



Where Needs Meet AGAPE Love

February 2017

BY THE NUMBERS SERVED

January 2017
846 Families
2834 Individuals

January 2016
858 Families
2829 Individuals

WELCOME NEW VOLUNTEERS

Marta Clifton—Clothing
Betty Crigger—Clothing
Emily Doyle—Clothing
Karen Doyle—Clothing
Annie Ferguson—USDA/Reception/Clerk
Erin Fraser—Clothing/Clerk
Rick Johnston—Furniture
Sherry Kidd—Telephone
Rita McFall—Telephone
Cameron Morgan—Pantry
Tracey Reichard—USDA
Walt Reichard—Furniture/Pantry
Cathy Taylor—Clothing

Invitation from the Prayer Team: Join in Prayer for Agape!

All volunteers are invited to join the Agape Prayer Team for prayer on Tuesday, February 28 during 8:45 -9:45 am in the Conference Room. Feel free to slip in quietly and join in any amount of time for the Agape departments, clients and volunteers. The first few minutes will be sharing concerns from each department. The balance of our time will be for praying and agreeing together.

For personal requests, feel free to email at: reed-marion22@gmail.com. Be assured it will stay confidential.



Marion Reed, Prayer Chair

Volunteer Appreciation Banquet

Plan to attend the Volunteer Appreciation Banquet with your spouse/guest on March 17 at 5:30 pm at Palestine Baptist Church. It will be a fun night of reflection, entertainment, and fellowship with all who work so hard throughout the year for our Lord and our community. Contact Karen Jones to register: 540-239-1399 or agape-centersml@aol.com.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

February 28—Join the Prayer Team from 8:45-9:45 am-(See above)

March—Two New Bible Studies for Agape Clients/Volunteers (see page 6)

March 17—Volunteer Appreciation Banquet (See details above)

May 20—Agape Annual Golf Tournament at Mariners Landing. Contact Bob Winters to volunteer or to register a team to play. 484/888-1856 or bob.lynn.winters@gmail.com

October 6, 7, 8—Charity Home Tour

Haitian Family Fled Persecution in their Country

Agneau Paul fled his home in Haiti in April, 1992 when he was fifteen years old. He joined fifty-five others on a small boat to come to America to escape religious persecution in his home country, along with his two brothers, his seventeen year old girlfriend, Siliamine, and her sister. They traveled two days in the ocean before their boat drifted into the coastal waters of Cuba, where they were rescued by the US Coast Guard. They were taken to Guantanamo Bay, where some of the escapees were sent back to Haiti, and the remaining were dispersed throughout the base. At that point, Paul and his compatriots were able to apply for asylum to America. Agneau had another brother in Miami, Florida, so he and his brothers were sent there within two weeks. Siliamine and her sister were detained for three months, before they were able to join the Paul brothers in Miami. They eventually married and settled in Florida.

Agneau's father was a preacher on LaGonave Island, a small island off of Haiti where they lived. The Haitian government was concerned about the growing assembling of Christians and there were spies in every organization, church, or civic club. According to Paul, "The government assumed that we were plotting against them when in fact we were worshipping our Lord. We were warned by an informant that our church was to be targeted, and my parents urged me, the second youngest of their fifteen children, to do anything I could to get to America. Everyone was arrested at the church, except for the five of us who escaped. Most were executed." Agneau's parents were arrested and detained, but eventually released. His older brother was also among those detained, and he has not been seen since then. Agneau never saw his father alive again, but attended his funeral in 2012.



Agneau and Siliamine came to America as teens, fleeing from religious persecution in Haiti.

Once in Florida, Agneau and Siliamine enrolled in high school just in time for the fall semester. They had not finished their education in Haiti, and they took advantage of the opportunity to learn English quickly. Siliamine quit school when she finished the tenth grade, as she was pregnant with their first child, Schneider. Agneau completed the 11th grade, but then found a job as a hotel dishwasher in order to take care of his growing family. His mother joined them in Florida, but returned to Haiti when she became ill, and she passed away in 2013. Siliamine was able to visit both her parents after the 2010 earthquake, but both have now passed.

The family lived in Florida sixteen years when Agneau became concerned about negative influences on his older children, who were now teenagers. He prayed fervently to God about what he should do, and God responded in a dream. They were to move to Virginia. "The Lord showed me it was time to leave, NOW. I was praying about where to go, where there would be safety for my family, and he showed me the Roanoke home we would live in, and impressed on me the urgency of moving quickly. I had a brother who lived in Roanoke, and he confirmed for me that I should move my family." Agneau felt such urgency that he went to the three schools his oldest four children were attending, released them from school, piled them into his rental car and they were on the road to Virginia. Siliamine was pregnant and could not travel by car or plane, so she remained behind. Agneau drove through the night, slept in his brother's Roanoke home, and the next morning, registered the four oldest children in schools in Roanoke. He then returned to Florida, where his newest daughter, Courtney, welcomed him home. She couldn't wait, and was born in the 48 hours he was gone! Agneau ultimately got a job as a cook at Lewis Gale Hospital in Salem.

