

Groton Assembly of God

JULY 2024 NEWSLETTER

PASTOR'S PEN

Calm In Crazyness

Fred taught me a very important lesson: The crazier things get, the calmer I can be. Fred was my manager at the Friendly's in what is today called the Ithaca Mall—my first job outside of farmwork. He was great. The crazier things got in the restaurant, the calmer he got. I remember thinking, "I really appreciate how he's handling this. I want to be like him." His reactions calmed others down and "threw water" on potentially explosive situations. Unfortunately, his calm came at a cost to him—ulcers.



I've learned since that being calm when things are stressful can come from two main sources: Ourselves, as we shove things down inside—and thus create ulcers—or the Lord, who gives us peace and sustains us.

In today's world, I think even Fred would struggle to project a sense of calm. Today the media screams warnings at us constantly— "apocalyptic" storms, "biblical" droughts, "deadly" extremes in temperatures. The media seems to be screeching at us that every event is the worst thing we've ever experienced.

Headlines are no better. The news apps on our phones frequently sound hysterical. I remember learning in school about yellow journalism, which focused on sensationalism rather than facts. That certainly seems to be the case today. Whether the story is about

weather, politics, economics, or social issues, there appears to be a tendency to want others to become upset, fearful, or angry. May I remind you of the *real* source of this constant urging to be in turmoil? That source is the devil, who is the ruler of this world (John 16:11). Remember this: we are *not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places* (Ephesians 6:12, NLT).

People are tiring of the ringing of the bell of alarm, I believe, but they are still being affected by the raucous noise and ongoing atmosphere of upset and tension that is being created.

To Christian brothers and sisters, I say this, "But God..."

In **Isaiah 46:9-10 (NLT)**, God says this to us: ⁹ *Remember the things I have done in the past. For I alone am God! I am God, and there is none like me.* ¹⁰ *Only I can tell you the future before it even happens. Everything I plan will come to pass, for I do whatever I wish.*

God has His plans, and He will fulfill them. He is working even now (John 15:7). Everything we see and hear He is using to further His plan. And remember this: His plan includes working good for us who love Jesus (Romans 8:28) while He readies the world for Jesus' return.

How are we to have peace as we experience this continual noise meant to keep us upset? By remembering (over)

the things He has done in the past—both His great acts that we read of in the Bible, such as delivering Daniel from lions, and the wonderful things He has done in our own lives, such as saving us, giving us homes and food, and loved ones. His faithfulness to us reassures us of His love, His care, and His presence. As we remember these things, and as we praise and thank Him and rejoice in Him, He will give us peace.



It is for *freedom* that Christ has set us free.
GALATIANS 5:1

Birthdays:

- 1 Linda Hull
- 3 Sariah Rivera
- 4 Lucas Rivera
Oksana Morse
- 5 Corrine Jaquith
- 7 Linda Garv
- 9 Tony Lanzilotta
- 11 Laurie Wright
Peggy Cortright
- 13 Leilani Norman
- 14 Samantha Rivera
- 16 Paul Eveleigh
- 19 Diana Buckingham
- 20 Malakai Morse
Mike Sears, Jr.
- 21 Martin (Marty) Sears
- 23 Levi Starner
Joyce Landcastle
- 24 Joan Price
- 28 Jim Hacker
- 29 Bob Phillips
- 30 Clifford Ostrander
Emma Clark

Anniversaries:

- 7/15/1995 John & Tammy Conner
- 7/18/1981 Sam & Cheryl Rose
- 7/18/1998 Chuck & Penny
Hendrickson
- 7/19/2009 Bob & Tess Gudbranson
- 7/24/2016 Elias & Samantha Rivera
- 7/26/2002 Bob & Sandra Phillips

July Service Schedule

Sunday, July 7

9 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. – Life Groups

10 a.m. – “Say Amen”

Sunday, July 14 (New Sermon Series: *The Holy Spirit, My Best Friend*)

9 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. – Life Groups

10 a.m. – “Overcoming Adversaries”

Sunday, July 21

9 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. – Life Groups

10 a.m. – “What’s That Sound?” water baptisms

Sunday, July 28

9 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. – Life Groups

10 a.m. – Gabbie Kress, Apprentice in Ministry

*One
Nation
Under God*



ADOPT-A-MISSIONARY

Thank you to everyone who has committed to praying for our missionaries! I am grateful for every one of you.

