave his testimony.

We are scheduled to see 76 patients. 385 total in two full days of clinics. As each station finished, we started to tear down the clinic. Vitals would be first, then triage. Urine has to stay active in case a Dr orders a 10 strip, etc. You get the idea.

Batteries have to come out of the transmitter and receiver units, the ones for translating the worship service to English for our team. Team members help as

needed. Things get packed and moved towards pharmacy. All the leftover medications get boxed up.

We finally had lunch around 15:00. Everyone was hungry. Badveli David thanked us and said I would like to repeat what sister Christine shared yesterday on Matthew 28:18-20. 😊

I had ordered a cake for Laura through Gayane. I requested lots of berries, since Laura likes that. We sang happy birthday to Laura after our lunch.

Said our goodbyes to the local team and got on the bus. Gina sat with me again and it's wonderful to get to know each other better. Levon (dentist) said they had a total of 185 children in Vanadzor.

We passed by the Moncler factory. I found it online and their items are very expensive. Apparently you can buy items here before they get the tag in Italy.

Around 16:30 we drive through Dilijan.

We stopped at Lake Sevan for 45 min. Once I got on the bus in Vanadzor, I really felt tired. As if my mind and body knew I had to have energy for the 5 days and once it was over, I felt it. Conversations on the bus were repeated in that this week went by too fast. We think it's because we had 3 half clinic days.

Since it was cold and I've been to Lake Sevan 2x and climbed to the top, I stayed behind and took a nap.

Back on the bus, it's almost a 5 min drive and we arrive at Yasaman restaurant by Lake Sevan. I was sitting across from Saro who is a resident Dr from Armenia, was Dr Al's translator. I asked him at dinner what types of cases he saw in Vanadzor. They did mostly OBGYN issues since that's Dr Al's specialty. They saw many patients who had hysterectomies, many with masses, a person who had Rose Handler's disease, also known as Sporotrichosis, in their wrist. Their last patient was a 17 year

old married woman who was 16 weeks pregnant. They did an ultrasound on her (wish I could have seen) and the baby looks healthy. 😊

Unfortunately, Drs have seen a handful of women each day in both cities who are victims of domestic abuse. The evil in that breaks my heart. A marriage is the most intimate human relationship and to abuse that is wrong on many levels. Please pray for those marriages, that husband and wife be drawn to Jesus, that they see the sin, that they repent and be transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Once back on the bus, Al gave an opportunity for those who wanted to share something, and several people spoke. ❤️

As we get near Yerevan (about 1.5 hour drive), some Armenian music is played and there's dancing!

Arrive at Ani Grand around 20:30. Al & Sue, Chris, Bruce & I have a short meeting.

Lexi had wanted to do something to acknowledge July 4th. Gayane got sparklers for her. Laura joined her and they went out to light it while we were meeting. I don't think the sparklers worked well.

I was too tired to work on this on Friday night to send.

Pictures:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/kpKoEpiPCjk9vynR9>



Christine

Saturday, July 5, 2025

I had a very detailed dream about auntie. She and I were getting ready to leave, I'm unsure where we were going. She passed out. We were in the US, but as she passed

out, Lexi came and administered an IV made of water, milk, and orange juice. !!
The expiration date of the milk was Sept 29th. Unsure why that was significant. I was concerned as to which hospital they would take her and they said one in Center City. I wanted her to be taken to Bryn Mawr, (a town near home) but they couldn't do it. They got her into a room to do tests and she was concerned if she was going to get lunch. My alarm woke me up. (My dream was very detailed, I've summarized. Lexi and auntie were paired up in Sisian. Lexi's applied to medical school, one of them being Temple University in Philly).

After breakfast at the hotel, we left the hotel around 09:30 towards Victory Park. The bus feels empty since we do not have the team members from Armenia. There's nice views of Yerevan from Victory Park, but Mt Ararat was fully covered by clouds. Could not see any part of the mountain. We got good laughs over some team members climbing into the tank.

Today is Constitution Day in Armenia, which is a public holiday in Armenia, commemorating the 1995 adoption of the Constitution. Museums are closed today.

Next stop was Tsitsernagapert.

<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tsitsernakaberd>

There were only a few visitors, maybe because the museum there was closed? So it felt like the place was ours. Gayane had red and white carnations for us to place at the eternal fire. Arpi asked Ari to lead us in singing the Lord's prayer and that was very meaningful.

We then stopped at St Gregory the Illuminator cathedral which was built in 2001. There was a service going on.

Since museums are closed, we have some extra time. We will also go to Gum. And I did not know, and I asked if we could go there since it's very close to the cathedral and was told I leaked the surprise. 😬

We find the vendor who we purchased items from in December. We buy some grape and pomegranate soujouk as well as some bastugh.

Lunch at Anteb. More mante! 😊

I look through Karina's watercolor book again. She's so gifted! Check out the pictures she let me take of some of her watercolors.

