

AGAPE CENTER NRV

NOVEMBER 2021



SCRIPTURE FOCUS

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. John 15:5

DIRECTOR'S MINUTE – PRUNING

I have been pondering the spiritual truth of "pruning" for a while now and hope you don't mind if I share some of my thoughts. I finally understand the difference between pruning and discipline, but I had to plant an orchard in order to get it. Four years ago, my husband and I planted a small, organic orchard with several apple, pear, peach and plum trees. We even have a couple fig bushes. We planted small saplings and this year we had our first harvest. Every year has been a learning experience as we learn to care for our trees. I have come to understand some spiritual aspects of pruning as I prune my very real trees.

We prune our trees two times a year; once in June and once in December. In June the trees are loaded with new growths of fresh branches and bright leaves. We prune during this life-awakening time to direct the new growth as we see best for the tree. We cut off the new branches that are going to interfere with other branches. We cut the ends of branches off back to leaf buds that will produce new branches that will grow in the correct direction in order to shape the tree into the form we desire.

And something I find really interesting... we cut off or cut back any new growth that is going to grow straight up instead of outward or outward and up. Tree branches like to grow straight up toward the sun (especially pear tree branches). But branches that grow straight up will not produce fruit. It is the outward growing branches, the ones growing sideways or diagonally, that produce the harvest. I have been thinking about the times in my life when life seemed easier and all sunny, felt comfortable - growing toward the sun- but often during those times my life was self-absorbed and I was not producing any fruit.

Sometimes life changes or doors close for us. I just want to encourage you during those times when your life takes a shift and things don't turn out the way you expect. Our lives may feel like they are going sideways and changing direction in ways we don't understand or want. Like our trees, perhaps God is pruning your growth to shape your tree and produce more fruit in the future. I want to encourage you to trust His pruning. Pruning is not punishment/discipline; it is life producing for the tree. And it does not happen randomly. You have to really step back and study a tree before pruning. You have to have a vision for the future of the tree before you cut. John 15 says our heavenly Father is the gardener, And He can be trusted.

MEMBER CHURCHES

Cambria Baptist Church

Christian Growth Center, Inc.

Dwelling Place Christian Fellowship

Hope Valley Church

New Life Christian Fellowship

New River Fellowship

The Bridge

The River Anglican Church

Tried Stone Christian Center

Victory Restoration Center



We prune a second time in December, while the tree is dormant and resting. The December pruning has a completely different purpose than the summer pruning. In December there are no leaves and the structure of the tree can be clearly seen. During this time of year, we cut off the branches that are going to keep sunlight from reaching the inner structure of the tree. As the tree grows we may have to cut out completely healthy branches in order to keep the center of the tree open to sunlight. I would suggest that those dormant times of our life, when everything seems unproductive and on hold, are the perfect times for God to show us the structure of our lives. I believe He often uses the coming and going of people in our lives to open up new spaces to let the light in. Friendships change, people move, routines change and we get discouraged because we don't like change. I would encourage you to trust God during those "winter" times. He is making room for more sunlight so let's be open to Him as He changes the structure of our lives.

I have one more thought on pruning I want to share, so let's talk about tomatoes. I plant over 50 tomato plants. This year I planted a new variety that got over 6 feet tall. Those were wonderful, hearty tomatoes. But as soon as the fruit began to appear, and my vines were full of green tomatoes, I cut the tops of all my plants down to about 5 ft. If I hadn't continually cut off all the new top growth for the rest of the summer, my plants would have continued to put their energy into growing "up". By cutting off the tops, I was able to help the plants redirect their energy into producing the fruit. Pruning helped my tomatoes grow larger and ripen beautifully. Pruning my tomatoes reminded me that God will sometimes limit my growth, and/or my time, in certain areas so that the fruit I am growing spiritually will have the energy and attention to increase and ripen. I am a multi-tasker. Sometimes God has to prune that tendency, or prune my impatience, in order to let His work develop in my life.