I need prayer coverage for these missionaries:

- Doug & Jackee Raught International Media Ministries, Spain
- Live Dead family, North Africa

I need prayer coverage for these missions programs:

- Aged Ministers Assistance (AMA)
- Finger Lakes Pregnancy Care (formerly Cortland Pregnancy Center)
- Hope Teen Challenge
- 107th Psalm House

If you would like to pray for any of these missionaries or missions programs,

Contact Laurie Wright,
Missions Committee Secretary:
cell: (607)644-8671

Email:
greatcommissionarymom@yahoo.com

AGWM: Pray for AFRICA

New Guinea & Conakry

Join as we pray for a new ministry in West Africa. In 2025, Mark and Victoria Turney will lead the first AGWM missionary team to Guinea-Conakry. This country is Muslim majority, and "almost 90% of the population live among unreached people groups." Despite its Muslim culture, Guinea-Conakry is not run by an Islamic government, meaning the church can minister freely and openly. The Turneys report, "The Lord is opening a window of opportunity to plant churches and to proclaim the name of Jesus among the unreached of this nation as never before."



AGWM: OPEN DOORS IN EAST AFRICA/ Ethiopia & Sudan

Pray for growth of the Church in Ethiopia and across East Africa. The Lowenbergs, global workers in Ethiopia, report that the 2024 goal of Ethiopia Assemblies of God is to plant 1,000 new churches and witness to 10 million people. Recently, in a new EAG church planting effort in South Sudan, close to 80 believers gathered to worship for the first time and several dozen people came to know Jesus. The Lowenbergs share, "The Lord is faithfully sending men and women to plant churches where none exist. Members of every congregation are sharing their faith in Christ with Ethiopian Orthodox believers, Muslims, tribalists and those without any religious commitment."

**Anchorage Native Assembly of God,
Missions church/U.S. Missionaries**

Philip & Amy Boswell, Alaska
Supported by Groton AG

**Children's
Ministry**

Our children's ministry has grown over the past few years. We have an average of 20-25 kids each week. At



Easter, we had 54 kids attend church with their

families. My wife, Amy, does a fantastic job with them. She has been the children's pastor here for 10 years.

She is currently working hard to build a team of workers to start helping each week with this ever-growing ministry. Just recently, we had a couple move to Alaska, and the wife has begun to help fill in and teach for the kid's Sunday school class. Amy is also training up one of our special native elders to help co-teach the Thursday night kid's bible study class. She has a very small room for so many kids and limited resources, but regardless, the kids do not seem to mind in the least! They come to church every week excited and expecting to meet with God! God is blessing this ministry.

I believe adults can learn from these amazing kids. It does not matter how little you have or how limited you feel your resources are. Come expecting to meet Jesus! Come excited to learn more about Him! Children are the future of our church. May they be called to preach to their home villages all over Alaska one day!



U.S. MISSIONS
...that none perish



dorms for campers

**Bible Camp
Agiutim Nune
(Place of God)**

Remote Bible
Camp in Western
Alaska,
accessible only
by boat

On-site teams
building

**Bible Camp Agiutim Nune
2024**

Thank you, Groton AG, for your financial gift that enabled us to purchase the new motor. We are using it at camp this year to move supplies and staff to camp by boat (U.S. Missionary, Terry Hull, pictured).



Here at Anchorage Native Assembly, we gather supplies, food, equipment all year for the camp AN. We fill three storage areas, then we pack them and ship them to the camp. This year, at Bible Camp AN, there are now two dorms. One dorm was finished in 2023, and this year, 2024, we finished the second dorm. In Alaska, we have a short summer season while we hold Vacation Bible School/Kids' camp & youth camp, and the campers will be happy to not be sleeping in tents. Thank you for your prayers and financial support.



Joe & Mary Benecasa

Napoli, Italy

Supported by Groton AG

The Lord has been faithful to provide all that we needed to finish phase 1 of the church renovations. We rejoice because our first service was on May 26, 2024! Many guests came to support us and to witness the first international, Pentecostal church for English speakers in Napoli.

In February, we were informed that the **New York Ministry**

Network Youth Department was sending us money to purchase a new Speed-the-Light vehicle! We were not expecting this and are so grateful to these young people. We went to a Fiat dealership owned by a dear friend who provided a wonderful deal on a brand-new DR SUV. DR is an Italian make, and it is loaded with extras. We love it! God knew what we needed. The day after we picked up this car, our old Toyota died! It's roomy enough to carry five people, but we can also carry building supplies with it!



