

Travel Journal
Compilation of emails sent

AMAA Medical Mission Trip
in Sisian and
Vardenis, Armenia

July 1 – July 15, 2026
by
Christine Momjian

Pre-Trip Email

Dear praying partners,

Lord willing, on July 1st, Bruce & I, Matthew & Laura will be flying to Armenia to serve with the AMAA medical mission team. You have traveled along with us in previous years, and have prayed for us. I hope to send emails again.

Please reply to this email by Sunday, June 28th, if you would prefer to NOT receive the emails.

thank you!



Christine

Wednesday, July 1, 2026

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.

Our son Matthew and his wife Laura are already in flight. They're flying out of JFK.

Bruce, auntie and I are about to take off from PHL. The adventure starts!

Thursday, July 2, 2026

This year, I requested a wheelchair for auntie. It was ready at Philadelphia airport, and we went through security quickly. We also had "pre board" status. She was happy.

Smooth flight. I start work on my newest counted cross stitch project. I only get to work on counted cross stitch when I fly. This one I've started is big. The white blank canvas is daunting.

Bruce and I watch a movie that we downloaded - the Case for Heaven. Some philosophical stuff and I'm still thinking about parts of it. And I pray.

Once we landed in Frankfurt, we were told to wait on the side for the wheelchair. There were at least 8 other people waiting. An agent finally came with one wheelchair and asked to see our boarding passes.

Since we had a long layover, we would be last. She said a colleague was coming with the car. That came, but they argued a bit and the driver only took 2 passengers. At this rate, we thought even if we move slow, let's move. We started the long walk. Fortunately there were many flat escalators which were helpful for auntie.

This time we purposely got a flight with a long layover so we could get a hotel to sleep. I don't sleep on flights. We had rooms at the airport Marriott. Matthew & Laura (I'll refer to them as M&L moving forward), had already arrived. 😊

Had a solid 5 hours of sleep.

I forgot something important back home, fortunately one of our team members from our church, is taking the same flight as us a day later, so Catherine took the item to their home. Thank you Catherine and Araz!

I like the slippers at the hotel. "These are coming with me." 😂 They're better quality than some of the ones I'll get this week.

We needed to check out at 18:00. The five of us went to to the Marriott lounge for a bit before walking to the airport. We're excited for the week. M&L are on an earlier flight.

Once back at the airport, we walked to our gate. Got auntie settled, then Bruce and I headed to the Lufthansa senator lounge. He can only bring one person. I had experienced this before, it's massive and impressive. He took me to the area where they have beds and surprisingly, I took a nice nap. He woke me up with the tastiest carrot, ginger, coconut soup. We then headed to the gate.

As we approached the gate, we heard our names and there were Dr. Al & Sue Phillips! What a sweet surprise to see them here. They started this mission 17 years ago.

I get a lot done on the counted cross stitch.

Thankful for your prayers.

[Pictures](#)

Friday, July 3, 2026

I spend the flight working on the counted cross stitch piece. We land at 03:15. Welcome to Armenia!

As we walk towards the immigration line, a worker sees us and points us to a side line so auntie does not need to wait the full snake through. We are out in a matter of minutes. Get our sim cards for the phone. Luggage has arrived.

Go out and we see a sea of people waiting for their loved ones. I love this area. There's so many balloons, big bouquet of flowers. One person even has a cake with candles! We see Gayane, who organizes all the details of sightseeing, buses, etc, Dr Gor who works at the AMAA Aynilian clinic in Yerevan, and Narek, who works at the AMAA office. I see pictures of Narek's son, just a few months old. So hamovig!

M&L had gone out for a bite since they arrived before us. They greet us at the hotel lobby with some snacks.

In our room at 04:45. Up by 09:00. We're moving slowly.

A friend sent me a devotional on the power of the Holy Spirit. Timely reminder. I've shared it with the pictures. Maybe it will will bless one of you.

I checked in on auntie. She's well. Had breakfast at the hotel and is resting.

At 12:30, we start walking towards Toumanyanyan street, to a restaurant that has delicious lehmejune and soo-boreg. Bruce leads us via a street we haven't used before and it becomes a bit of a maze. As we go through a small alley that's lined with plants, and on the right side, there's this huge space that has washed wool drying. See pictures. Reminds me of our children's 4H days with sheep care.

We arrive at Mer Tagh (our street), and the big clue that it's the right place is the plaid tablecloths. We order a large sooboreg. (Homemade wide egg noodles layered with cheese and baked). It takes a while to bake. M&L arrive and we order a few more things. It's delicious. We take our leftovers back for auntie.

I feel a bit queazy. Unsure if it's from the heat, not enough sleep, or dehydrated. We go to the North Ave juice store and get some fresh squeezed juice. I try a new combo. Grapefruit and pomegranate. So tasty!

Kegham Keri (uncle) and Dalo auntie arrive. They will visit with auntie. We sit for a bit, then separate.

Bruce and I take naps and then around 6p, we meet up to walk to Abu Hagop restaurant to eat dinner with my cousin Vartan, his wife Sevan and their daughter Paleny. The food is so delicious. We've been here before. The owner is from Aleppo.

The conversation around the table is great. Lots of laughter.

I realize during dinner that Matthew has not been to Sisian! I'm excited that he'll get to see the beauty of the Syunik region.

We celebrate Laura's birthday, which is tomorrow. 🎂

Walking back, the wind is so strong and by the time we arrive back it's pouring rain.

Auntie leaves with them. She'll be staying at a hotel near their home which is in the Bangladesh area of Yerevan.

