

# Groton Assembly of God

OCTOBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

## PASTOR'S PEN

### One of Those Days

Today I have too much to do and too little time to do it in. I've visited someone in jail, and now have three life group lessons to write, a Pastor's Pen to write, a board report to write, and a phone call with an attorney from Alliance Defending Freedom. Following that call, I'll have just a few hours to revise the church's Constitution and Bylaws before our board meeting tonight. Additionally, I got up an hour later—7 a.m.—because last night I had some heavy counseling that went till 9 p.m.

Ever have one of those days? I know we often say we are busy, and it's not unusual to have more to do in a day than I am able. But it is usual that I really can't afford to let much slip to another day.

What do we do?

I think our sense of time can work against us. Or maybe our sense of priorities works against us. For example, do I *really* have to finish every one of these tasks today? Or could I finish one of the life group lessons early Saturday morning?

Maybe the better question is this: How do I live with the pressure and stress of having too much to do and too little time to do it in?

This proverb comes to mind: **9** A man's heart plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps (Proverb 16:9, NKJV).

If this proverb is true, could it be that God will direct my steps today and that whatever I get done is His will, and whatever I don't complete, He'll direct me in completing?

Does this proverb mean that I might want to stress a little less about my plans and seek His face, and trust Him more as I go through today—and the coming days?

As I go through today, I'm finding that I have a choice: To trust God in the midst of the day and relax a little, or to rely on my own wisdom and battle frustration—and be stressed out.

Which would you choose?



## October Service Schedule

### **Sunday, October 6**

9 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. – Life Groups  
10 a.m. – “The Family Grows”  
11:30 – fellowship meal (dish-to-pass)  
12:30 – Special Business Meeting

### **Sunday, October 13**

9 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. – Life Groups  
10 a.m. – “Praying When I Don't Know How”

### **Sunday, October 20**

9 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. – Life Groups  
10 a.m. – **New Sermon Series: Living in the Spirit** “Living in Christian Liberty”

### **Sunday, October 27**

9 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. – Life Groups  
10 a.m. – “Loving One Another”  
11:30 a.m. – Newcomer dinner (for newcomers)

# happy birthday

## October Birthdays -

- 1 Deserae Miller  
Betty Burhans
- 4 Ron Woodard  
Brianna Morse  
Sammie Price
- 5 David Morse  
Zuleika Torres
- 9 Betsy Sears
- 10 Charlton Wright  
Bert Nicholas  
Christeen Garrow  
Carly Costa
- 11 Joan Zhe  
Julius Lamb
- 12 Natalia Torres
- 13 Mary Ellen Brown
- 18 Liam Starner
- 21 Ethan Besler  
Evan Besler
- 22 Assante Lamb
- 24 Mike Competillo, Sr.  
Christopher Garrow
- 25 Alisha Scheffler  
Keith Blanchard
- 26 Stephen Lizzo  
Amos Cortright
- 28 Gabriella Kress  
Ensley Scott-Bradbury
- 31 Brittany Wade

# Happy Anniversary

## October Anniversaries:

- 10/2/1982 Jim & Faye Hacker
- 10/5/1991 John & Karen Huether
- 10/17/1976 Mike & Sue Sears
- 10/17/1970 Ron & Joan Addy
- 10/20/1979 Mike & Linda Competillo
- 10/24/2013 Bob & Deserae Miller
- 10/25/2014 Bruce & Tama Stotts
- 10/29/2013 Vince & Elizabeth Ballistrea



## SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3

# FALL MISSIONS CONVENTION

**Fall Missions Convention with Missionary Speakers from a sensitive country.**

- Plan to join us in person to hear the missionaries. There will be no livestream.



NEW YORK  
**HER**  
CONFERENCE  
November 14 -16  
Binghamton, NY

Register Today! 

# NYHER CONFERENCE

**Date:** November 14-16th, 2024

**Location:** Doubletree by Hilton  
225 Waterstreet, Binghamton, NY

**Cost:** Early Bird Rate: \$85 (Through Oct 14th)  
Student Rate- \$40.  
Regular Rate- \$95 (After Oct 14th) Student Rate- \$50



## YOU MATTER!

### LIGHT THE NIGHT, OCTOBER 31

6-7 PM AT MCKINLEY AVENUE,  
BENEVOLENCE BUILDING OF GROTON AG

- FREE HOTDOGS
- CHIPS
- COOKIES
- HOT CHOCOLATE
- BAG OF CANDY

### DONATIONS ARE WELCOME!

- BOTTLED WATER
- SINGLE SERVING/PREPACKAGED CHIPS, COOKIES, HOTDOGS, ROLLS
- CANDY (NO HALLOWEEN DESIGNS)