Each year I've seen amazing crocheted items for sale at the Yerevan airport. Made by Sharan. Turns out their store is next to Anteb. So many fun and beautiful items. I just took pictures.

Back at the hotel around 14:30, we have a bit of free time before the celebratory dinner with the team and the Armenia AMAA team. Most people go to Vernissage, for those who don't know what it is:

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yerevan_Vernissage

A few of us get fresh squeezed juice from the corner store by our hotel.

You may wonder why I've taken a picture of a toilet. Ani Grand is a very nice hotel and even in very nice restaurants, I've noticed the toilet seat does not match the shape of the bowl. The seat is shorter than the bowl. It's odd.

I hand wash a few pairs of socks. I know, maybe that was TMI. 😂

We met in the lobby at 17:30 to leave for dinner at Taverna Yerevan. There's a live band, dancing, and a live show of the origin of Armenia. The story is: Ara the handsome, from 8th century BC, he was so handsome that the story of him went to Shamiram of Assyria. Ara was already married, so he says no to Shamiram's offer to marry him. So she decides to conquer Armenia. Ara is killed, and when Shamiram hears that he was killed, she takes him to a mountain and there were special animals there that licked his wounds and brought him back to life. 🙄 That mountain is called Ara, since it has the shape of a man.

While our small team was in Sisian, pictures and videos were taken by the AMAA staff and they made a short video.

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=1146429864194349&id=100064820375618

We say our goodbyes to the Armenian team and leave the restaurant at 22:00. Starting at 02:00 tomorrow morning, people will start heading to the airport. Some are staying a few days to sightsee.

Once we arrive at the hotel, Bruce and I spend another hour saying goodbye to most of the US team.

The young members were all very mature in their faith which was very exciting and encouraging to see. Being one team had benefits in that the team really bonded.

I was also encouraged that an Indonesian couple, Joshua & Early, who are friends and colleagues of Lucy, came to serve! They admired how Armenians feel tied to each other.

Pictures:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/kpKoEpiPCjk9vynR9>



Christine

Sunday, July 6, 2025

This is the Lord's day.

Woke up a few times, finally got out of bed at 09:00.

Yesterday I mentioned that I hand washed socks. The detail I forgot to mention, which is why I wanted to share that, was that there were Gadoo fur strands in the socks. 🙄

We will go to worship service at the Evangelical church at Baghramyan which starts at 11:00. Laura & Nancy will be leaving for the airport at 13:00 from church. We will see my family again today. They are active in the church.

If you noticed there were a few pictures of many soldiers when we returned to Yerevan on Friday. Bruce found this:

Thousands Rally For Jailed Tycoon In Yerevan

<https://share.google/Sz7De6cZUIfVow6DN>

Church service at 11:00. Chris, Barb, Edma and Lexi are also here. I translate for Nancy and Laura via typing on my phone since the church was out of translation units. There was a group of 30 Christians from Germany who had come to worship with us, so we were out of translation units.

Badveli Avetik Khatchateryan, minister to the ECA, gave the message.

After Laura and Nancy leave we head to the SAS at the Baghramyan district of Yerevan, which is near my family's home. Sevan rides with Bruce and me in a taxi. Fortunately Bruce still has the Yandex app on his phone so we can order one.

Our driver is very spirited. 😊 He had much to say. He was born in Armenia, but lived in Ukraine for 20 years, and returned when the war started. He had much to say about Pachinyan, Erdogan, Putin, Trump, Biden, Israel, Iran. He also mentioned how people in Armenia have changed since the last war with Azerbaijan. And not for the better.

We had a hearty lunch at SAS. I really like the fresh bread with all the seeds on top. Auntie asks what I've heard from our children, how are they, how's Gadoo. We tell

her and she's upset. Sevan has a positive perspective in that we were blessed to have her for 20 years.

Vartan & Sevan, Bruce & I leave SAS around 14:45. Headed to Saghmosavank. Saghmos = Psalm.

Passed through Achapnyak, Soviet era buildings.

Drive by mountain Ara which I wrote about yesterday. You can see the profile of a face while laying down. We're on roads we have not been on.

We arrive at Saghmosavank around 15:30. It is a very busy, narrow road and cars parked on both sides. I would not want to drive here. It is beautiful! As we enter the church we notice that there's a baptism that just finished. We get blessed as the priest walks by us, he puts his hand on our head and says a blessing. We also notice that there's a wedding that will start.

We noticed four team members whom we had said goodbye to at the church. It's great to see them again.

The inside reminds me of Geghart, but it's bigger.

By the cathedral there's a gorge, and Vartan says it's Armenia's Grand Canyon. Beautiful.

We walk the grounds a bit, the place is very busy. We then head back towards the car. It's a challenge to get out of the parking spot, uturn, and get out! I'll mention again, I would not want to be driving this.

