



Where Needs Meet AGAPE Love

July 2017

VITALIZE CHURCH BECOMES 16TH AGAPE MEMBER CHURCH!

Unconventional Church Joins in Agape Mission

AGAPE MEMBER CHURCHES

- Bedrock Community Church
- Covenant Fellowship
- CrossPointe/Franklin Heights Baptist Church
- Dwelling Place Christian Fellowship
- EastLake Community Church
- Flint Hills 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

“We want to be part of Agape because this is where lives are being changed; not only physical but eternal needs are being met here. We appreciate the Gospel being shared with each person who walks in the door.” Pastor Tony Gray, of Vitalize Church, continued, “We have wanted to be involved for several years, and have participated in many projects over the years. We wanted to participate financially, and we are now we are in a place to financially support Agape.



“The vision of Agape, helping people turn or return to Christ, is very much in line with the vision of our church.” *(Continued page 8)*

Pastor Tony Gray often meets with people in his unofficial office—a booth at Bojangles—where he stations himself and tells FaceBook followers when he will be available.

PRAYER FOR AGAPE

Please join as you are able in prayer for Agape ministry, clients, volunteers! Join the Agape Prayer Team in the Meeting Center at

8:45 to 9:45 am
 Thursday — July 27
 Tuesday—August 8
 Thursday—August—24

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

August Prayer for Agape — Join the Prayer Team in the Meeting Center to pray for the day at Agape.

NOW—Charity Home Poster Displays *(See Page 8)*

NOW—School Supplies Needed *(See Page 8)*

October 6-8 — Charity Home Tour—Sign up in Sue’s office

October 9—December 4— Getting Ahead program

October 21—Running for the Children—Save the Date

I am the God who Sees
 By Moira Bell, Agape Volunteer

I am the God Who sees
 What is done to the least of these;
 How they are treated, if they're respected,
 Whether or not they feel connected.

And I am delighted by my Bride 'round the Lake
 Looking after the needy for My Name's sake.
 Channeling resources to help alleviate pain
 And doing it sincerely, "In My Name."

You use and repurpose what I send your way
 To bless those in need in every way –
 By greeting and smiling, praying and gifting,
 Piling in groceries, even furniture lifting.

Food for the bellies; wood for the stove;
 Warm clothes and shoes; and a treasure trove
 Of beautiful birthday gifts made lovely and special;
 Along with all the household essentials.

No one takes the credit or acts alone
 Because you're each vital to what gets done –
 From Runner to Filer, to the Jewelry Maker
 to Pray-ers, and Cleaners, and the Trash Taker.

It all is needed and precious to Me,
 Whether others realize it or even see,
 Because each investment, kindness and care
 Assures those who struggle that I'm really there.

Eternal abundant life knowing Me
 Is the only truth that can set anyone free.
 And you open the door and pave that way
 When you serve the clients each Agape day.

Don't grow weary in well-doing or fail to know
 That I am thankful for all the love you show;
 As you're faithful and hang in there, and keep pouring in
 I am working with you to liberate from sin:

To take away shame, remove condemnation,
 Place each into my family – no rank or station;
 Everyone, an equally cherished child,
 made righteous, accepted, and no longer defiled.

The fact that no one says, "Hey! Look at me!"
 Or does what they do for men to see,
 Delights My heart and makes Me rejoice
 in the Bride My Son has made His choice.

Continue to walk in this holy space
 Flowing and following in My rhythms of grace
 Draw close and receive so you have it to give –
 That innermost riverflow through which others will live.

I love you and am proud of you,
 Your Father — who sees what's done in secret

By the Numbers Served. . .

June, 2017
 Families 822
 Individuals 2775

June, 2016
 Families 823
 Individuals 2658

Welcome New Volunteers

Gretchen DeCou — Clerk
 Maggie Gray — Telephone, Receptionist
 Bill Harding — Pantry, Food Pick-up
 Carol Harding — Pantry
 Jamie Overstreet — Clothes, Pantry
 Kris Wagner — Linens, Gift Baskets
 Laci Walker — Pantry

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Agape's Annex Operational, Debt-Free

The first phase of the Agape Center's expansion was completed just in time. "We knew we needed more and better space for meetings, but we didn't know the extent of the need until we saw the room schedule filling up; we've had to quickly designate the responsibility of 'room scheduling' as a volunteer assignment," said Sue Lipscomb, Agape's Executive Director.

