

# GROTON ASSEMBLY OF GOD

NOVEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

## PASTOR'S PEN

### More Than Thanksgiving

This month we celebrate Thanksgiving, which is a good time to remind ourselves of God's commands in

**1Thessalonians 5:16-17, NLT:** *16 Always be joyful. 17 Never stop praying. 18 Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Jesus Christ.*

The Lord has taught me to practice giving Him thanks throughout the day every day. The days when I remember, I feel better. The days when I don't—usually a few in a row because of busyness—I feel much more weathered and weary. It seems the busier we are, the more we need to focus on Him and all He has done for us.

It is in this mindset that I direct your attention to another matter heavy on our minds this month: The leadership of our nation. In this area, too, we should give God thanks, for He gives us those in authority over us (**Romans 1:13**). Let us obey the Lord, and thank Him for placing us in this nation and for His lovingkindness, without which, we would cease to exist (**Colossians 1:17**).

But God also calls us to more than just thanksgiving. He commands us to obey those He has put in authority over us,

regardless of whether they are our personal choices or not: *Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God (**Romans 13:1, NLT**).*

God will not let us off the hook about submitting to those who govern us. He repeats the same command in **Titus 3:1** [*Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, NKJV*] and in **1Peter 2:13-14** [*For the Lord's sake, submit to all human authority—whether the king as head of state, 14 or the officials he has appointed, NLT*].

God also commands us to pray for our leaders, regardless of whether we agree with them: *I urge you, first, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. 2 Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity (1Timothy 2:1-2, NLT).*

God has a plan that He is working out for our good and for His glory. Let us join with Him by thanking Him for His goodness and by praying for those whom He has placed in authority over us, because they too will be used by God for His purposes, whether they know Him or not.



## November Service Schedule

### Sunday, November 3

#### FALL MISSIONS CONVENTION

9 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. – Life Groups

10 a.m. – Missionary speaker from a sensitive country

### Sunday, November 10

9 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. – Life Groups

10 a.m. – “Living A New Way”

### Sunday, November 17

#### New Sermon Series: *Gifts of the Holy Spirit*

9 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. – Life Groups

10 a.m. – “Diversity”

### Sunday, November 24

9 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. – Life Groups

10 a.m. – “All Are Valuable”

#### Water Baptisms



### November Birthdays:

- 1 Autumn Lanzilotta  
Shirley Avery
- 3 Zachary Lattin
- 4 Trish Plummer  
Lisa Garrow  
Beth Underwood-Scott  
Nadia Torres
- 5 Brian Short
- 6 Erin Wright
- 7 John Scott
- 10 Hope Twitchell
- 12 Phoebe Bliss
- 13 Dawn LeFever
- 14 Abigail Lattin  
Ron Addy
- 19 Emily Conner  
Amy Lanzilotta
- 20 Benjamin Moss-Caceres
- 21 Joe Wright  
Bailey Wright  
Karen Huether
- 22 Kevin Corgel
- 23 Cody Price
- 25 Kathie Collier  
Jeremy Woodard
- 26 Bonnie Eldred-Kress

### November Anniversaries:

- 11/10/2007 Steve & Denise Lizzo  
11/15/1962 Charles & Donna Bernhardt  
11/23/1974 Ted & Leilani Norman  
11/24/2007 Brian & Erica Short



**FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN**  
**UPDATE:**

**We ended up packing the maximum amount of food we could with only two trucks: 248,832 meals!** Thank you, Groton AG family, for serving.

## TESTIMONY: HE IS FAITHFUL

Live Dead/ Lebanon

Names withheld

Supported by Groton AG

**October 8, 2024**

We were still maintaining a rhythm of normalcy in life and , at least as much as possible. We had no immediate plans to leave Lebanon, though we had our contingency plan in place and were monitoring the situation closely, knowing it could change any moment.

In the city there was the lingering fear of what could happen and a general solemn feeling, but we weren't in immediate danger. I went to the grocery store. I bought food for the weekend and a bag of lemons to make lemon bars. That evening after the kids were asleep, and we caught up on the news, we began to talk seriously about the possibility of leaving. Things were intensifying each day without any sign of deescalating. Locals were all telling us we needed to go; whereas, previously, many of them had reassured us things were fine. We decided to sleep on it and talk again the next day. That night when I cried on our balcony, I asked that If God wanted us to go, He would make it clear.

