



Where Needs Meet AGAPE Love November, 2019

Agape Provides Thanksgiving for 1000 families

AGAPE MEMBER CHURCHES

Bedrock Church—Franklin County

Bedrock Community Church

Covenant Fellowship

Franklin Heights Church—Rocky
Mount, CrossPointe, & 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



As has been Agape's practice since its inception in 2004, the fixings for traditional Thanksgiving dinners have been provided to our clients and their families. Each meal consists of a turkey, plus corn, green beans, potatoes, and stuffing.

Client Denise Van Buren, (left) expressed her appreciation for this blessing. She says she also participates in the Crochet Team that makes baby blankets, children's blankets and other items for client gift baskets.

This year, it is estimated that nearly 1000 families will be blessed with a full Thanksgiving dinner, thanks to the generosity of donors from the community.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Now through November 26—Feed a Family of Four for \$25

November 18; December 2—Finance/Budgeting Class (Open to clients and volunteers)

November 26—December 23—Angel Gift Distribution for Clients' children.

December 9 —GA Graduation — 6:30 pm, EastLake Chapel All Agape Volunteers invited!

Agape Closed December 24—January 1, 2020. Open on Monday, December 23 and Thursday, January 2, 2020.

January — Annual Linen Shower —Bring new or gently used towels and sheets to stock-up our Linen Department.

Vitalize Church Has Permanent Location

Seven years after forming Vitalize Church, Pastor Tony Gray's passion for the lost is still evident. His priority is reaching unchurched people in the community and introducing them to have a relationship with Jesus Christ. After several attempts to find a permanent location for their meetings, God seems to have provided the perfect space in a building behind Smith Mountain Building Supply, which formerly housed a lighting company. Located at 145 Builders Pride Drive in Hardy, the church worshiped for their first time in the new building on November 3, 2019. Pastor Tony says, "I have no desire to be a big church because I want to be small enough to reach out to unbelievers. When we get too large here, we'll plant another church in a different neighborhood, so this space will last a long time."

Vitalize Church had started to raise money for a church, and after two different locations fell through, the plan was to notify all donors and offer to refund their money. In April, letters were written, addressed, and sealed; but before they reached the Post Office, Pastor Tony received a call from the Willard companies wondering if they might consider another option. They put the letters on hold, and the Willards worked with the Church to make it happen. Once zoning approval was obtained from Franklin County, the letters were trashed, and work began on the building. All of the demolition and reconstruction has been done by church members with the exception of the dry wall.

The church had been holding services in three of the theaters at the Westlake, and also renting office space. Now they will consolidate all services and offices in their new building. Pastor Tony says, "The biggest blessing is that we no longer have to set-up and tear-down for every service."



Pastor Tony Gray at the new location of Vitalize Church near Westlake. Vitalize Church has been an Agape Member Church since 2017.

From the Prayer Team

Prayer is a match that lights the fuse to the dynamite power of God to take care of the affairs of men.

Of Special Note: We have recently been notified that of the 23,000 agencies in the 211 Virginia database, Agape-Moneta is in the top TWENTY referral agencies! What a compliment!

Welcome New Volunteers!

- Margaret Bishop** — Pantry
- Avery Carter** — Furniture Pick-up
- Sarah Carter** — Pantry
- Nancy Joyce** — Clothing, Toys
- Paul Roderique** — Pantry, Mentor

By the Numbers Served . . .

October 2019
Families 852
Individuals 2911

October 2018
Families 838
Individuals 2853

November 2019 Volume 11 Issue 11

The Agape Newsletter is a monthly publication produced by The Agape Center for volunteers, member churches, and other interested individuals and organizations. Comments may be sent to:

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Vinton Agape on the Horizon

Plans are moving ahead on an Agape Center to serve the Vinton area. A few years ago, this site was put on hold as there seemed to be insurmountable obstacles. However, God had a plan, and when Sue Frase, former K-12 Principal at Parkway Christian Academy, retired last June, she felt God calling her to pursue the Vinton option. She has been a Mentor at the Moneta Agape since 2008 and has served in many roles, catering many events and helping in a variety of other, invisible roles, such as grant writing. She is the Executive Director of this site, and has already recruited over thirty volunteers. A site is under consideration, and once a decision is made, plans will accelerate to open an Agape Center to serve families in the Vinton community.