The 5000 square foot Annex houses the furniture department and a 625 square foot Meeting Center. The Agape Meeting Center was christened in June with two mentor training sessions. The room is already scheduled for client and volunteer nutrition classes, budgeting classes, Board meetings, prayer meetings, Directors' meetings, Bible studies – and the schedule is filling up.

Jan Hogle, who is Mentor Administrator and Coordinator of the Getting Ahead Program (GAP) notes, "This is not just another space for people to meet: it is a God-anointed state of the art, fully-equipped space to further the ministries of Agape. It is having eternal, Kingdom impact on the lives of the people using it. For the GAP participants, it is helping clients with tools, principles, opportunities and training to provide a more stable life for themselves and their families."

The Agape Meeting Center includes state of the art overhead projection system; a refreshment center; a glass, magnetic, dry-erase white board; twelve laptop computers in a special charging cart; and cabinet space for organized and tidy storage of training materials. The room was specially wired with extra of wall outlets for laptops and a center-floor outlet for internet and electrical connectivity.

The building was fully funded by the time it was completed. Mr and Mrs Bill Harding provided the majority of the funds for the construction of the Annex; twenty five individuals participated in the capital campaign; F & S Building Innovations provided the final funds to complete the project. The classroom was funded by the Lynchburg Community Outreach Foundation and the Bernau Foundation. F&S Building Innovations provided the professional construction; volunteers provided numerous hours finishing the building; volunteers Bill and Cindy Horvath found laptops for the GAP at an extraordinarily good price; Don Frase built all the specialty cabinets; Dick At Lee provided the computer programming for the GAP laptops; Jay Leftwich of J-Works, provided the final cement work connecting the buildings at cost; and Jack Lipscomb oversaw all of the details.

The planning and design work is in process for internal renovations in space where the furniture department previously existed, as well as additional mentoring rooms and office space. Interior remodeling has begun and will include additional mentoring space, private USDA offices, remodeling of the waiting area, as well as additional space for most of the 'back-office' departments.



Sue Lipscomb, Agape's Executive Director, accepted the funds from Delores Fezell of F & S Building Innovations, which was the final installment of the total cost of the project.

AGAPE HAS BEEN PROVIDING SCHOOL SUPPLIES FOR TEN YEARS!

For the past ten years, Robyn Tuck has been helping prepare packets of school supplies for children of Agape clients. When her daughter was working on her silver award for Girl Scouts, she needed a project that would help people in her community. One hundred packets were needed that first year, but the numbers of clients continually increased, to the point that mom and daughter could no longer do this alone. Robyn continues to do this project each year, she says, "because I work in the school system, and I see the huge need for our students."

Iris Mills and Monica Berger came in to help with school supplies, and have been doing it as a three-some ever since. Iris Mills, who also is a Mentor, started about eight years ago, and "absolutely loves this program." She says, "I got my teaching degree with three young children of my own, and I worked as an elementary teacher. It makes the kids feel really special to have a packet of new supplies to start the school year. This is my way of serving God. I'm at my best with kids, and this is my way of loving children, even though I don't get to personally meet them. I feel good about where these items are going and am thankful for a place to serve in my community."

Monica, who has been working with school supplies for about six years, says, "There is really no one in charge; we each have our own skills to bring, and we work together as a team. I really like working in the back, organizing, so this project is very appealing to me."



From left: Robyn Tuck, Sunny Kook, Monica Berger, and Iris Mills begin their annual School Supply project.

This year, Agape will distribute approximately 1000 packets for Kindergarten, Elementary, and Middle/High School students. Since the different schools have different 'supply lists', Agape uses a condensed list that can be used in any school. For that reason, financial donations are very welcome, as the School Supply team will purchase exactly what is needed. However, specific items are always welcome. Just bring them to the Annex, or drop off clearly marked as 'school supplies' and the team will put them to good use. (See Page 8 for list of school supplies needed.)



Left: Monica Berger and Iris Mills make their first trip (of many) to Walmart to get a head-start on filling school supply packets.

CrossPointe Small Group Answers the Call for Benches

Recently a request was sent to all volunteers at Agape, letting everyone know that Agape needed benches for clients as they wait outside for their appointments. Although not a regular volunteer, Danielle Gray is signed up to receive emails from Agape. When she saw this request, she immediately responded, saying, "Our small group is very capable when it comes to construction! It is something we can do. We've had a lot of practice with construction projects."