We drive towards the Alphabet Monument. We find the letters that start our name and take some pictures. We then hike to the new marble/glass church that's being built. It's not attractive IMO. Vartan shows us some purple flowers that a man is picking that he says is used for sore throats.

We then head towards Aruch. He says there's something unique about the cathedral there. On the drive Vartan buys some soujouk and fresh apricots from a vendor on the side of the road. There's another person starting a BBQ. Vartan says that guy cooks lamb and sells kebab. We see a few lambs in a small area. They're ready to be sold or perhaps slaughtered for kebab.

Vartan says it's a very old cathedral, commissioned between 661-682AD. The dome of the cathedral is gone. I later find on Wikipedia that:
Architecturally it is one of the most important Armenian churches of the Middle Ages and also one of the largest.

I feel there's death all around me. It's very uncomfortable. There's even a dead bird on the ground by the trash can and a dead bird in the trash can. I wonder what the people in this community do, with no church and no pastor.

The grounds also have hundreds of black ant homes with thousands and thousands of ants! Took a few pictures, zoom in and you'll see it!

Heard that Laura and Nancy landed in Paris. They will spend a bit of time there. She mentioned that on the flight to Paris, "They called a medical emergency on the flight, I was the only one. There was a woman with a headache and high blood pressure - she went to medical in the airport when we landed. It was a little chaotic and hard because they were translating Armenian to French to English. She'll be okay. She was very sweet."

Enter Yerevan arrived 19:30, Mt Ararat looks so big from this direction.

We buy a watermelon, some cookies that are famous in Aleppo from the bakery across their home. They buy fresh bread every day from that bakery. We walk towards the hotel where auntie is staying.

We have a feast of a picnic with our watermelon, cherries, apricots, blackberries, bread, cheese, and cookies.

By 21:30 we're in our Yandex taxi heading back to the hotel. Run into Lexi in the lobby.

Pictures:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/kpKoEpiPCjk9vynR9>



Christine

Monday, July 7, 2025

I will treat myself and my cousin's wife Sevan to a Kobido technique facial massage. I've never had one but our main translator, Ani, was mentioning on Saturday night how she gets these and how fabulous they are.

The place is called Eveil, it's down the street from Ani Grand. The owner's name is Uujw (Ahs-ya). She's born in Yerevan, went to France to study, met an Armenian Frenchman, got married, they moved back to Yerevan and opened her place a month ago.

She massaged my face, head, neck and upper shoulders. It was amazing. Peter and Catherine, you would love this. Would really like to come back, Lord willing, next year.

I took some of her business cards to the Ani Grand. They should have her as a recommendation if a guest is interested.

Bruce goes to the drop off place for the campers returning from the week long Camp Shoghig. Paleny was there this past week. He had not seen her yet.

Walk through Vernissage to get an item for Catherine. It's empty, and none of the flea market vendors are there.

We walk around Yerevan. Eat some lehmejune. We run into some people from the medical trip at various places. I believe those left are all leaving tomorrow.

Tonight Bruce was scheduled to be the main speaker at a Postgres users group meeting in Yerevan. He gave two talks: *Explaining the Postgres Query Organizer*, and *Beyond Joins and Indexes*. This group was started in December 2024 when we were last here and it's growing.

Vartan came to hear Bruce and then drove us back. The talk was in an office building in Nork Marsh area of Yerevan. A new area for us. Check out the beautiful view from the window of the office building.

We leave Yerevan tomorrow morning. We were talking that it would have been nice to have a few more days here.

Pictures:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/kpKoEpiPCjk9vynR9>



Christine

Tuesday, July 8, 2025

The adventure continues. We checked out of our 6th hotel and are on our way.

While planning for this trip, I reached out to Anna at AMAA Armenia and Anahit of ECA, she's in charge of Camp Shoghig, indicating that Bruce and I could stay an extra week and if we could be of any help. I mentioned that AMCC (our home church) is paired with the church in Berd. They came up with a plan. We will be able to help at both locations.

We were picked up by Manvel, who works for the AMAA at 09:30 for the 3.5h ride to Berd. We are to help with the daily vacation Bible school (DVBS), help at the AMAA

soup kitchen, which is a day care for the elderly in the community. And let's see what else the Lord opens up.

This is also good for Bruce since he's now serving on the missions committee at AMCC. It will give him a better understanding of the work needed/being done in Berd.

So far we're on the same roads from when we returned from Vanadzor. All horseshoe at this point. Our driver passes many cars. 🤔 One thing to pass cars on a straight road, but it's daring at horseshoe turns.

At 10:55 we arrive in Dilijan. From here on, the roads and scenery are new to us since we'll be heading east.

I ask Manvel if he drives this route often, and he says yes. There some from Artsakh who have resettled in Berd since the climate, landscape, and even dialect is similar. He goes back and forth often taking supplies.

Around 11:30, we pass through Ijevan. Manvel points out the building that serves as the Armenian Evangelical church here and the AMAA center. (See picture with red arrow) The trees are very different here, mostly pines. We see a market in the center, an open farmers market.

