

GROTON ASSEMBLY OF GOD

APRIL & MAY 2024 NEWSLETTER

PASTOR'S PEN

Where Do I Turn?

I've read accounts of people who lived through great winds that were unrelenting for hours or even days. Some of the people complained that listening to the relentless wind was hard on their nerves.

Personally, I like hearing the wind—as long as it's not so strong as to threaten our home. Years ago a downburst swept the field to the west of the house I grew up in, and it took off the cupola, which had been there for decades through hurricanes, blizzards, and summer storms.

After windstorms, I always walk around our house to survey the damage to the maples that stand like guards around our home. There are usually plenty of branches to clean up, but, thankfully, so far I haven't found any speared into our roof. Occasionally, I have to pull out the chainsaw to cut up a tree-sized branch. The strong gusts seem to be the worst offenders during such windy times.

May I suggest that those powerful wind gusts are like unforeseen challenges that strike us? Just as strong wind gusts test a house and tree, and strip away shingles that are loose and branches that are weak, sudden challenges test the strength of our relationship with Jesus. Trying times show us whether or not we really are trusting in Him for all things.

But what about those constantly blowing winds that sometimes come up? When we visited Dallas, Texas, in 1997, the wind was blowing steadily the entire three days we were there. Do trying times come upon us as do such winds? Yes, they sure do. While

some challenges come out of nowhere, strike us, unsettle us, then leave us to assess the damage, there are other challenges that come up and seem to camp out with us, giving us constant pressure such as a house experiences during a long wind event. That constant pressure for a sustained time really tests us.

Some people, like some houses and trees, don't fare well during a sustained time of pressure. They are like loose shingles and weak limbs that are blown away from our Branch. They fall away from God during such times—stop reading His word, stop going to church, stop praying, lose hope. They seek comfort or “salvation” in people around them or in former—or new—addictions.

But God wants us to draw nearer to Him during such times. He says to us in Psalm 46:1, “God is our refuge and strength, a well-proven help in trouble” (MEV).

When the winds of challenge and pressure arise against you, what will do? Will you seek Him through constant prayer, by fervently searching His word, or will you focus on the wind and what is causing you anxiety, and seek comfort elsewhere?

May each of us turn to Him who stretched Himself out on a cross for us and then rose again. He is our greatest help in any storm.



Join with your
brothers and
sisters across
the U.S.A. on
May 2!

See p. 10



April Birthdays:

- 1 Diane Costa
- 2 Jackie Baxendell
- 3 Lonnie Hinkle
- 10 Bec Groves-Haley
- 13 Josh St. Martin
- 14 Edison Scott
- 15 Linda Competillo
- 17 Della Lovelace
- 20 Olivia Clark
Christina St. Martin
- 27 Trude Morse
Serina Craig
- 28 Kylie LeFever
- 29 Paul Bateman
- 30 Melissa Besler
Raybert Patterson

April Anniversaries:

- 4/2/1966 Earl & Diana Buckingham
- 4/14/84 Mark & Jackie Baxendell
- 4/18/1999 Paul & Trude Morse
- 4/25/1981 Paul & Pam Bateman
- 4/30/1983 Clif & Debbie Todd



May Birthdays:

- 1 Hannah Wright
- 5 Kinsley Scheffler
- 7 Charlotte Huether
- 10 Stephanie Neno
- 11 Mike Rinchack
- 12 Joe Fitzgerald
- 13 Grace Short
- 16 Barb Patterson
- 21 Chris Stevens
Merwin Greene
- 25 Chuck Hendrickson
Jazmyn Hurlbut
- 27 Cheyanne Hendrickson
Jeff Ellis
Calliope (Cali) Sears
- 28 Luke Starner
- 29 Pam Bateman
- 31 Ted Norman
Tama Stotts

May Anniversaries:

- 5/16/2004 Cliff & Sara Ostrander
- 5/17/2018 Rick & Debbie Fernandez
- 5/22/1965 Paul & Mary Lu Eveleigh
- 5/22/1976 Charlie & Laurie Wright
- 5/22/1993 Joel & Sandra Rivera

Lonnie Hinkle To Serve Him

As a child, I was taken to church every Sunday. I continued this ritual until I was in my teenage years, and sometimes it was with kicking and screaming because I didn't have a relationship with Jesus. Sure, I knew of Him, but I didn't know him. It wasn't until much later in life that I began a relationship with our Lord. I got married in 1985 to Julie, but I didn't attend church that often still. Most of the time it was Julie and our children that went.



first syllable. As I grew, I experienced more syllables and words. I became very comfortable praying in the Spirit.

