



THE AGAPE RINGERS NEWSROOM

SPRING 2014

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

KIM AHLGRIM-HEINE

TABLE OF CONTENTS		Warm greetings to you! At least through the time of sitting down to write this article, I feel we've experienced a lot of cold and a lot of snow this winter! It sure doesn't keep Agape from concerts or rehearsals though -- unloading or loading our equipment for <i>Sounds of the Season</i> 2013, our Ring-In/retreat of 2014, recording sessions...you name it, we get our equipment and ourselves where we need to be, no matter the weather (well except maybe when it is -50 wind-chill).
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2013 Donor List	1	And, of course, the true highlight of our retreat each year is getting a first crack at many of the pieces David has chosen for our new concert season. At retreat we bond over music, meals, and late night camaraderie.
Tour Time	2	In the articles below, you will read about several of our ventures and adventures...the marvelous opportunity we had ringing in a concert with the Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra in November of 2013 for one. We are always thrilled to ring as guest artists or to include guest artists in our concerts. As proof in point, hopefully you were able to hear and watch Pan Go Trio at SOS – what an unexpectedly great combination it was, with handbells and steel drums.
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2013 Review	3	As always, we are extremely thankful for our generous donors (listed below). We hope you consider giving to the Friends of Agape this year so we can continue to do what we all love. To donate to the Friends of Agape, please contact David Weck (dweek@agaperingers.org) directly or check out the Friends of Agape page on our website. The Agape Ringers is a non-profit 501(c) 3 tax-exempt organization; all contributions are tax-deductible.
Upcoming Concerts	4	Sit back and enjoy the following articles. Feel free to drop us a line on our Facebook page. Come chat after a concert. We look forward to talking with you!

Thank you to our 2013 donors:

We gratefully acknowledge a combined \$10,000 donation provided by Rick Heine and the Johnson & Johnson Family of Companies in recognition of the musical excellence that The Agape Ringers continues to uphold.

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TOUR TIME!

KRISTIN PAUL DIAZ

Although it's hard to imagine warm weather when you're in the middle of a Midwestern winter, it is that time of year when Agape starts looking forward to our summer plans – especially if there's a tour on the horizon.

Over the years we've been able to take some very exciting trips and have found that whether it's an elaborate tour (Puerto Rico) or a weekend hop (Minnesota), we always grow – both musically and personally. In the early days of Agape's existence, we planned some bigger tours – two weeks in England, ten days in the Pacific Northwest, a week in Puerto Rico. But as personal schedules have gotten tighter and the economy has given us some monetary restrictions, we've found that mini-tours are just as satisfying and a little easier to squeeze in.

With that said, we still try to look at a longer trip every couple of summers. We're starting to get excited about the Summer 2014 tour, which will run from June 14 to June 21 and will include concerts in Tulsa, OK, Little Rock, AR, Oxford, MS, and Germantown, TN.

The process of planning a tour can be a little time consuming, but is oh, so necessary for things to go smoothly! It usually starts a year (or even two) in advance. Sometimes we get an invitation and try to build a tour by looking for other venues in the same vicinity. Other years we've picked a part of the country we haven't been to before and start calling people we know in that area: "Hey, anyone interested in hosting a bell concert?"

Once we have four or five possibilities, we start sending out contracts and nailing down dates. This part of the process is handled by David and KC (with help from anyone who has contacts in the chosen area). After the contracts are in, the baton is handed off to the tour committee.

The tour committee can be different for each tour, but having served on several, I've been able to see how we've improved our methods over time. One of the most important things we did was to create a generic checklist and time line. That way if tour committee members change, they don't have to reinvent the wheel. Things on the checklist include: reserving car rentals (we usually travel in three minivans and a Penske truck for the equipment), making hotel reservations (continental breakfast is a must-have), planning driving routes and maps, collecting medical forms from group members, and creating a tour booklet (with hotel info, phone numbers, daily schedules, roommate lists, and other stuff we want everyone to have at their fingertips).

Those sorts of things are pretty standard for every tour. But sometimes a tour has its own special issues. One year we started and ended our tour by teaching and performing at two different Area Festivals. Some Agape members taught classes and others didn't. Some people had tricky work schedules and others had the summer off. For that tour, instead of a nice, neat, "Let's meet in the church parking lot and leave on tour together," we had people driving, flying, and taking trains. Different carpools left on different days and we weren't all together until our performance at the first festival. There were a lot of colored charts and graphs involved, and we breathed a big sigh of relief when everyone was finally there!

