



Where Needs Meet AGAPE Love

March 2020

TAKING PRECAUTIONS AGAINST THE CORONAVIRUS

AGAPE MEMBER CHURCHES

- Bedrock Church – Franklin County
- Bedrock Community Church
- Covenant Fellowship
- Franklin Heights Church – Rocky Mount, CrossPointe and Union Hall
- Dwelling Place Christian Fellowship
- EastLake Community Church
- Flint Hill Baptist Church
- Goodview Baptist Church
- Halesford Baptist Church
- Inner-Faith Fellowship Ministries
- Morgans Baptist Church
- Palestine Baptist Church
- Radford Baptist Church
- Rocky Mount Baptist Church
- Staunton Baptist Church
- Vitalize Church
- Westlake Baptist Church

A Note from Sue:

The Agape Center is open — but on a reduced service scale. Praise God, our Lord never stops working. He’s open 24/7, no matter the crisis, no matter the circumstances.

Most of our clients have been able to keep their scheduled appointment. Even though we cannot provide mentoring and our other services, we are able to give them food. The client signs in at the Reception Desk, receives an appointment for the next month, drives around to pick up their food, and is met by a pantry volunteer in the parking lot. The client remains in the car while their food is brought out to them.



The clients have expressed their appreciation and are grateful that we are willing to help them during this difficult time. And, we are so very thankful for the Agape volunteers who are willing to serve: the supervisors, receptionists, telephone, data, USDA and, of course, our truck drivers and pantry workers. If you work in a department that is currently closed because of the virus but are willing to help in the pantry or perhaps another area that is currently operating, please let me know. Some of the support service departments have also been operating. Please contact the leader of your department if you have questions.

We will continue like this until the government notifies us that we can once again operate as before. We miss having the entire team and look forward to being back to normal soon.

The Lord bless you and your family and please let me know if we can pray for you or help you during this crisis.

Sue Lipscomb, Executive Director

KEY DATES

Agape Open Golf Tournament: May 30

Register at <https://www.agapecentersml.org/golf>

Our Pantry Volunteers Helping to Feed Our Clients

Photos taken before 6 ft. social distancing rule went into effect



Rick



Client & Robbie



Russell, Clay, Sally, Carol



Jeff & Sally



Paul R



Russell, Dave K & Rick

Welcome New Volunteers!

- Alan Canterburg** – Pantry
- Karen Contarino** – Baskets
- Brad Ellis** – Furniture
- Penny McKisson** – Pantry
- Nathan Newville** – Pantry
- Nathan Offenbacher** – Pantry
- Barbara Roberts** – Clerk, Clothing



By the Numbers...

February 2020
 Families 789
 Individuals 2,672

February 2019
 Families 787
 Individuals 2,746

March 2020 Volume 12 Issue 3

The Agape Newsletter is a monthly publication produced by The Agape Center for volunteers, member churches and other interested individuals and organizations.

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Mentors Sharpen Skills Using "Open Space" Methodology



On March 14th, twenty Agape mentors from all three of our locations (Moneta, Lynchburg and Vinton) got to share mentoring challenges and best practices with each other using a unique brainstorming technique called **Open Space**. Our facilitator was Erin Gordon, a highly trained, experienced consultant with a servant heart for Christ, who uses visual tools and methods to help all types of organizations “meet with impact.”

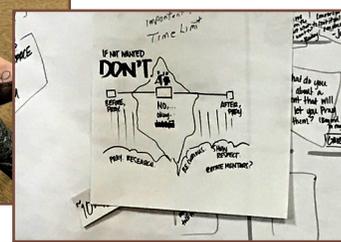
The energy level was high and the impact of our Saturday morning session was great. We did indeed “spur one another on” toward achieving our Agape mission of connecting, listening, loving and praying for our clients to help them turn or return to a Christ-centered life.



*Soooooo good!
Learned much!*



*Wonderful program,
good involvement,
learned much!*



The open conversations and feedback were such a blessing!

Feedback from one another was so helpful



Thank you, Jan, for the article and, Carolyn, for the photos

Agape Supporters Raise Over \$9000 during RVG

Congratulations Agape Center Supporters!



In one day, on March 18, you raised over \$9000 in the Roanoke Valley Gives (RVG) fundraiser. Donations totaled \$8850 and the Agape Center won an additional \$500 incentive prize for the most money collected during the

Coffee Break Power Hour (3:00 – 4:00 p.m.). The Agape Center finished 8th out of 50 Roanoke Valley non-profits in the medium-sized charities and 22nd of 149 charities overall.

This is most impressive in that these donations were made during difficult times. The coronavirus outbreak is disrupting our daily life and other fundraising campaigns are competing for donations. Still, Agape supporters came through to support our clients and volunteers. For that, we are grateful.

This money collected will go a long way in our facility improvement program. Specifically, these funds will be earmarked to complete our security system (to include intercom capability throughout the building) and to finish the heating and air conditioning in the household/linen/book departments. Thank you once again and stay tuned for another RVG campaign next year!