Time had passed, about 6 months, before I committed myself to water baptism. I knew at that point because of Sunday education that I needed to do this out of obedience. My relationship continued to grow stronger as I learned more.

Eventually, I took on the

teaching ministry, Mission's committee, food pantry ministry, the media ministry, and was elected to the board. I found out that the tighter your relationship with the Lord, and the more you serve Him, the greater the spiritual attacks. I really felt this when I was on the board, and I found out the meaning of perseverance, prayer, and faith.

During the COVID epidemic, I wandered away from my relationship. Other than the fear of catching COVID, there was no clear explanation, even though I tried to find a reason for the separation. I can now look at it, and it was a point in my life that I gave the enemy a foothold. This lasted for some time, but I can now say I am back, and

resurrecting my relationship.

I am starting to feel complete once again. The emptiness has left me, and I feel and hear the Lord once again. I have rejoined the Missions Committee, which I have a heart and yearning for.



I remember the day, April 1, 2000, very well. That morning there was a feeling inside of me that I couldn't put a label on. That evening I went to "Heaven's Gates and Hell's Flame" with my family. I told them not to expect me to be saved. Needless to say, I was wrong. This day was my day 1 with our Savior. It wasn't until 2008 or 2009 that I received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. It was a scary and doubtful moment because I didn't feel OK about speaking in what sounded like a baby babbling their



**Good News Club,
Mike & Karin McCadam
Cortland, Home Missions
Supported by Groton AG**

Have you heard about Good News Clubs? If not, then we are happy to share a little bit about them. Good News Clubs are a critical component of *Child Evangelism Fellowship®* which is an international Bible-centered organization founded in 1937. The volunteers are born-again believers who have a passion to lead children to the Lord Jesus Christ and help them grow in the Word of God. Furthermore, we hope they will become involved in a local church.

The Cortland Good News Club began in Smith School (grades 3-4) October 2022 with four volunteers. On a weekly basis 6-8 children learned about God's love for them and how they could daily live for Jesus. It was a wonderful year where the children learned about the Lord through truth from the Word of God. The children had fun learning memory verses such as John 3:16-17 and Romans 8:28. Each week there was singing, crafts and history through the Bible. We ended the year with a fun party outside with games, including pie in the face. The volunteers were committed with their time and talent, and paid for all the materials, activities, snacks, and drinks.

The 2023-2024 year has been amazing for many reasons! One important reason is that Groton Assembly of God chose the Cortland Good News Club as a home missions project. The volunteers (Mike and Karin McCadam, Deby McCormick, and Melody Sheffler) are blessed by your prayer and monetary support. And the Lord is blessing our club. We have 17 children registered yet after the Christmas break (when attendance falls off) We have averaged 11-12 children weekly.



The children are growing in their knowledge as well as their love of the Lord. We sing songs like "Have Your Heard About Jesus," "He Is God," and "Trust in the Lord." Although several of the boys and girls identify as Christians, many of their families do not attend any church. So, then you may understand what a vital ministry the Good News Club is. Moreover, you will be happy to know that there was a beautiful conversion in January as one girl gave her heart to the Lord. When this happens, a volunteer spends time with the child reviewing key Bible verses on salvation.

Please pray for these precious children, their families, and their school. We would appreciate it if you would consider being a volunteer at the Good News Club in the fall. Please pray about it and certainly speak with Karin or Mike. Once again, thank you for investing in these children.



