



# The Echoes

February 2025

A monthly publication of the  
East Martin Christian Reformed Church



## A View from the Pew

### Time to Agape

#### Will They “Know We Are Christians by Our Love”?

Perhaps seeing February on the calendar prompts us to think about the word *love*. After all, a holiday in this month, Valentine’s Day, focuses people, around the world, on that four-letter word. For the Christian, however, what, in the final analysis, defines *love*?

Basically, in the Greek, it takes four different words to grasp the concepts (the various meanings) of *love*, unlike the single, limited word of the English language. First, we might consider *storge* (store-gay) for an empathy bond, like love for family. In scripture, we find this usage in Romans 12:10—“Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring one another.”

Then there’s *eros* (air-rohs), romantic love, the one so adulterated and degraded in today’s world that, conceivably, anything goes. A third type, *phileo* (fil-leh-oh) belongs to the idea of friend bond, thus Philadelphia as the city of brotherly love.

However, the ultimate *love*—and the word occurring 106 times in the Bible—we know as **agape** (uh-gah-pay), or, unconditional and sacrificial “God” love (the verb form appears as **agapao**). Let’s turn our attention to this *love*, thinking about ramifications in and for our own lives.

We might do well to ponder **agape love** in terms of *requiring, recognizing, and realizing*.

First, *requiring*. Where does the Lord command that we love like He loves? “The **agape** of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit Who has been given to us” (Romans 5:5). Logically, then, as Philippians 2:1-2 urges/demands, “Therefore, if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of **agape**, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same **agape**, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.” Then there’s the familiar account in John 21:25ff, where Jesus twice asks Peter, “Do you **agapao** Me?” Yet the disciple, also twice, admits only to a brotherly connection (*phileo*). So



the third time, the Lord, in His mercy, asks, “Do you *phileo* Me?” and, grieving, he responds, “Lord, You know I *phileo* You.” Yet Jehovah desires **agape**. “I pray that your **agape** may overflow more and more and that you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding” (Philippians 1:5).

Should we doubt the “command” nature of this, we need only read the words of our Lord Jesus as recorded in John 15:9-12. “As the Father has **agapao** Me, so have I **agapao** you. Abide in My **agape**. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in my **agape**, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His **agape**. These things I have spoken to you, so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. This is My commandment, that you **agapao** one another as I have **agapao** you.”

What about *recognizing* the existence of this *love* in our lives and the lives of others? Where’s the proof? I Thessalonians 1:3 points us in that direction. “As we pray to our God and Father about you, we think of your faithful work, your **agape** deeds, and the enduring hope you have because of the Lord Jesus Christ.” Moreover, “...we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and your **agape** for all of God’s people” (Colossians 1:4). As “those who have been chosen of God, holy and **agape**, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience” (Colossians 3:12). Jesus affirms, if we exhibit the fruit, then, “By this all men will know you are My disciples, if you have **agape** for one another” (John 13:35).

Requiring, recognizing, and, finally, *realizing*. “Beyond all this put on **agape**, which is the perfect bond of unity” (Colossians 3:14). Since the fundamental part of being made in the image of God begins with a delight in the Son, if we **agape** Him, then “nothing renders us so like unto God as our love unto Jesus Christ, for he is the principal object of his love” (the Puritan John Owen writes).

What does this look like? “This is love: that we walk in obedience to His commands” (II John 1:6a). Additionally, we read, “For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don’t use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in **agape**” (Galatians 5:13). Also, “Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to **agape** one another, for whoever **agapao** others has fulfilled the law” (Romans 13:8). Indeed, we know that “Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and **agape**—and the greatest of these is **agape**” (I Corinthians 13:13).

Therefore, contemplate the truth found in I John 4:7-8: “Beloved, let us **agape** one another, for **agape** is from God; and everyone who **agapao** is born of God and knows God. The one who does not **agapao** does not know God, for **God is agape**.”

With 106 biblical references to **agape**, we barely scratch the surface here, but if God mentions **agape** that many times, then...we conclude,

**“What is important is faith expressed in *agape*”** (Galatians 5:6b).



## In Contact With Council



- ♦ The Council meeting of February 11 was opened with devotions from II Kings and prayer by Jonathan Kalkman.
- ♦ The minutes from the January 14 meeting were read, supported and passed.
- ♦ Communications:
  - The next Kalamazoo classis meeting is scheduled for March 11.
  - Members of Third CRC submitted an overture to classis Kalamazoo to review the ecumenical status of the Reformed Church in America as a church in communion. They want to recommend that Synod makes no changes to the relationship between the CRC and Reformed Church in America. The Council of Third CRC does not agree.
- ♦ Discussion on Good Friday service start time. The Good Friday service will start at 6:30 instead of 7 pm at our church.
- ♦ An updated visiting schedule was distributed.
- ♦ Reports:
  - Pulpit supply schedule reviewed.
  - Communion will be observed on March 9; Pastor Ken is preaching.
  - Pastor Joel has interest in starting a profession of faith class.
- ♦ Deacons' report:
  - General fund is behind 7.6%; ministry shares is 23.66% behind.
  - The offering schedule was reviewed and approved.
- ♦ Worship committee: no meeting
- ♦ Evangelism committee: no meeting
- ♦ Finance committee: no meeting
- ♦ Church security: no meeting
- ♦ Building and Grounds: the humidifier is working and ceiling fans have been installed in the parsonage.
- ♦ Informal ministry committee:
  - Cornhole tournament and chili dinner was scheduled for February 15.
  - Looking at a kayaking outing this summer.