On Saturday, we woke up to news of a drone attack less than ten minutes from our house that killed four. Not just ,that but because of everything, we suddenly felt an urgency that it was time to go. Ethan began working out the travel details with our fellow workers. With only one airline still operating, the earliest flight we could find to fly anywhere from Beirut wasn't for another week or more, with some flights costing thousands per seat. We considered a boat but weren't confident about its legitimacy. Miraculously, Saturday



evening a travel agency found a flight for the next day, and we were able to purchase the last 7 seats available on the plane! We were skeptical, as there had been people showing up to the airport who then didn't have seats. We hoped it was legitimate and not a scam because

the price was reasonable. Nonetheless, we began the flurry of packing.

My mind was racing and competing with my emotions—should I pack like we'll be back in a month or never coming back? What will the kids miss if we can't get back? What would help them feel comfortable during this crazy transition? How was I going to tell my friends I was leaving them? Would I even have time to say goodbye? Are we really leaving our home right now?

Sunday afternoon, less than 24 hours later, we were heading to the airport. As we drove into Beirut, the sky was smoggy. I thought it was pollution...until I realized it was smoke hovering over the city. There were people sitting on the sidewalks with their bags unsure of where to go next. Cars were lined up everywhere alongside the road because of those displaced from the south. We drove past a building next to the main highway that had been bombed three days prior according to our taxi driver. The airport was so empty. The restaurants and stores were mostly closed. Outside the airport the air smelled. There were two spots of smoldering smoke not far away. It was sobering and eerie. While waiting for our flight, we saw a Twitter post that all flights had been suspended for the next 24 hours. Our hearts stopped, and we braced ourselves. It turned out to be false. A friend watched our plane take off on a live cam from the airport and said there were explosions that close to

the airport not long after we took off.

When we made it to Cyprus and then Jordan, I felt so relieved, like I was holding my breath and could now let it out. I also felt so guilty to be privileged enough to leave when so many were suffering with no way out, and I was so sad for leaving dear friends behind in those circumstances. But God has been so faithful. Not only in guiding us and protecting us but even in showing us He's with us in the little things. At one point on the plane, I remembered the lemon bars I had wanted to make with the kids, and that hadn't happened in the chaos. Something so small but it made me feel sad. It is almost like it represented the bigger things I left behind undone. I felt sad because it was another thing that was taken away from me. When we arrived in Jordan, we were picked up by good friends on staff with the launch team. On the way, they told us they had pizza at their house and LEMON BARS. I couldn't believe it! What a sweet little gift from God! Truly He was going to take care of us.

Then this morning my heart suddenly sank as I remembered that I hadn't packed my daughter's favorite book. It had crossed my mind at one point but in the frantic packing it hadn't made it into the bags. That afternoon we took the kids to play at the childcare facility for the launch team members. Inside, propped up on the top of a little bookshelf, was her favorite book, available for us to borrow anytime!

Really, I feel like God is going above and beyond to reassure us that He is with us. We don't know what is next, but we know who holds the future! Please continue to pray for peace for Lebanon.



**Leslie Latona, Colombia**  
**supported by Groton AG**

**Simon Bolivar Church**

Construction on the new building is progressing. In July, the roof, doors, and windows were installed. The floor on the second level is completed. The second floor is the area for the children's feeding program. The church members and people in the community are so excited to see the progress. Brick by brick we have seen God's faithfulness. Thank you, Groton AG, for your monetary gift from Vacation Bible School!

**Simon Bolivar Church Bakery**

Over the last few months, we have been baking cookies, breads, and cakes to sell in our community. I have had the privilege of teaching the leaders how to make pizza and cookies. We have also had a local baker come and teach them how to make bread and cakes. The profit from the bakery will help sustain the children's feeding program in the church building.



**Joe & Mary Benecasa, Italy**  
**Supported by Groton AG**

This has been a busy summer for us. After signing a lease for our new building in March, we have been working daily to renovate it into a welcoming place for people from all over the world. We have had local people as well as teams from the United States. We've had five teams—two for the women's conference, one for Vacation Bible school, and two construction teams. Please continue to pray for us and the renovation work on the building.