Pruning is not punishment, but it is not always comfortable because we cannot see what He is trying to achieve in the moment. The more I garden the more I am learning to trust the Master Gardener. Thanks for letting me share my pondering with you. I hope you can learn to trust the Spirit, full of fresh growth and thriving.
(Whitten by a dear friend, Kathryn Wallace, and shared with her permission.)

Kim Bowman, Executive Director

PRAYER MINISTRY FOCUS

- Pray for the Lord to establish us in our own building, providing the way and the means, in his perfect timing!
- Pray for our clients over the holiday season, that they would have all their needs met and their homes would be filled with joy and peace from the Lord.
- Pray for the Lord's provision for all of our Angel Tree gifts and extra food needs over the holiday



VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHT

Carol Hubbard

The Mentoring Experience

By Carol Hubbard

“I feel like I don’t belong.” “My family is fighting over my mother’s will.” “I need help being a good parent.” “I am looking for a place to live.” “I need a job.” “I just lost my father.”... These are just some of the prayer requests I get from my clients every Friday. Each week, I look forward to seeing the people I’ve spent the last 9 months getting to know. While it’s hard to hear the suffering of people, I am encouraged by the openness of them and the willingness to share their

lives. I also have the opportunity to share the Gospel and Biblical wisdom as the Holy Spirit leads. Many times, my heart is broken for those sitting with me, but my heart is also uplifted by the testimony of those who already know Jesus as their Savior and are burdened for others.

The Mentor Program is central to this ministry. Our purpose is to help guide the clients into or return to a life with Christ as the center. We meet with each client once a month by appointment and listen to them, assess needs, and pray with them. After a short 15-20 min appointment, the client gets an appointment for the next month and receives food and diapering products.

The Mentors are the relational piece of this ministry where we get to know and build trust with those we serve as we continue to meet with them each month. I have people with whom I have worked for several months resolving issues in their lives that are on-going. I have worked with one on helping to mend a family relationship that has been broken. Just recently, we have made progress in the restoration of this relationship. I was able to celebrate with this client the victory and encourage her to continue trying. I truly look forward to Fridays just to see what God is going to do!

The Mentoring experience is not just about the clients. It is also about getting to serve alongside my Christian brothers and sisters. These are people that I have met through the Agape center. We have a common goal and purpose in Christ and that binds us together. The sweetest part of the day is when we come together in prayer for the day. I have learned so much about prayer and how to be with fellow believers in just serving with these people. I look forward to Fridays just to spend time with other mentors and volunteers who enrich my life so much!

I have grown so much just by serving in this ministry as a mentor. I go home after each session tired in my body but uplifted in my spirit because of the miracles I’ve seen God do, the love of the other volunteers and mentors, and the power in wisdom I experience from the Holy Spirit each week.

Thank you!

FOOD DRIVES AND DONATIONS

VT Corps of Cadets - 7,861 pounds of food

Raised 15,000 nonperishable food items in three days. Plus a large cash donation that will provide an additional 20,000 items. This is our largest drive to date. It took them 3 days to raise the food and a us a month to process and store it! Please use the following link to read the article published by VT.

https://vtx.vt.edu/articles/2021/10/corps-fooddrive.html?utm_source=cmpgn_news&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=vtUnirelNewsDailyCMP_100621-fs



Faith Christian Church of Christ VBS - 317 pounds nonperishable food items

Faith Christian Church of Christ Vacation Bible School kids. They made Agape Center their mission for their VBS this summer. Mary Quinlan gave a presentation about Agape Center's mission. The kids also came out for a tour of the pantry. They raised 325 lbs. of nonperishables in addition to a sizable cash donation.



Christ Church of VT - 189 pounds nonperishable food items



FOOD PANTRY REPORT

MONTH OF OCTOBER 2021

Pounds of food

Agency Partner Pickups	2,690
Food Drives	9,907
Total	12,597

Families Served	94
Clients Served	292

Year to Date 2021 Jan 1 – Sept 26

Agency Partner Pickups	40,839
Food Drives	28,788
Total	69,627

Families Served	1,062
Clients Served	2,983



MEMBER CHURCH HIGHLIGHT –

CAMBRIA BAPTIST CHURCH

Cambria Baptist has a rich history in Montgomery County. What might be interesting to note is the changes of the town and the movement of the church meeting house through the years.