The work group consisted of four couples and their seven children. Danielle continued, "We all attend CrossPointe Church and as a church body



Top row from left: Steven and Emily Hicks, Josh Willis, Kerri Styne, Kelly and John Tyler Rutrough, Daniel and Danielle Gray. Bottom row from left: Hailey Gray, Wyatt Hicks, Juliet Gray, Landen Gray, Savannah Gray, Liam Rutrough, Madison Gray, and Easton Gray.



Two new benches grace the 'front porch' of the Agape Center, thanks to the efforts of a Cross-Pointe small group.

we try to help support the Agape Center.

"My children and I have volunteered in the toy department, and my children also volunteer as runners. With children it is hard to get involved. People always think they will be in the way. But these little ones are hard workers and they love putting in their time to serve God wherever they find a chance!! I'm so glad we could help! Our small group is always looking for some family friendly service projects we can help with to do our part in sharing Christ's love with the community!"

The Agape Center received ten boxes overflowing with canned goods from the kids at Radford Baptist Church's Vacation Bible School in June.



Bedrock Serves Agape



Each year Bedrock Community Church has "Serve Sunday" as the Church goes into the community and participates in a service project. This year, there were six options; over seventy people chose to serve at the Agape Center.

Jim Day, Agape Mentor and Floor Supervisor, led the volunteers who came to Agape. He recalled, "I was expecting about 30 people to come to Agape, but as I was driving toward Agape, I received a text saying we'd probably have 50. I was wondering how in the world I would find work for that many people. Then we had seventy show up (and later a few more)! However, God's timing is always perfect, as Agape had over FIVE TONS of food from the US Postal Service food drive held at the end of May and it needed to be sorted and shelved.

"Once everyone arrived, several Agape volunteers were among the Bedrock crowd, so assembly lines were established as Charlie Goodman and Tom Stevens (Pantry volunteers) established a process for sorting and organizing the food. Brenda Biesser and Stephanie Childress (Store and Clothing volunteers) organized teams who sorted and hung up clothing in the store until they ran out of racks. One of our members brought his weed-whacker and cleaned out the ditch at the front of our parking lot."

Jim continued, "The only problem was holding the volunteers back. All of the food drive boxes were sorted; boxes were broken down and put in the compactor. I wasn't sure that was supposed to be done, but by the time I saw it, it was pretty much done."



Agape Volunteers Serve on Mission Trip

Agape Volunteers from Radford Baptist Church continued their lifestyle of service as they served on a mission trip to West Virginia. Carol Moyer, Member Church Liaison for Agape; Lenore Field, Store Clerk; and Scott Moyer, Mentor, brought their talents to Mallory, West Virginia, which is in the Appalachian coalfields. They went to strengthen and encourage a sister church and reach out to the impoverished community with the Gospel.

The group accomplished these objectives by holding a day camp for children, provided a community supper, hosted a teen night, performed several maintenance projects, building improvements/repairs, and church services.



Lower left to right: Carol Moyer helps with the beautification project; Lenore Field helped with the teen event; and Scott Moyer led the team with logistics and spiritual responsibilities, and also handled many of the construction projects.

Christmas is Coming!



Preparation for another Christmas season has already begun at the Agape Center. Many hands are needed to augment our Basket Team creating baskets for the children of Agape clients. Last year, over 3000 baskets were put together, and we expect to serve a similar number of clients this year.

If you are involved in any type of group, or know of a possible group, that can help with this project for an afternoon, evening, or anytime, please contact Sue Lipscomb to get scheduled. Last year some of the groups who helped included the banking staff from American National Bank at Westlake; the bus drivers from Bedford County, small groups from churches, youth groups from schools and churches, home school groups, Bible study groups, and neighborhoods. It becomes a fun project, working in an assembly-line, and creating one-of-a-kind gifts that will thrill a child and help you feel like you contributed to serving needs in your community.

This year, Agape is also looking for “Christmas Runners”. Young people are especially great in this role of ‘running’ to keep the Gift Shop stocked and to search for specific items during the hours Agape is open. Help is needed from November 21 to December 21.

For more information or to sign-up your group, contact Sue Lipscomb at 540/296-0609.



Lynne Jefferson was a pastor’s daughter and was involved in all things pertaining to the ministry of Jesus Christ. She purchased Bibles and Testaments to give to anyone who needed one. Her life was dedicated to the spreading of the Gospel and to show everyone the love and forgiveness of Jesus.

Lynne went to the lost, lonely, desperate, and rejected of the world. However, not everyone wanted to hear Christ’s message.

Hank Dolan was a very troubled young man. When Lynne spoke to Hank about Jesus and said she would pray for him, he told her to shut up or he would kill her! She prayed, and he shot her.

