



# THE EXTENDED FAMILY

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## *Steve's Slant*

In 2014 Rutger Bregman, a Dutch historian and journalist, published a book called *Utopia for Realists*. In it, he makes a surprisingly convincing case that, despite what we might currently believe about the state of the world, life is getting better for the overwhelming majority of the world's citizens.

He carefully documents how human beings today are, on the whole, far better fed, better educated, richer, cleaner and healthier than we were even two hundred years ago. And how there is less conflict today, and how we have more capacity to solve large-scale crises as they arise.

Perhaps because Mr. Bregman offered a glimpse of light under what often feels like gloomy skies, the book quickly became an international bestseller. Humans may be better fed today that we were not so long ago, but it seems that we are always hungry for a word of hope.

I mention this because, just three years after the book's initial publication, it feels like we are again in a time when we could use another glimpse of light, when another word of bright hope would be a welcome reprieve from the steady torrent of distressing news we read about in the newspaper (stories I won't recount here in this space).

Toward that end, I think it's helpful to remember that we are not the first people to feel distressed by the circumstances in which we find ourselves. After Jesus took his leave from his disciples, we know that, as a group, they were so frightened by the prospect of facing life without their remarkable leader that they spent their days hiding in an upper room behind locked doors.

You can't blame them, really. They were but a small group whose members Jesus had charged to go into all the world and teach his way of love and peace in places they'd never been before, in cultures they didn't understand, to people who didn't even share their language, let alone their values.

It must have felt like an overwhelming challenge. Who wouldn't want to stay hidden away under those circumstances?

We also know that on Pentecost, something happened that changed all that, something that enabled this timid group of fledgling disciples to go out into the world and, against all odds, establish communities of love and faith -- little outposts of the Realm of God -- across the Mediterranean world.

How did they do this? What kept them going when things got hard -- when their new leaders were jailed, for example? Or when the urgings of the Spirit to welcome strangers, to expand their tent, to expand their understanding of what God's love means and what it looks like in practice, were met with resistance, sometimes from within the membership of these very communities?

(Continued on page 2)

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**June Birthdays!**

Emma Eagle Joslin  
Fran Roberts  
Anne Dale  
Neil Satterfield  
Kristin Williams  
Steven Hamilton

June 1  
June 13  
June 17  
June 21  
June 25  
June 27

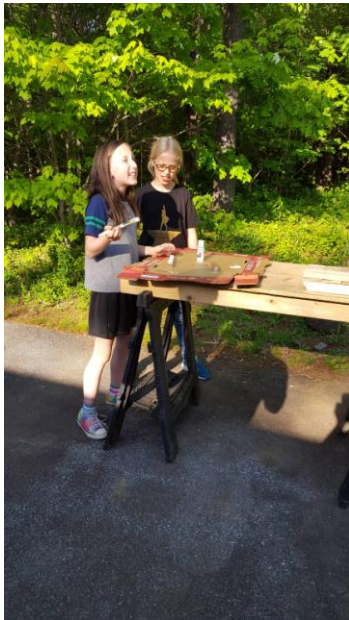
Mary Fran Spencer  
Nancy Garrison  
Fitz Legerton  
Gina Marvin  
Jackie Wintle

June 6  
June 16  
June 20  
June 22  
June 25



**Just For Fun**

May Just for Fun was really great! Lizzie celebrated the double digit birthday on May 10, CC and Carol had a bat house ready to assemble. With young and a bit older than young working together painting, drilling, nailing, gluing and in general having fun the bat house was put together and will soon have a place around WWPC to encourage bats to make a home. There was information about bats in the FH so we could learn about our friends!



*Steve's Slant continued...*

I believe these are important questions. I also believe that looking at them afresh could offer us insights not only into how to be our own vibrant and viable community of love and faith in these challenging times, but how the process of rising to meet these challenges might make more of us.

Which is why I am announcing here my summer sermon series, *Utopia for Realists: Lessons from God's People Then, for God's People Now.*

We'll anchor the series in stories from the book of Acts, and in passages from the epistles to the early churches. We'll look at the words of hope that anchored and inspired these early communities; the ways they found joy in one another's company; the ways they worked out their conflicts and differences, and, of course, the ways they rose to meet the challenges and opportunities of their time.

Utopia for realists. Or, as I like to call it, the Kingdom of God.

