



Where Needs Meet AGAPE Love

Oct–Nov 2020

AGAPE MEMBER CHURCHES

Bedrock Church
Franklin County

Bedrock Community Church,
Bedford

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

TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE



"Give thanks to the Lord for He is good, His love endures forever." | Chronicles 16:34

Help us share our blessings:

Feed a Family Thanksgiving Dinner

This year we're doing things a little differently. Our clients will be receiving a \$20 gift card for the purchase of turkey, ham or produce at Walmart. More information and instructions on how to donate can be found on page 5.

We have much to be thankful for this year and it isn't even Thanksgiving yet! COVID has certainly not stopped Our Lord from blessing us abundantly. Here are some highlights. You'll find more information about these blessings in the pages that follow.

- The Capps Community Charity Challenge made up for the cancellation of our largest annual fundraising event — the SML Home Charity Tour — in a **VERY BIG WAY!**
- The annual Agape Golf Tournament was a success despite social distancing restrictions and precautionary measures.
- People in our community who weren't all that familiar with the Agape Center, like artist Lisa Floyd and The Landing Restaurant, recognized need and stepped forward to help.
- Large food donations from 300 jars of peanut butter to 30-pound boxes of food showed up unexpectedly
- And, though we were limited in our operation at the beginning of the pandemic, The Agape Center did not close down. We were able to provide food for our clients from Day 1 and, as restrictions were lifted, we were able to offer more of our services. Limited mentoring & prayer was added the first part of June and by September it was once again in full swing along with the Store, Furniture Dept. and Gift Shop.

From the Heart of a Mentor



Tracy Dunn: The Gift Is Greater Than What We Give

by Kate Hofstetter

Over the past weeks and months that the Agape Center was closed due to the Covid pandemic, Tracy Dunn, a mentor at the Center for the past three years, found herself longing to be back with “her”

clients. Although she missed them terribly, her need to see them went beyond just the camaraderie.

Mentoring clients brings Tracy a comfort and completeness she finds difficult to fully explain other than to say, “It is my connection to God.”

“I need this,” she said as she spread her arms in a gesture as though embracing the entire Center. “Being here and sharing God's love with my clients keeps me from focusing on myself and my problems or past hurts and mistakes. My work here is a huge part of my life.”

Besides meeting the physical needs of clients and making practical plans for the future, which includes setting goals in employment, education and training, the Agape Center also addresses individual client's spiritual needs. In fact, in the majority of cases the need for spiritual healing is far greater than the need for material things.

Volunteers, like Tracy, play such an important role. Trained by the Center, they mentor the many clients served by the Center each day. Frequently, they are able to identify with those they are mentoring because they have walked the same roads as their clients. This also helps in bonding with one another and developing trust.

Mentoring actually refreshes her, Tracy said, and fills her heart with joy and happiness. It also heals many of the scars and pains of the past. Even on those days when Tracy sees one client after another all day long she can honestly say: “I never go home exhausted or spent because my heart is full.” That fullness, she knows is love.

Through experience, Tracy has learned what so many of us at the Center have learned. Any love given to others is replaced by divine love which is healing, refreshing and strengthening.

“When I'm able to pour love into a heartbroken person...I actually experience the presence of God.” Tracy said, “sometimes it is so powerful it brings me to tears. And, when I invite God into the lives of heartbroken people, He always comes.”

Tracy speaks for all our volunteers upon whom, as a community, we depend so greatly. In her own words, the rewards of serving God by loving all His children, is His divine love and His healing presence. “When we give, we receive,” she says. Always. And, most times the gift is greater than what we have given.

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

John 13:35

A note from the editor: God answers prayer! I've been praying for someone who has a writing background to come alongside and help with the newsletter stories. Sue reached out to Kate Hofstetter, who wrote the recent article “Nourished & Nurtured With Love” that appeared in Discover Smith Mountain Lake magazine. And to our delight, Kate said she's willing to lend a hand.