Thank you, Rick Cockrane, for once again leading a successful RVG campaign.

Thank you

Spring Is Here & We've Been Readying the Nest

Right Down to Cleaning the Pantry Mats !



Larry DeCamp hosing down the mats

As Sue said in her thank you note to the volunteers who came out for **Deep Clean Night**, February 21, "It's amazing how quickly we can put a shine on our Agape facility when everyone comes together for a couple of hours to work!" Sue also extended her thanks to Rose Goodnight and her First Impressions team who work hard EVERY week to keep our building clean.

And, in God's good timing, we just so happened to have the steam cleaning of the carpets scheduled at the beginning of the Coronavirus crisis. When we do get back to normal operations, we will certainly have a much cleaner environment!



Two Precious Gift Shop Hostesses

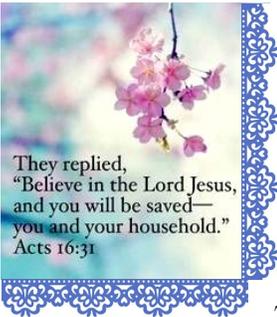
Thelma Meador (right), who celebrated her 90th birthday last September, has been an Agape volunteer since 2004. She comes in almost every Thursday to greet clients in the Gift Shop and help them choose a birthday gift.

Carol Mills (left), 81 years old, moved to Bedford after suffering a stroke last September. She was missing her friends and activities from northern Virginia. At the suggestion of her nephew, Tom Wilmoth, she came to Agape and is helping Thelma in the Gift Shop. Even though her mobility is now limited, she thoroughly enjoys this opportunity to be useful. Interesting Note: Carol served as a secretary to the ambassador in countries all over the world before retiring 17 years ago.



Carol and Thelma folding bags for the Clothing Store.

Paula Lynn Hodges: I'm Going to Be Baptized Sundry



You know you've been blessed as a volunteer when a you strike up a conversation with a client — whether it's in the Clothing Store or putting food in their car or checking them into the USDA system — and God opens their heart to you.

A couple of weeks ago, the Thursday before the pandemic hit, I

was working in the USDA office and was checking Miss Paula Lynn Hodges into the system. I'm not even sure how it began, but Paula mentioned she was going to be baptized the coming Sunday, which, of course, led me to ask her how that came about. She told me a little and I knew it would be a story I'd want to put in our newsletter. So, I asked her if I could record what she was telling me and she didn't flinch. Instead of trying to rewrite what she said, I'm simply going to share this interview with you.

Your Reporter [Kn]: Okay, so this is Paula Lynn Hodges. Paula just told me a beautiful story of what has happened since Sunday. Paula, please go back to the end of last week and what happened Sunday.

Paula: I was in the hospital from Friday to Saturday [suffering with a kidney stone] and my husband came in and said, "You need to come home and let the Lord help you. You have a purpose to go to church on Sunday, I believe.

Kn: So your husband is a believer?

Paula: He is a very big high faith believer. The Lord saved him from his deathbed not too many months ago ... His name is Steven. We were living in a tent at this point when the Lord saved him. *[the story of his salvation will have to wait til next month]*

I (Paula) signed myself out of the hospital and went home. Come time for church I was in a lot of pain, but I still got up and went to church. I thought it was very important. We started on our way and the truck run out of gas before we got to the end of the road. And so my husband said, "Dear Lord, I know that there's a purpose. I have this urgency. I feel she needs to get to church Sunday. Please help me get her to the church. I know it's very important. Please let the truck crank up and make it to the store so we can get some gas." He continues, "If it's Your will and I need to walk, we may get to church late but just know that if it's Your will, we will get there." And so, he said this prayer and my son was sitting in the seat beside us and tried to crank a few times. I was like, "Steve, it's out of gas. When it's out, it's out!"

He fired it up a third time and that truck cranked up like there was gas in the truck. And we made it all the way to the store and then from there we were able to make it to church where I was saved.

Kn: What church do you go to?

Paula: It's Mount Pleasant Christian church in Rocky Mount.

Kn: You were saved Sunday.

Paula: And I'm going to be baptized this coming Sunday.

Paula: And then I went in for surgery on Tuesday for a stone blockage. We felt that I needed some extra healing so we called a couple of the elders in church to come and anoint with oil because it says in the Bible, you know, get your church elders to come and anoint with oil that you may be healed. That's what it says in the Bible.

So we did that and we prayed before I had surgery. I went in and they said everything went right with the surgery and everything looked good, but I still had an infection. And so they sent the stone with me, which was supposed to be 6.9 millimeter in size, which is a good size stone. I picked up the little container and looked at it. It was a just a little sliver, not very long, it wasn't round and I could see where it would block, but it was so small that even the nurse had trouble seeing it. The Lord had been working on dissolving that stone for me and He blessed me. I have no doubt that even though that little sliver had to be removed because it was stuck in there, it wasn't as big as when they x-rayed it because the Lord had dissolved the stone to help get it out so I wouldn't be in pain.

Kn: Praise the Lord! So, now you're still in pain, but you know that the Lord has this.