Live Dead Missionaries Supported by Groton AG

What is life like
in Tripoli,
Lebanan?

Oh man, where to start? Life is wild and fun and hard and beautiful. There are cobble stone streets that lead to hidden staircases, French influenced middle-eastern architecture, downtown there is a souk [outdoor market] that sell spices, dates and delicacies.



There are basket weavers and soap makers that have crafted by hand for centuries. There are donkey carts piled high with cabbages outside trendy, new coffee shops blasting Taylor Swift.

There is squalor, makeshift housing and beggars knocking on your car window, buildings with bullet holes, guarded neighborhoods, spiteful graffiti and murals that stand as reminders of a failed revolution. In every neighborhood, there are photos of people who are esteemed by the Muslim sects and affiliations. Each group has their own slogans, flags, and posters of those they consider martyrs killed in one of many conflicts.

Walking down the street, you pass children playing in an alley, a woman hanging rugs out on her balcony, fashionable young adults smoking shisha outside a coffee shop, and old men playing backgammon in a dingy smoke-filled café. When we need a break from the city or a fun family day, we can explore the cedar forests of biblical days, find snow on the mountains, or visit ancient Roman ruins.

Daily life is less glamorous.

It's fixing a leaking wall and dripping ceiling after another heavy rain. It is fixing broken toilets that won't flush because of the build-up of hard water. A cockroach falling on your arm (true story). Calling an electrician again because the lightbulbs won't stop glowing making it difficult to sleep.

It is rushing to the washing machine when the electricity turns on, tripping the power a few times a day, and getting stuck in a rickety elevator.

It is having my sin show clearly in all the daily stresses and frustrations. It is a regular reminder that I am simply a broken jar of clay, but God can shine His light through me if I remain in Him.



It is figuring out how to drive with tuk-tuks and mopeds weaving through a city with few enforced rules—no red lights, no stop signs, no speed limits and plenty of potholes, men pulling carts and pedestrians to dodge.

It is knowing that everyone is watching you and at least initially, is wary of you. It is sticking out like a sore thumb everywhere you go because there aren't foreigners living here, and few tourists would add Tripoli to their Lebanon itinerary.

It is false accusations that by God's grace blow over with time.

It is driving through a protest and seeing the anger, frustration, and wounds on their faces up close.

It is using any spare energy to follow the news of the war that is not too close and not too far away. It is living with a sense of

unsettledness as the region faces an uncertain future. It is daily trying to walk a balance of being security conscious and trusting God in a way you have never had to do before.

It is making our home a haven for our kids so that they love their life here. It is doing Arabic letters and crafts and songs to help them fall in love with the language and to make friends.



It is our new, Muslim friends going out of their way to bring us gifts for Christmas and others going out of their way to help us when we need something.

It is team meetings in our home with kids running around playing, praying together, board games, and lots of food!

It is going out to community parks, shops, and cafés to meet Syrians to better understand their culture, what their lives are like here, and their needs.

All of this culminates in the joy of gifting a Bible to a new Syrian friend who opens it and can't stop reading it with her teenage sons reading over her shoulder. It is explaining to them the message of the Bible so they can hear for the first time that Jesus loves them and died for them too!

What have we been doing?

In these early days of starting a new work in a new place we have been prioritizing prayer, building relationships, and learning as much as we can. We've been busy:



- Getting settled in our home and neighborhood
- Meeting together as a team a few times a week for prayer, team building, and field training
- Going out into the community to meet Syrians and learn about their lives and hear from them their struggles and concerns
- Building relationships with those we meet in different Syrian communities
- Sharing the Gospel with everyone we can and reading the Bible with those who are interested
- Connecting with other workers serving Syrians in Lebanon to learn from them
- Praying about and researching the best way as a team to engage with Syrians and meet their needs in this city and the surrounding areas

Thank you so much for partnering with us and praying for us. We are so grateful that we can do this Great Commission work together!

Live Dead Missionaries Supported by Groton AG

What is it like to live in Madagascar?



