

# Groton Assembly of God

SEPTEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

## PASTOR'S PEN

### Leaves And Sticks

Ever clean the house or your apartment one day only to find it filthy again the next? In our house, we know the main culprit. She trots around on four legs, wags her tail, is easily excited, rests her head on my knee at the dinner table after I've finished eating, and loves to crawl halfway onto my lap when I'm on the couch.

She is also very hairy and has lots of fringe. She brings in sticks, leaves, weeds, and mud with her when she comes inside. And she keeps depositing it hours after she's come in. We do try to head off that problem by wiping her wet feet and brushing her, but she still brings in things we didn't see.

Finally, Penny said, "I'm going to cut her hair." So she trimmed Pepper and gave her a bath. Now Pepper looks like a new dog—sleek looking and without fringe. And—thank you, Jesus—she's not bringing in leaves and sticks.



This reminds me of a spiritual truth: A little yeast can change a whole batch of dough (Galatians 5:9, CEV). If we clean ourselves up by receiving Jesus and walk in holiness, we grow and do well. However, if after receiving Jesus, we allow little sins back into our lives, we slowly dirty our lives until one day we wonder where the sense of cleanliness we once had went. But if we will repent, and rid our lives of those things that God discourages, we give ourselves a chance to walk in holiness once again. And when we are walking in holiness, we feel clean and victorious.

### Thank you board

**members:** Ron Woodard, Mike Sears, and Jim Hacker with P. Sam for painting the Fellowship Hall ceiling 8/19/24!



## September Birthdays:

- 1 Jim Burns
- 5 Rick Cortright
- 8 Caleigh Garrow  
Michael Morse
- 9 Corbin Jaquith
- 11 Victor Pomianowitz
- 13 Scott Craig
- 14 Joan Addy
- 15 Justin Besler  
Siera Harriger
- 16 Karen Scott  
Anastasia (Any) Neno
- 17 Scott Brown
- 18 Samuel Rose  
Cadence Wade
- 19 Wanda B White
- 20 Jon Marks
- 21 Clark Jaquith
- 22 Steve Chandler  
Jedediah (Jed)  
Neno
- 23 Sara Ostrander  
William Foster  
Robert LeFever
- 25 Pastor Sam Neno
- 26 Rose Thresher
- 28 Mike Sears, Sr.



## September Service Schedule

### Sunday, September 1

- 9 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. – Life Groups
- 10 a.m. – “Receiving His Gift”

### Sunday, September 8

- 9 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. – NEW Life Groups begin
- 10 a.m. – “Different Works”

### Sunday, September 15

- 9 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. – Life Groups
- 10 a.m. – “More Needed,” water baptisms

### Sunday, September 22

- 9 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. – Life Groups
- 10 a.m. – Alan Kress, Apprentice in Ministry
- 11:30 a.m.- Senior Moments

### Sunday, September 29

- 9 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. – Life Groups
- 10 a.m. – Trude Morse, Apprentice in Ministry

## Anniversaries:

- 9/2/01 Jeffrey & Robin Cargian
- 9/9/2023 Zachary & Abigail Lattin
- 9/10/1988 Robert & Dawn LeFever
- 9/12/1992 Jeff & Yvonne (Vonnie) Ellis
- 9/23/2018 Alan & Gabriella Kress
- 9/27/2019 Matt & Elly Starner

## NEW! Life Groups

Beginning **Sunday, September 8, Join a Life Group this fall!** Groups for nursery and preschool, children, youth, and adults. Descriptions in flyer in foyer.

## TeamKids

Beginning **Tuesday, September 10.** TeamKids is our midweek children's program through the school year. There is also an adult Bible study the same night. No nursery care is available.

## Block Party at Groton AG

**Saturday, September 14,**  
11a.m.-3p.m.

**What:** Free food, children's obstacle course, bounce house, games for children and adults

## Pray For Me:

**Sign-up in foyer or via email by September 15.**

Will you pray for our students in elementary, secondary and college, who attend Groton AG?. Join the Pray For Me support team via [penny.neno@yahoo.com](mailto:penny.neno@yahoo.com) or in the foyer.



## Feed My Starving Children

**September 28.** FMSC offers volunteers a one-of-a-kind experience. You'll hand-pack rice, soy, dried vegetables and a nutritionally complete blend of vitamins and minerals into bags which are then sealed, boxed, placed on pallets. Join us for this compassion outreach at the Armory, 1765 Hanshaw Road, Ithaca, NY 14850.