Tomorrow is a full day of team building as we do some sightseeing.
I'm so thankful for your prayers!

[Pictures](#)

Saturday, July 4, 2026

Happy 250th to the United States of America! 🇺🇸🎆🎇🎆🎇 I recall the excitement when I became a naturalized citizen. I'm thankful that the Lord brought my family to the US at the time He did. I thank God for His goodness and I pray for His mercy and blessings. 2 Chronicles 7:14.

I read Ephesians 3:14-21 many times this morning. What a beautiful passage. Each verse is full of, I can't even think of the correct single word to describe it. It blows my mind. Please read the passage. It's so beautiful.

We had the window open and we're facing the street. There was severe lightening and thunderstorms throughout the night.

Woke up many times during the night. At times had trouble falling back asleep. By 07:30, decided to get out of bed.

My church, AMCC, is hosting our annual 4th of July picnic. Kebab with all the works. Prayers go out for a blessed day. If you're close by, go for some great food and fellowship.

Our team, as usual, is staying at the Ani Grand hotel in Yerevan. Last of the team members arrived early this morning. Prayer request: two team members' luggage has not arrived yet.

I took a picture of the counted cross stitch, since I had worked on it on the flight from Frankfurt to Yerevan. I won't get to work on it until I fly again.

I appreciate your responses to the emails. 😊 I respond when I can.

Unsure if I mentioned yesterday, my family who lives here, was saying that prices have gone up for all basic things in the last few months.

At breakfast, I see several team members. I sit with Arpi, she's been coming faithfully for many many years. I meet Marlen, who's a friend of my cousin Lara! Haigazian graduates. Her son Arie will be serving on our team. He had served last year. We have some great, encouraging conversations. Praise God for how He's using her at her church, Cilicia, in Pasadena. (She's visiting this week, not on mission trip.)

I find out from Marlen that my second cousin, Gacia, from CA is also here. They'll vacation together. Gacia's daughter is going on the mission trip!

On my way to the room after breakfast, I saw our bus, and I noticed our driver. He had served last year, and he's wonderful. His name is Arman. I went out to greet him and gave him a warm hug.

We had our team meeting at 09:30, and by 10:00 we were headed to the bus. Our first stop was Etchmiadzin, think of it as the Vatican. We saw the museum with the relics, and the inside of the main cathedral. The tip of the spear that was used to pierce Jesus' side after His crucifixion is here.

We then drive to our next location. The traffic gets worse each year that we come. We're sitting towards the front and we talk to Gayane about that and other things.

We then had lunch at a new restaurant, Akori. New for us. The potatoes are always amazingly delicious. The restaurant is a walking distance from Tzizernagapert.

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

I sat next to John from Fresno. He's a Dr and is serving as his first time. He's a member at First Armenian Presbyterian Church (FAPC) of Fresno.

We then took the guided tour at the Tzizernagapert museum. I saw the proximity of the villages in my ancestry on the stone carved map behind the main desk - Ainteb, Marash, and Zeytoon. Our guide was fabulous.

We then walked to the eternal flame. 🥲

Back on the bus, we'll have a 90 min drive to our next stop. Gayane tells us that tomorrow, July 5th, is Constitution day in Armenia, so there's more flags being flown. She said they refer to the orange in the flag as dziran-a-kooy (which is "color of apricot") instead of orange since there are no oranges grown in Armenia but apricot is the country's fruit. 😊 I do love apricots and I'm pacing myself so I'm not sorry later on.

We stopped at Geghart Monastery. I've been here many times, there's still something new about it each time.

We get back on the bus and head over to Garni Temple.

Get to sing happy birthday to Laura! We were all too full at dinner, but the ghata was the best we've had!

It's been a hot day. It must be "dry heat" (some will get that inside joke) since you feel the heat in your bones. ☀️🍖

Trying to stay hydrated.

Prayer requests - one team member has GI issues. Each person is so important to the well functioning of the mission.

One person has family back home with health issues.

Thank you for your prayers!

[Pictures](#)

Sunday, July 5, 2026

Last night, I took an over the counter sleeping aid, since I needed a good night's rest. I slept 4 hours, got up thinking hours had passed, but thankfully was able to return to sleep quickly.

Grab a quick breakfast. We need to check out today. At breakfast I sit with Arpi and Marlen again. Marlen's husband is first cousins with Matt Silverman! That name should be familiar to most of you. In case it isn't:

<https://www.duggansserra.com/obituaries/MatthewJohnSilvermanobId=31810860>

Our Armenia team has arrived! It's great to see them. We've been serving together for many years now. Shoushan our pharmacist; Gayane, the admin person at pharmacy; Gohar, ultrasound; Ani, head translator.

In one bus with our Armenia team and we leave a few minutes after 09:00.

Headed towards Ararat plain to Khor Virab.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khor_Virap

We have nice views of Mt Ararat.

At one point, we see a few stork nests with storks! Mt Ararat on the background.

We have an hour here. 12 people from the group choose to go down the pit. I've done it before, so no need to wait in line to go down. The views are beautiful. It is very hot. That "dry heat" again. 😊☀️

We say our goodbyes, and separate into two groups. The one bus going south, the other going north (Stepanavan and Ichivan). The south team is smaller in number. I'm on the smaller, south team.

The drive to the Syunik region is beautiful. I've taken so many pictures in years past, but I'll try to limit myself and take a few this time.

Some prayers answered:

- * The person who had a family member back home who's sick, is stable.
- * The team member with GI issues, is slowly recovering.
- * The luggage arrived in time!

