

flying with purpose

CHRISTINA LEHIGH | *Aviation. How we sustain ministry at the ends of the earth.*



Flying along in this JAARS Helio-Courier at the Smoketown Missions Aviation Fair.

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a day in
the life of
a missionary
flight
student

My sweaty hand gripped the yoke as my mind and right hand raced through engine re-start procedures. Nothing was working. The clouds that had seemed like a welcome cloak moments before now were a deadly menace to safety below. My instruments began blinking out one by one as I made a Mayday call to air traffic control. As I broke out of the clouds I quickly selected a field and made my last preparations for an emergency landing. I maneuvered the stricken aircraft into position and touched down in the soft field leading to a rather rough and abrupt stop. I breathed. We were safe. Then my instructor reached over and hit “pause” on the simulator. It was just another day in the life of a SMAT flight student.

why aviation?

My vision is to use aviation as a tool to bring the Gospel to those who have never heard and would have no chance of hearing due to barriers only overcome with airplanes. Many people groups are cut off not only from the gospel but also from having basic needs met as well as no access to medical help. My heart often melts in sorrow as I curl up with my Bible and study aids, realizing that so many have no scripture in their own language, and no way to access it unless someone physically brings it to them.

multiple stages of learning to remove corrosion from steel and then refinish it - definitely a work in progress!



Graduation day. Our captain's bars represent a year of incredibly hard work and exciting accomplishments.



Preparing for overseas ministry—good friends teaching me to drive stick shift!



changes & blessings.

praying.

I can't express enough thanks for those of you who have been praying for me through the last two years. There is no way I could have gotten through everything without your prayers!

Praise the Lord for giving me the strength and stamina to successfully complete the maintenance and flight programs at SMAT, and directing me into Proclaim and a position serving at SMAT.

Prayer for openness to God's leading for the future as well as sensitivity to the Spirit in working with the students/staff at SMAT.

Prayer for partners to come alongside me to reach full ministry funding.

These last two years have been packed full of unexpected changes, extreme challenges, and overflowing blessings. Since moving to Michigan in August of 2019 I have certainly not known a dull moment! As many of you know, I've recently graduated from School of Missionary Aviation Technology. I'm now a certified A&P mechanic, as well as commercial instrument pilot. Basically, that means I'm legal to turn wrenches and fly people in airplanes in clouds—but I have lots yet to learn! I'm now in full-time ministry with Proclaim Aviation, an organization that comes alongside new aviation grads like me to break down the seemingly insurmountable barriers to achieving service overseas. In order to gain the required experience before heading overseas, Proclaim is loaning me back to SMAT, where I have joined the staff and am working with the current maintenance students in the lab. I am helping to teach them all aspects of aircraft maintenance—and how to do so with minimal injury, as snug inspection panels, sheet metal, cables, rivets, torque wrenches and the like tend to draw a lot of blood from aircraft mechanics! Serving at SMAT also allows me to keep my flight in tip-top shape and prevent the terrible affliction known as ground-sickness.

plans moving forward.

During the next two years while on staff at SMAT, my goal is to gain the necessary aviation experience, while also becoming fully funded and prepared for transition to overseas ministry. I have not felt a strong leading to any particular mission aviation organization, but know God will make the way clear in His time just as he did for me to join Proclaim and SMAT. At the same time, I am very excited about all that God will be doing as He works through me during my time of ministry at SMAT. My contact information and ministry webpage are listed below. If you feel led to come alongside me in this journey, I'd love to talk with you about what partnership looks like.

blessings. CHRISTINA

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