Leadership for the new site includes: Cheryl Turner, Office Director (includes Data, USDA, Reception and Phones); Donna Cosmato, Director of Housewares; Jeremy Sietz, IT Director; Sue Frase will manage the Pantry initially and work with the mentors; and Vickie Doak, Director of Clothing. Plans include not only securing the building, but approaching the 157 churches in the service area to get the entire Christian community involved in this outreach.



Sue Frase is the Executive Director of the Vinton Agape Center.

Charity Home Tour Another Success!

The Charity Home Tour (CHT) raised \$107250 for eight charities at Smith Mountain Lake. Nearly 1500 individuals from seventeen states, plus Washington DC, toured the eight participating homes, and nearly 1000 volunteers worked on various aspects of the annual event. Jan Hogle was on hand to represent Agape at the distribution ceremony, where Agape received \$14,750 from the CHT Executive Director Sandra Morse (below right).

The Agape leadership for the Charity Home Tour included: Jan Hogle, Betty Ann Allen and Judy Harper; Hosting; Moira and Greg Bell, Ticketing; Kris McKenzie, Sponsorship; Susan English, Recruitment; Mike and Leslie Burzynski, Traffic/Parking; Ronnie Gordon, Dock Parking; and Bonnie Fiori, Poster Distribution.



Above, from left, Carolyn Gordon, Agape's Charity Home Tour Director, with Homeowner Terry Shea and Agape Volunteer Sharon Cordell. Each charity provides a gift to the homeowner for allowing their home to be displayed throughout the weekend.

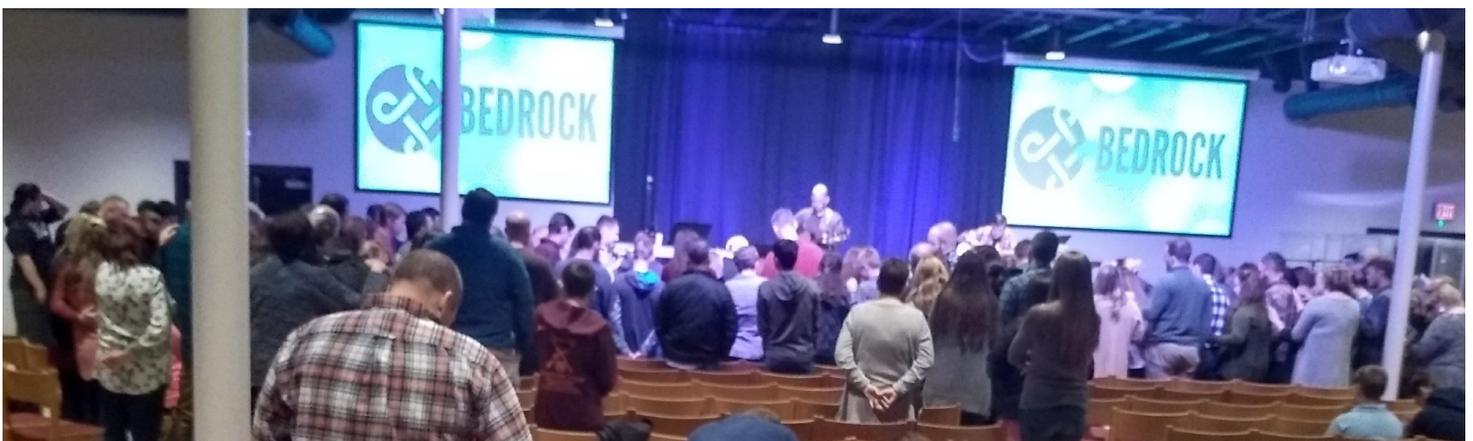


Guest Workers Help Agape Throughout Fall Season

Bedrock Community Church in Bedford devotes one Sunday each fall to serving in the community. Individuals and families sign up to support a local ministry, and Agape was privileged to have a great group of people helping in Clothing, Pantry, Gifts, and maintenance projects including cleaning out the ditch and painting!



The Angel Gift Tags are now in all the Agape Member Churches, plus three local businesses. Distribution of gifts to clients starts November 26th. Below, Bedrock Community Church is praying over the Angel Gift Project for Agape.



