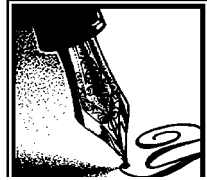




The Echoes

September 2023

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East Martin Christian Reformed Church



A View from the Pew

High Stakes Lost and Found

Lost and Found—We've all seen signs like this, posted generally in public places. Individuals can claim lost items. I don't know about you, but I get really frustrated when I lose something and cannot find it. Ultimately, then, what does it mean to be lost? How might God feel about it? Luke 15 provides some significant clues.

The dictionary gives several definitions for the word lost. First, it can mean strayed or misplaced; missing. This applies to the lost sheep, and the ratio is 1:100. The shepherd tends 100 sheep, and one of them strays. Of course, the herdsman goes resolutely in search and rejoices when he finds it, calling for others to join him. We might think it foolish for the shepherd to leave 99 to go in search of just one. But he knows those 99 are safe in the sheepfold, whereas the one is in danger. Because each sheep is valuable, the shepherd searches diligently. God loves each individual so much that He seeks out each one and rejoices when that one person is found.

Another definition reads unable to function, act, or make progress; helpless. Next, Luke tells us about the woman with ten coins, who loses one. (In Jesus' day a dowry was ten coins. A married woman would string them together and wear them.) These ten coins are not only valuable, they are significant. They bear both monetary and sentimental value. Probably this lady, a common person, so moved by her loss, feels she cannot function until she locates the missing coin. Thus, she desperately scours the floor of her dark, windowless house. In this parable, Jesus "ups the ante." It's now 1:10. Originally distressed, because also at the time, these coins could have been essential to survival, when she finds her lost coin, she, now delighted, asks others to share in her joy. Each and every person is precious to God.

Of note, these lost items have nothing to do with their lostness. In fact, it's the owner who seeks earnestly. In the case of the lost sons*, however, a human being, a loved son, rejects his father. His actions are scandalous, treating his father like he is already dead. The stakes get higher. And the ratio becomes 1:2.

Several other definitions come into play in the words Luke records for us. Lost: gone morally astray; fallen. Or gone in time, like lost youth; passed away. Again, lost: bewildered or bemused.

If you return to the asterisk (*) above, you will see that I used the word sons. That is no typo. Wait a minute. Isn't this the parable of the

prodigal son? Well, yes, the younger son departs, taking with him all his possessions, leaving nothing behind to come back to. He wants to be free of parental constraint and to spend his share of the family wealth as he pleases, no doubt in “wild living.” He demonstrates arrogant disregard for his father’s authority and leaves out of selfishness. Thus, the prodigal goes morally astray, is fallen. Most likely he also “lost his youth.”

But we often overlook the older son. You know what? He’s lost, too. His bitterness and resentment render him just as lost to the father’s love as his younger brother. Among other things, he’s bewildered and bemused. Big brother simply cannot understand his father’s actions. He resents dad’s willingness to accept the kid brother he recognizes as the worst possible son, one who literally has sunk to the depths. Yet his father watches and waits, overjoyed when he sees his son returning, and immediately plans a celebration.

So, as recorded in Luke 15, Jesus teaches about high stakes lost and found via three parables. The sheep and the coin cannot return by themselves. The son is a human being with a will of his own. So, the message of these parables, that build on each other and climax with the prodigal son, is that God does not treat us as we deserve. God’s great love reaches out and finds each sinner no matter why or how s/he got lost.

In these parables the lost is found, followed by a call to rejoice. With the third, however, Jesus gives no ending. What will the older son do? Will he choose to come to the party and rejoice? Will we? Lost and found. It’s all about grace.