As a writer, Kate has a newspaper background, having worked several years for Stromberg Publications in the Baltimore area. She wrote for Laker Magazine for several years, leaving to write a family history/genealogy book. She has been a contributing writer for Discover Smith Mountain Lake magazine for the past 7 years. She loves her community and the wonderful people she has met as a result of her writing. She and her husband, Pete, moved to the Lake from Maryland 21 years ago. She is the mother of 5 children, grandmother to 17 and great-grandmother to 12.

“When I did the article on the Agape Center I was so impressed by what is being done here to help members of our community and the fact that every single person at the Center is a volunteer. But, I was particularly moved by Sue Lipscomb. Her service and dedication is nothing short of inspirational. I'm honored to help with the Center's newsletter.”

We welcome Kate as one of our “shadow volunteers” and a much-needed member of the newsletter team. Thank you, Kate.

thank you!

God at Work in Our Lives

Miracle Birthday Gift



Karen Sutphin celebrated a birthday last week and received a gift for which she's been praying for many years. Karen has a 12-year-old granddaughter, Keylie, who



was born with Angelman Syndrome, a genetic disorder that mainly affects the nervous system. Symptoms include severe intellectual disability, development disability limited

to no functional speech, balance and movement problems. Keylie is non-verbal and physically challenged. The doctors told the family early on that Keylie probably would never be able to sit up by herself, let alone walk. Through years of all kinds of therapy, including aquatherapy and hippotherapy (equine-assisted therapy), Keylie has gained more use of her body than thought possible. And, last week, Praise the Lord, Keylie actually took her first independent steps.

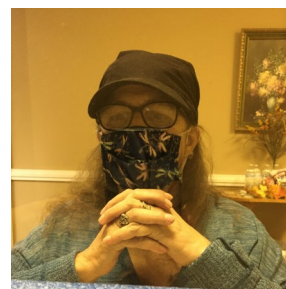
Karen says this is proof that God still makes miracles every day. It was the best birthday present Karen could have ever received. Never say "Never!"

*Blessed is she
who has believed
that the Lord
would fulfill His
promises to her!*

*Luke 1:45
beyondblessedblog.com*

"This Is My Church!"

JoAnn Finch traveled 23 hours by bus to this area twelve years ago. All she had with her were the clothes on her back and a wedding blanket. That's all she had until she came to the Agape Center. Over the years God has been here for her through the Agape Center. She says that everything she has the Center has provided — food, clothing, etc. But above all that, we have provided encouragement, support and trust in God.



JoAnn has had many struggles. She shared that she had no hair from the time she was 12 until she was 57, at which time her hair grew back in. It was a difficult ailment to contend with and she was angry most of the time. That is until she went to anger management. Between counseling there and mentoring here at Agape, she was changed.

She hadn't been able to come to the Agape Center the last few months because of the pandemic and her husband's recent surgery. She is glad to be back. She says, "This is my church! It's a safe haven. No one is going to hurt me here!"



Capps & Community Charity Challenge – A Huge Success!

In September, Capps Home Building Center put out a challenge to the Agape Center, Lake Christian Ministries, and SML Good Neighbors. “Raise \$100,000 among you” said owner Dave Cappellari, “and Capps will match your donation.” Well the charities raised \$145,000 (\$47,000 from Agape) and, with the Capps matching funds, **the Agape Center walked away with about \$90,000!** (Final expense reports are not in yet.) This provides a great boost and will enable us to continue providing for many families in need.

What is most impressive is that the friends of Agape made these donations during difficult times. The coronavirus outbreak is disrupting our daily life and there are many worthy charities competing for donations. Still, Agape supporters came through in this challenge to support our clients and volunteers.

This fundraiser was unique in several ways. First, it was much needed due to the coronavirus outbreak. Other events to raise funds have been cancelled. Second, this was the first time a local business has stepped forward to provide matching funds. Capps has been great! Lastly and most important, this was an opportunity to collaborate with two other local charities: Lake Christian Ministries and SML Good Neighbors. We all forged a positive and vital working relationship that will benefit all of us moving forward.