We stop for 30 minutes at Noravank.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noravank>

The area is packed today, I assume because it's a Sunday. There's also a large group for a baptism. I find out while talking with Arie (who's dad is first cousin with Matt) and Shant (who's from Calvary Armenian Evangelical Church in SFO) that Matt had a huge influence on Shant's faith journey. 😊

We continue on our drive. Stop for lunch at a restaurant on the way. It's set up like a garden with fountains. Very attractive.

We continue the drive. This portion of the drive is so beautiful. The mountains, hills, trees, plants. Two passages go through my head as I marvel at His creation.

Psalm 121 I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come?

My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber.

Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade on your right hand.

The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.

The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.

The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.

Isaiah 54:10 For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed," says the Lord, who has compassion on you.

At 15:30, it's raining. The temperature has dropped from 29°C/84°F in Yerevan to 17°C/62°F.

We arrive at the church in Sisian at 16:15. It's great to see everyone again. We look through the space, and set up mostly in the same way as last time. EKG gets moved to be between Dr office and pharmacy. They've put a tent and chairs outside and will have patients wait for their medication outside.

We meet the new dentist in Sisian. Barb, you must be bursting with joy.

We see Mari, she's helping this year. She's the young person who's father died suddenly. I had written about her before.

We create a circle to figure out who's doing what. Badveli Arman let's us know that there will be four worship services, and 35 patients reach time. We'll have a total of 140 patients

tomorrow! We have Dr Anna, cardiologist, daughter of the pastor from Goris, serving as well. That gives us three Drs - Chris, Matthew, and Anna. One nurse - Laura.

After seeing up the clinic, we have close to two hours before dinner. Gayane arranges for a mini bus to drive us to Sisian falls. Bruce and I are glad the team will get to see it. It is beautiful.

At the falls, Bruce leads a small group to a climb to the top. I circled him at the top in one of the images.

It's good we have the bus since the walk from the street to the entrance, which is about 20-30 min long would have been impossible. It was all muddy and uneven. They had a severe storm yesterday.

Back at the church, thunder and lightening starts. We got in and have delicious sarma and dolma. We leave for the hotel at 20:00.

The hotel is about a 5 min bus ride. Seems like new construction. There is a water leakage issue with our toilet. At one point we were unsure what was leaking. They come to inspect and think it's the hose filling the tank. They'll fix it tomorrow. Gayane offers her room, but it's ok.

M&L have trouble with their key. Locked in the room. We think the lock needs some oil.

We try to find the password for the wifi....

It's 21:40. I'm feeling very tired as I write to you.

Pictures

P.S. two pictures have been shared of auntie. One with Badveli Nishan & Maria at church. The other a family shot. Auntie is staying at a hotel near family.

Monday, July 6, 2026

Not a great night for me. I was up a few times and it took me a long time each time to fall back asleep. I also could not get comfortable on this bed. We're at the Lalaner Hotel in Sisian.

Around 04:00 it rained fairly strongly. We had the window open for air. I'm thankful the rain came then and not during clinic hours.

Sue had asked Bruce and me to lead the team devotionals. Bruce felt led to focus on Job, so he's taking the lead. I will support.

Really blessed that 4 of the 5 young adults on our team know Armenian! After all, we are the A Team. 😊🥰.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_A-Team

(Bruce had thought of that nickname for our team and even purchased an A-Team vehicle as our mascot.)

After a quick breakfast, we left the hotel at 08:30. We gathered in the church's courtyard for our devotional. Bruce gave an overview on the book of Job, and focused on:

- * Are we good because we're blessed?

- * Is blessing always a sign of God's favor? (The opposite could be said that if we're not blessed, God is withholding His favor?)

At 09:00, we had the worship service. Chris gave his testimony.

Badveli Arman's message was from John 5:1-14. The paralytic was sick for 38 years. There are some among us, who are sick. Jesus asks us the same question today, "do you want to be healed?" Jesus heals the body and soul. Sometimes we are focused on physical healing only.

It tied in beautifully to our devotion, sometimes we go through suffering, not knowing the purpose, but to trust in Christ and allow Him to be glorified.

At 09:30, we all went to our stations. A woman showed me a picture of herself with Bruce and me from 2023!

The volunteers at Sisian church are really phenomenal. There's many of them, and it really helps with the workflow. It's nice to see them over the years. One of the big surprises was that Mari was there. She had helped Bruce with lab two years ago. The young volunteer whose father died suddenly last year. She's doing well in her studies. I love the t-shirts of the church volunteers. Saida, pastor's wife, tells me about the number of children going through vacation Bible School and Sunday school. Over 200 children!

The mayor in the next town who became a believer last year, has offered a space for them to meet as a church. Badveli & Saida go every Sunday still, in the afternoon, and conduct a service there.

Paused at 13:10 since lunch was ready. We were not done with our patients, but would get 35 more at 13:30.

The food in Sisian is so delicious. The ladies do a great job in making delicious food for us. Lunchtime always includes a soup, and that's all I had today. Beef, lentil soup.

The day is divided with four worship sessions. At 09:00, 11:00, 13:00 and 15:00. The patients go through the clinic after the worship service. Each time there are 35 patients scheduled. So we're to see 140 patients today!!!

I'm really admiring our team. Each one has a great attitude.

The Drs pray with each patient after they're done the consult. We heard later on from Badveli Arman what an impact that makes on the patients. Several went to him to tell him that, some through tears.

Mari, the child who stayed with us a few years ago and her older sister Asdghig have come to the dental consult and then come to visit us. They've grown! Asdghig looks like a young lady.

