

# THE AGAPIAN

October & November 2013 — Agape Church of the Brethren

## A Personal Note and a Joint Reflection



This note is one that I find hard to write, because it involves acknowledging that I have made a difficult decision that marks an end to some very important things in my life. For the past 34 years my waking up and my going to sleep each day and night have occurred in the context of serving a beloved Brethren congregation. I have awakened each day to ministry, and I have gone to sleep each night knowing myself to be immersed in that service. My life schedule has revolved around the needs of the church. A significant part of my identity has been tied to serving as an active, full-time pastor.

Come January 1, 2014 that ends. I will then be a retired pastor. That doesn't mean that all ministry ends at that point. There are many ways to remain in ministry, but having that special relationship with a congregation that comes from being their pastor will no longer be my experience. Certainly I will miss that, even though I recognize that every pastor must eventually reach the point where God says to them what I perceive God has said to me: "Okay, let go now! I have other things in mind for you from here on."

I want to thank all Agapians for calling me to be your pastor for the past 6 plus years. You have been a wonderful and supportive congregation. Being your pastor, as I wrote to the District Executive some weeks ago, is "an honor not easily relinquished." Agape is an exciting congregation to pastor with its

diverse musical talent, its skilled leadership, and its committed members. I feel fortunate to have been the pastor of this congregation for more than 6 years.

As we look to the future, we'll all continue serving the same Lord, just in different circumstances. Whatever the circumstances, I believe we can trust that as the apostle Paul asserted, "neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord," (Romans 8:38-39/NIV). That love keeps us bound together, wherever we are, and whatever our circumstances.

As we look ahead, let's enjoy working together in the time we have remaining. Jesus is our common Lord, the time is His gift to us, and His service is what we're all about. One of my grandsons coined a new word recently, "benext." He said it when he was trying to indicate the places that all of his stuffed animals were located in. "They're 'benext' to one another, Grandpa," he said; by which he meant that they were either between one another, or next to one another. Wherever the days ahead lead us, all Agapians and Connie and I, we will always, as my grandson said, be "benext" to one another, in spirit and in Christ.

*Bless you all!*

*-Pastor Jeff*

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## Thanksgiving Feast

Don't forget about Agape's annual Thanksgiving Feast on **Sunday, November 24th, after worship service**. This is a planned menu carry-in meal, not to mention our last with the Copps as our pastoral leadership, and everyone is welcome to celebrate thanking God for our blessings this holiday season. Make sure you **sign up on the clipboard** to bring your favorite Thanksgiving dinner food! See Becky M. or Diana S. if you have questions.



## Children's Sunday School

Thanks to those who have been teaching through the fall months. We appreciate the teachers and helpers who share God's word with our children.

We are now looking toward the winter quarter of our year, and need those who will commit to teaching/helping through December, January, and February. We have the materials, and the theme is "Meeting Jesus the Messiah: Stories from John" which takes us through the Advent season, Christmas, and then tells stories of Jesus. Look for a sign-up sheet on the announcement board.

## Agape's Love Fund

The need continues as Pastor Jeff has been fielding a number of people with help for food, utility assistance, fuel, etc. We offer vouchers to the Community Harvest Food Bank which allows a person to choose 100 pounds of food, and we pay CHFB \$19. Pastor Jeff also has \$25 scrip Wal-Mart cards that can be used for food, fuel, paper goods, and supplies. We have drop-in persons who ask for help with rent, utilities, or travel needs at times. The Deacon's Love Fund pays for all of these needs for those people who qualify for assistance, and it usually stays well over the \$1000 mark, but has dropped to \$612 currently. Prayerfully consider dropping quarters in the bank or making a Love Fund donation.

## Blue Bird Revival Concert



The Blue Bird Revival Concert was a huge success! Thanks to those who had a part in planning, inviting others, or making cookies to share. We had a good crowd to enjoy the music and message of the band, and the offering of \$571 was wonderful. That money will be split between Brethren Disaster Ministries and Blue Bird Revival's fund for traveling next summer as they perform at the 2014 Annual Conference in Columbus, OH.