Life as a follower of Jesus is not always easy. There are some days, some seasons when you feel like you're walking against the wind. This can happen anywhere...in your home country or on the field.

Our team is coming out of a distraction. We have continued meeting, praying as a team, and praying individually. Through distraction we are being tested as a team. We are grateful for passing the test.

We are celebrating the news of four new believers from a Muslim background!

More students are coming to study English. More relationships are beginning. People are seeking and opening their hearts to Jesus!

Ramadan.
Please pray with us for our friends, neighbors, and community members across the island

who will observe Ramadan (March 10-April 8) this year. Our Muslim friends will be trying extra hard during the month of Ramadan to "earn" their place in heaven. They will be trying to tip the scales, making sure their good works are more than their sins. We will have perhaps even more opportunities to share the Good News of the gospel of Jesus Christ during this focused time in their lives.

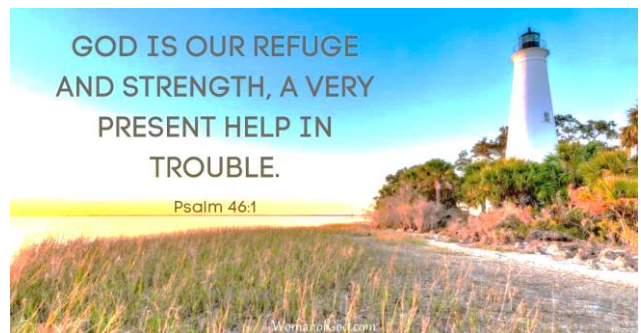
Please pray with us for the gospel to go forth powerfully and effectively.

We are so grateful for your prayers with us, for us, and for continuing forward momentum for our team. We are so grateful for your partnership.



GOD IS OUR REFUGE
AND STRENGTH, A VERY
PRESENT HELP IN
TROUBLE.

Psalm 46:1



April Service Schedule

Sunday, April 7

New Sermon Series...*Why Do We Do That?*

9 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. – Life Groups

10 a.m. – “Take A Day Off”

10 a.m. –Water Baptisms

Sunday, April 14

9 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. – Life Groups

10 a.m. – Mike Sears

Sunday, April 21

9 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. – Life Groups

10 a.m. – Steve Chandler

Sunday, April 28

9 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. – Life Groups

10 a.m. – Vince Ballistrea

11:30 a.m.-Senior Moments

May Service Schedule

Sunday, May 5

9 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. – Life Groups

10 a.m. – Alan Kress

Sunday, May 12 (Mother’s Day)

9 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. – Life Groups

10 a.m. – Gabbie Kress

Sunday, May 19

9 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. – Life Groups

10 a.m. – Trude Morse

6 p.m. – Sectional Pentecost Service

Sunday, May 26

9 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. – Life Groups

10 a.m. – “Give My Money”

11:30 a.m.- Senior Moments



Pentecostal Transformation in 1976

Opal W. Eubanks, a white, hard-nosed Mississippi Highway patrolman, was known for his foul mouth and rough ways, especially when dealing with African Americans . . . who would have believed God could transform him into a loving pastor of an African American congregation?

Opal W. Eubanks joined the Mississippi Highway Patrol during the race riots of 1964. A large, broad-shouldered white man, he relished the opportunity to strike fear in the hearts of African-Americans who were in trouble with the law. By his own admission, he was a foul-mouthed sinner who liked “rough stuff.”

A radical conversion to Christ in the early 1970s altered the course of Eubanks' life, and his hardened heart became tender toward African-Americans in his rural community. He and his wife, Thelma, ultimately pioneered an Assemblies of God congregation consisting mostly of African-Americans, which they pastored for 21 years. He shared his story in the Feb. 8, 1976, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel*.

Eubanks' conversion occurred in the midst of deep personal suffering. His 20-year-old daughter had recently been killed in an automobile accident, and he had been experiencing excruciating back pain. He realized that he was far from God, and his father-in-law, a Pentecostal preacher,

encouraged him to seek the Lord and repent of his sins.