Established in 1852, what is now Cambria Baptist was named Allegheny Baptist Church. The original church was built of logs and located along the Blacksburg Turnpike (Now 460). In 1872, the Church was moved to a spot on the “North Hill” of the town of Bangs, Virginia, near the present location of Weller Baker School. In 1885, the church moved down the hill closer to the depot. That building burned, but a brick structure was built in 1928. The town of Bangs was renamed Cambria in 1907, and Allegheny Baptist officially changed its name to Cambria Baptist in 1909. Cambria established two new churches: Main Street Baptist in Christiansburg in 1907 (which is now GraceLife Church) and Bethel Baptist in 1908. The present building located on the corner of Cambria and Ellett Road was built in 1966. In 1964, the town of Cambria was annexed to Christiansburg.



That’s just a history of where the church family met for worship and ministry. But what is more important is the mission of Cambria Baptist. Through the years Cambria supported International Missions and Statewide Missions. But closer to home, Cambria has been actively working with groups and ministries in Bland County, Bluefield College, and the Women’s Resource Center, Pregnancy Resource Center, and the Baptist Collegiate Ministries at Virginia Tech and Radford University. Cambria is an active member of the Western Blue Ridge Baptist Network that focuses on missions and projects in the New River Valley.

Almost daily, people would come to the church in need of help. Cambria offered this help in terms of assisting on electric and water bills, food, clothing, and sometimes rent and gas. In an effort to be more effective in our assistance, Cambria restructured their community missions under a program called “Helping Hands.” The hope was to be more intentional with knowing the people who came, striving to develop a relationship with them, getting to know them on a Spiritual level and introducing Jesus Christ in their lives instead of just providing an immediate need.

While we were helping people with immediate needs, we were not really helping people in the long run. That is why we believe in the ministry of the Agape Center. We have transferred our helping hands ministry to the efforts of the Agape Center because we believe in the mentoring process, the life transformation that can take place, and the hope it brings to people who need to see promise in their lives. Our goal is to connect people to God through a relationship with Christ, and we believe that connection can be made through the Agape Center in meeting felt needs, and ultimately spiritual growth in Christ.

UPCOMING EVENTS –

CELEBRATE RECOVERY --



Celebrate Recovery is a 12-step program that helps people recover from their hurts, habits, and hang-ups in a safe and caring environment. Meetings are held Sunday's from 4:00-6:00 PM at The Bridge, 880 Life Dr, Christiansburg

PRAYER AND WORSHIP NIGHT --

YOU'RE INVITED TO A
**PRAYER AND
WORSHIP NIGHT**
FOR THE AGAPE CENTER NRV



Join us for a night of worship, prayer, and testimony-sharing
for all those invested in or interested in
the Agape Center NRV!
Come and see what God is doing in the NRV!

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4th, 2021

6:30pm-8:00pm,

Refreshments and fellowship following until 8:30pm

Location: Dwelling Place Christian Fellowship

3325 N. Franklin St

Christiansburg, VA

Note: Childcare is not provided, but children are welcome to attend in their parents' care.

www.agapecenternrv.org

GIVE LOCAL NRV --

Give Local 2021 is right around the corner! This is our big year end giving event. It's an opportunity for sew into the ministry work of the Agape Center here in the New River Valley. Agape Center NRV has been operating out of five separate buildings in four locations since its formation in August of 2021. God has blessed the ministry and we have outgrown our current facilities.

It's time to move our operations under one roof. This year's

Give Local Campaign is NOVEMBER 30. Our campaign goal is to raise \$200,000.00 to go towards the purchase and improvement of a new facility. This will allow us to expand our days and services.

We hope that you will join us and give generously to the Lord's work at Agape Center NRV. You can donate through our website at agapecenternrv.org , on our Facebook or by simply scanning the Smart Code below. Be sure to select Building Fund from the dropdown menu on the giving platform to insure your contribution counts towards our goal.