We amazingly finish around 17:30. One of our last patients was an EMT, and Matthew was her Dr. She took M&L, and Araz to the hospital for a tour. They were super excited.

We took our team picture, since it would be tight on time on Tuesday. Afterwards we had dinner. Fish and potatoes. The potatoes were the best I've ever had! Not saying that lightly.

After dinner, Chris, Shant, Badveli, Bruce and I went for a quick visit to the new dental clinic of Dr Garen. The AMAA was instrumental with helping him with the clinic. He was here today, and would come tomorrow, to give fluoride treatment to the children.

We then returned to the church, to pick up M&L and Araz since we were going to visit Sevag & Lena's family at 20:00.

We arrive, and the samavor is lit for tea. Bruce loves that. We have a lovely visit. They've prepared a dessert table for us. Sevag shares about his feelings on the health of his two children. Very difficult. I serve as translator.

The blackberries and raspberries are the best we've ever had. Lena says it's from Sevag's parents' garden.

It's raining. A bit after 22:00, they drive us back to the hotel.

The leak in our bathroom is fixed!
Sleep around 23:30. Long, memorable day.

I get updates throughout the day from my Keri's wife about auntie. She's doing her daily walks. I'm very thankful.

[Pictures](#)

Tuesday, July 7, 2026

I took a unisom last night and that helped.

This morning we need to be at breakfast, with suitcases at 08:00. That makes check out from a third hotel.

We have our devotional time, and Bruce focuses on how do we handle suffering? He discusses the responses in the book of Job. The response of his wife – curse God; the three friends – although they were quiet the first 7 days they then said you must have done something wrong; the other friend – who tried to reason; and Job himself – questioning God. Bruce then connects that to us and how we should respond to suffering, and I share about how Jesus responded to suffering. What we can learn from that. We then sing the hymn, Great is thy Faithfulness.

Badveli Sarkis and his wife are here from Goris with 44 patients. Goris is about 30 minutes away. We have an Armenian Evangelical Church there. He gives the message during the sermon on Matthew 6:6. I get to serve as translator for our translation units for team members.

Shant shares his testimony. He talks about the impact of Matt Silverman on his life. Shant is a dental student. I marvel at the number of lives Matt impacted.

We start with patient number 141 this morning.

I recognize many patients today from previous visits. We have some interesting cases. I learn many things medically myself.

We freeze the clinic a few minutes before 13:00 for our 30 min lunch break.

Before Badveli Sarkis and his wife Armineh leave, I ask him what they can tell me about Vardenis. He says that of the three poorest locations in Armenia, Vardenis is one of those three. The Badveli is Armen Movsisyan, wife Looba (means love in Russian). Been there about 20 years. I ask if he'll (Sarkis) would pray for us. He says yes. I go get Bruce from lab, and we pray in the pastor's office.

At one point I have the privilege to be the translator for my daughter-in-love Laura as she serves in triage. What a gift that was to me. ❤️

16: 45 we're done. We've seen 247 patients in two days!!! That's really amazing.

We close up the clinic, and take all the containers to the pharmacy area so it can be loaded on a truck to get to Vardenis.

We finish out the day with Grand Candy ice cream bars for the full team.

Badveli Arman asks Bruce & me, M&L, and Chris into his office to thank us and has a gift for the US team members on behalf of the church. I serve as translator and he mentions how we've become family over the years and he's happy the family is growing (his first time meeting Matthew).

He also mentioned how many patients thanked him for the care they received.

He mentioned that five people today, on their own, came to him and asked for Bibles! Praise God. This is what we pray for. Thank you for praying with us. One of them promised to come to church because she wanted to learn more about what was in the Bible.

On the bus ride to Vardenis, I ask team members what stood out to them.

"We're seeing people that are multiple years in a row. They recognize us and we recognize them. Almost like back home, my patients whom I see once a year." - Chris

"A 12 year old boy who has type 1 diabetes. It will be difficult for him to manage that." - Ari, Laura

"Lots of similar issues. Many with numbness in hands." - Araz

"The man who had crusted over scabs from shingles." - Marisa

“The man who passes out 2x/month with epileptic seizures. He had blood in his urine.” - Ari

“A patient whom I drew blood from, when I went in to the doctors' room later on to ask Chris something, she was with Matthew. He had just finished treating her and was praying for her. That was very special and emotional for me. I put my hand on her back as he prayed for her.” - Bruce (thank you Jesus for the timing of that. For allowing Bruce to witness his son praying for a patient.)

“Some lost family members to death.” - Laura

I'm able to join the AMAA Armenia committee meeting via zoom. How crazy is that? I'm sitting in a bus, within the remote mountains of Armenia, and I'm able to join in through my phone to a live meeting.

We stopped 25 minutes for dinner, we have already hit some rain, and it's getting darker. The ride is supposed to be 4 hours long. The scenery is stunning.

On the ride, I review tomorrow's schedule with Gayane, our guide.

We arrive at the hotel at 22:15. We're 40 min ride from the church in Vardenis.

Random Armenian words/phrases I've learned over the last days:

Coconut - կոկոս (kokos)

Cyst - կիստ (kista)

Protein - սպիտակուլ (spitakuts)

I say քիչ մը (keych muh) to indicate a small amount, which I'm now learning is western Armenian, since they say մի քիչ (me keych) in eastern Armenian for the same thing. They find it amusing.

I say պարսպ է (ba-rab eh) to indicate that it is empty/available, they say ազադ է (azad eh) which to me means free/liberated.