In Contact With Council



1. The Council meeting of September 12 was opened with devotions and prayer by Don Wubben. Don read from a devotional on “Depending on the Lord”.
2. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved.
3. Pulpit supply is in place through October.
4. Deacons’ report: The offering schedule was made, supported and passed. The budget was reviewed.
5. Education Committee: Sunday school begins September 17.
6. Security: Tim Westendorp has been added to the committee and is the Council liaison.
7. Three Council member visits were made.
8. A proposal was made to the Council for a class on Grieving. A motion was made, supported and passed to support this class and purchase books.
9. Sue Tiemeyer asked to be released from the Treasurers position. Council will begin looking for replacement.
10. A motion was made to adjourn. It was supported and passed. Closing prayer was led by Bruce Tiemeyer. Ryan Tucker has devotions next month.

Study Opportunities

Coffee Break started on Wednesday, September 20. We are studying “Embracing God’s Grace” — a study of Colossians and Philemon by Elizabeth George. Please contact Deb for a book if you still wish to join.

Ladies' Evening Bible Study will be doing a study on the life of King David - Anointed, Transformed, Redeemed. This study is done by Priscilla Shirer, Beth Moore and Kay Arthur. We started on September 25 at 6:30 pm and will meet in the narthex the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month. If anyone would like to join us, please contact Sue Tiemeyer.

Men's Bible Study will meet the first Wednesday in October. They will continue their study of Joshua.

Sunday School and Catechism started on September 17. Jonathan Kalkman will continue studying the Heidelberg Catechism with the Freshmen through Seniors. Bruce Tiemeyer will pick up with the study of Genesis and Exodus with the fifth through eighth graders. Libby Dendel (second through fourth grades) and Amy Kalkman (pre K and first grade) will be studying stories from the Bible. Many thanks to those who have stepped forward to teach our children this year. They look forward to partnering with you in the church education of your children.

What About Grief?

When someone we know is grieving, we want to help. Yet most of us struggle with what to say or how to interact. So, sometimes we stay away or stay silent, afraid we will do or say the wrong thing, that we will hurt instead of help.

A straightforward and practical book by Nancy Guthrie provides us with the insight we need to interact confidently with grieving people. Drawing upon the input of hundreds of grieving people as well as her own experience of grief, in a tender, compassionate, clear, honest, Gospel-rich way, she offers specifics on what to say and what not to say, what to do and what to avoid. Tackling touchy subjects like talking about heaven, navigating interactions on social media, and more, this book can equip people like us to support, with wisdom and love, those who grieve.

To that end, East Martin is offering an informal

workshop, "Coming Alongside Grieving People." To assist our preparations, sign the sheet in the narthex, including your name and best times for you to meet (at church).

Grief persists as a constant presence in a fallen world, so, everyone is invited. Join in, as over several weeks, as a group, we will discuss *What Grieving People Wish You Knew About What Really Helps (and What Really Hurts)* by Nancy Guthrie.

Please accept this invitation. We'll order copies of the book. Then watch for the announcement of our start date/time. (Not a reader? No worries. We will, in a relaxed setting, discuss practical suggestions that will help us come alongside each other as we grieve.) For, "we do not grieve like those who have no hope" (1 Thessalonians 4:13).

Graduate's Plans

I graduated from Otsego High School. While I was attending Otsego, I enrolled into the Early College Program which allows students to have an opportunity to earn a free Associate's degree. I was a competitive cheerleader all 4 years, and participated in sideline cheer for 2 years. With sideline cheer, I got to help the O-Dawgs cheer team (girls in elementary school). Outside of school, I worked for McDonald's on D Ave. I just quit before the summer and got a new job at the Home Depot in Plainwell that I love so much more. Some of my favorite hobbies are creating art through music, drawing, painting, etc., working out, and doing anything outside.

I am currently on my third and final year of Early College. I feel so blessed to have had this opportunity! I don't have any plans for further college as of right now. There's a lot of careers I would like to go into but I haven't dug deep enough to make a final decision. Therefore, I'm probably going to work until I make that final decision for myself.

God has blessed me with so many opportunities that I will be forever grateful for.

Whatever the plans, I know God has the right ones in store for me, and I know He will keep me safe along my way.

Thank you all for the love and support through everything. Thank you for the compliments on doing something as small as the PowerPoint, or even playing in church.