**Shelley Carl, Japan**

Supported by Groton AG

### **October 19, 2024**

I am thankful that I could send in my absentee ballot from Tokyo, Japan. The vote of every American is important. God bless America. Here in Japan, less than 1% of Japanese are Christians. On October 14, we had a level 3 earthquake. The power of a level 3 earthquake still shocks me. I'm okay, but I surely got rattled. It was almost 8 pm on Monday here in Tokyo, and I was getting ready to go into my bedroom to wind down, when the whole house suddenly shook. I just want to say once again, thank you to so many people who pray for Japan every day. Please continue to ask for the mercy of the Lord over these precious people.

My favorite hour every month for 35 months now—the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday at 7 pm (Eastern time). That is when we jump on zoom, for our Victory In Prayer call to storm heaven on behalf of Japan. What does that hour look like? I send out the prayer points in advance through email. Many times, we have prophetic words and prophetic prayers. We are simply in awe at how God is working through us. **To get the link for Shelley Carl's VIP call, contact Laurie Wright, Missions committee secretary.**



**Groton AG  
Missions  
Committee**

### **Missions Trip Policy**

The primary purpose of the missions committee is to raise awareness and promote missions in the body of Christ here. We support full-time missionaries through the Faith Promise program and the Adopt A Missionary Program. 100% of the Faith Promise funds are used to support missionaries and missions programs. Another purpose of the missions committee is to support short-term missions trips by giving monetary gifts.

In order for the committee to consider a monetary gift for your trip, we have adopted the following policy:

- Applicants must submit a letter to the committee stating your destination, costs, dates, and purpose of your trip.
- If you receive a monetary gift, we ask that you give a letter talking about your experience when you return.
- Applicants must also solicit prayer and funds from others, in a sense "itinerate."
- Priority will be given to Groton AG members and adherents.
- Priority will also be given to those taking trips for the first time, though we will consider requests for successive mission trips, depending on missions requests and funds available.



## HIGH STAKES ON ABORTION at NOVEMBER ELECTION

Two years after the U.S. Supreme Court returned the issue back to the states, a record number of abortion initiatives are on the ballot Nov. 5 that will limit the rights of the unborn.

Already since the federal reversal of *Roe v. Wade* in 2022, seven states have approved measures to remove protections for babies in the womb. [This] month, voters in 10 states will be asked to decide whether to loosen safeguards for the unborn.

But pro-family organizations warn voters that the ballot initiatives under consideration would open the door for unrestricted abortion never allowed at the federal level.

"Every one of these measures actually goes far beyond what *Roe v. Wade* declared constitutional," says Nicole C. Hunt, an attorney with Colorado-based Focus on the Family. "They all would enshrine abortion as a constitutional right."

"These extreme abortion amendments could allow for late-term abortions and taxpayer-funded abortions," says Erica Steinmiller-Perdomo, legal counsel for Alliance Defending Freedom's (ADF) Center for Public Policy in Washington, D.C. She says the language of the amendments is intentionally vague, inviting legal loopholes down the line.

Rather than referring to terminating the life of a baby in the womb or even mentioning abortion directly, the proposals are couched in language focusing on "reproductive freedom," "women's health," or "human rights." While the initiatives typically purport to forbid abortion after

"fetal viability" (usually around the 23rd week of gestation), exceptions would be granted if any medical provider deems abortion "necessary." Hunt notes that myriad judges in the past have allowed abortion because the pregnant mother merely contends it would be detrimental to her mental health if she didn't obtain one.

Organizations such as Planned Parenthood and the American Civil Liberties Union are pouring money into campaigns of the 10 states involved: Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Maryland, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New York, and South Dakota. Six of those states now have pro-life laws in place, which Hunt estimates save a combined 50,000 lives annually.

### CHRISTIAN TURNOUT

AG General Superintendent Doug Clay urges adherents of the Fellowship to exercise their right to vote on Nov. 5.

"Genesis 1:27 reveals all humanity is created in God's image, while Genesis 9:6 commands respect for human life because of its status," Clay says. "I'm grateful that our Fellowship has always celebrated and fostered a culture of life, protecting the most vulnerable among us."