Paula: Yes, I'm still hurtin' and I know that he is going to continue to heal me. You know I can't expect him to do it when I want it because the Lord does things in His own time. So I just pray at night and I pray throughout the day and ask Him for forgiveness of my sins and ask for His everloving healing touch to continue to heal me.

Kn: Thank you so much for sharing. That's quite a God story.

If you see Paula the next time she's at Agape, please ask her how she's doing and welcome her as a new child of Christ. And watch for Installment 2 of this God story in the April newsletter --- the Saving of Steve.



I'm Here to Celebrate My Birthday!



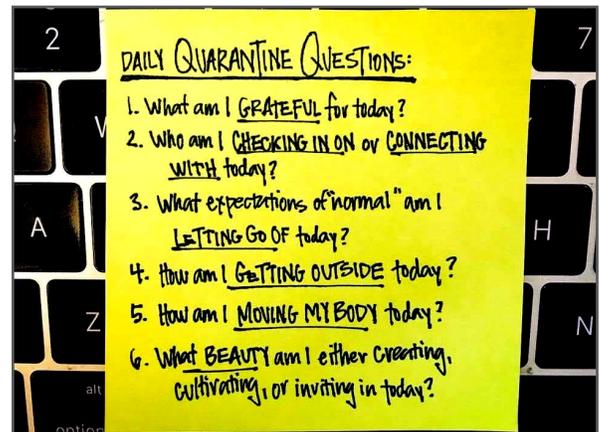
Sheila Flood has been coming to the Agape Center for several years and back in 2018 she participated in the Getting Ahead Program. Sheila says that she knew her faith was growing as she went through the classes, but didn't know that God would soon be testing her. A short time after graduation, one of her daughters had a seizure while driving. Shana's car crossed the median, bounced off a guard rail and hit another car head on, but she was okay. Then two weeks later Shana had another seizure and God protected her again. Sheila knew her trust in Him was growing stronger.

Not long after, Sheila was having difficulty swallowing. She went to the doctor, had a scope done on February 12, a month before her birthday, and got "the worst news ever heard in my life" — Cancer. When her birthday came around, she and her family questioned if she'd be celebrating another one in 2020.

Sheila saw her oncologist in April and was told her cancer had spread and aggressive treatment was necessary — radiation every day, Monday through Friday, for six weeks followed by chemo once a week for six weeks. On July 25, surgery was done to remove the cancer in her esophagus, upper stomach and lymph nodes. The cancer was gone ... ALL gone!

I asked Sheila what her relationship was with the Lord through all that, was she angry, was she.. ? And she abruptly cut me off and said "No, No! I trusted God with everything. I talked to Him more and more. God brought me through this and it was all God!" She went on to talk about losing her momma and her daddy and how afraid she was of dying. "I was so afraid of death, terrified of it, but now I'm a true believer of God and I'm looking forward to that day! When He's ready, I guess I'm ready!"

A year ago Sheila didn't expect to be visiting the Agape Center Gift Shop to pick out a gift for her birthday this month. But God is in control. Happy 54th Birthday, Sheila! And may your witness of His love and mercy bless many in the years to come.



Click here to see prayer video. It's a "safe site"

https://www.prayerscapes.com/FilmPages/prayer_for_hope.html

Bits & Pieces



Diane Davis
Agape Book Reviewer

From the Book Shelf

The Bush Is Still Burning

Lloyd John Ogilvie

All of us have felt rejected, misunderstood or overwhelmed with life. We face health problems, marital problems, money problems and family problems. When trouble comes, what can we do?

Some blame God and turn from Him. Yet, the Lord can turn our struggles into stepping stones. If we cry out to Him, He is there. If we open our hearts for His healing, He is there. He is still the Great I Am!

Our Lord is still the One true God who healed the sick, made the blind to see and brought the dead back to life. He is the same Jesus who died on a cross for our sins, rose again, went to heaven and will return again. If we believe and accept Him for who He is, call out to Him in our times of trouble and surrender our lives into His loving care, He can and will lead us through our times of trouble.

No, things here on earth are not easy. Sin changed God's perfect world into what we have today. Our Lord loves us and when the time comes, He will take His own unto Himself and we will forever be with Him. Struggles of life and sin will be no more.

Yes, the bush is still burning and Our Lord is still the Great I Am. (Exodus 53:14) (previously published, worth repeating)

Young'uns Helping Out

Liberty High School FFA

Charlie Moser, Caleb Crumpacker, Alexis Buckland, Brooke Hodges, Makenna Garrett, Kate Robertson, Zach Orange, Parry Dooley



Bedford Team Leadership Club

Sebastian Young, Maribeth Martin, Reagan Harvey, Gavin Holdren, Brenden Rever, Mia Perry, Makyla Branham, Sophie Brown, Allie Milton, Kole Williams



WHY I SERVE ...



"I volunteer to serve the Lord and to serve others."

Ted Bernau
Pantry
Moneta VA
Volunteer since 2008

Isaiah 58:10 Feed the hungry, and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon.