Pamoza Vision Trip Highlights:

August 30 – September 10, 2026

Sunday, August 30 – The Journey Begins

- Fellow board member, Doug, and his wife Cora drove us to JFK International Airport, where we repacked luggage to meet weight restrictions before beginning our journey.
- After a 14-hour flight, we arrived in Nairobi only to discover that an airport strike had caused widespread delays and cancellations, including our connecting flight.
- Despite the uncertainty, we experienced a sense of peace and saw God provide for our needs.

Monday, August 31 – Chaos & Confusion at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport

- We spent 8 hours navigating chaos caused by the aviation strike in Nairobi. With little official information available, travelers helped each other navigate long lines for visas, new boarding passes, hotels, and food.
- We finally received a voucher from Kenya Airways to cover our hotel, food, and transportation and were able to get some much-needed food and sleep.
- We reflected on **Matthew 6:33** and God's provision. Even in the uncertainty, He met our needs.

Tuesday, September 1 – A Divine Appointment in Nairobi

- Our unexpected extra day in Kenya led to a visit with Jane, Edward, and their son Arnold, who serve children from the slums in Kibera, Nairobi.
- We visited their school which reaches approximately 220 students from preschool through sixth grade.
- We helped serve lunch, learned about their hopes for expanding the school, and identified practical ways we may be able to encourage their work.Our time with them reminded us that God is raising up people around the world to serve others.

Wednesday, September 2 – Finally to Malawi, but..

- With the airport strike over, we returned early to the Nairobi airport and finally departed for Malawi.
- After arriving in Lilongwe, we began the long drive north to Zowe, only to get a flat tire three hours later.
- We got some help from two boys who lent us a tool and Mr. Saka from Karonga who stopped to check on us.
- With the tire fixed, we stopped for fuel and learned had we arrived two days earlier, we would have found no fuel at the station! Thank you God for your provision!
- After roughly 8 hours of driving, we arrived safely in Zowe, grateful to begin the Vision Trip in earnest.

Thursday, September 3 – Listening to Pamoza Staff Leaders

- We met with Pamoza's leadership staff to hear their perspectives on the organization's strengths, challenges, and future direction.
- **Sustainability, flexibility, and resources** emerged as important themes, along with the need for continued professional development and succession planning.
- We left encouraged by the quality and commitment of Pamoza's management team and the importance of investing in their continued growth.
  We also visited Emily and the Tailoring Skills Center, hearing about her hopes for the future and seeing firsthand how limited solar power affects the program.

Key Moment – Dreaming Bigger

When we met Emily last year, she was a student in Pamoza's tailoring program. ***Four days a week, she walked three hours each way to attend class.*** *She was also selling doughnuts and small sewn items to save for a second-hand sewing machine so she could practice what she was learning from home.*

And then one year later, what a difference! Emily has graduated and is running a sewing business from her home. After graduation she received a sewing machine through a loan of 290,000 Kwacha (roughly $145), and paid the whole thing back in nine months, an incredible accomplishment in a community stricken by poverty! She also used her earnings to pay school fees for her daughter Raquel and purchased an additional machine. While we sat in her home talking, four customers arrived with clothes for her to alter or sew. Her business was literally unfolding in front of us.

*But what impressed us most was what she talked about next. She wants to use the additional machine to train other women in her village to sew, who could eventually help her with her growing business, and she hopes to launch another small business selling soap. Emily isn't finished dreaming. "****Come and visit me again next year,"*** *she told us.* ***"You'll see. I'll be selling soap."***

Friday, September 4 – Building Community Among Staff

- Pamoza's ad-hoc Social Welfare Committee hosted a gathering for staff and their spouses.
- The gathering provided intentional time for staff families to fellowship and strengthen relationships beyond their work.
- Staff danced, shared personal testimonies, played games, and ate together. They have true Pamoza spirit.
- At the conclusion of the event, each person was assigned a prayer partner for the year, including us! (Chris with Damaseko, Holton with Star, and Temwa with Leah). We will need to hold each other accountable to be praying for them.
- The day reinforced the importance of unity, relationships, and spiritual community within Pamoza.
- A highlight: Pamoza staff member, Anthony and his wife **sang beautifully together**. They just got married last year!

Saturday, September 5 – Pamoza Program Visits & Meeting Advisory Board Members

- We began the day at the Pamoza Farming Institute (PFI), seeing the fish ponds and other agricultural initiatives, including poultry, oxen, feed production, and manure fertilizer.
- We met with members of Pamoza's Malawi Advisory Board and heard Gladson, our Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, present highlights from the 2026 Impact Assessment, followed by discussion about Pamoza's future and leadership roles.
- We visited the Zowe Agri-Depot and saw how it serves farmers.
- We met with two families and heard about their progress and the challenges they continue to face.

Sunday, September 6 – Faith, Family & the Realities of Rural Life

- We worshipped with three different denominations gathered together, all connected through Pamoza's Church Leadership Training Institute (CLTI), and heard Damascus preach.
- We spent time with two families, listening openly to their experiences and participation in Pamoza programs.
- Their stories revealed both significant challenges and signs of progress, including couples working more closely together.
- The visits gave us a deeper understanding of the complexity of transformation and the importance of walking alongside families over time.