This last stretch of road, H37, is older, bumpy, and parallel to the Azerbaijani border.

We stop for a few minutes at a view point. The scenery is stunning.

I've been feeling nauseous for a while, I don't get carsick, but the roads are so windy and he's been driving fast. I fight it, but thankfully I had a plastic bag with some leftover food and I get it in time. Manvel pulls over and I step out. I'm also wondering what our elevation is since we went up so many mountains.

We arrive at the hotel with Badveli Seno, whom we've met before in Vanadzor, and two women, Ester and Gohar waiting to greet us. 🙄 All I want to do is to lay down. Movses must have said something, so they figure out we need a rest and get us to our room. I hear the owner saying he'll bring some tea. I have no interest. Ester puts her phone number in my phone and I head for the bed.

We lay down for about an hour. I feel better. But my head is still throbbing. I'm reminded of the verse "Great is the Lord who delights in the welfare of His servant" (Psalm 35:27b)

The views from the room are spectacular. This hotel reminds me of the one in Sisian.

I text Ester that we're up, as she instructed us. As we wait, the tea looks inviting and we heat up the water. There's also a decent size bowl full of red berry jam. I put some in the black tea and it's delicious!

Ester arrives to pick us up. It's a few minutes walk to the church. They have just finished with their daily VBS, and are taking a group picture. I recognized a woman who had come to the clinic in Vanadzor. She is delighted that I recognize her and we talk. She tells me how she studied journalism and was a high school teacher for 50 years! She's very active at the church and is here to pick up her granddaughter, who is adorable and we talk briefly.

We then join the team meeting with the leaders. The table is full of older teens and young adults who are helping. They review what worked well today and what needs work. The VBS runs from 10:00-15:00! With lunch. For 7-11 year olds. They have 47-50 children coming. These are the children that did not get to go to Camp Shoghig, which returned yesterday.

The focus today was God takes care of us. Badveli Seno asks, Did the children understand that through your care for them? Good question. Verse focus was Matthew 6:26.

Theme for Monday was God is with us.

Theme for Wednesday, God knows our struggles & needs. Verse Matthew 6:8b

ՄԱՏԹԷՈՍ 6:8ա վասն զի ձեր Յայրը ձեզի պէտք եղածը գիտէ՝ դեռ դուք իրմէ չխնդրած»:

After the team meeting, Ester takes us on a tour of the Shogh center, which she runs, since it's opening in 2023. 30 children come from 13:30-17:00. They have activities and extra classes. They have space for a maximum of 30 children.

10 infants are helped through the infant formula program.

The space is great. She shows me the basement level which was used as a shelter. Hard to hear that.

We then see the soup kitchen which provides meals 5x/week year round except the month of August! They provide means for 35 families, which make up 65 individuals. Homemade meals are made from scratch by the kitchen staff. See video for how it's picked up. 😊

Bruce and I then go to the sanctuary which is decorated for VBS. I help cut some printed fish so they can be used for decoration.

They also review the songs for tomorrow. I sing along. So much fun to have these songs in Armenian.

I ask about where they get their curriculum. It's Anahit! I'm not surprised.

Badveli Seno then says he's going to take us somewhere. I'm a bit hesitant (half jokingly), we get in the car. I find out Gohar is Badveli's wife. Garik, Ester's husband, meets us on the road. They take us to Soran Botanical garden, about 10 min drive, which was built in 1976. It's beautiful. As we walk, we come across a building and as we enter, we realize it's a restaurant and we eat on the terrace. The views are

breathhtaking. Bruce and I are in awe. What an amazing Father we have who has created such beauty. We can't say enough of the magnificence of what we see.

We eat a delicious pork kebab and the conversation is delightful. The six of us immediately connect.

We don't want to leave the spot and they suggest we walk a bit in the garden. As we walk they direct us toward a cliff area and it's hard to imagine the views could be any better, but they are. We could have stayed much longer, but the sun was starting to get low and there was more they wanted to show us.

The whole place is heavenly. The place is open and free. There are families here and there.

As we leave, Garik and Ester head home and Badveli Seno and Gohar drive us to the hotel. I ask him about how he started here. He was the pastor at Ijevan, and in 2001 he started coming here with the other pastor from Ijevan. They started with a camp for the children. By 2002, there were enough families that he and the other pastor would come on Saturdays to do a service. He moved here almost 8 years ago to be the full time pastor. He talked about the challenges. There are up to 90 children in Sunday school. The difficulty is retaining as they become adults. The men go to the military and the women marry. He said sometimes the husbands won't let their wives come to church. Then there are some who leave Berd for Yerevan. Very difficult.

He also mentioned that since the church is really a purchased home, and does not look like a church, there's reluctance from some individuals to attend. His desire is for a bigger building that looks like a church.

They are doing wonderful work here. Please pray for them. Pray that they be encouraged.

Bruce has some work to do as I've been writing/editing this.