Rozalyn Denzel

2023 Bible League Conference: Growing Inward - Reaching Outward Celebrating 85 Years

Last year, every hour of every day, 350 people studied a Bible provided by the Bible League, which adds up to over 8000 people per day reached with the Word of God, guided by a mentor! And on Friday, September 8, men and women from Michigan (including 13 East Martinites) celebrated what in 1938 began as one man going door-to-door—giving a Bible to the occupant if he or she promised to read it, or if the household already owned a Bible, encouraging the people to read it—to now, 85 years later, where literally millions of copies of the scriptures have been placed in the hands of under-served people around the world.

To begin our morning, Bible League CEO Jos Snoep led devotions, zeroing in on the truth that it all starts with a loving heart from the Father Who stirs our hearts to be in love with Him. Our first love must be love for God.

Throughout the conference, vibrant singing helped to “connect the dots” of the talks from our keynote speaker. Led in worship by Dr. Mark and Elizabeth Sooy, the 246 attendees sang hymns and contemporary songs, sometimes antiphonally, sometimes a capella, but always with voices raised in notes of joyous praise.

For the 2023 Michigan conference (themed Growing Inward – Reaching Outward), author and speaker Carol Kent encouraged us to find a touch of joy in the middle of hard times. In

“Growing an Enduring Faith,” she reminded us to *choose* several things: life instead of emotional death; to trust, trust in the Lord; to show gratitude (make a list); to forgive, quickly and completely; and finally, to take purposeful action (pass the blessing on to the next generation).

Over a tasty lunch, participants appreciated the opportunity to fellowship with old friends and make new ones. During the afternoon portion, Carol spoke twice to the group. Seamlessly she wove her and Gene’s life-story (which required a new kind of normal after their son was arrested for murder and now serves a life sentence with no opportunity for parole) with transparency, humor, the Word, love, warmth, and wisdom.

Author of 27 books, Carol shared encouragement she received from the Lord, to help us learn to live the lives we’ve been given, when life doesn’t meet expectations and sometimes forces us to adjust. If your life has taken an unexpected “left turn,” or you would like to know more, in the future look for and check out copies of Carol’s writings from the EMCRC library.

The first of Carol’s post-lunch addresses centered on “Developing Brave and Strong Faith,” and when we do that, we begin to get passionate about what God is passionate about. Again, she used the concept of *choices*: Christians must begin with praise; continue seeking Jesus; do it scared (God frees us from our fears); be honest with God and others; call for help (read the Word, phone a friend, seek wise counsel, speak Jesus’ Name aloud); experience family (God’s) benefits; and receive the blessing. Interestingly, the circumstances we ask God to change are often the ones He uses instead to change us.

Finally, keynote speaker Carol Kent left her audience with “Making a Difference in Your World,” reminding us to keep walking through doors that God opens for us. How? By following seven life-changing principles: *Time Alone with God*. Spend time with God at our peak time of day. *Walking and talking*. Develop the art of turning interruptions into

divine appointments. *Story-telling.* God knows few things touch as deeply as a good story, and He can get through to us when we see, hear, and experience His story). *Asking questions.* For a man with all the answers, Jesus asked a lot of questions! *Compassion.* What did we do today that only a Christian would have done? *Casting vision.* When we verbalize the giftedness we see in others by naming the potential they have, that helps individuals envision their personal worth—to God, to others, and to themselves. Demonstrate *Understanding love.* This kind of love never gives up, cares more for others than for self, and doesn't keep score of the sins of others.

Keep going to the Word. Grow inward. Reach outward.



Check Out What's New in the Library

THE HEARTS BIDDING—KELLY IRVIN (Very good book)
 THE HEART'S CHOICE—TRACIE PETERSON & KIMBERLY WOODHOUSE (The Jewels of Kalispell #1)
 ROCKY MOUNTAIN RENDEZVOUS—MISTY M BELLER (Sisters of the Rockies #1)
 COUNTER ATTACK—PATRICIA BRADLEY (Pearl River #1)
 COLD PURSUIT—NANCY MEHL (Ryland and St. Clair #1)



Harvest Sale Time

East Martin Christian School will hold its 80th annual Harvest Sale on Saturday, October 14. The doors open at 4 pm.