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

- WE NEED YOUR HELP! LOTS TO DO.
- CONTACT P. SHARON

## Faith For the Impossible

### Stephanie Russo

Greetings all! I'm Stephanie Russo, Vice President of SUNY Cortland's CRU (formerly Campus Crusade for Christ). CRU is an interdenominational Christian parachurch organization that promotes evangelism and discipleship with college students. I am also a fellow Groton AG church adherent since January 2023. I was saved by Jesus Christ in October of 2022 and baptized by Pastor Sam Neno in March of 2023, at Groton AG, a place and people I consider to be more of a family.



This summer I had the amazing opportunity to go on a mission's trip for 10 weeks to Ocean City, Maryland, and live with 29 other college students. Ultimately, our goal was to get more comfortable sharing the gospel while cultivating community with our brothers and sisters in Christ. I originally planned to go on another mission's trip in Jacksonville, Florida, but God redirected me to Ocean City, MD, and He provided every step of the way.

To say God did miraculous things is an understatement—miraculous is simply a part of our God's nature, but this summer He really taught me about what it means to have grace and to give it freely to those around me, especially when I really don't want to in the moment. I was faced with several challenges this summer that required a lot of God's grace and patience to focus on the mission at hand and what is truly important at the end of each day—doing

the will of God as exemplified by Jesus. He wants us as Christians to be active in His mission to save the world with the help of the Holy Spirit. Yet none of those challenges was able to taint the opportunities I was blessed with to evangelize every week within and outside of my work setting, being a member of the mission's outreach/evangelism team, bible study leader for a women's small group, and simply basking in the radical love of Jesus among peers I'd never met before. Most of all, I'm honored to proclaim that the living God welcomed 70 new souls into His eternal kingdom this summer using 30 college students who had no plans other than to make the gospel known in Ocean City. I can testify of seeing miracles happen with my very own eyes this summer. I hope this testimony increases your faith for the impossible and gives you a hunger to share Jesus with those around you, like it has mine. Blessings to all!

## **Native American Church (NAC)** **By U. S. Missionary John Flood**



*(Rev. John Flood is supported by Groton AG)*

The Native American Church (NAC) is also known as the Peyote religion. The NAC mixes traditional worship of spirits with Christianity and psychedelic drug use (Peyote) and so is far outside the bounds of biblical faith. The NAC is a "pan-Indian"

religion (mixing things from all Native cultures together) that originated in the mid-1800s in Mexico. It developed into a distinct religious movement around 1885 among the Comanche and Kowa in Oklahoma. Today, it is the most widespread indigenous religious movement in the United States and Canada. It is practiced in more than 50 tribes.

Different groups combine Native traditionalism and Christianity in various ways and varying degrees. A NAC group will most commonly meet in a Tipi around a crescent-shaped earthen altar mound with a sacred fire. Services start on Saturday around 8 pm and include prayer, singing, sacramental peyote eating, water rites, and contemplation. Services ends Sunday morning with a communion meal. NAC members believe that eating peyote, which is a hallucinogenic, in this ritual context enables a person to commune with God and spirits (including the dead) in contemplation and vision to receive spiritual power, guidance, correction, and healing.

NAC doctrines believe there is one supreme God (Great Spirit) who deals with people through various spirits, including the Native traditional waterbird and firebird spirits that carry prayers to God. IN many tribes, peyote is personified as the Peyote Sprit. It is considered a God-given Indian version of Jesus (given to the Whites). Some NAC tribal groups view Jesus as an Indian cultural hero who has returned, as an intercessor to God, or as a guardian spirit who turned to Indians after being killed by Whites.

Two main memorial ceremonial peyote fireplace altars and approaches to worship have been passed down generationally. The first is the Half-Moon Fireplace, named for the shape of the sand altar. Tobacco and corn shucks are used during the ceremonies (to call on spirits). There is little to no Bible reading. Different coal designs are created on the Tipi walls according to

tribal traditions. A ritual staff is passed around the tipi during singing sections of the service. Mainly, non-Christian songs are sung, and 4 ceremonial songs are sung as part of the service. The second is called the Cross-Fire Fireplace. Its fireplace is horseshoe-shaped, and often, a second altar is created outside the tipi to represent the grave of Jesus. No tobacco is used. The staff is placed upright in the ground rather than being passed around. Portions of the Bible are recited according to a family's prayer for parts of the service. A cross design is created within the coals to represent some aspects of Christ. Christian peyote songs are primarily sung, including 4 main ceremonial songs as part of the Cross-Fire Fireplace.



