

LIFE WITH LANEY

Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, rejoice. - Phillippians 4:4



Chloe - Daniel - James - Laney - Clara - Jayden - Lydia

Durres Youth Rally

Durres is a beautiful city right on the coast of the Adriatic Sea in western Albania, and we were blessed to be able to attend a youth rally there! Now this youth rally was very different from ones that I have been to. The kids attending came from all over Albania as basketball teams, they played basketball games tournament style, Friday and Saturday. Before every game and during half time, a church leader or young man would teach a devotional on topics like: good sportsmanship, leadership, teamwork, and perseverance. Watching the kids learn how to play basketball and support each other, win or lose, was very heartwarming. Some of the kids attending do not attend church and were simply there to just play basketball, but even so they were introduced to the Gospel and a different way of living and thinking. Before the basketball games on Friday evening, Chloe and I joined the Durres girls youth group class. We had a lesson on the story of Esther. We talked about her strength, courage, and faith in God, and how we can apply her story to our everyday life. The girls were so sweet and tried their absolute best to talk English with us and get to know us both! Overall the weekend went super well and all the players got an award Saturday on the things talked about during the devos!

Speaking the Language

My teammates and I's biggest struggle so far has been the language. Most of the younger people in Albania know at least a little English and we communicate with them pretty easily, but the older generations know little to no English. It has been a challenge communicating with the members at church due to this fact but thankfully this month we started language classes! I have been learning basic greetings, pronouns, and the alphabet. Albanian is definitely hard to learn but now we are able to have very basic conversations with others and I am excited to learn more!

Thereasa Winnett

This month we had a missionary from the U.S., Thereasa Winnett, come to visit us for a couple days! Thereasa focuses her ministry on working with kids of all ages. She taught us how to work with kids who have grown up in different cultures and how to keep them entertained even if we do not speak the same language. Thereasa has been doing this kind of work for a long time and we had so much fun getting to know her and learning some very insightful tips!

Polican VBS

The small town of Polican is located just 45 minutes from Berat and even though Polican is a very small village, they have a very active and thriving church! The Smith family and my AIM team were invited to come help with the Polican summer VBS. The theme for the VBS week was the Fruits of the Spirit, so Jayden and Daniel prepared lessons, then Chloe and I worked on crafts, games, and snacks! There were about 50 kids from all over the Polican valley and they were so fun and had such exciting energy!! They were all so excited to be there and to learn about the Gospel and the Fruits of the Spirits. One of the older girls, Deliza, helped the boys translate their lessons and showed us how to sing and dance to their fun Albanian VBS songs!

All the songs had very specific hand motions and dances, which took some time for us to learn. But the kids were so happy and excited that we knew their songs and were dancing with them! This week in Polican was filled with ups and downs but I am so glad we went! Learning the ways of other cultures is hard but my team and I are learning and growing better together.

Create in me a
clean heart, O
God, and renew a
right spirit within
me.

Psalms 51:10 ESV

Tirane VBS

Tirane is the capital of Albania and is about 90 minutes north of Berat. Here we helped out with the Tirane Church of Christ's summer VBS as well! With how our schedule worked out, we were only able to be a part of the Tirane VBS for a day.

Nonetheless, it was still a great experience and we had tons of fun with the kids! Daniel jumped right into leading the VBS songs and Jayden and I got to work prepping water and snacks for the kiddos. Since it was their last day of VBS they had a little competition to see who learned the most from the week, almost like a Bible Bowl competition. I loved seeing the kids' joy for learning the Bible and how on fire they are for Jesus!!

BERAT

Our time in Berat has been very good but also very busy! Our schedule looks different every week but we have a few things that consistently stay the same. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings we have our language classes. On Tuesday and Thursday evenings we help lead a Mark Bible study at the church building, and we save Friday nights to hangout and spend time together as a team! Thank you for all your love, support, and prayers! God Bless!!