Time: 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. Saturday, September 28. **Reserve your place: contact Bec Haley at (607) 280-6456**

## Senior Moments w/Steve

**Sunday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>**. This group is for Seniors 55+. Following the 2<sup>nd</sup> service, come enjoy coffee, fellowship, Bible reading, and even a few outings with your brothers and sisters in Christ. **Contact Steve Chandler for more information** at (607)379-2743.

## Community Choir Rehearsals

Rehearsals begin **September 24<sup>th</sup>** and continue every Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. at Groton AG.

## Meals-to-Go (or Stay) Fellowship Hall Fundraiser

**On September 29** grab a hot dog & chili lunch \$5.00/person.



**Thrive is discipleship. It is one-on-one Biblical mentoring using a handbook. The mentors are called faith coaches.**

**Faith coaching** is one of the most powerful ways to invest in a believer's life. It moves beyond group gatherings to develop one-on-one relationships.

**LIFE COACH/mentoring.** Paul told Timothy to entrust the gospel "to reliable people." In other words, Paul was challenging Timothy to take what he had learned and invest it in others. Having mentored Timothy, Paul expected Timothy to mentor others.



**First, contact Penny Neno, 607.279.0921.** You will be connected to a coach (men with men/ women with women).

# LifeGroups

**Life Groups is**  
small group discipleship  
for the entire family of God.



## Beginning in September

Life Groups for Youth & Adults  
*Course descriptions in foyer*

**Beginning 9/8/24**

**Sunday mornings, 9:00 a.m.**

**Alan Kress/ Men's Group:**  
Godly Choices, Ezekiel

**Gabriella Kress/Women's Group:**  
Practical Christianity, Thessalonians

**Pastor Sam,**  
Reboot: Trauma Recovery

**Beginning 9/8/24**

**Sunday evenings, 6:45 p.m.**

**Brian & Annette Twitchell,**  
Experiencing God's Dream  
for Your Marriage.

**RSVP Annette, 607-745-5077**

**Beginning 9/10/24**

**Tuesday evenings, 6:30 p.m.**

**Steve Chandler,** Wisdom from Job, Proverbs,  
and Ecclesiastes

## Ministering to a City that Doesn't Exist

Once a year, this isolated location in the Alaskan wilderness becomes the fourth largest "city" in the state and the ideal place for AG missionary and chaplain Terry Hull!

For nearly 51 weeks out of the year, the city isn't even a city. Located nearly 200 miles southeast of Fairbanks and nearly 200 miles northwest of Anchorage, Alaska, this isolated venue is more regularly frequented by wandering wolves or a meandering bear than people. But for that one wild and snow-filled week, the location becomes the fourth largest city in Alaska — bustling with up to 15,000 people — and one incredible opportunity for ministry!

Assemblies of God [U.S. Missions](#) Intercultural Ministries missionaries to Native People in bush Alaska, Chaplain Terry and Danean Hull, explain that thousands come from all over Alaska and the world to participate in and view one of the world's most demanding and unique sporting events — The Arctic Man Classic.

Called the ultimate adrenaline rush by organizers, the Arctic Man is billed as one of the "world's toughest downhill ski races" and snowmobile races wrapped into one event. Skiers start the race atop a 5,800-foot summit, dropping 1,700 feet in less than two miles. They then meet up with their snowmobiler partners who tow them at up to 86 miles per hour to a second mountain where they release and drop another 1,200 feet to the finish line.

But with all that excitement and literally being isolated from the rest of the world — the real or perceived lack of any accountability makes the Arctic Man for some, little more than a weeklong binge of \*drinking, drugs, and other excesses. "What



Sturgis is to motorcycle operators, the Arctic Man is to snowmachine (snowmobile) operators in Alaska — both good and bad," Hull says.

Hull says that the 31<sup>st</sup> Arctic Man, held April 4-9, 2016, was his first time to attend the event with their new mobile chapel — an Army bus he converted with the help of [BGMC](#) (Boys and Girls Missionary Challenge) funds to provide a warm place for people to sit, talk — perhaps sober up a bit — and soon, enjoy some hot chocolate or coffee. The bus also features an LED cross on the top, so it's readily identifiable as a chapel.

"I wasn't sure if I would be allowed to set up what basically amounts to a church at the event," says Hull, who is based in Anchorage. "But when I called, the organizer was happy to have us and gave us a great location."

"Being an endorsed AG chaplain in addition to being an endorsed U.S. missionary is a key part of Terry's ministry," explains Manuel Cordero, senior [Chaplaincy](#) director for the Assemblies of God. "Terry recognized that as a chaplain he could gain access to — and even be welcomed or invited to — events and locations that otherwise could be closed to him."