Agneau was anxious to become a citizen; he studied very hard, listening to the instructional CD in his car, memorizing the one hundred questions that he could be asked. The test requires six correct answers out of

ten questions, and he answered the first six correctly, so passed the test with ease. Their three oldest children graduated from William Fleming High School in Roanoke. The oldest two, Schneider and Steve, both attended Virginia Western, and now work as fork lift operators for companies in Roanoke. Merland, their daughter, will finish her associate degree in nursing in May, 2017, and plans to complete her Bachelors' Degree to become a pediatric nurse, with the hope of someday using her passion for children in foreign mission work.

Of the current issues surrounding foreigners entering the United States, Agneau acknowledged, "It makes me nervous for others. But I understand that America needs to protect its borders in every way. Security is very important, and it is important that everyone who is in America is here legally."

Agneau and Siliamine's love for their family is evident. They feel they are blessed to have come to America, to have a roof over their head, food on their table, and everyone serving the Lord. The family attends church together, including prayer services on week nights, and they support one another in each person's endeavors. There is deep respect among the family members.



The Paul family: Back row, from left: Steve 22; Jordan 10th grade; Agneau. Middle row: Merland 21; Blessing 6th grade; baby Japhthah 8 months; Siliamine; Schneider 24. Front row: Courtney 1st grade.

In 2014, God spoke to Agneau about moving to Bedford from Roanoke. They had attended a Haitian church in Roanoke, but when that church closed, the family began looking for another place to worship. God showed Agneau, through a dream, that the pastor he needed to find would be found in Bedford. They drove around, and ultimately found the church and the pastor that God had shown in the dream: Bible Truth Tabernacle. The church also had a school, so the younger children were enrolled in a Christian school, where they are excelling. Agneau says, "We are a family that desires to live for the Lord, touch others in need of the Word of God. We consider ourselves to be on mission to spread the gospel, perhaps someday returning to Haiti

since there are a lot of people who need help there. I would like to travel to different cultures, especially to the worst part of their societies, to help bring people up. I see the Lord helping me to speak to others this way. I believe God is telling me to become a preacher; I know His hand is on me for a purpose. However, I do think I am unworthy; I don't speak well enough. I am afraid, so I have tried to run from this call."

To begin preparing for his future, Agneau, who is a client at the Agape center, applied to be a part of the Getting Ahead Program. This program is designed to help people out of poverty by addressing the issues that have put them into poverty and setting goals that are achievable. Agneau was in the first graduating class in December 2016. His entire family attended the graduation ceremony. Schneider, the oldest, was asked, "You must be very proud of your dad completing this program?" Schneider's immediate response was, "I am proud of my dad every day." It is clear, the respect and pride in one another runs throughout this family.

Agape's New Furniture Director Wears Many Hats

Dick At Lee assumed the position as Director of furniture in Fall, 2016, after Eldon McKernan was no longer able to volunteer due to health. Dick started at Agape after learning about the opportunities from Susan and Dave Wolf, fellow participants in the Community Bible Study.

Dick and his wife, Robin, moved to Huddleston in 2015 after his retirement as a commander in the US Coast Guard after twenty-seven years of serving our country in many different roles and locations. In his Coast Guard service, Dick worked with law enforcement; drug and illegal alien interdiction; presidential security and honor guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington Cemetery, the White House, and the Pentagon; marine environmental protection; and search and rescue. Since moving here, he has also joined the volunteer Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla #881 at Smith Mountain Lake. He has four children who are married, and 7.9 grandchildren!

Dick has a degree in computer science, and has led software teams serving the Information Technology needs of the US Coast Guard. He has expanded his role at Agape to help with the Getting Ahead (GA) program, in developing software for the GA participants to track and calculate their progress in three different areas: finances, life stability, and building resources for themselves and their families. Jan Hogle, GA co-facilitator, says "Dick's expertise and hard work have been invaluable not only in helping GA clients to set goals and be accountable for their progress, but also as a powerful tool to use as we solicit funding for the program from various community organizations." Dick is also working with Ron Cordell in developing a Resource Directory of other services in the area for mentors to use with clients.

Dick has also spent over 35 years in youth ministry, with Young Life, where he also met his wife, and as a youth pastor. Five years ago, he and a friend co-led a men's fraternity in their church. He is a part of Bethlehem United Methodist Church, where his wife serves as the Chair of the Bethlehem UMC Preschool Board.

