

AGAPE NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2011

VOLUME 6 ISSUE 3

AGAPE CHURCH OF CHRIST



Agape Core Values:

- *Agape Love: God is Agape, spiritual maturity manifested in unconditional love (Agape)*
- *Relationship: Jesus is God seeking relationship, Jesus was friend of sinners*
- *Empowerment: The Spirit helps us in our weakness, we empower others to do ministry*

BACK TO THE BASICS

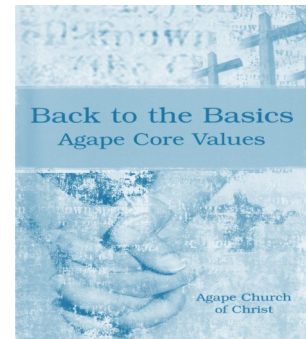
The month of September was a time to prepare for Fall ministry. During this time we trained our home community leaders, a team for our domestic and sexual violence ministry, a new core values class, and our staff to continue our outreach into SE Portland for the new church plant Agape Southeast Church of Christ. I also traveled to Charlotte, NC to speak and teach with Providence Road Church of Christ's minister Jeff Walling. The church has two counselor/ministers (Sandy Welfare and Holly Barrett) who are leading a domestic violence ministry and who requested that the

church hold a covenant marriage training. I am also teaching a Wednesday class via teleconference with our supporting church Park Plaza Church of Christ. Agape is continuing to train and prepare others to do outreach in many places.

As many of our children returned to school, our campus ministry reboots for a new year, and our families return to a normal routine it is important that we focus on our core values, basics of the faith, and preparing our church systems to reach and develop others. As any teacher knows, September is a time to refocus their

students after the long summer and prepare them to move to the next level.

September was a month to revisit our three core values: Agape love, Relationship, and Empowerment. *Since God is agape* (1 John 4:8) we must reflect the love and acceptance that is manifested to all people in our world. In Matthew 5:43-48 Jesus told us that our Father is mature (some versions translate perfect but the word means mature) because love is extended to the just and unjust. Jesus also calls us to be mature, like God, by practicing unconditional love to others.



Back to the Basics, Agape's Core Values text is available for \$10.

Sunday Worship:

| | |
|---------|----|
| Sept 4 | 92 |
| Sept 11 | 81 |
| Sept 18 | NC |
| Sept 25 | 92 |

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AGAPE SE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Becky and I joined the Agape staff in August with plans to start a new church in SE Portland in 2012. This new church plant will begin as an extension of the Agape church. It will be called *Agape Southeast* and share Agape's core values, mission statement, and home community ministries. As this church grows and begins to stand on its

own feet, *Agape Southeast* will eventually spin off to become its own, independent congregation that will continue to work in the community and partner with Agape to plant new churches.

It's only been a month and God has been opening tons of doors for us in the community. Since Jesus calls us to be fishers of

men, I like to think of our work in Rockwood so far as "casting our nets." I spend at least three days a week in the community meeting people. Each time that I meet someone, I learn more about the community and God opens another door for me. Eventually I will slow down and focus my time on two or three areas in the community where I will have the most impact.

AGAPE NEWSLETTER

BACK TO THE BASICS

This love creates an environment where people feel safe, accepted, not judged, empowered, and experience a God who seeks relationship with others.

In 1 Corinthians 13 Paul shared with us that agape is mature and the way to maturity. Faith development scholars indicated that when humans are able to practice this love they are spiritually mature.

Christians have been taught for years that maturity is manifested by time on this earth. Age has little to do with spiritual maturity. Practicing and manifesting agape is the determining factor for spiritual maturity. As Christians we have the opportunity to create safe and sacred spaces where others feel welcome, accepted, validated, safe, and loved. Our ministry reaches those who are homeless, in prostitution,

in addictions, have been abused, have abused others, in college, own businesses, have lost their children, have lost their spouses, or are trying to be involved parents. People come to us with their own baggage. Agape has created a place where they can set their bags down, feel welcome, and leave knowing that they are worth the risk that God has taken for them. This safe environment happens when God's people



Preaching on Domestic Violence with Jeff Walling in Charlotte, NC.