Although one might expect the "great location" Hull was given to have a more "family-oriented" feel, Hull has the "reach-the-lost" missionary mindset. So, he was excited to learn when he arrived that he was placed in The Wild West Parking Lot —

an area with a well-earned reputation for loud, long, and wild partying.

“When I arrived and told one of the vendors what my lot number was, he was surprised, asking me how I got that prime spot, right in the middle of the party,” Hull says. “But that’s exactly where God wanted me to be!”

God continued to confirm Hull’s presence at the Arctic Man Classic with another unexpected blessing. Hull went to seek permission from the event organizers to pass out his race2win/[Philippians 3:14](#) “business” card. The folded card flips open to reveal the plan of salvation on the inside and a sinner’s prayer and Hull’s website address on the back.

“I didn’t want to break any rules or make the race organizer upset with me, because I was given a prime ministry location and wanted to be welcomed back,” Hull explains. “But when I showed the organizer an example of the race2win card, he looked at it, and said, ‘Tell you what, you give them to me and I’ll make sure that every vehicle that enters gets one of these.’ There’s no way I could have ever gotten the card into all those people’s hands on my own — that was a God thing!”

Hull says that throughout the week he was able to interact with a lot of people at the event and establish relationships, with many encouraging him to return for next year’s Arctic Man. “I looked at this year as a time to plant seeds into hearts and lives,” Hull says. “I believe consistency will result in growing trust, growing recognition, and growing relationships — all of which, through God’s grace, will also earn me the opportunity to speak into lives — and be heard.”

Hull says he will continue to upgrade the mobile chapel and says he plans on taking it to as many dog sled and snowmachine events as he can drive to. Places he plans to minister at include the Copper Basin 300,

Yukon Quest, Iron Dog, Mount Marathon, and the 45<sup>th</sup> annual Iditarod Dog Sled race. “Our desire is to develop this outreach ministry to any location where there is a group of people gathering on the road system.”

However, the Hulls haven’t lost sight of their calling as they will continue their ministry to bush Alaska.

“One of the things I really appreciate about Terry and Danean is their focus on raising up indigenous ministers of the gospel within the people group they are ministering to in Alaska,” says Malcolm Burleigh, AG [Intercultural Ministries](#) senior director “As a result of their effort, native ministers are developed and deployed within that community — the Hulls are driven, passionate, and their commitment is over the top!”

“We have a vision to minister to the villages along the nearly 3,400 miles of dog sled race trails,” Terry Hull says. “The villages are isolated and the conditions can be brutal, as the temperature can drop to as low as 60 below, and wind chill to 100 below zero, but we believe God has called us and now is the time!”

*Editor’s note: Hull is the assistant director of [Camp Agaiutim Nune](#) (The Place of God), a kids camp run by AG missionaries Jim and Linda Schulz for Yupik Eskimo children in remote Western Alaska ([BGMC/Coins for Kids funds helped build the camp](#)). The camp fits perfectly with the Hulls’ calling as it is located 500 miles west of Anchorage, 17 miles from the nearest village, and is only accessible by boat! He is also the director of [Voice to the Village, Alaska Church Network](#), and is the metro area field representative for Intercultural Ministries.*



## Step Out Into the Unknown

Nicole Herrero, AG Missionary to France, AGWM Europe

All I wanted to do was serve Jesus and follow Him. I learned in college through Chi Alpha that there was a Heavenly Father who wanted a tangible, day to day relationship with me. He didn't want me to come only when I was desperate or reciting the prayers I grew up with. He wanted my whole heart. He wanted me. When I came to realize that, I laid down my dream of becoming a surgeon. I gave up the plan I had so intricately planned for myself as I came to understand that God's ways were higher than mine (Isaiah 55:8-9). Why? Because He loves me and knows and desires only what is best for me.

After graduating university, I gave a year to missions. I found out through Chi Alpha about the opportunity to serve overseas and curiosity sparked. As soon as I saw France on the list my heart leapt at the thought of serving in a place I had only dreamt of visiting since I was a little girl. One year and then I'd figure out the rest of my life. That was my plan, but God had something else in mind.

I remember his gentle but firm whisper saying, "You're going. I just need you to trust me." It terrified me to think that God was actually willing to give me this dream of mine. I graduated, raised my budget, went through the hurdle of getting my visa and landed in Grenoble in 2015.

