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## Summer 2021 Update // A Year Out

1 message

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Tue, Jul 27, 2021 at 10:54 PM

Dear family and friends,

Hello from Rochester!

By God's grace, I am now in my final year of medical school. Woooo! He continues to carry me through. Being a third year student in the middle of a pandemic was at times challenging, but I enjoyed learning on my feet and learned a lot about myself too. Surprisingly, I ended up enjoying surgery and for a looong hot second I was convinced that it was the specialty I would go into. But then I ended my third year rotations with an elective in ophthalmology, and it felt like coming home. You may remember, my desire to become a doctor in the first place was inspired and encouraged by an ophthalmologist I met in rural China.

Many students at my school decide to take a gap year between third and fourth year for a variety of reasons: to pursue passion projects, to take care of themselves or their families, to do research, etc. I guess the idea behind it is this is your last chance to explore something freely before you start working (to pay off those loans..). At first, I did not even entertain the idea of a gap year; I wanted to graduate as quickly as possible.

It was only when I reached out to one of my mentors in Philadelphia, who connected me with one of her friends, [Dr. Kempen](#), a Christian ophthalmologist missionary serving in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia with his family, that I started to realize I might benefit from time away from the grind of school. And here was an opportunity to spend a year doing exactly what I want to do in the future: combining medicine with cross-cultural missions alongside an excellent Christian mentor to do research/clinical work/outreach. I decided I'm going.

Though the plan is to travel to Addis Ababa this fall, there are a couple things that leave it up in the air. I ask you to please pray with me!

### Prayer requests:

1. I take my **board exam** on **August 12**. It's the culmination of all I learned this year and a major component of residency applications. **Please pray I will do my best and leave the result to God.**
2. I am still waiting on my school's decision to allow me to travel internationally this year. Half of my year out application has been approved (to do research with Dr. Kempen) but the approval to travel to Ethiopia is pending. **Please pray for school approval.**
3. Ethiopia is going through major political turmoil and the government has temporarily halted administering visas on arrival or online. I've heard the only option now is to go to the embassy but there is no guarantee that the visa application will be approved even then. **Please pray I would be granted a visa.**
4. **For the gospel of Jesus Christ to be made known in Ethiopia and for local churches to be strengthened.**

Since the school year ended in June, I've been able to enjoy the joys of summer living in upstate NY: hiking in the Adirondacks, going on walks in the numerous parks in and around the city, and eating out! It helps that many of the covid-related restrictions have been relaxed for those who are vaccinated. After three years, I have really come to appreciate Rochester- living here has helped me to experience the blessings of a quiet life (1 Thess 4:11-12). Being a part of an [amazing local body](#) helps tremendously. But as I prepare to go to Ethiopia, I will be temporarily moving back home to NJ this Sunday.

Thank you for walking with me on this journey as I seek to live a life that speaks of Christ, walking in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God (Colossians 1:10).

At the same time, I would love to know how you are doing and how I can be praying for you. Drop me a line!

Love in Jesus,  
Clara