AGAPE SE (CONTINUED)

For now I am "casting my nets," trusting that God will show me where to focus my time in the near future. In this article I want to share with you just a couple of the ways that God has worked through our community involvement so far. If you would like to know more, take a look at our personal newsletter "Mission: Portland."

The [Rosewood Initiative](#) is a non-profit organization dedicated to building a safe, healthy, and empowered community by connecting community residents with each other and with their public safety officers. They are accomplishing this task by building a non-profit café

that will serve as a community space where people can gather, host events, eat food, use the internet, and develop relationships. The Rockwood and Rosewood neighborhoods sit adjacent to one another on the boundary between Portland and the city of Gresham, and share many of the same problems and challenges. What is exciting, and what I have observed in my past experiences with community involvement, is how crime and fear go down in a neighborhood when its residents develop relationships with each

other and rally around a common vision. This is the goal of the Rosewood Initiative. They host a community meeting once a month at their café, which is currently a hollowed out space at the Village Square shopping center. What impresses me about the Rosewood Initiative is that they are already developing community as they raise money to begin construction on their café. Partners with the Rosewood Initiative include: The Portland police, the Rockwood Business Coalition, the Gang Task Force, several apartment complex owners and managers, and several SE Portland residents. As a church planter,



Ken and Katie Noguchi were married September 18 at Sellwood Park, the place they met one year ago.

practice love and offer it freely to others. This is a driving force in our outreach and evangelism. We share with those who are without, because we not only love God, we love like God.

Second, *God seeks relationship in Jesus*. John wrote that Jesus became flesh and inhabited our community (John 1:14). God moved into our neighborhood in Jesus.

BACK TO THE BASICS (CONTINUED)

Once we create safe and sacred spaces for people, we stress that Jesus wants relationship with people. This relationship thrives in safe space and offers the opportunity for us to be open, vulnerable, and set healthy boundaries with ourselves and others. People are called into relationship and, as John wrote, have the right to become children of God (John 1:12). We enter this relation-

ship by faith, a desire to follow Jesus, doing the work of repentance (making amends and behavior modification), and baptism into Jesus. In baptism we "put on Jesus" (Gal. 3:25-27) and are baptized "into Christ" which puts us in relationship with our Lord.

Finally, the *Holy Spirit empowers others to do ministry*. Paul wrote that the Spirit

BACK TO THE BASICS (CONTINUED)



Meeting with African delegates concerning our work with Human/Sex Trafficking

“helps us in our weakness” (Romans 8:26). The Holy Spirit gives us strength to walk with Jesus, bash sin out of our lives, grow in God’s image, and lead in ministry (Eph. 4:11-16). Leaders are empowered to help others develop their faith and Christians are led by the Spirit to share God’s agape with others. A healthy church is one where the

members grow spiritually, do ministry, and reach out to others in their community.

Our three core values reflect the trinity (God is Father, Son, and Spirit). Because God is love, seeks relationship, and empowers others; we respond by doing the same for others. Our core values are not just statements we make on Sunday mornings, they are driving forces

in our ministry. This has helped us create a safe environment for people to lay their burdens down, worship God, serve others, and then gain strength each day to carry their burdens into battle with Satan. However, burdens are lifted when we love God and others, develop relationships, and help others fulfill their calling in Jesus.

Ron

BLESSING FOR OUR CHILDREN BY MARY DICTSON

On Sunday morning, September 11, Agape worshipped with prayer stations calling everyone participating to experience God, pray for missions, and support new churches being planted. Mary Dictson led our kids in a beautiful blessing as they began school and try to integrate Jesus in their intellectual and spiritual growth. Mary’s blessing is a great encouragement and call to Christian spiritual formation. Mary, an elementary school counselor, has a heart for our children and their life in the school.

