

# GROTON ASSEMBLY OF GOD

APRIL 2026 NEWSLETTER

## PASTOR'S PEN

### Truth...

When I was a boy growing up, my parents always gave me big hugs and said, "I love you." Even when I was an adult, they continued to do the same. I try to do the same for Penny and have always tried to do the same for our children.

But I know from speaking with people that many do not grow up hearing they are loved. In fact, some grow up believing they are unlovable.

One of the most surprising things for me has been speaking with a few people who will tell me, "Yes, God loves everyone," but then turn around and say, "but God doesn't love me." I find that such a contradiction in beliefs is a sign of the world's influence. Whenever we see what appears to be a very clear contradiction, I believe we should think, "Enemy influence here." A good example would be someone who will go to great lengths to save the lives of animals but thinks it is permissible to take the lives of unborn babies.

My reason for writing this month is simply this: To remind you that God loves you. "For God so loved the world, that He sent his only

begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

If you struggle to believe that Jesus' proclamation of His love for people includes you, reread that verse many times, substituting your name for "whoever." And keep doing it. The truth is more powerful than any lie. The truth sets us free. The problem is that we have often rehearsed the lie that we are unlovable. My friend, it is time to rehearse the truth many more times.

May God bless you!



**God is doing wonderful things.**  
Wouldn't it be cool to be a part of it?

**Celebrate with us on Sunday, April 5**

**Sunrise Service, 7:00 a.m.**

Stonehedges Golf Course, Groton, NY

**Breakfast, 8:30-9:30 a.m.**

Fellowship Hall

**Worship Service & Drama, 10:00 a.m.**

"Exit Strategy"

## Birthdays & Anniversaries



### Birthdays

- 1 Diane Costa
- 2 Jackie Baxendell
- 3 Lonnie Hinkle
- 10 Bec Groves-Haley
- 15 Linda Competillo
- 17 Della Lovelace
- 20 Olivia Clark
- 27 Trude Morse, Serina Craig
- 29 Paul Bateman
- 30 Melissa Besler, Mary Flach, & Raybert Patterson

## April Service Schedule

### Sunday, April 5 (EASTER)

7 a.m. – 7:30 a.m. – Sunrise Service at Stonehedges Golf Course  
 8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. – Breakfast  
 10 a.m. – Easter Drama: *Exit Strategy*, with water baptisms

### Sunday, April 12

9 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. – Life Groups  
 10 a.m. – Alan Kress, Apprentice in Ministry

### Sunday, April 19

9 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. – Life Groups  
 10 a.m. – Gabbie Kress, Apprentice in Ministry

### Sunday, April 26

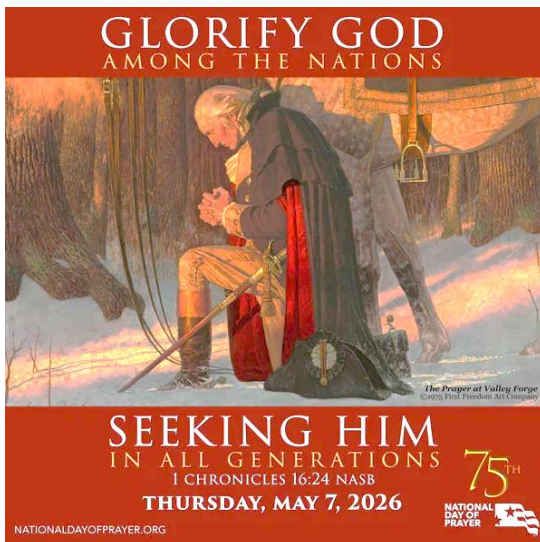
9 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. – Life Groups  
 10 a.m. – “It’s Your Story”



### Anniversaries

- 4/2/1966 Earl & Diana Buckingham
- 4/14/1984 Mark & Jackie Baxendell
- 4/18/1999 Paul & Trude Morse
- 4/25/1981 Paul & Pam Bateman
- 4/30/1983 Clif & Debbie Todd

**Join us May 7, 2026  
 National Day of Prayer**



**You are Invited  
 May 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6:00 pm  
 Beauty For Ashes,**

**Finger Lakes Pregnancy Care  
 Cortland Fundraising Banquet  
 Greek Peak Mountain Resort: the Acropolis**

**Guest Speaker: Kelly Lester**

Kelly shares her powerful life story that covers many difficult and painful topics in our world, including sexual abuse, drug dealing and several abortions—even working in the clinic where she had her first abortion. For 15 years, Kelly had been running from the Lord, desperate to fill the hurting places in her heart with every kind of coping mechanism. Now a wife and mother of six children, Kelly loves to share her story to give hope to the most desperate situations, proving that God can save anybody.