### Dan and Deanna Klepel, Thailand Supported by Groton AG

We travelled to Buayai, Northeast Thailand for a weekend of ministry. We held an assembly for 300 students, then an English camp for 120 students the next day.



On Sunday, Daniel Klepel preached and the rest of us taught the kids. The school is next to the church, so we invited the students to come to church on Sunday.

We are praying there will be some who start coming to the church on a regular basis and become part of the family of God. The school we went to is in a village the church has a burden to evangelize their neighbors.

This camp will be one of the first contacts with the people in this village. Thank you so much for praying with us!



### Asia Pacific Media Mission/AG

In a world saturated with digital content, Asia Pacific media missionaries are using the power of cinema to spread wisdom and faith beyond the church walls. We are expanding our reach into Indonesia, Cambodia, Bangladesh, Taiwan, Philippines, Japan, Malaysia, Vietnam, and the South Pacific. Most of these resources can also be accessed in many nations of the world, including the Middle East and Europe.

### Fighting A Suicide Epidemic in Vietnam, Media Missionary in Vietnam

Susan a Media Missionary with AG Asia Pacific Media Ministry explains that, "Youth are struggling in Vietnam. Two youth went on a "wreck" together (commit suicide). They jumped into the river and we lost two." She shares, "their parents put a lot of pressure on them to succeed and not a lot of affirmation for what they are or could become." Yet Susan has found an amazingly simple way to bring light. Through bite-sized videos on Facebook, Instagram, and now TikTok, she is reaching a staggering 200,000 followers with bite-sized messages of hope and truth.

## Quenching Indonesia's Thirst For Truth, Media Missionary in Indonesia

In Indonesia, a digital revolution is changing the face of church outreach. Gatut, a church leader, shares how media ministry has been effective in reaching out to the majority Muslim culture non-offensively. They have opened conversations and even led to conversions in some cases. Gatut says that his strategy is to "run with the runners" working with experienced churches like Bethlehem Assembly of God in Bogor. He'll use their expertise to inspire and help those who haven't started running yet.

## A Lifeline in Myanmar, Media Missionary Team in Myanmar

In a country grappling with a "surge in crimes, suicides, kidnappings, assassinations, and mental health challenges," the team at Media for Hope are leveraging social media to spread a message of hope. They're producing a diverse range of content, such as evangelistic messages, sermon videos, Scripture-based content, and worship songs. The content reaches people in Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Korea, the U.S., and even Austria. The global audience is a testament to the power of digital missions...We believe this is a crucial time to share an evangelistic message," Akin, Media Missionary emphasized. In a predominately Buddhist country, Media ministry fills a gap. "There are not many Christian broadcasting (channels) using social media," making their work even more vital. As Myanmar continues to face challenges, this growing community of digital missionaries stands as a beacon of hope. Their work proves that even in the darkest times, the light of the gospel can shine brightly through screens and hearts alike.

**FAITH Promise GIVING**  
 As God enables me, I will help take the message of Jesus into all the world by giving through the missions program of my local church.  NEW  RENEW  
 Weekly Faith Promise \$ \_\_\_\_\_  Monthly Faith Promise \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
**AGWM**

**FAITH Promise GIVING**  
 I have made a Faith Promise to give as God enables me.  
 Week  Month  
 per \_\_\_\_\_  
 through the missions program of my local church.  
 (Detach and keep as a Bible marker)

## Help our missionaries GO!

**Jesus wants the whole world to know Him! So what can you do to help spread the gospel? PLENTY.**

God uses missionaries here at home and around the world. He calls people of all ages to be missionaries. Today you are being called to pray, to give, and to reach the lost. Some of us will be called to leave home and go.

### How do missionaries reach the mission field?

When people are called to go—they are supported by churches like Groton AG. Together, the funds from the churches—whether coins or dollars—help the missionaries spread the gospel around the world.

### What is a faith promise?

A faith promise is a pledge or goal between you and God. It is a pledge to give to missions, whether weekly, monthly, or yearly. It is made every year so that you can re-enlist again this year or enlist for the first time! Your entire gift goes to missionaries and missions programs, and enables us to help keep missionaries on the field.

Ask what the Lord would have you give. Step out in faith that God will provide over and above all you could ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20).

Thank You  
 FOR  
**GIVING**  
 GENEROUSLY