## HELP THE FOOD BANK

Food Bank is in need of the following items:

**Cereal, saltine crackers, hamburger helpers, dish soap, bar soap, evaporated milk, toilet paper, shampoo, chicken and dumplings, beef stew, dried beans, rice, canned fruit, tuna, and mac and cheese.**

When you shop, remember to purchase some of these needed items for the food bank. It would be greatly appreciated!

## Agape Volunteer

### Secretary's Meeting

Agape's wonderful volunteer secretaries (and their families) are invited to a carry-in meal and meeting in the church fellowship hall after worship service on December 8. We will discuss duties, any suggested changes, and just check in to see how everyone's doing. **Please RSVP to Kendra M. by Dec. 1st with what you will bring and how many people are coming.**

## Church Board Reorganization

The Church Board reorganizational meeting will be held on Nov. 20th. Please be praying that Agape will be Spirit-led in our decisions and discussion that day.

## Offering Envelopes

Bette S. will deliver the offering envelopes on December 29th. Let her know if you would like some!

# AGAPIAN SPOTLIGHT

By: Joyce Musser

Melissa Anne Brooks Wagner was born to Vicki and Doug Brooks of New Haven. She has one sister and two brothers and they were all raised in St. Johns Catholic Church. Almost twenty years ago, Melissa married Rick Wagner, and their children are Kaleb Richard (a freshman at IPFW studying engineering) and Alea Suzanne (a junior at Bishop Dwenger who loves criminology and wants to work for the FBI). Melissa graduated from The University of St. Francis with a RN degree and works at Fort Wayne Medical Oncology giving chemo treatments. It is a rewarding job, and she learns to know her patients and their families. Rick is a graphic printer and he also cares for the Agape building.

Favorites of Melissa include all kinds of music, TV shows like “So You Think You Can Dance” and “Criminal Minds,” and spending time in Disney World and Logan's restaurant (always orders South West BBQ chicken). In her spare time, Melissa enjoys watching movies and spending time with her extended family. Melissa and Alea both give their time to work at the food bank. Three words Melissa would use to describe herself are outgoing, funny, and caring. Meals at home are just standard fare, not fancy. Kaleb always requests lasagna and Alea wants steaks. Rick is also a good cook in the kitchen, so everyone helps out. When going to big family meals, Melissa is always asked to bring green bean casserole.

When asked what one woman you would want to trade places with for a day, Melissa answered Michelle Obama, not because she is a Democrat, but because she gets so many opportunities to do special things and do outreach to touch people's lives. If she had one wish, Melissa hopes to live to see her kids have happy, healthy, long lives. She also wants to learn foreign languages and always enjoys learning new things in her nursing career. When asked what she is looking forward to, Melissa said watching Kaleb and Alea be successful, and a long way down the road, grandbabies!

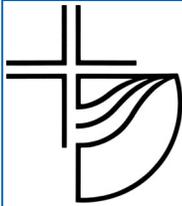
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## Nurture Group News

- \* The Crafty Group will be meeting at Mary Ebert's home on the second Tuesday of every month.
- \* The Daytime Group will meet at the church at 10:00 and then go out to eat on the fourth Wednesday of every month. Marilu Brunson is the contact person.
- \* Due to the low interest in a Friday night Nurture Group, unless an organizer steps up to plan and solicit members, there will be no group this year.

Any of the groups may change their plans, so watch the bulletin and calendar for updates.





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*Sent to our friends at:*



**Continuing the Word of Jesus—Peacefully. Simply. Together.**

## Senior Moments

The Agape Senior Moments group has started meeting on the fourth **Wednesday** of the month at noon (instead of Tuesdays). Join the Agape Senior Moments and bring a dish to share!



## Creative Women of the World

In October, Agape's Women's Fellowship visited Creative Women of the World in downtown Fort Wayne. We got to meet the store's owner, hear about the store's wonderful mission and goals ("global empowerment through handmade design"), and support women all over the world by shopping! As you think about purchasing gifts this Christmas season, consider stopping by Creative Women of the World at 125 W. Wayne Street in Fort Wayne. Call the store at 260-267-9048 for store hours and more information.