Guest Workers: Christian Heritage Academy Sends Seventh Grade Class

Fourteen seventh graders came from Rocky Mount's Christian Heritage Academy and worked in the Pantry, Toys, Clothing and Gifts. Jeremiah Poland (right), worked in Toys. He said, "It was fun working here, especially knowing that what we were doing is helping others." Bailey Spencer and Angelina Dillon (below left) working in Clothing, and "enjoyed hanging clothes with our friends. We even put on a 'fake' fashion show with the beautiful wedding dresses!" The Agape Meeting Room was turned into a lunch room (lower right) as the students gathered to celebrate their experiences.



John Turnipseed was born into a legacy of poverty, violence and despair that followed through three generations. John was an out-of-control boy who had to steal to eat and survive. This lifestyle turned him into a drug dealer and a gang leader. Anything wrong and sinful was a way of life for John.

This was all before John was touched and rescued from his destructive life style by Jesus Christ. Through hard work and the love of many Christians, John accepted Jesus as his Savior! John finally saw that he had hope. By God's grace, he could change.

John studied and with God's help, began his own ministry, "To the Outcasts, the Rejects, the Unwanted." He had learned to accept God's forgiveness, something he couldn't earn and didn't deserve. He learned to dig deep into others and find goodness., just like had been done for him. Matthew 25:40 (The words of Jesus)". . . I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' "

From The Agape Book Shelf

Bloodline

By John Turnipseed



Diane Davis
Agape Book Reviewer

WHY I SERVE ...



Jan and Rick Johnston have both served Agape for many years in many different capacities.

Jan says, "I volunteer here because I strongly believe in home missions and reaching out to our community. I love the fact that all donations go to client needs and not organizational costs. Everything is poured back into ministry and you can see that you are helping people and spreading the Gospel.

**Jan Johnston, Moneta
USDA
Volunteer since 2013**

Rick says, "When I work at Agape, I am living out Matthew 25:40: 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' "

**Rick Johnston, Moneta
Maintenance/Grounds
Volunteer since 2013**

'Santa' Gigs Fund Missions

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"I never wanted to go into missions overseas because I am very comfortable in America. I came from overseas (Yugoslavia in 1958) and didn't want to leave. Frank Nikic continued, "I was a machinist, retiring from Good-year Tires after thirty-three years of service. After retirement, I drove school transportation for another fifteen years."

Moving to the Smith Mountain Lake area would give me a chance to fish for big fish and enjoy my retirement. But God had a different plan for my life."

After Frank and his wife, Karen, moved to the lake area in 2018, and got involved in their new fellowship, EastLake Community Church, Frank was invited to join the team going to the Dominican Republic (DR) on a mission trip. He had no interest, but finally agreed to go. On his first trip, in July, 2018, God made it clear within two days that it was actually God who had been pursuing him to go to the DR. "As I watched the Holy Spirit work before my eyes, with so many people coming to repentance in Christ, I realized this was really what God had called me to do! I love the nation! I love the people!"

He returned in March, and again in June, 2019. "These trips have changed my life. I have submitted totally, completely to Christ. He can do whatever He wants with my life for His Kingdom, for His glory!"

He continued, "One of the churches we worked with in the DR had forty members on our first trip. We taught the members of the church how to effectively share Christ with others, and they took those lessons to heart. When we returned in June, 2019, their congregation had increased to 200 people."

When I was still in Ohio, I started playing Santa with a local holiday event for six years. When we moved here, I went to Santa University in Denver, Colorado, learning to be a 'professional' Santa. Since then, I've done short-term gigs in North Carolina, Virginia, and Ohio. It occurred to me that I could use this interest to raise money for my true passion, the passion God has put in my heart for the people of DR to know Him. So, all the proceeds of my Santa gigs now go toward my mission trips."

Frank concludes, " I thought I was moving to this area to catch fish, but I'm learning that God had a different plan: my desire now is to be a fisher of men!"