At Lynne’s funeral, the church was packed. The ones Lynne had talked to and prayed for came to show their love and gratitude to the one who cared for their souls and brought them to Jesus.

Lynne had planted seeds; God had made them grow. He had given them beauty for ashes.

This is by far one of the best books on how we are to spread the Gospel of Jesus to those around us. Lynne went to the ones that no one else seemed to want to be around. She saw homeless, drunks, druggies, prostitutes, thieves, adulterers, etc. She went to the ‘least of these’.
DD

Editor’s note: All books reviewed by DD are available for volunteers to read from the Book Department.

Agape Member Church—Vitalize *(continued from page 1)*

A challenge in terms of working with Agape is the fact that the younger families involved in Vitalize Church are working during the times that Agape is open and thus are not able to volunteer. "To deal with that fact, we have focused on special projects, where we can come and accomplish something on a one-time basis. This includes things like creating Christmas gift baskets."

Pastor Tony started Vitalize Church in the Westlake area in 2012 with a vision to reach unchurched, non-Christians in this area. He held a vision-casting meeting in his home, inviting people who were specifically not involved in church, and perhaps had never even been inside a church. This team of thirty or so people desired to do something different – to see church done in a different way—a way that would speak to younger, non-church-going people.

So the music is loud, rock 'n roll style, accompanied by smoke and flashing lights; there is a focus in the sermons on speaking to those who are unfamiliar with biblical/church language but who desire to know God. "Using language that a sixth grader can understand was initially my goal, and with practice, and with feedback, I think I'm meeting this challenge," continued Pastor Tony. "We baptized fifty people on our first baptism; in our five years, we've baptized over 120. We often baptize in the lake, in a public space, so that the testimony is to all who observe. We've even had people walking by who are not connected to us at all, stop to watch and decide this is the day they want to follow Jesus."

He continued, "We've struggled financially; I had to find a job for a couple of years, in order to pay our family bills. I underestimated the maturing time for new believers to understand the concept of giving to God. We've always given a percentage of our offerings to mission endeavors, and now we've extended that to include Agape. Since we are at a more stable financial situation, and have raised money to move to a more permanent site, we hope to start reconstruction on an existing building in the next few weeks."

Communication within churches is often a challenge, and in doing away with such amenities as worship folders to make announcements, Vitalize has relied on social media. "People who come from a non-church background don't think of calling a pastor when they have needs or are hospitalized, so", continues Pastor Tony, "I follow my flock through their Facebook postings; this has become our primary method of communication, something I never thought I'd would be a part of!"

How does Vitalize connect with people who are not involved in church? Pastor Tony says, "Volunteering where people are at the Lake: the SML Wine Festival; the Oktoberfest; events at Bridgewater; the YMCA, the Charity Home Tour. We have helped with the Oktoberfest for five years; hanging out with people where they are is a great way to connect with people."

Charity Home Tour Posters NEED POSTING

VOLUNTEERS: Can you take 5-10 posters to be posted in the region advertising the Charity Home Tour? Agape receives a large source of its income from this event each year, so we need to do all we can to make it a huge success.

They can be placed in any public area with permission of owners, especially in the areas of Lynchburg, Salem, Roanoke, Vinton, Rocky Mount. Places might be churches, community centers, libraries, banks, realtors, restaurants, health clubs, stores, mom and pop food marts etc.

After they are posted, please send a note to Sue Lipscomb at www.agapecentersml.org or Bonnie Fiori at abfiori@verizon.net to let us know where you were able to post them, so we have a record for next year!

Help Needed with School Supplies

WE WILL SHOP FOR YOU - \$10.00 per child

**Pens-black and/or red
Spiral Notebooks-1 subject**

Loose leaf paper- ((College & Wide Rule)

2 Pocket Folders

Subject Dividers

Pencils

Colored Pencils-(12 in pack)

Crayons -(24 or 8 in pack)

Pencil bags-(no boxes)

Glue sticks

Chunky erasers-(2 pack)

Washable Markers

Agape Volunteers are invited
to attend the upcoming
Bridges Out of Poverty Training

Where: Smith Mountain Lake Water Treatment Plant
1500 Radford Church Road, Moneta VA 24151

When: September 15, 2017 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Parking: Parking is limited to 50 parking spots. Please carpool to the event. Space will be limited to 75.

Lunch: Lunch will not be provided. There are a few restaurants at downtown Moneta and at the Food Lion Shopping Center on 221 or pack a lunch and eat at the facility.