- ♦ Two visits were made.
- ♦ Names for Deacon and Elders were reviewed.
- ♦ A motion to adjourn was supported and passed.
- ♦ The next meeting is scheduled for March 10.
- ♦ Scott Tuinstra closed in prayer and has devotions next month.



## Combined Evening Lenten Services with the Martin Reformed Church

March 9: The Primacy of Preaching the Gospel

Sermon Texts: 1 Cor. 15:1-2; cf. 1 Cor 2:1-4  
Heidelberg Catechism Q65: Since then faith alone makes us share in Christ and all His benefits, where does this faith come from?

March 23: The Gospel Message: Christ Died, Buried, and Raised!

Sermon Texts: 1 Cor. 15:3-4; cf. 1 Cor. 1:23  
Heidelberg Catechism Q44: Why is there added: He descended into hell?

April 6: The Gospel of Grace: I Believe!

Sermon Text: 1 Cor. 15:5-11  
Heidelberg Catechism Q86: Since we have been delivered from our misery by grace alone through Christ, without any merit of our own, why must we yet do good works?

April 18: Good Friday: The Gospel: No Empty Faith in the Empty Tomb

Sermon Text: 1 Corinthians 15:12-19  
Heidelberg Catechism Q45: How does Christ's resurrection benefit us?

February 7 marked one year since I was diagnosed with leukemia. Since then I have spent 92 days in the hospital and had over 100 outpatient doctor visits.

July 30 I had my stem cell transplant. I thank God that he supplied the perfect donor for me. My body has suffered very few rejections to the transplant. I just finished my second round of maintenance chemo and I still probably have two more to go. They space them 6 to 7 weeks apart so my body can regenerate.

I would like to thank the congregation and all of you for your support and ask that you please continue to pray for me and my family.

Thank you, Les Lynema



## New Babies

We praise God with Colton and Jennifer Petrie who welcomed Ayden John into the world on Sunday, January 12. Ayden was 9 lbs. 1 oz. and 22 inches long. Congratulations to Colton and Jennifer, grandparents Dave and Jean Mejeur and great grandparents Jim and Cindy Mejeur.

Congratulations to Brad and Maria Leep on the birth of their twins born February 6. Jett and Josie weighed in at about 6 pounds each and were 19 inches long. Jett and Josie's big brother is Jack.

Congratulations to great grandma, Mina Haveman, too.



Please join in showering Brooke Leep and Jonathan Hoysradt with baby gifts as they await the arrival of their baby boy in March.



Please place your gifts in the pack 'n play in the narthex. They are registered at Babylist under Brooke Leep if you wish to purchase something from their wish list.

Instead of a card you may sign a children's book as Brooke and Jonathan would love to read their baby a book picked out by you.

## Homecoming at Tri-Unity Christian

Justyn Rillema represented his Senior Class on Homecoming Court on January 31. He was also on Homecoming Court last year representing his Junior Class. Congratulations Justyn!!



## Check Out What's New in Our Library

SERIAL BURN—LYNETTE EASON (Lake City Series #3)  
THORN IN MY HEART—LIZ

CURTIS HIGGS (#1 in this series) Historical placed in Scotland  
FAIR IS THE ROSE—LIZ CURTIS HIGGS (#2 in this series)  
WHENCE CAME A PRINCE—LIZ CURTIS HIGGS (#3 concludes the series) Very good series—worth the read. Background of Jacob & Esau's story — forgiveness  
GRACE IN THINE EYES—LIZ CURTIS HIGGS (sequel #4)  
GUILTY UNTIL INNOCENT—ROBERT WHITLOW  
WHISPERS OF FORTUNE—MARY CONNEALY (Golden State Treasure #1)



On February 1st the annual Kalamazoo Council Cadet Snow Derby was held at the Cadet campground in

Bangor. The East Martin team was made up of 6 boys from our cadre, and a total of 9 different teams competed. The turnout was quite surprising and the weather was wonderfully sunny.

The boys were able to compete in different stations set up at the campground. They showed off their fire building and axemanship skills, sled racing ability, knot tying and marksmanship knowledge and their ability to react and assist in a first aid situation. There was also a compass reading, trail sign and Cadet landmarks station.

The East Martin Cadre did a fine job with the training they had recently received and we look forward to teaching them even more skills throughout the coming year in anticipation of next year's Snow Derby.