Oh! Get this, the hotel we're staying at, it's named "No Problem"!!

Pictures:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/kpKoEpiPCjk9vynR9>



Christine

Wednesday, July 9, 2025

Forgot to mention on Monday, you know you've been gone too long when the travel size toothpaste finishes. Bruce and I aren't even sharing!

Heard this morning from Laura & Nancy that they arrived safely. And Chris/Barb/Edma/Lexi that they arrived.

Something unusual if you've never been here, they use what we'd call tissues as dinner napkins.

We're repurposing our AMAA medical mission name tags for this week. It works since it doesn't specify "medical mission".

I'll have to remember to look at the night sky tonight.

There's a woman working on her garden this morning. I can see her from our hotel room.

Bruce and I walk over to the church to be there at 09:30. The kitchen staff at the Shogh center is providing breakfast for the VBS staff. When I say VBS staff it means church volunteers. As the children come in, one of the VBS staff is dressed like a queen/king (based on the sex of the person) and is asking the child to say yesterday's Golden verse (memory verse) to enter. Cute idea.

They start at 10:00 with morning stretches, which we join, and the theme song. We then go into the sanctuary, which has seats for 52, to see a skit, sing songs, hear the Bible lesson, have an application to the Bible lesson, work on the new memory verse. Every corner of the sanctuary is used.

The theme song is Բռնիր քո ալիքը | Catch your wave

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YRJs5-E_zk

See the waves of awakening coming,
That will change our hearts and lives
Are you ready to spread your sails,
And receive the wind of the Holy Spirit?
Are you ready to enter this process,
To dive into the waves of God?

Catch your wave,
Catch your wave.

The mighty waves await you,
But you are not alone.
Our Lord is with you.

Are you ready to open your eyes
And receive the wind of the Holy Spirit?
Are you ready to enter into that process,
To dive into the waves of God?

Catch your wave. 3x

The waves of awakening await you,
That you may dive into them with new power,
And may see the Glory of God in your life.

Catch your wave. 3x

We then go to games, then lunch. During games I help Gohar get all the items ready for the craft. During lunch I find out that they will do this again next week! For another 45-50 children. I know from working on VBS back home that it takes a lot of energy. I can't imagine doing this for two weeks. 5 hours each day.

I also find out that the AMAA internship which is going on now will be arriving in Berd over the weekend. The team will be divided into four.

One group will help with VBS.

One group will help with the senior soup kitchen.

One group will do visitation.

One group will go to neighboring Tavush, where there's some Artsakh families and help them with their fields and home repair.

Gohar is very talented and showed me pictures last night of items she's baked and various handwork. Today she brings in a piece that she's working on. Very impressive. She's drawn the image on maybe 40 count cloth, or more? And then the stitching is in various stitches. Please see the pictures. It's showing Mary & Joseph taking Jesus to the temple and Simeon and Anna are there.

While we're talking, this is right before lunch, I ask her if she knows anything about the "Berd bears". We have three at home. These are bears made out of fine crochet. It turns out one of the women who work in the kitchen, Tamar, was the person who started Berd bears! What are the odds of that? God takes care of so many details. They will take me to the place where they come to crochet. I've added two pictures here from the three I have. She says if you get a picture of the tag, it will show who made it.

Bruce finds out during the morning that he can't come home after Hong Kong & Shenzhen, he also needs to go to Singapore. He goes back to the hotel to change his flights, etc. Lord willing, if there's no further changes, he'll be home on July 23rd.

Clarification on the apostolic churches here. There's three, but only one is functioning and it's a new church across the street from the Evangelical church.

After the craft, I have a good conversation with Gohar. She shares some personal items and I'm thankful for the opportunity to listen and to pray for her.

After VBS is done, we have our team meeting and by 16:30, we are in our room. We rest for a bit and Ester calls and they're ready for us. They have a surprise for us.

Badveli Seno & Gohar pick us up in their car and we follow Garik & Ester, and their 5 year old son Aren. We drive towards Navur, then head to Chinchin, a real tiny village. They take us to a spot west of the center of Chinchin.

The roads for the last few minutes are a trail and we get out and walk. They take us to a view that is breathless. We thought yesterday was amazing, today was even more so. Both Bruce and I were amazed at the beauty. I'll just let the pictures speak for themselves.

They had brought some food and we had a picnic. Tonight is a night we won't forget.

Gohar picks some wildflowers which are good for tea.

It's a full moon. Won't see any stars. 🙄

We stop by one of the old churches in Berd on the way back. Badveli Seno sings a sharagan which is the words of Titus 3:5 He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, (Titus 3:5)

ՏԻՏՈՍ 3:5 Ո՛չ թէ արդարութեան գործերէն՝ որոնք մենք ըրինք, հապա իր ողորմութեան համաձայն մեզ փրկեց նորէն ծնանելու աւազանին միջոցաւ ու Սուրբ Հոգիին նորոգելովը:

AMEN!