Jesus is smart.
 Jesus made everything.
 He keeps it working.
 He is the first and the last.
 He conquered death.
 He is the master of molecules.
 He knew how to transform
 Tissues of the body and heal the sick.
 He gave up his life by choice
 (He could have called 72,000 angels
 To do whatever he wanted)
 To return to the father
 He is the master of every phase of
 Physical reality:
 Physical, moral, spiritual.
 He is not just nice,
 He is brilliant.
 He is the smartest man who every lived.
 He has the best information on everything
 And certainly on those things that matter most in human life.

Dallas Willard
The Divine Conspiracy 1998, pp 94-95

You can trust his words,
 So read and meditate on the Bible.
 You will be amazed how his words will inform your day
 You can trust that he will win the battles with evil,
 But there will be battles. Don’t be surprised.
 The comforter will help you, so ask in prayer.
 You can trust that Jesus has everything you need
 In every situation.

When school starts and you go back to school and meet powerful personalities
 And teachers and others who seem so smart probably are so smart, but they have
 Not much knowledge about Jesus and who he really is remember Jesus is the smartest
 man who ever lived. Trust him. When you see others doing things that do not fit with the
 way Jesus teaches you to live, go with Jesus. When you are not sure, ask him what he
 wants you to do and then do it to the best of your ability.
 Jesus loves all the children. Trust him, turn to him, walk with him every step of your day
 And we will be praying for you that God will give you what you need to be what he made
 you to be.

*“You can trust
 that Jesus has
 everything you need
 in every situation.”*

We're On A Mission From God



GAPE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Meeting at:

Metropolitan Learning Center

2023 NW Glisan, Portland, 97216

Mailing Address:

11124 NE Halsey #635, Portland, 97220

Phone: 503-313-5329

E-mail: office@agapecoc.com



AGAPE SE (CONTINUED)

this is one of the best places for me to network in the community.

The Rosewood Café, although incomplete, opens its doors to the community every Friday afternoon. It's incredible to see such an unfinished space be filled with so much life. Kids show up to hula-hoop, people play chess and Ping-Pong; others bring their lunches and visit. It has become a priority for me to block out my Friday afternoons to spend time with people at this unfinished, yet full of life Rosewood Café.

Two weeks ago I was hanging out at the Rosewood Café. I met a lady who used to be a prostitute. She told me that it has been 23 years since she has stripped or prostituted herself. She told me that she wants to help reach out to others who are prostitutes. She knows about the dangers of human trafficking and wants to do everything she can to prevent young girls from falling victim to it. She told me that her

years in prostitution have left her emotionally wounded and wants to find counseling and healing for herself in order to be a healthier resource for others.

The next week I met with her, Ron, and Lori Clark at McDonalds. This woman shared her whole story with us. She talked a lot about how God has changed her life, but she did not belong to a faith community. Eventually we began sharing with her some of the stories at Agape. Ron told her that there are a number of people at Agape who have been prostitutes, and some who struggle to leave that life. We told her that at Agape, these kinds of stories don't shock people. At Agape, people feel comfortable to share about their lives openly. There are prostitutes, addicts, abuse victims, homeless people, etc. Agape is a church that loves people where they are and doesn't judge people for what they have done. People at Agape are not

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. 1 in 4 women have experienced physical abuse in their lifetime. 1 in 6 males has been abused/molested in their lifetime. 1 in 5 females experience dating violence. 33% of males in Churches of Christ admit to viewing pornography on a regular basis. The average age of a sexual abuse victim (female) is 12-14 years old.

This month Agape will be conducting trainings, prayer and fasting days, holding seminars, joining agencies in their programs, and celebrating hope and healing from abuse (October 30). Please join us in the fight to speak out for those who are oppressed.

"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge righteously, defend the rights of the humiliated and afflicted." (Prov. 31:8)



shocked when prostitutes come to church, they are thankful because we have prayed that God would bring them to us.

As this woman listened to us talk about Agape, I could see joy in her eyes. She was amazed! She told us that she has not been to a church in her neighborhood that is welcoming to people like her. She asked where Agape meets and said that she really wants to come to church. We told her that Agape is in downtown Portland, but we're starting a new church next year in Rockwood and it will be just like the church downtown. Prostitutes, homeless people, addicts, anyone will be welcome to come. When she heard that she said, "Praise God!" I told her that we are starting a new home community at our apartment in Rockwood and we would love to have her join us. She wrote down the date and said that she would love to come and that she will bring tamales!