[Editor's note: This excerpt is from *High Stakes on Abortion* at [ag.org](http://ag.org)]

## Convoy of Hope: Hurricane Relief Efforts and Cleanup Continue, Restoration Process Begins

Convoy of Hope has delivered 150 semi loads of relief to victims of hurricanes Helene and Milton, with Christ in Action welcoming volunteers for cleanup and restoration process. Convoy has been partnering with

multiple AG district offices and churches throughout the response to both hurricanes, including: in Georgia: Vidalia First AG, and Cornerstone Church (Augusta), and the Georgia district office; in South Carolina: Greenwood First AG; in North Carolina: FAM Church (Morganton), Revol Church and Crossroads AG in Asheville, and the North Carolina district; in Florida: Mayo First AG, Perry First AG, First AG (Cross City), Jasper AG, Radiant Church (St. Petersburg), Sebring First AG, Dream Church (Bradenton), Church of Hope (Palmetto), and the West Florida district office. In addition, multiple AG churches from Florida, North Carolina, Indiana, New Jersey have sent volunteers to work with Convoy.



## **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

Chaplain Denny Nissley, an ordained AG minister for 40 years, is the founder of the Christ in Action ministry. Headquartered in Virginia, the ministry recently deployed to Florida, however, the focus of Christ in Action is one of cleanup and restoration. “There’s a lot of chainsaw work and gutting of homes we’ll be doing in Florida, and we need volunteers there — we need the church there like ants at a picnic,” Nissley says. “All you have to do is register and get there and we’ll house and feed you for free, line up work, and assign jobs that fit an

individual’s skill level.” Nissley says that in addition to “heavy labor,” people are needed to cook, deliver meals, clean, do administrative work, and several other jobs — no one is asked to work beyond their abilities. “We have 42-foot commercial kitchen, commercial shower units — we are fully self-contained — except for the sleeping quarters,” Nissley explains. “We sleep on the church floor. We always partner with a local church, because when we’re gone, we want people to have a place to go, a place for people to anchor to.”

Christ in Action, founded in 1982, is setting up in New Port Richey, Florida, as officials have reported more than 17,000 homes damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Milton. He adds that those individuals who volunteer and travel in an RV will have water and electricity hook-ups available to them. “People can come for a day, a week, a month, two months as we’ll be here at least until Dec. 16, if not longer,” Nissley says. Currently, Nissley says, Christ in Action will not fully deploy to North Carolina for at least another week as they’ve been asked by the state’s Emergency Operation Center to wait. Although Christ in Action does have heavy equipment at its disposal, the state is still searching for missing people — hoping for rescues, but likely also facing recovery of the dead. “We did send our 6,000-gallon tanker truck for hauling potable (drinking) water to North Carolina and we set up a water purification system there,” Nissley says. *[For complete, unedited article go to [ag.org](http://ag.org)]*



## Calling all bakers!!

If you are interested in baking pies, breads, rolls, or your specialty bake sale item, please sign up in the foyer, or contact Annette Twitchell at 607-745-5077. **All baked goods need to be brought to the church by 8:30 a.m. Wednesday, November 27.**

### Annual Thanksgiving Pie & Bake Sale

**Wed., November 27**

from 9:00 a.m. to noon

8" Pies (\$10); 9" Pies (\$15)  
Breads, Rolls, and more!

Coffee and pastries will also be available to enjoy on the spot, hosted by the youth group!

**To pre-order**, use the church app, sign up in the foyer, or contact Annette Twitchell at 607-745-5077. Payment will be made when you pick up your baked goods. **The last day to pre-order will be Sunday, November 17.**



Thanks!

## Would You Like To Make Groton AG Your Home?

Membership is a commitment to the people at Groton Assembly, and they commit to you, as well. As a member, you have the right to vote for board members and for the senior pastor, if there should be a change. You also have the privilege to teach and lead ministries, and receive pastoral care from leaders in the church.



**The next membership classes are Sundays, November 10 and 17**, right after second service, around 1p.m. Each of the two weeks we will have a small dish-to-pass lunch, and then discuss membership, doctrines of the church, our personal stories, church history, and the direction that the church is headed.

**If you are interested in membership, whether you can make the classes those weeks, please let Pastor Sam know:**  
**via text or phone (607.898.5163), or email ([samnen@grotonassembly.org](mailto:samnen@grotonassembly.org))**