Pictures:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/kpKoEpiPCjk9vynR9>



Christine

Thursday, July 10, 2025

Not a good night. This paragraph you may want to skip. After my 8th trip to the bathroom, I took a pill that Dr Chris had given me. Bruce did not go as frequently. We're wondering if it's from the watermelon that we ate last night.

I had set my alarm but did not hit the start button. 😞 So we got up at 10:15. Not our finest hour, but it makes sense since we were up so often this night.

Ester was concerned and there was a text from her. We quickly got ready and headed over. Turns out Gohar also was sick. 🤒

Today's focus is God hears us. Psalm 50:15 was the Golden verse. "and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me."

I took a lot of videos of the children since we're leaving tomorrow morning to Camp Shoghig in Hankavan.

After the time in the sanctuary, Ester said we would need to go in the morning to the house where the Berd bears are made. We got a taxi, and Ester, Gohar and Bruce & I drove over. It's about a 5 min drive. It's all over unpaved roads.

We arrived at the house and there is also a meticulous garden. The ladies are expecting us. They've branched to more things than the bears. They only had five bears for sale. They had lots of small items. Interestingly, they're getting orders from Europe for celebrity finger puppets. See pictures. Also lots of animals. I had so much fun looking through and I bought lots of gifts.

We also noticed the cutest octopus, and I thought it would be a good gift for the VBS helpers and the kitchen staff. Ester looked at our group picture to count how many we were. See picture.

We went back to have lunch, then crafts, then the closing portion of the day. The children also get a Grand Candy ice cream cone as they leave. Yes, Linda, some of us are also getting ice cream daily!

I found an AMAA booklet from 2016. There's a few pages about my ancestor Aram Bey Cholakian (mother's side)!

Then was the team meeting and at the end I gave the octopus.

Tonight, they planned to take the staff to a local park for dinner. We had take out and we went to this park in Berd. Very interesting. A family has purchased some land, built it as a park. There are grills, a sink with running water, tables, benches, and a children's play area. All for free for the community. You just call them to reserve the space. How cool is that?

The weather is so pleasant. We ate. Danced. I learned some new, more challenging line dances! Played some games and then everyone said goodnight. Ester and Badveli Seno have a wonderful working relationship. So good to see.

Bruce and I had wanted to walk a bit through the center of Berd, since we had not seen it yet. Gohar wanted to guide us. So we walked. We saw the stores they shop at. They then invited us to their home. She has a beautiful room full of many plants and many African violets. We got to learn a bit more about them.

We were only to have a cup of tea, but you know Armenian women, she set the coffee table full of items. Her ghata was the best we've had. So fluffy. If you recall she had shown me pictures of things she bakes and hand makes.

Gohar also loves to cook and a few times she mentioned how she prefers the seasonings of the Armenian foods from Lebanon and Syria.

At 21:30, we said we needed to get back. We walked towards the hotel. We see the full moon rising, it's so beautiful. They showed us around a bit more and I had the chance to pray for them. What a blessing.

This hotel room has a pull out couch and it's been great for Bruce to work on his laptop as I write to you.

Pictures:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/kpKoEpiPCjk9vynR9>



Christine

Friday, July 11, 2025

There is so much plastic that is trashed. All the water bottles for one. They are of the thick variety. We're a family that recycles as much as possible so this is unusual for me.

They repurpose the large soda plastic bottles for water to put in the fridge to get cold or when water is cut off. At Badveli Seno and Gohar's home, in the hallway, there was a table with at least 10 soda bottles full of water. She said that was for when the water is cut off for the residents of that floor.

On our walk yesterday they showed me some buildings with bullet holes. From the war time with Azerbaijan.

We also saw a park in the town center. It had various climbing apparatus for children, swings, etc. But it also had ping pong tables and there were youth playing. What a great idea!

While we were sightseeing outside of Yerevan with Vartan & Sevan on Sunday, he mentioned that public things are not defaced / damaged in Armenia. I have noticed that and it's admirable.

The plastic plates here are very thin. When we were in Yerevan having the picnic with auntie outside of her hotel room, as you cut into the watermelon, the plastic fork made a hole in the plate. So you'd have watermelon juice dripping on you. 🤔

We've opened the hotel room windows regularly and there's no screens and no bugs flying in. The breeze is lovely.

We arrive at the church/Shogh center around 09:30. The children are already arriving and saying their Golden verse (memory verse) from yesterday to enter.

I talk to one of the moms who is a group leader and has been helping to teach the daily Bible lesson. She says she started here in 2002 with VBS when Badveli Seno would host camps. She's been active here since then and of course especially since the church opened about eight years ago. She's the Sunday school, equivalent to a superintendent for us. How beautiful is that! The fruit of Badveli Seno's labor. She has two children. One is old enough to attend VBS, she's seven. Her son is three, and is disappointed that he can't come.