I never imagined that when I walked into our ministry center that I'd feel like I had come home. Hearing prayers in different languages, worshiping in a language I had been learning since middle school, it was the homecoming I never knew existed. I

never thought that as I co-lead a French-speaking small group that my heart would ache for this nation. I never thought that this one act of obedience would be the step I needed to walk into the path the Lord was laying out before me. My heart was now longing for university students and French seculars to have the opportunity to come into a place where they could belong and journey with Jesus

One "yes" changed the course of my life. The "yes" to following Jesus. The "yes" to getting to participate in the Great Commission. The "yes" to the path that He has for me. May we be brave to step out into the unknown and cling to the One who is sure to never let us go.



## Faith Despite Persecution: Hugo, AGWM Asia Pacific

Growing up as a missionary kid in Taiwan, it wasn't uncommon for people from our small church to come to our house and spend time with our family. The Holy Spirit was doing great things, and the struggling church my parents pastored was beginning to grow.

During that time, I met Hugo — a shy, mild-mannered young man a few years younger than me. Hugo was just learning English, and I was still struggling with Mandarin, but somehow, we found a way to communicate. Hugo was around every week until, suddenly, he wasn't.

Then, one day, just as suddenly, our doorbell rang. I opened the door, and there was Hugo! His clothes were dirty, and his head hung low. Hugo sobbed as he asked to speak with my father. Dad came around the corner, and when Hugo looked up, I saw that his face was swollen, with a dark bruise on it. (continued on next page)

"I told my father that I have become a Christian," Hugo explained. His dad flew into a rage, beat him, and demanded that Hugo recant his faith in Jesus. When Hugo would not recant, his father threw him out of the house. This was the first time I saw a real physical cost to being a Christian, and my friend Hugo was experiencing all this while still just a boy. I don't remember much more of the conversation from all those years ago, but I do remember Hugo not once backing down from being a Christian.

More than three decades passed, and, as I started out in my own ministry, I often wondered about Hugo. Then, one day, I received a Facebook friend request from him! No longer is Hugo a shy boy — he is a pastor — a confident man with a wife and children. His testimony is not one of a survivor but of an overcomer.

Hugo's victory started not long after my family moved away from Taiwan. I learned that after his father's abuse, Hugo went home and led his mother and sister to the Lord. A few years later, Hugo led his father to Jesus, as well.



## In the Darkest of Valleys

By AGWM Personnel in sensitive region,  
Eurasia

Recently we walked through a dark valley with Erdem\* — a friend of ours who has been a follower of Jesus for over a year. From the beginning, he has been bold and vocal with his family about his new faith in Christ, despite being from an unreached people group with very few other believers.

Last year, after his father died, Erdem became the elder of his extended family. This means the family honor and respect are

in his hands. He could now lead his family by example and share his faith in an even stronger way. Erdem began to make decisions to correct wrongs that had weighed his family down for generations. For years, there was enmity between his family and another that would result in revenge, betrayals, and feuds, with the two groups considering one another sworn enemies. Erdem decided to obey Christ's command to forgive his enemies and, as head of his family, to bring reconciliation.

To do this, Erdem went to his enemy's home, knelt, and asked forgiveness for all the evils exchanged between the families. Erdem's brother was furious, believing this action brought shame upon their father and grandfather. He retaliated by shooting Erdem four times with a pistol and then fleeing. The family that had once been his worst enemies drove Erdem to the hospital.

The next day, Erdem's son said his father was in a coma in the hospital's intensive care unit. The doctor reported that the next 48 hours would determine whether Erdem would live or die.

For those 48 hours, we walked the dark valley. Our community of believers responded with prayer and fasting. Together we rebuked death and believed for life and healing. I prayed for recovery but also began to pray about my next actions.

If Erdem lost his life, I would go to the funeral. We knew that funeral protocols had been changed because of COVID-19, but my presence there would be important. We began to count the cost, knowing that Erdem's brother was still out there and might also be very angry with me for leading his brother to Christ. My wife and I prayed and felt peace to go visit the family.

I didn't sleep much, staying in constant communication with Erdem's son. He began to ask me detailed questions about his





father's faith and how he could be such a forgiving person. I shared about the character of Jesus and that Erdem had made his choices in order to obey the commands of Christ. Erdem's son then explained that the police were waiting for a statement, and he wanted to honor his father by sharing about his faith.

But before Erdem's son gave the statement, Jesus showed up, and a miracle happened — Erdem woke up from his coma. Erdem informed police that he would give the statement on his newly-arrested brother, telling them that he forgave him.

The doctor interrupted, pleading with the police that Erdem was not psychologically stable and didn't know what he was saying.