**HABITAT FOR HUMANITY ANNOUNCES NEW COMMUNITY IN ARDEN;  
CONSTRUCTION OF PRESBYTERIAN/METHODIST HOUSE # 26 WILL BEGIN IN SEPTEMBER**

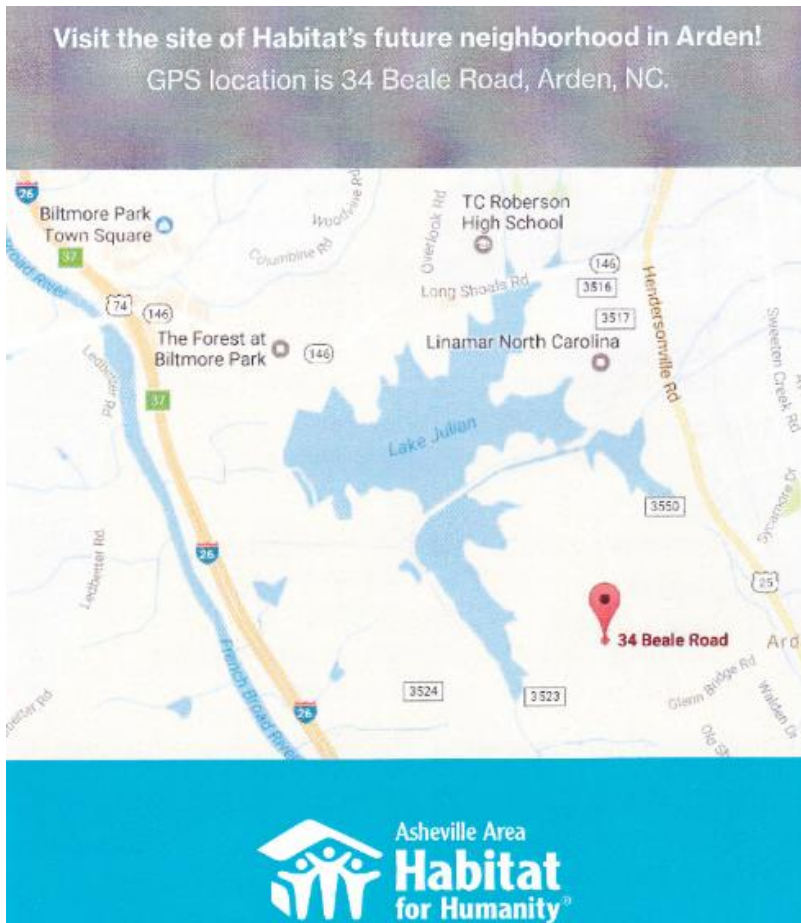
Asheville Area Habitat Executive Director Andy Barnett recently announced a new, 21-house subdivision in Arden with construction beginning this spring. This will include Presbyterian/Methodist House # 26 with groundbreaking for it scheduled for September 5.

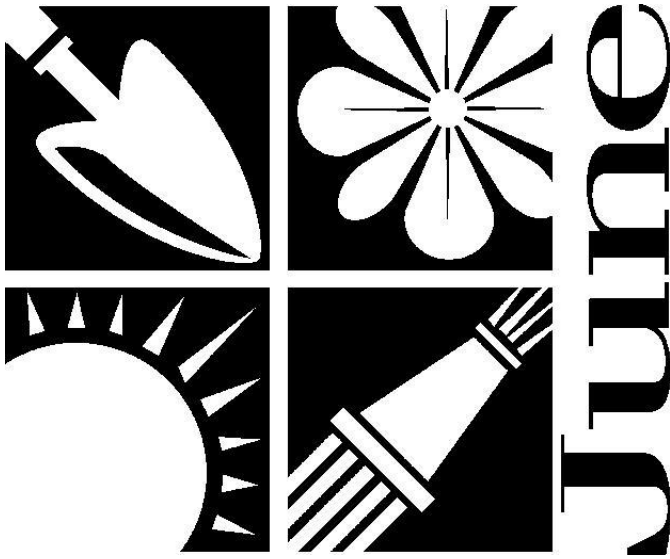
This project follows the construction now nearing completion of 15 new Habitat houses in Asheville’s Shiloh section. The \$3.2 million development in Arden will be Habitat’s first in southern Buncombe County, and the main road will be named Jon Kraus Way in honor of the late son of long-time Habitat Executive Director Lew Kraus.

The new green-built single family houses will be closer to more employers than any previous location Habitat has built in, and will continue the tradition of strength, stability and self-reliance for the future owners through the purchase of an affordable home in a safe neighborhood.

The work schedule for Presbyterian/Methodist house # 26 will be available in late July.

There will also be a lunchtime kickoff celebration for four houses including # 26 at the job site on Friday, August 11. All Habitat supporters are welcome to attend.





At Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church we are mothers and fathers, single and married, gay and straight, young and old, black and white, prosperous and poor, uncertain and sure, broken and whole. We are the many faces of humanity-yet as a community of faith, we are committed in our diversity to be one in Christ!

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