(Badveli = pastor)

Garik arrives with the daily fresh bread for the VBS and stays a bit to talk to us. We say goodbye. 😞 Ester also gifts us a package of dried herbs from their garden for tea. ❤️ They have a travel business, his work, it's called Zovak. (I asked about the name, he says the marketing person suggested since zov = cool, as in temperature) They run a hotel and they live in one of the rooms of the hotel with their son and his parents. They will host the AMAA internship for a day of sightseeing. I love how this young couple ministers together.

Check out their Facebook page. Visit them! Especially if you like to hike.

<https://m.facebook.com/zovakguesthouse/>

Gohar brings a package of her ghata to take home. ❤️ One of the reasons her ghata is so good must be because she uses pork fat instead of butter. I'm sure her skilled hands have a lot to do with it. You shouldn't overwork the dough as it won't be fluffy. 😊 She also brings one package for the staff.

For those who don't know what ghata is:

<https://mission-food.com/gata/>

I have no idea if the above recipe is good or not. I have a recipe at home and I've made it once.

We say our goodbyes and head to the hotel for our luggage and driver. Ester calls to say change in driver. Manvel, who drove us here on Tuesday will be taking us at 12:30. We were originally supposed to go at 10:30 by taxi, but that got changed. This gives me time to unpack our suitcases and rearrange things. I have had no time to do that since we arrived. Bruce catches up on some work stuff.

You need a support team to be gone from home three weeks for me, 32 days for Bruce. Shout out to our adult children back home for taking care of things and to you for your prayers!

We ask Manvel if we can stop by the church in Ijevan. We drive right through the town. We get there at 14:15, but the church which is also in the same building as the AMAA Shogh center is closed. He had tried to reach Badveli Albert while we were getting close, but there was no answer. We walk the grounds of the church, which used to be a movie theatre before it was renovated to look like a church. It's lovely from the outside. There's also a fenced yard which is helpful. It's right by a park. I notice the back of a boat right outside the church and I wonder if they're having VBS. Sea, ocean creatures, boats are part of the decoration this year for VBS. The theme song is also about God can take care of the waves in your life.

We also see the river that cuts through the center of Ijevan.

In Ijevan I notice a store named Fresh, and next to it, phonetically named Ֆրեշ (that's not a word in Armenian). 😊 Fresh in Armenian is բարձր, pronounced tahrm.

Terms of area, Armenia = Maryland. But each region is very different in topography.

In the Tavush region, all along the ride, there are cows grazing on the side of the road. Manvel says the owners let them graze freely and call them back in at night. I was surprised that the cows were so close, right at the edge of the roads, and were they not afraid? He says we are more afraid of them. If we accidentally hit them, the car is totaled. I guess it's like deer to us in PA.

Over a stretch of about 10 min drive, we see many stands on the side of the road selling corn. All the stands are similar, some are empty, some have a vendor. You rent out the stand to sell corn. We stop and buy an ear each. It's so delicious!

Few miles before Dilijan, Kesab restaurant, owners from Syria.

We arrive in Dilijan, after we pass through the over 2K tunnel, the route will be different from what we took on Tuesday. It will also mark the end of the Tavush region.

This will be the third time going through this tunnel. The fume smells inside are very bad. There are no fans to aerate the fumes. Manvel says he's seen tunnels in Georgia and they're well lit and well ventilated. Unfortunately this was not built as such. It does save on travel time extensively.

As we drive by Lake Sevan, Bruce sees several stands selling orange bottles. We ask what they are and it's the juice of sea buckthorns (see picture). This fruit only grows in this part of Armenia, right by Lake Sevan.

We arrive at Camp a bit before 16:30. It is so different from last year. So much construction has taken place. Badveli Vartan who is the pastor at the Vanadzor church shows us our room. He's the pastor at Camp this week, and his wife is also here. We're in the new building. It's very nice. We put our things in and then he

guides us to the cafeteria for some fruit and we get caught up with the changes at camp.

The toilet seats here match the toilet bowl!

Camp is now for six days so they can accommodate 230 children instead of 185. They have one adult for eight children. The camp is free for the children, all funded through the AMAA. If you'd like to send a child to camp see:

<https://amaa.org/summer-camps-in-armenia-artsakh/>

We then walk around and we're really in wonder at the amount of changes since last summer.

We meet Arman who's the, I don't know his proper title, but he oversees all of Camp Shoghig. We had met him last year but we did not know that he's Badveli Seno and Gohar's son-in-law!

Dr Gor is here. He came to help Dr Emma who's the Dr this week since early on this week there were many children who had an intestinal bug. All under control now.

Everyone is asking if I'll come back for the grand opening on Sept 28th.

Dinner is at 19:30 and I recognize some of the leaders from last year and they come up to us to hug.

A group of campers come up to me and say they remember me from Sisian! They had come to get their teeth varnished. They ask me how old I am. 🤔

We then go to the closing part of the evening. There's singing, they sing the theme song from last year as well. Great to hear it again! There's lots of skits, games, and talent show.