Thanks again for your support!

by Rick Cockrane

Outcomes & Results		
\$289,533 Raised	309 Donors	361 Gifts



Rick & Debbie Cocrane with guest Claudia Laryea accepting Bonnie Fiori's donation at Capps

AGAPE OPEN TOPS \$21,000 !

The rain showers held off for the 16th Annual Agape Open on August 29th at The Westlake. All 92 slots were filled.

Twelve tournament sponsors led with contributions totaling \$12,000. These included Carl Grove (Edward Jones); Distribution Specialists, Inc.; EastLake Community Church; Gifts Ahoy, Bridgewater Sportswear, and Fun N Games Arcade; Integrity Financial Planning, Inc.; Shumaker Industries; Bob and Lynn Winters; Phyllis & Casey Johnson (Re/Max Lakefront Realty); Bruce and Darby Smith; Roger and Becky Blackman; Environmental Options, Inc.; and Radon Medical. We encourage you to patronize these local businesses who have supported our ministry!

Thank you to the The Agape Open team: Bob Winters (chairman), Bob Stouffer, Phyllis Johnson, Carol Moyer, Teresa McCain, Betty Ann Allen and Becky Blackman.



The Winning Team: Joey Phillips, Drew Phillips, Kevin Ayers

Tracy's Story

A 2nd Lisa Floyd Silent Auction



Lisa Floyd with the silent auction items on display at the Smith Mountain Lake Coffee House at Bridgewater

Lisa was very excited after touring the Agape Center when she came to deliver the proceeds of a silent auction she had done on Facebook early this summer to benefit the center. She had heard of the Agape Center but didn't know all that we do. In her words, "I had no idea that it was so massive. They serve thousands of the neediest people in our community."

She was so moved she decided to do another silent auction of her work, again on Facebook, and once again it was a success. The two silent auctions that netted more than \$1,000 for the Agape Center.

From the Bookshelf

Heart's Safe Passage

by Laurie Alice Eakes



Diane Davis
Agape Book Reviewer

Phoebe Lee, a midwife and her pregnant sister-in-law Belinda are on a British privateer. Their mission is to get Belinda's husband out of prison. Captain Rafe Docherry promises to help in exchange for information about the man who destroyed his family. Rafe had once been a Christian but turned away from God when his wife died.

As Phoebe and Rafe become closer, Phoebe talks to Rafe about God, but he refuses to listen. So when their attraction for each other becomes obvious, Phoebe tells Rafe she cannot accept a man who does not share her faith. As time passes, Rafe becomes more in tune with God and asks God for forgiveness for his sins. His desire for revenge is replaced with a peace that only God can give.

Rafe and Phoebe marry and produced three fine boys. Rafe gives up his ship and continues his calling as a physician. Phoebe continues to practice midwifery. In the end, the Lord has given Rafe a new life.

And I will give them one heart and I will put a new spirit within you, and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh and will give them a heart of flesh."

Ezekiel 11:19

Welcome New Volunteers!

Marie Anderson – Clothing
 Rolanna Bell – Data/Clerk
 Amber Dunbar – Clothing
 Barbara Finley – USDA
 Barbara Garnett – Clothing
 Leah Keller – Pantry/Runner
 Carol LeMay – Data
 Lois Rittenhouse – Pantry/Clerk
 Brenda Salmons – Clothing
 Laurie Stuckey – USDA & Newsletter
 Christine Young – Clerk



By the Numbers...

August 2020

Families 508
 Individuals 1,767

September 2020

Families 686
 Individuals 2,402

August 2019

Families 791
 Individuals 2,696

September 2019

Families 788
 Individuals 2,614

The Giving Season Is Upon Us



Happy Thanksgiving to Our Clients

The Agape Center is once again providing Thanksgiving Dinner to approximately 900 families in the communities of Bedford and Franklin Counties. Due to the pandemic, the distribution is being handled differently this year. Rather than getting a turkey and fixings in their food carts this year, the Agape Center clients will be receiving a Walmart gift card in the amount of \$20.00, limited to the purchase of turkey, ham or produce.