Key Moment – Preaching Hope

When we visited Kaviyombo CCAP church during our vision trip, three different denominations gathered to worship together. What united them was their leaders being trained through Pamoza's Church Leaders Training Institute. That morning, Pastor Damascus stood before the congregation and preached on Matthew 6:25-33, encouraging all of us to trust God to provide. He was a powerful preacher.

But Damascus's story did not begin in the pulpit. When Pamoza first began working with his family in 2024, they were struggling. Their maize harvest lasted only about 6 months and when food ran out, they survived by working on other people's farms. Damascus's oldest child, Edward, was in high school but they couldn't afford his school fees. In that season, Damascus shared openly that things had gotten so heavy, so desperate, that he even considered taking his own life.

Then his family was invited to participate in Pamoza's Family Sponsorship program. Pamoza began walking alongside them, holistically. Spiritually and practically. He received a Bible and read it day and night. In the fields, he applied training in sustainable farming and manure fertilizer mix. Little by little, things began to change. Today, the family grows enough food to last throughout the year. Instead of spending the little income they made on food, Damascus can now use it for school fees and other needs. They have chickens, pigs, goats, and they've made improvements to sanitation and their home.

But the transformation wasn't only physical. That same hunger for God's word led Damascus into deeper training through Pamoza's CLTI program. When asked what Pamoza had helped him with, he named three things. Enough food for his family, income for school fees, and theological training for his calling. As he put it, ***"before my heart was so troubled, but now I have found peace."***

Monday, September 7 – Seeing the Needs Behind the Programs

- We joined Pamoza staff for their weekly devotion and then toured Pamoza's offices, where we saw needs related to office space, staff housing, and reliable power.
- We met with traditional leaders about the future of Pamoza's health facility and were encouraged by their willingness to contribute toward making expanded health services possible.
- Other visits revealed both challenges and opportunities, including problems at the maize mill and a lively CLTI class led by Rev. Kalua.
- At Chabonga Nursery School, we met more than 70 children and 2 volunteer teachers and heard the community's vision for developing a school of their own.

Tuesday, September 8 – Goodbye Village, Hello City

- Before leaving Zowe, we made several personal visits with families and new friends.
- We began the journey south to Lilongwe, experiencing another reminder of Malawi's fuel challenges when diesel was unavailable at one of our stops (but we had already filled up).
- After arriving in Lilongwe, we checked into the Warm Heart Guest House and prepared for our journey home.
- Over dinner with Dr. Chimwemwe Mvula, we received encouraging guidance about a possible **phased approach to developing Pamoza's health center and staffing it appropriately.**

Wednesday, September 9 – Reflection & the Journey Home

- Before departing Malawi, we reflected on the people, experiences, and lessons that had affected us most during the Vision Trip.
- One common theme emerged from the families and communities we visited: **despite significant challenges, people continue to have hope and a vision for the future.**
- We came away with a deeper appreciation for Pamoza's staff, Malawi Advisory Board, community leaders, and the expertise and commitment already present within the organization.
- As we headed home, we agreed that the next step is not simply to make plans, but to **pray, learn from the Impact Assessment, and share where we feel God is leading Pamoza next. *Stay tuned…***

Key Moment – Growing Together

*When we sat down with **Sumayira and Malia** and their two small children, Michael, age four, and Vitumbiko, age one, they didn't offer us a polished success story. Instead, they spoke plainly about both their progress and their struggles; and it was their honesty that touched us most.*

This year, Suma and Malia harvested twelve bags of maize, enough to feed their family for the whole year. That's no small thing! Suma also takes on extra work molding bricks, and they sell crops like soybeans and cassava to earn additional income. But life this year has not been without setbacks. As participants in our Family Sponsorship program, they learned how to make a manure-fertilizer mix that reduces their need for expensive store-bought fertilizer. However, they used one of the key ingredients, gaga (a byproduct of processing maize into flour), to feed their five pigs. Then all five pigs died from disease! They lost the pigs and had to spend more money on fertilizer. Their bathhouse was also knocked down by wandering oxen, and while we were visiting, we watched them repeatedly shoo goats and cattle away from food they were drying. Every bit has to be protected.

Then there are the difficult choices rural families face. Suma left school after 8th grade when his father needed his help farming after an older brother went to South Africa in search of work. Malia left school after 9th grade when she married. And when she was expecting Vitumbiko, she had to go to the hospital and wait there three weeks in order to deliver safely instead of on the way there.

*They were equally honest about areas where they still want to grow. Malia shared openly that Suma struggles with drinking too much and asked us to pray that he would stop. Suma acknowledged the struggle himself. Their willingness to talk openly about these challenges reminded us that **transformation isn't about pretending everything is perfect. It's about recognizing where change is needed and continuing to move forward together.***

And they are planning for the future. They would like to buy two oxen to help with farm work and rent to others in the community. It's not a cheap goal, about 1 million kwacha per ox, but they have a plan: sell their groundnuts. They also plan to construct a new house and have already started molding bricks. And when we were leaving, they gave us two large bags of cassava, worth far more than what we offered to pay. Even while working toward their own goals, they wanted to give. They haven't arrived, but they are trying, working, dreaming, and growing together.