We finish there around 21:50. There's fireworks at the camp next door.

Badveli Vartan asks me if I'll lead a 10 min devotional tomorrow morning at 07:15. I say yes. I don't think I can say no. I ask him for an Armenian Bible. We walk back with Anahit. It's great to talk with her and have a few moments together. I show her the crosses that they gifted us last year from camp, made from fuse beads. They've been on my backpack since last summer.

As we get in our room, I'm thinking over what to share tomorrow. I open one of my daily devotionals which I haven't had time to read. Today is on God will give you the words. Do not worry about how you are to speak out what you are to say. Thank you Jesus.

As we get ready for bed, I hear the AMAA internship team arrive. It's 20:40. I open the door and I see Araz from our church!

Pictures:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/kpKoEpiPCjk9vynR9>



Christine

Saturday, July 12, 2025

I mentioned yesterday about the Ijevan church, I heard that the AMAA team that did the work in Ijevan, to change the theater to a sanctuary, was headed by Vicken from my church, AMCC! That's cool.

We woke up a bit before 07:00. I didn't sleep well. We got ready and walked over to the cafeteria building where the devotions would be held.

This time was for the volunteers who are here for several weeks. Badveli Vartan asked me to prepare something for max 10 min. They had a few announcements, and then it was me. I shared from John 15, the beginning verses. About abiding in

Christ, about bearing fruit that is kingdom fruit and how apart from Him we can do nothing. We then closed with prayers, and then coffee.

Had a chance to talk with Anahit and Badveli. Anahit loves The Chosen, and she had asked about Bruce and me being extras for season five. We showed her where to look for us. She was very excited.

Do you ever see a face you recognize but can't put a finger on from where? I'm good with faces but not names. I'm working on it. Anyway, there was a gentleman I saw last night at the evening worship and I could not figure out where. It turns out he's Hagop Israyelyan from Vanadzor (he was there the week of our medical mission) but is studying at Near East School of Theology (seminary where my dad got his M.Div. in Beirut, Lebanon). He comes back to Armenia during the summer. He thanked the medical team and said how successful it was.

The children would have morning stretches / exercises at 08:00. Badveli asked if I would lead the devotional time for the kitchen staff which would be at 08:30. We did the stretches / exercises then Bruce and I went back to the cafeteria. Badveli had said it would be good to do the same passage.

There are two volunteer staff who have dressed up as sumo wrestlers for the stretch time! Check out the pictures. They seem to like these puffed up costumes, since there were a few last night as well.

There are many women who work in the kitchen and I recognized many from last year. Many nodded their heads as I talked about bearing fruit and what type of fruit. I thanked them for serving the children and staff with such love, patience, and care. Reminded them that the Lord sees their good work.

After that time we head back towards the building where our rooms are and Anahit, Badveli Vartan, Henry Dabbo (who's chaperoning the AMAA internship group) and I have some time to talk until breakfast at 09:30.

Here's how the cafeteria works. You sit with your small group at a table. The food is on the table. After you're done eating, you clean up your table. The bread baskets go to a particular spot. The leftover food gets collected at a particular spot. The mugs and tea kettles (they serve tea with breakfast) a certain spot and the plates and flatware to another spot.

The small groups are eight children to one adult. Those adults come from the churches that send the children. Those adults go back with the children. Then there are older teens / young adults who stay for several weeks. Those volunteers help with skits, games, etc.

There are a few men in their 40s who have come with the children. I speak to one and I thank him since it's such a great role model for the boys. He agrees, and says that's why he does it. I've noticed that the boys are watching Bruce to see if he's cleaning up, singing, doing motions, etc. The children at Camp this week are the 8-11 year olds.

I meet several of the internship group members. Some I know, some are new faces.

I wonder how the young adults memorize their lines so well for the skits. I find out later on that they start practicing in early November for the following summer months! They gather either in person or zoom regularly by category.

They wanted to drive us to the airport departing here at 20:00. It's a bit early, but we're hoping to have some time with family when they drop auntie off.

Hagop and Badveli Vartan help us with our luggage and walk to the car. Daniel G who's with the AMAA internship trip cubes over to say hello and asks me to send his greetings to AMCC. 😊 Very kind of him to do so.

Our driver is Samvel. He's been working for the AMAA for 29 years in various capacities, and now is a driver. The road back to Yerevan is full of cars, he says returning from a day at Lake Sevan since it's been very hot in Yerevan the last two days.

We arrive at the airport and my family is here. We stay together until around 23:30. Our flight is delayed 30 min. We will take off at 00:20. Connecting in Brussels to Newark, NJ.

Will miss Armenia.

Bruce will be flying to Hong Kong. He'll be gone for 10 days.

Pictures:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/kpKoEpiPCjk9vynR9>



Christine

Sunday, July 13, 2025

Auntie and I arrived home around 15:00. Good to be home.



Christine