"Your brother tried to kill you, shooting you four times!" the doctor exclaimed. "Yet somehow you are alive!"

"I have been resurrected like my Savior," Erdem responded. "My brother tried to kill me. I died, but now I am alive again. What else can my brother do to me? I forgive him."

We are blessed to be part of Erdem's life. He walks with new boldness. His family, his community, hospital personnel, police, and his former enemies are now very close to the Kingdom of God.

*\*Name has been changed for security.*



### **Angola: Freed from Fear**, Africa

In 2002, when Ron Mueller and his wife, Donna — along with young daughters Breanna and Brooke — began missionary

service in the southwest African nation of Angola, the country was emerging from 27 years of civil war.

"Every day for those 27 years, Angolan followers of Jesus agonized in prayer," says Donna. "They told us they lived every day as though it were their last. To this day, many still just buy enough food to last the day." One night, two months after arriving in Angola, Ron and Donna lay in bed, unable to sleep. "We were restless and were just lying there thanking God for everyone that we knew was praying for us," Ron remembers. "Then a tap came on our window."

An Angolan colleague was alerting them that one of the armed guards outside the Muellers' home had been shot and was dying. Ron leapt out of bed and ran to the side of the wounded guard. "He was sobbing," Ron remembers. "He was worried about who would care for his family." After bandaging the man's wounds as best he could, Ron took the guard's fallen AK-47 rifle and stood with the remaining guard until it was clear the attackers would not return. Miraculously, the wounded guard survived and later realized God had intervened on his behalf.

"When we first arrived here, I didn't understand why local Christians greet each other with, 'Thank the Lord we passed the night well,'" Donna says. "After the shooting, I came to understand. Fevers, thieves, and other evils often happen in the night, so to wake up each morning is considered a gift."

On another occasion, Donna herself saw an angelic presence intervene in their situation. "The spirit of fear that has ruled in Angola had begun to attach itself to me," she says. "I was looking out our window one night, over a short cement wall and out into the tall grass. I saw an Angolan man in a bright white, untucked dress shirt. All the other

Angolan men tuck their shirts in. He was patrolling slowly near our home. I turned to call Ron to see him, and when I turned back, the man was gone."

The Muellers also received an email from Ethel, a supporter of their ministry who lived in California. "I don't know what's going on over there, but I am praying for you, and I saw four angels dressed in white and standing at attention, encamped at each corner of your home," she wrote. After this event, Donna says that she took the words **of Psalm 91 as her own. She says, "My trust** had to go deep in who God is, though I did not feel it."

The Muellers note that a common conviction among Angolan believers is this: We will not turn in any direction apart from God. We will not bow. "That is a place beyond any emotion," Ron says. "That is a place of faith."



### He Is Worth It All, Europe

When I was around 6 years old, I sat in a small country church listening to a missionary pray a prayer that forever changed my life. He prayed that God would call someone into missions, and in the quiet moment that followed I heard a voice whisper – *I want you*. It was probably the first time I heard God speak, and I remember saying – *No!* I instantly began to compare myself with everyone in the room and thought that God was making a mistake. But I felt like the Christian thing to do was to follow my no with – *If you want me, you're going to have to be the one to get me there*. I packed that moment away and lived my life without really giving it a second thought.

I was seventeen, scared, a bit broken inside, and wondering how my life was going to

turn out. I was in an unhealthy relationship, and my relationship with God was more like me telling God my plans and hoping He would do His part in making my dreams come true. Then God began to speak to me. *Elina, you can keep on living this life the way you are living it, and you may be happy, but you will never go where I want you to go, never do what I want you to do and never be who I have created you to be*. What a moment. God didn't put my happiness on the line; he reminded me of something much deeper – my purpose.

So many things happened after that moment to get me to where I am today. I live in Leipzig, Germany with my husband, Tyler. God miraculously changed his life and called him into missions. He brought us together, and He began to form us for His purpose here in Germany. We've planted two churches and hope to plant more. My heart is to see people not just accept Jesus as Lord but be transformed and live their lives like Jesus lived His – all in!

What I've learned through this process is that we have to lose ourselves in order to actually find who we are in Christ and what our purpose and deepest desires really are. I tried living my life my own way, and it was broken and unfulfilling. I gave my life to Jesus, and my life has still had its mountain-sized challenges, but the difference is knowing that I am fulfilling my purpose and walking through this life hand in hand with the One who knows all my steps. When life and ministry is hard, I know it's also worth it, and there is nothing else in this world that could ever fulfill me like Jesus does. He is worth it all.

## Pray for ME

**sign up in the foyer by 9/15/24**