[Pictures](#)

Wednesday, July 8, 2026

We went to bed after midnight and I woke up at 06:15. Each room has a small balcony and I wanted to see outside. Last night I heard rushing waters, but since it was so dark when we arrived, we could not see what it is.

A river is rushing by parallel to the hotel rooms. We are perpendicular to Lake Sevan. And while it was too late for the sunrise, unsure if it was good since it was so cloudy, it had rained, and the sun was starting to be visible. I saw part of a rainbow 🌈! A beautiful sign of God's promise from Genesis. That to me was a visual sign that He's with us. 😊

It was good that I woke up since I also noticed that while I had set an alarm on my phone, I had not actually turned it on! ❓ So at 06:30, we went back to bed hoping to sleep some more.

The property is large, and we have less than a 10 min walk to the place where we have breakfast.

There's two dogs walking with us. At our circle time a puppy joins the fun.

At 09:50 we walk back towards the bus to do our team devotional. Bruce talks about the three ways from the book of Job that we could support someone who is going through suffering. One is to sit with them quietly as the friends did for 7 days and just be with them to offer them quiet support. The second way could be doing physical things for them that they may need help with. The third is emotional support.

I mention how we have the opportunity to do all of those things over the next few days. These are patients we've never seen before. They have not gone through the AMAA clinic before. So take that extra moment, look into their eyes, into their face, and listen to them, give them encouraging words. Be the hands and feet of Jesus.

We sing our hymn, verses 1&3 today, and it's my hope that by Friday, everyone has the chorus memorized.

Great is Thy faithfulness
Great is Thy faithfulness
Morning by morning new mercies I see
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.

Amen and amen. My hope is that I am faithful to Him as He is always faithful to me.

The drive over to the church is beautiful. There's lots of pastures and mountains all around. There's herds of sheep. Random cows. The homes seem to be made out of stone with the tin roofs. The green is lush. Large home gardens. Lots of solar panels.

Ari, who will be sharing his testimony today, asks if I would read it. I read it and it's so beautiful and mature. Praise God. I encourage him to share it with his parents. That would be such blessing to them.

We're going in not knowing what to expect set up wise.

As we arrive, the pastor, Badveli Armen Movsisyan recognizes Matthew! It turns out that when Matthew came with the AMAA internship group in 2012, 14 years ago, he helped with the VBS for a week in Vardenis! I was shocked that Badveli remembered him.

He and his wife, Looba, have been here for about 20 years. They serve not just as the pastor and wife, but she also serves as the social worker for the AMAA center.

We have to make some adjustments with the tents and where things will be and then after 2 hours of set up, we have lunch.

Looba has made a chicken rice soup in the biggest stock pot I've seen. The baguette is amazingly delicious. The lavash (Armenian bread) is so fresh. Just as lunch ends, it starts to rain. I'm thankful that it did not rain while we were setting up.

After the worship service. We start the clinics.

There's many family groups. Mom with young children, mom with older mom, good ratio of men.

Lab is busier since they want us to administer the Hepatitis B & C, HIV, Syphilis blood test on those who consent. 53 out of the 65 patients give consent.

The flow was good. About 20 min after we started, it started to rain. That made it a bit harder to give space for privacy since lab, triage, and urine were under a tent. It was a bit chilly at times. But the "A Team" pushed through. Some needed blankets to stay warm since we're outside.

We suggest to have the church volunteers go through the clinic today instead of Friday. It always feels rushed to me to do them on the last day just as we're packing up and we need to leave. Today was going to be our most flexible day.

We finish at 19:45. Back into the bus for the 40 min ride to the hotel. On the ride, I go around with the stickers. This is the second year that I bring stickers and at the end of the day, I show the stickers and the team mate picks a sticker to put on their name tag. It's a small way to show appreciation with fun. This year I have a full sheet of mini cats, and those are very popular!

On the ride, I review with the team and we figure out who's doing what tomorrow.

The dinner is delicious. The big winner is kounefe. But the special thing about it? They've added finely chopped dried apricots with the walnuts. It is so delicious, that we take the leftovers to have for breakfast tomorrow. I'll have to do that the next time I make it with walnuts.

Badveli Arman from Sisian had sent me a sweet message asking how our day was and that he's praying for the team. I pass on the message to our group.

The "young ones" go to the hot tub. We visit them briefly.

It's 23:00. Time for bed. Tomorrow will be a long day.

Thank you for following along. Thank you for your words of encouragement and your prayers.

[Pictures](#)

Thursday, July 9, 2026

It's now been a bit more than a week that we've left home. It feels much longer.

The medical mission blog is available on the AMAA medical mission Facebook account.

<https://www.facebook.com/AMAAInc/photos/d41d8cd9/1475905291245076/?set=a.339051064930510>

I took a unisom last night, but after 4 hours I'm up. It's a bit after 03:00. I never really fall back asleep. Start getting ready at 07:00.

Yesterday was a high of 60F, today it's showing 70F.

We are to see 130 patients today.

I received a beautiful message from Badveli Arman. He knows there are many back home praying. Here's the part for you, our praying partners. ❤️ "Express our deepest gratitude to that team who tried to support their sisters and brothers in Christ in the Homeland with their prayers. On behalf of all, convey our gratitude and God's abundant blessings.

We assure you that what they undertook in prayer is real answers to the prayer requests of our people. God be with us."

The 4 pieces of kounefe that did not finish last night, we asked to take with us and we brought it to breakfast. We cut them up and several people got to enjoy it.

The two dogs were waiting for us and accompanied us on the walk.