In February, after over two months of negotiations, we finally signed a twelve-year lease on a building in the Chiaiano section of Napoli. The rent is very reasonable, especially considering the square footage. The only downside to the place is that it needs a LOT of renovation work! But God has provided people and resources to help us accomplish that. Two brothers in Christ from New York - Gerard D'Ambrosio and Cliff Ostrander - arrived in April to evaluate what needs to be done when their team arrives in June [Editor's note: P. Cliff and Sara with Lucas Rivera are part of the team]. They also helped us get the construction on the sanctuary started. Then, our son-in-law, Dan Lisowski, spent nine days with us to install and tape the sheetrock. We also have had a few Italian friends and brothers in Christ - Giuseppe Barreca, and Paolo Maugeri -

who donated much of their time to helping us hang doors, parge walls, fix electrical issues and repair the sanctuary floor. Another brother in Christ, Gino, did a beautiful job installing the ceramic tile in our sanctuary. A big thanks to Antonio who replaced the hot water heater. Also, our dear friend Luca brought a sound technician, Andrea, from Rome to install a wonderful sound system. A special group of believers asked to come and clean the church for us - of course we said "Yes!"

Another group came to help carry in 102 chairs, which saved our backs! Thank God for these wonderful men and women who have used their God-given skills to help build this church.

Women's Conference

We were busy preparing for our Women's Conference, which was held at a monastery in the Pianura area of Napoli, on May 23-25, 2024. We had wonderful speakers lined up, and two churches sent people to assist - Navarre Assembly of God in Navarre, FL, and Inspire Church from New Orleans, LA. Thank you for praying for this event! The Lord touched the lives of each woman who attended, both the guests and the workers. We are praying that the women will continue to hunger for Jesus!

Vacation Bible School

We are looking forward to having a team from Kirkland Life Church, in Clinton, NY, coming in late July to help us put on a Vacation Bible School / English School at a local Italian Assemblies of God church. Pastor Jillian Pelkey is leading a team of twelve, and we are so looking forward to hosting them! They have a wonderful children's ministry in New York, and we know that they will be a tremendous blessing to the children of Napoli. Again, we ask that you keep this in your prayers, as we want to see the lives of children changed forever with the gospel.

Thank you for your continued prayers and financial support.



In this online photo, truck drivers are dumping waste into the Abu Ali river in Tripoli, Lebanon.



Water Filters Project

Live Dead Missionaries, Lebanon Supported by Groton AG

Since arriving in Lebanon, our team has been praying about how to interact with Syrians to create regular opportunities to share the Gospel while meeting physical needs and positively impacting communities. After much prayer and meeting with community members about their needs, we have decided to move forward with a pilot home installation water filter project.

Lebanon is facing a clean water crisis as it struggles to maintain clean water for communities affected by major economic crisis, government corruption and instability, conflict and unrest, poor management of garbage and waste disposal, and inadequate electricity for water treatment facilities to function properly. Now the cost of bottled water is spiraling. It is forcing people to drink unsafe water from under-the-table companies or polluted tap water. Despite the risk of disease, the Syrians have no choice but to drink contaminated water.

The severity of the crisis became clear a year ago when there was a cholera outbreak in Lebanon. Cholera is a disease that can kill within hours if not treated, because of polluted water and unsanitary



conditions. The town of Bebnine had the highest number of cases and is only 30 minutes from where we live. A sewage-polluted river runs through the town of 80,000 where only 500 households are registered with the state water network.

Installing a simple but effective water filter can protect a family from disease and enable them to save the money they would have spent on purchasing water for other essential needs. Water filters not only meet an urgent need, but simple filters can also open doors into homes and communities who have never had the opportunity to hear the life-changing message of the gospel.

The filter is the perfect illustration of how we cannot remove the filth of sin on our own, but through Jesus, our hearts can be purified, and we can be made new.

Subsequent visits to review how the filter is functioning and report on the health of the household are natural opportunities for strengthening relationships, sharing more Biblical truths, and discerning those who are responsive and interested in following Jesus.

Our desire is to share with as many as possible that Jesus ultimately is the one who can quench our thirst and give us the living water of eternal life!

Thank you so much for partnering with us to bring life and hope to Syrian refugees in Lebanon. We are so grateful that we can do this Great Commission work together!

Arab and Jewish AG Leaders Share on Current Crisis, Prayer

There are currently 24 ethnic fellowships within the U.S. Assemblies of God. AG News (ag.org) recently asked the leaders of the [AG National Jewish Fellowship](#) and the [Arabic AG Fellowship](#) about the current crisis in the Middle East. Michael Calise serves as president of the National Jewish Fellowship. George Rafidi serves as president of the Arabic AG Fellowship.

AG NEWS: Have you seen an escalation in antisemitic or anti-Arab hate in recent weeks?