God is in the business of changing lives. We are so excited to have a former prostitute at our first home community gathering, and we're praying for more people like her. God is freeing this woman to be the person that He designed her to be. She has left a life that has oppressed and exploited her for years. Meeting people like her humbles me because I am reminded of how powerful God is. It shouldn't surprise me that if God is able to raise Jesus from the dead, then he is certainly able to raise anyone else's life from the dead. I have a feeling that this woman's story is just the beginning of what God is going to do through his mercy and the faithful obedience of this new church plant!

To read Allyn and Becky's full newsletter [visit this link.](#)

Thoughts on Agape's ministry to those in prostitution, sex trafficking,

Agape Fall Home Communities: October—December 2011

For more information on groups contact office@agapecoc.com or 503-313-5329

| Group # | Day/Time | Community | Focus | Location | Leader(s) |
|----------------------|---|---|--|----------------------------------|---|
| SUN 01 | Sun 5pm | <i>Living Streams</i> | Small neighborhood study group meeting every Sunday evening for fellowship and study. | TBA | Barry & Mary Diction |
| SUN 02 | 1 st & 3rd Sun 5:30pm | <i>Home Bible Study</i> | Meal, fellowship, and Bible study together as a home community. | NE Portland | Brad and Dana Barbarick |
| Agape SE | 2 nd Sunday 5pm | <i>SE Portland Outreach</i> | Community building for future church plant in Rockwood, Agape SE. This group meets monthly. | SE Portland | Allyn and Becky Bradley |
| WED 01 | Wed 9am | <i>Men's Group Study</i> | Men's Bible study at Urban Grind Coffee House | Urban Grind NE | Marc Andresen |
| WED 02 | Wed 6pm | <i>Marriage Builders</i> | A group to strengthen marriages and train couples to lead 4 new home communities in 2012. | SE Portland | Ron and Lori Clark |
| WED 03 | Wed 6pm | <i>Bible Study Fellowship</i> | Dinner and Bible study fellowship | NE Portland | Ken and Katie Noguchi |
| SAT 01 | 2 nd & 4 th Sat 4pm | <i>Worship and Singing Group</i> | Practice and prepare for Praise Worship on Sunday mornings, pray, study, and fellowship. | Various Locations | Frederick Berry |
| SAT 02 | Saturday | <i>Wildflower Gals</i> | Single Women's Get Together. Meets monthly. | SE Portland | Crownover/Davis |
| New Life Communities | Various Teams | <i>Soul Steppin (2 groups) Sexual Addiction Domestic/Sexual Abuse</i> | New program being led by Frederick Berry that will consist of 3-5 small groups in these areas. Formerly known as Recovery Communities these groups will be restructured for the Fall | Downtown/Agape House SE Portland | Frederick Berry/ Louie Wilbelm Lem Harris Lori Clark |
| Agape TEENS | Sunday 9am | <i>Agape Teens Youth Group</i> | A study for teens in the book of James. This class will meet at 9am before Sunday worship at MLC. | MLC Sunday | Danna Nieto |
| CAMPUS | PSU, Warner Pacific, PCC Mt. Hood | <i>College Bible Study</i> | Bible Study/meeting for College Students | TBA | Ron Clark |
| | | | | | |



God has a wonderful plan for your life. We believe that this plan can be seen, no matter how obscurely, in your hopes and dreams. God speaks to us in the quiet of our hearts and calls us to our higher calling.

A church, if it really believes this, will learn to nurture that call (instead of its own agenda). That is our desire, for our dream is to support yours.

Friend's Day

Sunday, October 16

Join us for worship, praise,
and a whole lot more!

Agape Church of Christ
We're on a mission from God...



Meeting at Metropolitan Learning Center
2023 NW Glisan
Next to Couch Park
10:00am Sunday
www.agapecoc.com