Reserve Your Own Santa

If you have a Christmas party, Sunday School event, friends or family gathering, why not invite Santa Claus to appear at your event? Everyone can take photos with Santa, and he'll have a special message for

each child. You can schedule Santa by calling Karen Nikic at 330/858-7175 or email her at knikic@roadrunner.com. All funds raised help send Santa to the Dominican Republic to bring Jesus to the nations! (Matthew 24:14 (NLT) *And the Good News about the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, so that all nations will hear it; and then the end will come.*



Shadow Volunteers

Fifteen Year Veterans Transport Food to Agape From Feeding America Southwest Virginia

Keeping the Pantry stocked for Agape is a six-day/week job. For the past fifteen years, since Agape started, the original team has spent every other Monday picking up food from Feeding American Southwest Virginia in Salem. Volunteers Gary Ellis and Roger Walker started in the Furniture Department, but it didn't take long for them to move to Pantry Transportation Volunteers for the food pick-up, using Roger's pick-up truck. As Agape got busier, Ann Walker (Roger's wife) joined them, and they increased their capacity to a trailer on the back of the pick-up. Their son, Jesse, joined shortly thereafter, and they have been working together ever since. Ann Walker said, "We planned our lives around the Monday pick-up days—vacations, doctor's appointments, etc."

Every other week, the team walked the aisles of the food bank, selecting groceries for our clients. The groceries were packed in boxes and moved from the conveyor belt to the trailer, to the Agape Pantry. Gary estimated that each box got handled eight times.

Roger kept getting larger trailers as they continued to grow, with the last trailer being a 24-foot car hauler. Additionally, two friends from Roanoke met the team at the food bank, helping them load; then a team of four more people would meet them at Agape to help unload. Roger said, "This feels like mission work each week, God leading us to help people in our own community."

Recent changes in the food bank now require that orders be placed via computer, and the goods are pre-loaded on large pallets, eliminating the need for 'shopping' for each item. Now it takes two of Agape's large box trucks to load the 10,000-13,000 pounds of groceries since everything is on pallets. And now, Agape must make pick-ups every Monday, so new team members have been added for the alternating weeks.



Gary Ellis unloads a pallet with the manual forklift.



This same team has been stocking the Agape Pantry every other week for the past fifteen years. From left, Jesse Walker; Gary Ellis; Ann and Roger Walker. The Walkers hold two yard sales every year, raising funds to purchase the groceries. They have a team of friends from Roanoke, Covington, AltaVista, and Bedford who help these four-day events. Ann also works every Monday in the Clothing Department.

See **TRANSPORT TEAM, 9**

TRANSPORT TEAM: Increased Seven-Fold Over 15 Years

FROM 8

Gary Ellis said, "I feel like God has given me a way to make a living that fits my personality and this is how I give back, thankful for the blessings He's given me."

In addition to the weekly food bank runs, the Pantry Transportation Teams pick up groceries from Bonsack Walmart, Vinton Walmart, God's Pit Crew (Danville), Lake Christian Ministries, Beckner's Roadside Stand, and Westlake Kroger. The individuals involved in transporting from these locations include has increased seven-fold in the past fifteen years. Lonnie Allen is the Coordinator of the Transportation Teams, matching teams with the pick-up locations, six days per week. Currently there are over thirty volunteers serving in this capacity:

David Byers	Ken Herndon	Randy Quay
Rick Cocrane	Steve Holic	Glen Rebman
Rich Cole	Glenn Johnson	Bruce Smith
Gary Ellis	Rick Johnston	John Stubbs
Jeff & Carol Francis	Tony Maye	Paul Stuckey
Don Frase	Damian McKenzie	Ken Swain
Charlie Goodman	Ron Murphy	Jeff Turner
Ronnie Gordon	Carol Moyer	Skip Weddle
Robbie Hallock	Frank Nikic	Ann & Roger Walker
Jerry Henderson	Jim Perry	Jesse Walker

Judy Harper, Pantry Director, says, "The drivers and unloaders are definitely some of the unsung heroes at Agape! We couldn't feed the many families we serve without their help."



There are not too many jobs at Agape where volunteers will be working into the evenings. Not so for the Pantry Transport Teams, who often return to the Agape Center after 5 pm.



On a recent delivery, the loading dock at Agape had just been upgraded with new concrete and asphalt (above), so the team had to revert to past practices, using a combination of manual and automatic fork-lifts to unload the 6 tons of goods. Right: Gary Ellis, in truck, with Roger Walker, right, and Rick Johnston assisting with a pallet unload.