If you would like to donate or sponsor this event, please contact Jessica Tucker at 269.998.2960 or Jenny VandeBunte at 616.217.7977 with items/description to be included in the Harvest Sale booklet. Please be sure to turn in all donations (excluding perishable items) to the school office by October 1.

Thank you so much for your support of the Harvest Sale and of Christian education at East Martin Christian School.



Martin Area Resource Center

When grocery shopping in October, please remember the needs of those less fortunate. Martin Resource Center needs the following:

Toilet paper, paper towels, napkins, paper plates, female sanitary napkins/tampons, wraps, baggies, foil.



Greeters

October 1: AM—Dennis and Linda DeYoung, Dean Wubben; PM—Scott and Jen Tuinstra
October 8: AM—Bruce and Sue Tiemeyer, Don Wubben; PM—Marcia Bouman, Libby Dendel
October 15: AM—Les and Rena Lynema, Tim Westendorp; PM—Keith and Deb Smit
October 22: AM—Vern and Joanne Klaasen, Jonathan Kalkman; PM—Joel and Jen DeYoung
October 29: AM—Jonathan and Amy Kalkman, Dave Mejeur; PM—Wes and Darlene Leep

Ushers

October 1: Dave Misner, Toby Smith, Kevin DeKoekkoek
October 8: Glenn Leep, Dennis and David DeYoung
October 15: Sam DeYoung, Henry M. Tuinstra, Dean Wubben
October 22: Dean VanderMeulen, Bruce Tiemeyer, Chase DeMaagd
October 29: Joel and Jacob DeYoung, Bruce Aukema

Nursery

October 1: Laura DeMaagd
October 8: Hailey and Kylee Tuinstra
October 15: Riley and Addison Tuinstra
October 22: Rebekah Westendorp
October 29: Jen, Violet and Willow Tuinstra

Library

October 1: Carolyn VanderMeulen
October 8: Linda DeYoung
October 15: Ida Westendorp
October 22: Rena Lynema
October 29: Nancy Tuinstra

Pumpkin Pie Cake

Ingredients:

1 box of spice cake mix
1 can (15 oz) pumpkin (not pumpkin pie filling)
1/2 cup heavy cream
1/2 cup butter, melted
1 cup milk
1 box (5.1 oz) instant vanilla pudding mix

August Tithes and Offerings

General Fund	\$ 6,141.70
Ministry Shares	1,941.00
Faith Promise	
East Martin Missions	200.00
Sharda	364.00
Smit	184.00
Tiemeyer	309.00
Walker	154.00
Guatemala Orphanage	234.00
East Martin Christian School	1,186.00
Barry County Christian School	215.00
Martin Resource Center	1,019.00
Christian Neighbors	379.00
Growing Hope Globally	503.00
International Campus Ministry	287.00
Total	\$13,116.70

General Fund behind 28%
Ministry Shares ahead 10%

Offering Schedule for October

October 1: AM—General Fund/Ministry Shares; PM—GEMS Denomination
October 8: AM—East Martin Christian School; PM—Cadets Denomination
October 15: General Fund/Ministry Shares; PM—Gideons
October 22: AM—East Martin Christian School Tuition Assistance; PM—Tri-Unity Christian School
October 29: AM—Martin Resource Center; PM—Son-Life Camp

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees and lightly grease a 9x13 inch baking pan with nonstick spray. Set aside.

In a large bowl, mix together the spice cake mix and vanilla pudding mix. Add in melted butter, milk, heavy cream, and pumpkin. Mix until well combined, and spread batter in prepared pan.

Bake until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean, about 35 minutes. Allow to cool 10 minutes before cutting.