After breakfast, we did our devotional by the bus near the hotel restaurant. The dogs are a bit of a distraction. 😊 By 08:50, we were on our way.

Araz shared her testimony this morning after Badveli Armen gave his message. His message was on love. God loves us first, we know to love because He loves us, we're to love our brothers.

We then started the clinic.

We were supposed to see 130 patients, but 115 came.

A wide variety of cases today. Lots of children today. Over the two days, I believe we had two children who got diagnosed as having type 1 diabetes.

We have a longer break at lunch than expected. I encourage them to walk the town. A group goes to see the Apostolic church. Bruce takes a nap. I have a beautiful, deep conversation with Ari E.

18:55, leave the church. On the way, we see the plot of land, 11 acres, where the AMAA will be building a school, among other things.

19:50 arrive at the hotel restaurant. Some items from dinner that I really like: manti, thinly sliced eggplant rolled with cheese and walnuts, tomato/cucumber/pepper salad.

We see an amazing sunset.

The ghata for dessert is warm and filled with walnuts. I take a bite of Bruce's. Bruce and I walk back around 20:45. Anna joins us. We have a lovely chat and she expresses interest in joining my Wednesday morning Bible study. She's a cardiologist from Armenia.

[Pictures](#)

Friday, July 10, 2026

I'm up by 06:00. I quietly start packing since we check out this morning. Bruce is asleep.

One of the challenges with the clinic in Vardenis is that the closest possible hotel is 40 minutes away. We're losing almost 1.5 hours each day in travel. The benefit is the conversations on the bus.

This will be the fourth check out.

The Armenian Evangelical Church, which celebrated its 180th anniversary, has five branches separated by location. The Armenian Evangelical Church of North America (AEUNA), which my home church is a member of, had its Biennial in Montreal the end of June. There was a nice write up about it in the email communication. I wanted to give a shout out to a new publication, *The Apricot Journal*. I think you will enjoy the articles in this inaugural issue.

<https://www.apricotjournal.org/>

Yesterday morning, during the setup, one of the team members got a clean cut from the lid of the plastic containers. It was cleaned up and bandaged. This morning the team member told us that last night while they were walking, one of the dogs who's been following us came over and licked their hand which the cut was on. After consulting with Dr Chris at breakfast, the advise was to get a rabies shot. Gayane made a lot of calls and arranged for this team member to be able to go to a hospital to get the rabies vaccine. Unfortunately they didn't give the extra immunoglobulin shot, so that will need to happen on return to the US.

After breakfast, we had our last team devotional. Bruce focused on how God can redeem suffering.

I should also mention that yesterday when we stopped to look at the plot of land which the AMAA is going to build on, after we admired it, I asked Bruce if he would pray. So we prayed for the land and for its purposes, for its blessings to the community, and for God to be glorified through it.

Driving to Vardenis, the one side of the road is massive hills and small mountains covered in green, the other side is Lake Sevan and snow capped mountains. The scenery is beautiful. It helps me to be in a worshipful mindset.

On the ride, there are many buildings that are in not liveable conditions visually, and I'm assuming they're abandoned.

Badveli Armen's beautiful message this morning during the worship service. Here's the main points.

Why does one need to be saved? Romans 3:23

It is God who saves. John 3:16

You are saved if you believe in Christ as Saviour. Not by works. Romans 10:9

Laura shares her transparent testimony. I'm thankful for how she glorifies Jesus through it. ❤️

At 10:00, we start with clinics. We will have two sessions today, then pack up, lunch and depart. Hard to believe it's done. I believe we bonded well.

The clinics run smoothly. Again, some interesting cases.

After a delicious lunch, the team is treated to watermelon and ice cream! It takes us a while and many pictures to say goodbye.

246 patients total in Vardenis.

247 in Sisian.

Total of 493 patients!

We leave at 14:45. By 16:15, we arrive at Sevanavank.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sevanavank>

The other team has already arrived. We have one hour to walk around and climb to the top. We start to see members from the North team.

The drive to the restaurant is a short drive. We eat at Yasaman Sevan Restaurant in Tsovagyugh, which is on the way. We were here last year. Bruce loves the tomato/cucumber salad and a particular seeded bread. They've added a lot of seating in the area outside by the water. We spend some time there after the meal. At 19:15, leave restaurant.

It's a 70 min ride to the Ani Grand in Yerevan. We're all in one bus together. The "young ones" play music the whole ride and at first there's a lot of dancing.

We are in our room at 20:30. I get us settled. I prefer to unpack versus living out of a suitcase.

I write to you. It's now almost 22:30. Time for bed.

Pictures

Saturday, July 11, 2026

I'm up at 06:00.

The AMAA Armenia staff has put together a nice video of both teams.

https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=1774811987266010&id=1461374219366577

Here's the blogs on behalf of the two teams:

<https://armeniamedicalmissions.wordpress.com/2026/07/09/armenia-medical-mission-2026-vardenis-team/>

We don't leave until 09:20, since there's two team members who are not down. We try to reach out to them, but no answer.

Gayane tells us on the ride over to the Mother Armenia statue that almost 600,000 Armenians participated on the Soviet side in WWII. Half died.

Yerevan is the oldest continuous living city.

A few of us also visit the museum under the statue.

We then go to the Megerian rug factory for a tour. At the end where there's a gift shop, I admire the silver jewelry based on Armenian designs. There's a Marash design cufflinks which I like for Bruce. I find out the designer, in collaboration with the rug company, is Hagop Momjian who's related to Bruce.

What a surprise! Finish at 11:45.