MICHAEL CALISE: A security professional from New York recently said to the [New York Jewish Week](#): "The world is different from what it was on Oct. 6 . . . Everyone should be concerned." The reason for this concern is that there has been a **400% increase** in antisemitic acts in the U.S.

Incidents range from graffiti saying, "kill the Jews," and the chanting of "gas the Jews," to physical violence and harassment. One Israeli student was assaulted with a stick at Columbia University, which is the university my daughter recently graduated from so it hits close to home. Someone pushed a Jewish woman shouting, "This pig has got to go." In another incident a man punched a woman in Manhattan saying it was because she was Jewish. Synagogues and Jewish cemeteries have been vandalized. Any known Jewish establishments are at risk. The famous 2nd Avenue Deli was defaced with a swastika. If you are Jewish, you are a potential target of persecution in this current climate.

GEORGE RAFIDI: In recent weeks we have witnessed a Palestinian boy killed and his



mother beaten and hospitalized by their landlord in a **hate crime** following

the Oct. 7 attack. Others, even government officials, have insinuated that no Gaza citizens are innocent and all should be treated as terrorists.

AG NEWS: What are some ways you see people being personally affected by the current conflict?

CALISE: People are concerned for their safety and the safety of loved ones in Israel. Members of the fellowship have family and friends that live in Israel. Some are fighting in the war and others are helping families displaced by the bombings and attacks who are in need of material, psychological, and spiritual help. Some have been injured. For example, a young Messianic Jewish soldier, lost his legs in the battle and is in critical condition now.

This has resulted in people being nervous about attending services. While it is a good thing that local law enforcement agencies and homeland security have increased their presence around Jewish congregations, including ours, their presence is both reassuring and disturbing. People are concerned about openly wearing anything that would identify them as being Jewish for fear of harassment and attacks of violence.

RAFIDI: The current conflict is resulting in thousands of people dying without Christ. At the time of writing this response, the death toll in Gaza is in the thousands, including many children. We know Palestinians in Gaza have lost family and loved ones, and in some instances entire bloodlines have been wiped out. The ones we hear from

express that they feel invisible as the world watches their annihilation. Since the recent conflict began, we receive requests from Christians in Gaza asking us to remind their brothers and sisters in Christ not to forget about them. They wonder if people pray for them. In America, we see Palestinians hurting as they watch the destruction of their homeland, and the death of their people. They wonder if people care about them at all. When we share their concerns with people, some tell us they are afraid to pray for Palestinians because they're afraid of supporting Hamas. The Assemblies of God is represented on the ground in Gaza with an active ministry to both Muslims and Christians. The ministers there are concerned that when this conflict is over, they may have lost their entire Gazan staff.

AG NEWS: In what ways are you praying regarding the current crisis?

CALISE: First, we are attempting to rally the church to pray and stand with the Jewish people and not repeat the mistake of what happened in World War II when the Church was silent concerning the Jewish people and six million died.

We are praying for hostages to be safely returned, for protection over the land and the people, against the rise of global antisemitism, and that the good news of Messiah will go forth in power and bring many to salvation. We heard the story of a Messianic Jewish soldier who had her Bible with her as she was deployed. Her captain called her in and had her Bible in his hands. He said to her, "Yeshua (Jesus) is OUR Messiah." Other soldiers in her unit asked for a Bible so she ordered some to be sent to her and was sharing her Bible with her friends until she could get more.

RAFIDI: The current conflict is a result of the

horrific incident that took place on Oct. 7; however, the conflict itself is 75 years old. Knowing that not all Palestinians in Gaza are Hamas, and not all Palestinians in Gaza are Hamas supporters, we urge the church to remember people on both sides of this conflict with hearts motivated by the compassion of Christ.

- We pray for the miracle of resolution and peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
- We pray for mercy on all people being oppressed, injured, or killed, especially the innocent children who are so afraid on both sides of this conflict.
- We pray for safe places to shelter, for food, clean water, and medical care for everyone in need.
- We pray for opportunities for the believers and Christ followers in Israel and Palestine to share the love of God with those around them.
- We pray that the Church will see Palestinians through the eyes of Jesus.

AG NEWS: How can we pray for believers in your fellowship?

CALISE: Pray against fear and for courage to stand firm and not get disillusioned. Pray for protection from acts of antisemitism and Jew hatred. Pray that we would continue to be a light to our Jewish brothers and sisters and see many of them come to know our Messiah.

RAFIDI:

- Please pray for God to give us more compassion and wisdom and His perfect perspective on the world we live in.
- Pray we communicate God's love through every action and every word, spoken and unspoken.
- Pray that God will continue empowering us to serve.