**Contact: Laurie Wright to sign up for the banquet.**



## **Ginnan Family, Youth Alive Supported by Groton AG**

**Called Day.** Thank you for believing that students are not only the church of tomorrow, but missionaries today.

I've been thinking about a few student moments that have stayed with me from **Called Day**. None of these students were trying to impress anyone. They were simply describing what faithfulness looks like where they are. That's what stayed with me. Students are not waiting to be sent somewhere else. They are learning to be faithful where God has already placed them.

A student spoke honestly about choosing faithfulness over comfort. He shared that obedience cost him something, but that peace followed the decision. He wasn't describing a dramatic moment, just a clear one.

Another shared that leadership did not start when he felt confident. It started when he stopped waiting to feel ready and chose to obey anyway. He talked about learning to listen for God's voice in ordinary school spaces and taking small steps even when it felt uncomfortable.

Another student talked about how leading in her school has required persistence more than confidence. She described moments of discouragement and delay, but also how God kept opening doors she couldn't have planned for herself.

Your support is helping students step into real responsibility and discover how God grows faith through obedience. Again and again, we are seeing that faith joined with action leads to real transformation.



## **Central Eurasia, names withheld Supported by Groton AG**

Many of us remember how desperate people were to escape the Taliban after Afghanistan fell. You may have seen some of the images on TV. Afghan refugees crossed by the thousands into Tajikistan, hoping for freedom. We had no intentions to work with refugees when we returned. However, this crisis gave us a chance to reach people who had never heard the Gospel.

God had prepared the way, since we already had a project in the same town where many refugees arrived. Through the project, we had the permission necessary to work with them and could help meet their immediate needs. Many fled with only the clothes they were wearing, hoping to start over. We met with them in the streets and in their sparse homes. As we cared for their urgent physical needs, we also shared the hope of Christ and the message of salvation. Your support made this possible, allowing them to experience Christ's love that would not have been possible in their home country.

We were also able to host youth camps, giving children of first-generation believers the chance to experience age-appropriate ministry. We also encouraged them to invite a non-believing friend or relative, creating a welcoming space to see the difference Christ makes in real life.



## **Eurasia, names withheld Supported by Groton AG**

Please pray for our team members' neighbors. When they visited them late one evening during Ramadan, they were able to share the Gospel and discuss spiritual things for a few hours! In the end, the neighbors really wanted to understand more.

In a parking lot, a woman approached us and started asking for help. This is a daily occurrence as there are always beggars on the streets. It's always heartbreaking but this time I felt led to just put my hand on her shoulder and listen to her. She said she had three small children and she'd been kicked out of her apartment because she couldn't afford the rent and didn't know what to do. She started crying and I just reached out my arms and hugged her as she cried. Then we offered to pray for her but said we'd pray in the name of Jesus and asked if that would be alright. She said, "Yes, yes Jesus! I know who you mean." After praying we gave her a little something to help her situation. Please pray that she would feel seen by God through this small encounter. Pray that Jesus would reveal Himself as faithful to her and provide for her and her children.



## **Terry & Bridget Rosch, Panama Supported by Groton AG**

We have recently been invited by the national leadership for the ACTS 2 Journey, under the leadership of Alton Garrison (formerly U.S. Missions National Leader). We attended a 2-day conference where Alton presented this ministry to our strategic

leaders around Panama. We are believing that God will bring in the harvest here in Panama.

Assemblies of God initiative is to plant 3,000 churches by the year 2033. We have been working alongside our brothers and sisters to help to make that goal a reality. Secondly, the national church desires to revitalize 500 existing churches. The desire is for them to return to health and make a meaningful impact in their communities.



## **Mozambique, AFRICAN YOUTH**

Global workers use soccer as an arm of ministry to those who have never heard Jesus' name. Joel and Adrienne Charest are AGWM missionaries to Mozambique, focusing on sports camps, church planting, discipleship, and water solutions. Due to the Charests' commitment to the community, a young man, whom they had walked with in the past, planted a church. This young man wanted to create a soccer outreach and contacted the Charests. The Charests were able to sponsor and help with the outreach.

"Together we all have the honor of being part of what God is doing to bring the lost back into relationship with Him," say Joel and Adrienne.

Pray over the youth in Mozambique.

- Pray that every student who joins this ministry gets to know the name of Christ and accepts Him as Lord and Savior.
- Pray that Joe and Adrienne's son, Jacob, would have a quick recovery from surgery.