We then drive to Homeland Development Initiative Foundation (HDIF).

<https://www.hdif.org/>

Bruce and I discovered them in 2015. I have bought many things through them over the years. They are at a new location. It seems everytime we come, they have a bigger spot. They have now taken a new initiative to use up more of the wool that Armenia generates.

I bought a birthday gift for a dear friend and some keychains for my backpack. ❤️🍒

Almost everyone bought something. That took us a while. We finish at 13:20.

We're all hungry and next stop is the restaurant, one of my favorites, Aintab. Delicious manti in chicken broth and garlic madzoon with sumac, some salads, hammos, mouteb-bell, lehmejune, and cheese kounefe. We then walk back to the hotel. Laura is at Vernissage, the large open market. Back in hotel at 15:15. It is so hot. 97°F. Again, that incredible "dry heat" that you feel in your bones. I think the marrow in your bones dry out.

After cooling off for a bit, we meet Laura at Vernissage since she wants to show me a few things. She heads back.

We pick up something for one of my sons. Look for something for Catherine. It is so hot.

On our walk back to the hotel, we stop at the corner juice shop and get two fresh squeezed pomegranate with orange juice. One for us to share, one for M&L. So delicious. Hits the spot.

We are to meet in the lobby at 17:30 for dinner. We are going to Riverside Tavern.

I have an AMAA meeting at 17:30 local time. I get to the bus a few minutes before and log onto zoom. I stay on as long as possible, but at some point in the restaurant, it's too loud for me to hear the meeting.

Badveli Armen & Looba from Vardenis have come with their two daughters. The pastor and his wife from Stepanavan are here as well.

M&L leave around 20:15 by Yandex (Russian Uber) to the hotel after their goodbyes. They will pack and try to take a nap. They'll be on a drive to the airport at 00:30 with Ari. So it starts. The goodbyes and flights back. It's hard to say all these goodbyes.

Bruce & I are staying until early Wednesday morning this time.

[Pictures](#)

Sunday, July 12, 2026

I'm up twice, but thankfully can fall back asleep. M&L are in flight with a connection in Frankfurt.

At 07:45, I'm out of bed.

Got message around 08:00, that M&L landed in Frankfurt, 06:00 local time for them. Midnight back home.

I meet Chris for breakfast around 08:30. Bruce is sleeping. Two others from the North team are at breakfast as well. We sit together.

I had felt the nudge to worship at the Armenian Evangelical Church in the Bangladesh area of Yerevan. Never been there. We got the address from Anna of AMAA last night. We would need to move from our room around 10:00. We check out, and leave our bags at the front desk.

Bruce calls Yandex, and we get a real nice car in about three minutes. Bruce had looked at the address in street view on Google maps, but it did not look like a church. After about a 20 min drive, the driver takes us to a spot and says if we go up the stairs, the church is there.

We go up a few stairs and then on my right I see a building, and thankfully there's an ECA (Evangelical Church of Armenia) sign by the door. It's a very modest church. I'm surprised to see Badveli Kevork & Larissa Kasparyan there. He's now the pastor here.

I'm hoping to see Anahid and Nareg there with their baby. But I'm told they're at camp Hankavan this week. Badveli introduces me to Anahid's mom, Suzanna. I had a gift for their baby, I pass it on to Suzanna.

Badveli asks me to say a few words. I let them know about the mission, the areas we served, the five people who requested Bibles in Sisian, that while we come to minister physically, the desire is for spiritual healing as well. I give the greetings of the team and the AMAA.

The message is given by Arthur Israelyan. What a powerful message on Luke 7:18-23! He's was seminary student at NEST in Beirut, Lebanon but his studies are on pause. He certainly is filled with the Holy Spirit.

After the service, they invite us to the office and we sit for coffee and conversation. I find out many things about the start of the church. It's 25 years old. A woman named Inna who is with us was a teacher and taught about Jesus to her students. They started meeting in her home and then got too big.

The church used to be a bar. It has glass walls (used to be windows of the bar) and a tin roof. Very cold in the winter. Hot in summer. They have purchased a window AC unit. The church is very active and young families. The children brought their parents. It's growing.

Many youth are already at camp serving as volunteers. Of course, they desire a building that looks like a church..... Please pray for the Lord to provide for their needs.

This area is very close to my family's home and where auntie is staying at her hotel. We walk to SAS, and eat lunch there. From lunch we walk to auntie's hotel to visit.

Sevan (my cousin's wife) is able to pick up what looks like a wounded bird. We ascertain that the bird is thirsty. All the fountains are dried up today for Vardavar, the water holiday where people soak each other with water. She gets the bird some water and after a long while, it seems ok. We leave their place at 16:50 by Yandex.

Auntie has lost her voice the last two days, and she thinks it's from the AC unit in her room. 😊

We need to get back to Ani Grand to get our luggage and then check in to the Marriott at Republic Square. Our driver says many of the streets surrounding the Square are closed due to Vardavar. Will have to walk. It's about a 10 min walk, which is so easy, BUT, we had to walk in the sides of streets or smaller streets to avoid people with buckets in their hands or water guns 🚰💧 in their hands. The walk was longer. Bruce says it feels like we're dodging an assassin. Most people usually only get others wet who have a bucket in their hand, but with our luggage we were not really interested in taking a chance. The Marriott is right in Republic Square. We were very thankful we got in without getting wet.

I get settled into our room. We then go to the 6th floor for the lounge. There's a perfect view of Republic Square. Check out the pictures.