You can help fund this special meal for these families by writing a check payable to The Agape Center and sending it to P.O. Box 573, Moneta VA 24121 or donate online by clicking on the image below. All contributions are tax-deductible.

Please consider sponsoring a family or families as God leads you.

Feed a Family for Thanksgiving

Let's give thanks by helping other families enjoy a nice meal!

There are approximately 900 families for Thanksgiving that will have a nice holiday dinner because we care about them. The families are from Bedford to Rocky Mount. The Agape Center not only helps with food but helps with clothing, toys, furniture & appliances. Each family is assigned a mentor to talk with them concerning their physical, emotional and spiritual needs and God's love for them. This year we hope you can make a difference and sponsor a family for Thanksgiving.

The cost for sponsoring a dinner for a family is \$20. Please consider sponsoring a family or families as God leads you. You can do this in two ways.

You can write a check, payable to "The Agape Center" and send it to:

The Agape Center
PO Box 573
Moneta, VA 24121

Flyer

TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

You can use the "Donate" button below to make a donation and pay using PayPal or a major credit/debit card.

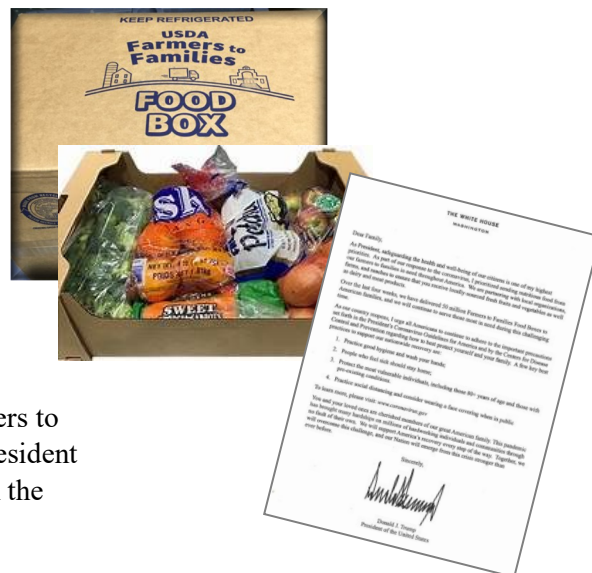
Donate



Farmers to Families Food Boxes

As part of the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has partnered with regional and local distributors whose workforces have been significantly impacted by the closure of restaurants, hotels and other food service businesses to purchase fresh food. Participating distributors and wholesalers package the pre-approved boxes of fresh fruits and vegetables and a variety of dairy and meat products for delivery to food banks, community faith-based organizations and other non-profit groups serving Americans in need.

The Agape Center recently received a shipment of 30-pound Farmers to Families Food Boxes containing a variety of items and a letter from President Trump explaining the initiative. It's not every day you get a letter from the president of the United States!



Responding to God's Voice

Shadow Volunteers: Angel Tree Project



Calling All Santa's Elves

Every year The Agape Center provides one nice gift for each of our Agape clients' children. Denise France, who is also the Office Manager for EastLake Community Church, has led this team for over ten years. When this initiative was started there were 103 children, now there are close to 1800 children gifted by this ministry.

Angel tags are created, printed, and labeled with the gender, age range, and gift suggestions. Return your **unwrapped** gift, with the tag securely fastened, to your church, place of business or to the Agape Center **no later than Sunday, December 6.**

If you prefer, you can sponsor a child with a \$30.00 donation per gift and someone will shop for you. Make checks payable to the Agape Center.

Parents of each child will be given the opportunity to choose a gift from the Gift Shop at the Agape Center during their scheduled appointment time beginning November 19th.