Eubanks began attending an Assemblies of God church, where he accepted Christ, was healed of his back pain, and was baptized in the Holy Spirit. He was a new man, and everyone could see the difference.

After being filled with the Holy Spirit, he started witnessing to people. His Bible became his constant companion in his patrol car, and he never grew tired of sharing how the Lord changed his heart and life.

One night, at a roadblock on Interstate 59, he stopped two African-American men who had beer in their car. He had to charge them with illegal possession of liquor, as it was a dry county. He also witnessed to them about the Lord, telling them that "liquor was a tool of the devil."

One of the men, Joe Pickens, came to see Eubanks several days later. He tearfully confessed that his life was messed up and accepted Christ. Before long, Pickens and his four daughters all had made definite decisions to follow the Lord and had experienced Spirit baptism.

News of the conversions spread through the largely African-American rural community of Bay Springs, Mississippi, where racial segregation still held sway. Patrolman Eubanks had been known for his tough ways, and people took note when he began ministering Christ's love to African-Americans as brothers in Christ.

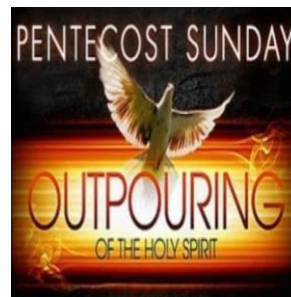
In 1974, Eubanks started holding a Bible study, which developed into a thriving congregation. In the first two years, about 45 people accepted Christ under Eubanks' ministry. The congregation, Bay Springs Assembly of God, was organized in 1975. The Sunday School superintendent was a redeemed bootlegger.

At the time, it was unheard of in that community for a white man to pioneer or pastor a church of African-Americans. Eubanks realized that he was breaking cultural mores. However, he insisted that God's values must trump cultural values: "If a man is a child of God, then he's your brother. I don't care what color he is, you have a duty to witness to him." Eubanks recounted "grumbling and opposition to the church," but noted that it was "nothing that God couldn't handle."

Eubanks served as pastor of Bay Springs Assembly of God until 1996. Sammy Amos, an African-American, followed Eubanks and is now in his 27th year as pastor. Amos echoes Eubanks' vision for the church: "We only care about souls, we don't judge people according to their color."

Amos noted that Bay Springs Assembly of God continues to be an interracial lighthouse in the rural community, where most churches are still segregated. The congregation includes black and white members and is known for its outreach and deliverance ministries. The largely African American church started by a white highway patrolman continues to demonstrate to the world that God can indeed change hardened hearts.

Read the entire article by O.W. Eubanks, "Highway Patrolman Pastors New Black Church in Mississippi," on pages 8-9 of the [Feb. 8, 1976, issue](#) of the *Pentecostal Evangel*.



**Pentecost
Sunday,
May 19, 2024**

Sectional Worship
Service, 6 p.m.



NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

MAY 2, 2024

LIFT UP THE WORD - LIGHT UP THE WORLD

For you are my lamp, O Lord, and my God lightens my darkness. For by You I can run against a troop, and by my God I can leap over a wall. This God—His way is perfect; the word of the Lord proves true; He is a shield for all those who take refuge in Him.

2 Samuel 22:29-31

The National Day of Prayer is Ours

The National Day of Prayer belongs to all Americans. It is a day that transcends differences, bringing together citizens from all backgrounds.

Nationaldayofprayer.org

For Dates & Times of Prayer check the events tab on the Groton AG app and listen to the announcements during Sunday morning worship service.



Life Groups

Summer Session (June-Aug)

[Foundations: AG Center for Holy Land Studies with P. Sam](#)

Youth & Adults welcome

Through this 12-session video and study series, you will explore the New Testament time-period to understand more about the world of the disciples and the Early Church. You will travel to Ephesus - Colossae - Miletus - Didyma - Smyrna - Pergamum - Thyatira - Sardis - Philadelphia and Laodicea.

You will encounter the challenges, beliefs, and drive of those who gave their lives to obey the command of Jesus. You will gain even more tools to help spread the gospel to all people, everywhere!

Life Groups