Now that the Agape Annex is becoming a reality, Dick is really excited about setting up and organizing the Furniture Department in the new space. He explained, "While it is not necessarily a greater amount of space, we will be able to set it up so it functions for efficiently. The workflow will be much more effective for our volunteer staff." Dick works with setting up furniture pick-ups for donations to Agape, as well as scheduling and training about fifteen volunteers.



**Dick At Lee, Agape's New
Furniture Department Director.**

Getting to Know Him

A different kind of Bible Study

- You don't need to know anything about the Bible
- You don't even need to have a Bible (we will give you one!)
- You just need to have an interest in finding out who this Jesus is. And what's He got to do with you. . . and your life?
- Come as you are and meet the One who is so eager to welcome you with open arms!

Two Options

Fridays—2-3 pm at Agape

Contact Jan Hogle for specific dates and to sign up: 540/814-0643

Wednesdays—9:30-11:30 am at CrossPointe Church—starting March 7

Contact Karen Baker to sign up or for more info: 540/797-7996



God has blessed Agape with great partners who help supply needed goods for our clients. Above are donations of snacks and blankets from **Gleaning for the World** for our Agape clients and their families. (See story on page 6 for more information about Gleaning for the World.)



Diane Davis
Agape Book Reviewer

The struggles to get the Bible translated into English started around the 14th Century with John Wycliffe and then in the 16th Century with William Tyndale. Numerous translators worked on this task and many were martyred for their efforts. For almost a thousand years, the only Bible of the western Christian world was a in Latin.

Trial by Fire By Harold Rawlings

These translators faced so many struggles in their battle for the Bible to be able to be read by everyone and were met with opposition on all sides. Yet, as we know, God always has His mighty plan and will see to it that it will be fulfilled!

Many Christians refuse to believe that new versions of the Bible are important; yet, these new translations of our dear Bible make it easier to read and understand. So, as you pick up your Bible, be it King James, NIV, or a study Bible, remember those God used to bring it to perfection: The Lord and His helpers!



Judy Harper , Pantry Director, recently completed her certification as a ServSafe Food Handler. This certification is required by Feeding America Southwest Virginia, enabling Agape to continue participating in the partner pick-up program, accessing food supplies from the food bank.



Jason Arthur, second from left, volunteers for Agape in the Furniture Department and on the Transportation Team.

God's Pit Crew Partners with Agape

Six days every week, members of the Agape Transportation Team pick up donations from various locations, including Bonsack Walmart, Westlake Kroger, Roanoke Neighborhood Walmart, God's Pit Crew in Danville, Gleaning for the World in Concord, and occasionally other stops. Gleaning for the World is an international humanitarian organization that responds to natural disasters, feeds and clothes the homeless, the poor, and US veterans. God's Pit Crew provides disaster relief for natural disasters, home building/renovation assistance, local food distribution to individual families and 180 local non-profit agencies (including Agape) and service projects and remodeling endeavors for local families. These organizations provide surplus goods that can be used by Agape clients. Lonnie Allen is the Team's leader, and is responsible for scheduling the drivers and coordinating the pick-ups. On this pick-up Agape received pallets of coffee creamer, Gatorade and assorted drinks, and cases of potato chips.

Jason served in the US Air Force for nearly ten years, and also in nursing home ministries and several churches in North Dakota and Virginia. He moved to Moneta with his family to Pastor Morgans Baptist Church in 2015. He says, "My family and I

have also been serving at Agape for about ten months. We are simply glad to be of service to our King, our community, and, as Galatians 6:10 says, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." This is how I see Agape. Y'all are our brethren in the faith, no matter what church you attend. We all come together for the same purpose and the same calling, and that's the greatest kind of church anyone could ever have! I'm glad to serve alongside you and we are here for all y'all."

ATTENTION CONSTRUCTION VOLUNTEERS

The new Agape Annex building is nearing completion, so it's time for anyone available to help with finishing to grab your tool belt and join in! If you have a specific skill (carpenters, drywall, electricians, laborers, painters, shelf builders etc) or if you just want to be of help, let Sue Lipscomb know as soon as possible.

Volunteers for this project do not need to be Agape volunteers! We'll take anyone willing to help!

**Contact Sue at
agapecentersml@aol.com or
540/296-0609.**

February 2017 Volume 8 Issue 2

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:

Executive Director
Newsletter Editor

Sue Lipscomb
Karen Baker

agapecentersml@aol.com
karenbaker015@gmail.com

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

Westlake Baptist Church

Member Churches

Published by The Agape Center, 1159 Promised Land Road (PO Box 573), Moneta, VA 24121 (Phone: 540/296-0609) www.agapecentersml.org