Please remember the East Martin Cadet club in your prayers throughout the year as we minister to boys from all different backgrounds. May God be honored above all.

## Calling all cookie bakers

We will be packing boxes for our military personnel and college students who live away from home on Tuesday, March 18. We also provide a plate of cookies to our college students living at home as well as our single, recent high school grads. We will need at least 24 dozen cookies plus other items such as wrapped candy, wrapped chocolates, Kind bars etc.



If you are willing to help, please watch the bulletin for details and the sign up sheet in the narthex. Please note that some of our regular cookie bakers are not available for this round of cookies so if you can help it would be appreciated.

Dear East Martin CRC,

We are so grateful for your financial support! Your donations have a huge impact on our school, the kids that attend, and the staff that work here. Through your generous gifts we can continue to provide a Christian education that makes an impact on lives and families.

Thank you,  
East Martin Christian School

## Help EMCS win a \$5,000 reward

PaperGator has announced a Paper Recycling Contest in celebration of Earth Day!



East Martin Christian School will have the chance to earn exciting rewards by increasing their paper recycling volume. The locations that show the greatest improvement from January through April 11 will be rewarded with fantastic prizes. Plus, all participants will earn double the usual payouts during the contest period.

Bring your recycling and put it in the bin in our parking lot. Let's FILL IT UP!

## Wild Game Dinner

There were approximately 345 in attendance for this event. We enjoyed an abundance of wild game dishes and delicious desserts.



Guy Zuck spoke to us about turkey hunting and demonstrated several turkey calls. He also spoke about the huge change in the priorities in his life when he gave his life to Christ.

Approximately \$24,000 was raised for East Martin Christian. The Lord truly blessed us with a wonderful evening of food and fellowship with family and friends.





## Martin Resource Center

While you are grocery shopping in March, please purchase some of the items below for the Martin Area Resource Center and put them in the grocery cart. Canned fruits, canned veggies, juices, applesauce, canned meat; i.e., tuna, chicken.

### Tithes and Offerings for January

General Fund	\$8,258.00
Ministry Shares	1,132.00
Faith Promise	
East Martin Missions	150.00
Shaarda	345.00
Smit	1,695.00
Tiemeyer	245.00
Walker	245.00
Guatemala Orphanage	40.00
Benevolence	3,620.00
Church Library	250.00
East Martin Christian School	1,495.00
Barry County Christian School	70.00
Heritage Christian School	150.00
Tri-Unity Christian School	200.00
Zion Christian School	70.00
Reframe Ministries	323.00
World Renew—DRS	70.00
Gideons	70.00
Christian Neighbors	70.00
Growing Hope Globally	263.50
Martin Resource Center	1,495.79
The Luke Society	70.00
Project Hope	295.25
Reaching the Forgotten	70.00
Bible League	153.00
Mel Trotter Mission	70.00
 Total	 \$20,985.54

General Fund is behind 7.60%  
Ministry Shares is behind 23.66%

### Library

March 2: Rena Lynema  
March 9: Linda DeYoung  
March 16: Ida Westendorp  
March 23: Rena Lynema  
March 30: Linda DeYoung

### Offering Schedule for March

March 2: AM—General Fund/Ministry Shares;  
PM—Martin Resource Center  
March 9: AM—East Martin Christian School  
March 16: General Fund/Ministry Shares;  
PM—Heritage Christian School  
March 23: AM—East Martin Christian School  
March 30: AM—General Fund/Ministry  
Shares; PM—International Campus Ministries

### Greeters

March 2: AM—Jonathan and Amy Kalkman,  
Cameron Tuinstra; PM—Glenn and Nancy Leep  
March 9: AM—The Elders  
March 16: AM—Joan Kammeraad, Nancy  
Minegar, Vern Klaasen; PM—Wes and Darlene  
Leep  
March 23: AM—Dave and Jean Mejeur, Scott  
Tuinstra  
March 30: AM—Don and Nancy Smith, Tim  
Westendorp; PM—Bruce and Sue Tiemeyer

### Ushers

March 2: Bob Katje, Bram Katje, Vern Klaasen  
March 9: Glenn Leep, Wayne Leep, Wes Leep  
March 16: Bruce Mejeur, Dave Mejeur, Tom  
Rook  
March 23: David Rillema, Justyn Rillema, Scott  
Rillema  
March 30: Keith Smit, Toby Smith, Bruce  
Tiemeyer

### Nursery

March 2: Laura DeMaagd  
March 9: Riley and Addison Tuinstra  
March 16: Jessica Tucker  
March 23: Rebekah Westendorp  
March 30: Jen and Violet Tuinstra

### Oreo Truffles

20 oz. Oreo cookies, crushed  
8 oz. cream cheese, softened  
1 tray Ghirardelli chocolate, melted  
White chocolate, melted

Blend Oreo cookies and cream cheese with  
electric mixer. Roll into 1 inch balls. Dip in  
chocolate. Place on paper. Drizzle with white  
chocolate. Refrigerate.