I'm recalling how tasty the manti was just yesterday. So after watching from the lounge, we explored the hotel some more, and then walk to Anteb for manti.

Bruce and I watch a short documentary, a large brush stroke on the history of Armenia. I think you may find it interesting.

<https://www.youtube.com/watchv=yIk89ROdjZs>

A bit after 22:00, we get a message that M&L landed in JFK. Thankful for their safe arrival. They still have a few hours to drive home.

[Picture](#)

Monday, July 13, 2026

I'm up early. M&L are home. I'm sure their two cats are very happy.

I listen to a podcast, hoping it will put me to sleep, it ends up being fascinating.

<https://www.sciencefriday.com/segments/gut-brain-connection-ibs-parkinsons-depression/>

My uncle, Kegham Keri, has Parkinsons.

I drift back to sleep and I'm up at 08:30.

Leisurely morning.

We visit the Yerevan History Museum. It was a first for us. Very nice.

<https://yhm.yerevan.am/>

It's another hot day. We then get a Grand Candy ice cream sandwich for Bruce.

We meet Aren D at the AMAA office. And then cool off with some fresh juice. I love the pomegranate/orange combo!

For a late lunch / early dinner we go back to Abu Hagop since I'm hoping to get some chi-kofte (beef tartare). Theirs is very clean and delicious. It just melts in your mouth.

Peter - you'd be amazed at the number of 'Yandex Eats' scooters. Especially in the Republic Square neighborhood. I try to grab a few pictures for you.

We then head back to the hotel. Then head off to Nork Marash section of Yerevan. Bruce is giving two talks tonight. We're told over 120 have registered. My cousin Vartan has come.

An incredibly beautiful sunset from the 9th floor of the office building where Bruce is giving his talks.

Did a lot of walking today.

[Pictures](#)

Tuesday, July 14, 2026

Not a great sleeping night for me.

Chris reached home.

Bruce and I had breakfast in the hotel restaurant this morning. Check out the tiny jingilov hahts!

Anna from the AMAA would pick us up at 09:00. Manvel was our driver. He had taken us to Berd last year. The drive is about 70 minutes. We went to Hankavan, to visit the AMAA camp there, Camp Shoghig. There's been a few more changes since we saw it last summer. You'd never recognize from what it was before, a Russian pioneer camp. We arrive at 10:10.

Badveli Vartan from Vardenis is the pastor here this week with his family. He greets us, and asks me if I would lead the devotional for the young adults who are helping. I said sure. We then join the worship time, which is about an hour long starting at 10:30. The curriculum is so clever and creative. The theme this year is "knock knock, open the door" (to your heart). Open your heart to Jesus. Today's focus is on friendship, how to be a good friend, and that Jesus is our best friend.

I recognize a few youth from Sisian, as helpers. And some others from previous years. I recognize some of the ladies at the kitchen staff.

We walk back to the one of the buildings, where there's a lounge area for staff and helpers. That's where the devotional is going to be. I'm given 45 min. I choose to focus on John 21:15-23. We have some good discussion.

When we're done, Armen from Toumanyanyan comes over to talk to me. He's curious about my faith. We have a real good conversation.

My cousin's daughter, Paleny, is a camper this week. She finds us. We had seen her at the worship time. She's found a frog and is excited. She's very happy at camp.

I have a chance to talk with the director of the camp, Arman. He came to camp as a young child many years ago. He's very encouraged to see the young helpers have gone through camping. And now they're serving. He sees the impact of camp. I find some stats from him which I've included:

Camp runs from June 29 - August 19.

Serves ages 8 - 35.

2,000 students this summer. They've maxed out.

We have 22 churches in the Union. (The Armenian Evangelical Union, ECA, which stands for Evangelical Church of Armenia). Each of the churches are given a certain number of tickets so that they can decide which youth qualifies. Averages that 30% of the children get to come.

They are all scholarship. If you're interested in supporting a child, it is \$75 USD for a week of camp. Through the AMAA. If you'd like to sponsor:

<https://wl.donorperfect.net/weblink/weblink.aspx?name=amaa&id=14>

We walk around some more. Badveli gives us a tour of the boys' cabin. The boys' cabin and the girls' cabin are the only two buildings that have not been renovated or built new. We also see the infirmary.

In between we interact with the children. At 14:00 it's lunchtime. It's a lentil beef soup that's really yummy. After lunch all the kids have quiet time for 2 hours. It's a good chance for them to get rested up, since the evening worship service starts at 20:30. And by time they get to sleep it's late. After lunch you end up getting a little sleepy anyway. And it's a hot time of the day.

Bruce and I walk towards the entrance. The security gate building is also new. Unfortunately the previous bridge that crosses over a strong creek collapsed over the winter. We want to investigate it. They've put in a temporary bridge for the meantime.

At 16:30, the team games start. Each team is named after a fruit of the spirit. The games are always so creative here.

The verse to put back together is John 10:11. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

We are enjoying being here.

The AMAA had sent a driver to pick us up. As we were walking to the car, Narek & Anahid and their baby son Haig arrive. So good to see them and spend a few minutes with them.

Our driver is Samvel. He's driven us from camp to the airport in the past. We're now headed to our hotel in Yerevan. It's 18:30.

We stop by the hotel lounge and grab a bite to eat. I start packing a few things while Bruce is finishing up some stuff. We get into bed for a few hours of rest, hoping to fall asleep.

[Pictures](#)

Wednesday, July 15, 2026

After six hotels, and two weeks away we've landed! Thankful to be back.

Thank you for following along, for your emails, and especially for your prayers.

[Pictures](#)



Christine