We've also found that adding a couple of social outings during our travel time has given us some good rebooting time and helps us face another long day of driving. We've had dinner in a bowling alley, visited a rainforest, taken in a Broadway show, and gone to wineries and caves. Even though some of us have been together for twenty years, there's not always time to socialize during rehearsals, and we enjoy the extra time together.

There are some helpful things we've discovered along the way, and I'll leave you with a few final tour planning tips. It's a good idea to take walkie talkies along (there's not always good cell reception and you hear some interesting trucker conversations). Also, when creating a driving schedule remember that not everyone wants to (or should be allowed to) drive. And some sort of identification for the rental cars is nice (so you don't follow the wrong yellow Penske truck).

If you're in the Oklahoma (6/15), Arkansas (6/18), Missouri (6/19), or Tennessee (6/20) area this summer, check our website for concert details. We'd love to see you!

Handbells, Handbells, Handbells!

February 22, 2014 – Oak Park, Illinois

The Agape Ringers with Handbell Musicians of America Illinois is pleased to be offering this day-long workshop. This is the 28th time we have had the opportunity to share our skill and enthusiasm with ringers of all experience levels. You can find more details and registration materials at <http://tinyurl.com/HHH2014>, or scan this QR code on your smartphone:



SOUNDS OF THE SEASON SOS COMMITTEE

Now that all the excitement for the holiday season has settled down, we want to thank you, our audience, friends and supporters, for making *Sounds of the Season* 2013 a success.

We were pleased to feature the Pan Go Trio as our guest artists. KC Congdon (Agape) and Lana Wordel (Pan Go) work together at First Congregational Church of Western Springs where KC is the handbell director and Lana is the steel drum director. The combination of handbells and steel drum was perfect for our arrangement of **Blue Christmas** and **Feliz Navidad**. You can hear **Blue Christmas** on our YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/user/AgapeRingers).



Pan Go Trio and Agape performing at
Sounds of the Season 2013

We have already started the planning process for *Sounds of the Season* 2014 and hope you will be able to join us for this wonderful annual tradition.

Save the date - Saturday, December 13, 2014!

Follow us on Facebook and YouTube!

2013 REVIEW KIRSTEN HENDRICKSON

2013 was another exciting year for The Agape Ringers. We celebrated our 20th Anniversary in May with a wonderful concert featuring **Embellish**. In addition to all that, we added a new member (Kirsten), a new DVD (**Splash of Gold**), a new (to us) truck, and a shiny new (well, updated) website. We cannot believe that it has already been 20 years since David first brought together talented musicians for this great adventure. Where does the time go?

For the first time in a long time, Agape decided to take the summer off and RELAX! As you may have seen in our previous newsletter, some of us took advantage of the opportunity to enjoy a vacation, get married, and win an award. While the break was nice, we were all excited to get back to ringing as the second half of the year was full of exciting adventures. In October, we traveled to Boyne City and Flint, Michigan. The



Agape travels to Boyne City, Michigan

Glasgow family (yes, they are related to handbell composer Michael Glasgow) were wonderful hosts to us in Boyne City. If you ever find yourself in Northern Michigan, you need to stop into Waterside Cafe and say hello. They are truly wonderful people and the food is delicious!

In November, we had the opportunity of performing with the Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra and Spirito! It was a wonderful experience and the closing number, **Be Thou My Vision**, left everyone (including us) wanting more. We closed the year with our annual *Sounds of the Season* concert. We are very thankful for all that we have accomplished over the year and are thankful for the loving support from our friends, family, and you, our supporters. We look forward to another year...actually another 20 years!



Agape performing with Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra and Spirito!

We are on the web! www.agaperingers.org

Like us on [Facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/agaperingers)

THE AGAPE RINGERS



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UPCOMING CONCERTS

DATE	TIME	EVENT/LOCATION/ADDRESS	TICKET INFORMATION
2/23/14	4:00 PM	St. Mary's Lutheran Church 2001 80th Street Kenosha, WI	Tickets Required; \$10 Adults, \$5 Youth
3/16/14	4:00 PM	Grace Lutheran Church of Glen Ellyn 493 Forest Ave Glen Ellyn, IL	Free Will Offering
4/13/14	4:00 PM	Christus Victor Lutheran Church 1045 S Arlington Heights Road Elk Grove Village, IL	Tickets Available at the Door
5/4/14	7:00 PM	Our Savior's Lutheran Church 3300 Rural Street Rockford, IL	Free Will Offering
6/14 - 6/21		AGAPE SUMMER TOUR (See article for more details)	
9/21/14	4:00 PM	Hanmee Presbyterian Church 1149 W Bloomingdale Road Itasca, IL	



This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.