



The Echoes

February 2024

A monthly publication of the
East Martin Christian Reformed Church



A View from the Pew

God's Love: From Shadow to Substance

And now then, these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.
I Corinthians 13:13

In its October 29, 2023 issue, *Good Housekeeping* featured the article, "How to Write the Perfect Love Letter." The popular mag divided its ideas into five sections: how to start; what to include; what you love about them; tips for writing; and how to end. As Christians, we live as recipients of the One and only perfect love letter. Let's begin reading!

To start, "My dear children..." and again, "Dear friends..." "I have written this to you who believe in the Name of the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life" (I John 2:1, 7; 5:13).

To include, that One, God, created everything and made mankind the pinnacle of creation (Gen. 1:1, 27, 26). Furthermore, the Lord clearly declares, "For you are a people holy to the Lord your God [...a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God]. The Lord your God **has chosen you** out of all the people on the face of the earth to be...**His treasured possession**. The Lord did not **set His affection on you and choose you** because you were more numerous...it was because **the Lord loved you...**" (Deuteronomy 7:6-7; [I Peter 2:9a]).

To love—yes, what's the foundation of this relationship? "Your **lovingkindness**, O Lord, extends to the heavens, Your faithfulness reaches to the skies" (Psalm 36:5). There's not enough ink to praise the character (clearly identified throughout this Letter) of our **Father**, the One who **adopted us**. But, for starters, "Even **before** He made the world, **God loved us and chose us** in Christ" (Ephesians 1:4). In the comforting 23rd psalm, David declares, "He makes me lie down in green pastures" (vs. 2), basically inviting us to nestle deeply in the **tall shoots of love**. When David notes this, he, in effect, indicates "my Shepherd makes me (1) lie down in His *finished* work" and (2) rest. In the garden, Jesus (the **beloved** Son, one with the Father and Holy Spirit in perfect union, in Whom the Father **delights**) further affirms this love when He prays, "You...have **loved** [those You have given Me] even as You have **loved Me**" (John 17:23b)!

To write, now God personalizes His love letter. Since we're His children, "[we] are heirs and co-heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17a). He "blots out *my* transgressions" (Psalm 51:1), for *our* Lord is "compassionate and gracious" (Psalm 86:15). Specifically, the Lord Almighty is "God *our* Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ Who gives *us* hope" (I Timothy 1:1b).

Yet “hope does not put *us* to shame, because **God’s love** has been poured into *our* hearts through the Holy Spirit Who has been given to *us*” (Romans 5:5). Moreover, He **woos** *us* to keep *us* from the power of evil, to justify *us* (no condemnation), to provide access to God at any and every moment, to never abandoning *us*. Insert your name where appropriate in any of these previous verses, as well as here, “God showed _____ how much He loved _____ by sending His One and only son into the world that _____ might have eternal life through Him. This is **real love**—not that _____ loved Him but that He loved _____ and sent His Son as a sacrifice to take away _____’s sins” (1 John 4:9).

To end, I love you! The perfect love letter comes first as *shadow* (in the Old Testament) and then, ultimately, *substance* in the person of Jesus Christ. “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For He **chose us in Him** before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. **In love** He predestined us to be **adopted** as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will—to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given in the One he loves (Ephesians 1:3-6).

In Contact With Council



- The Council meeting of February 13 was opened with devotions and prayer by Tom Rook. Tom read from 1 John 1:5-10.
- The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved.
- Pulpit supply is covered through the second week of May.
- Deacons’ report. The offering schedule was made, supported, and passed. The General Fund is behind 2.81%; Ministry Shares is ahead 6.72%. We will be sharing Lent evening services with the Martin Reformed Church.
- Worship Committee: Easter services will be at 8 am and 10 am with breakfast at 9 am.
- Nine Council visits were made.
- Mutual censure was observed.
- A motion to adjourn was made, supported and passed. Bruce Tiemeyer closed in prayer. Dean Wubben has devotions next month.

Search Committee Report

The Search Committee would like to thank everyone for their patience as we work toward finding a new Pastor for EMCRC.

We have been talking with a Pastor from Iowa about the possibility of coming to East Martin. Our first meeting was the Search Committee getting to know him and his family. He and his wife have five kids. Their oldest daughter will graduate high school this summer. She will be going to college in Alabama.

Our second meeting with him was him asking questions about East Martin CRC and getting to know us.

Our next step would be to have him come and visit our church. Unfortunately word was received just prior to publication of The Echoes that this pastor has declined to consider taking a call.

We will update everyone as things progress.

Lenten Services at East Martin

AM: Images of Jesus in the Old Testament
PM: The Cross of Christ (alternating between EMCRC & MRC)

February 18

AM: Text: Deuteronomy 18:14-20 / Images of Jesus in the OT: Moses
PM: Text: Mark 8:31-38 / The Cross of Christ: Our Example (at EMCRC)

February 25

AM: Text: Jeremiah 33:14-22 / Images of Jesus in the OT: David
PM: Text: Mark 10:35-45 / The Cross of Christ: Our Ransom (MRC)

March 3

AM: Text: Hebrews 9:1-14 / Images of Jesus in the OT: The Temple
PM: Text: Isaiah 53:4-6 / The Cross of Christ: Our Substitute (at EMCRC)

March 10 (Communion)

AM: Text: Micah 7:18-20 / Images of Jesus in the OT: The Altar *Communion*
PM: Text: Colossians 1:21-23 / The Cross of Christ: Reconciliation (at MRC)

March 17

AM: Daniel 7:1-14 / Images of Jesus in the OT: The Son of Man on the Throne
PM: Colossians 2:13-15 / The Cross of Christ: God's Victory (at EMCRC)

March 24 (Palm Sunday)

AM: Text: John 12:20-36 / Drawn to Jesus
PM: Text: Luke 19:28-44 / The Triumphal Entry: Jesus Weeps (at MRC)

March 29 (Good Friday) (at MRC)

March 31 (Easter)



Look What's New in Our Library

THE CHOSEN—JERRY B. JENKINS (I Have Called You by Name #1)
THE CHOSEN—JERRY B. JENKINS (Come and See #2)
THE CHOSEN—JERRY B. JENKINS (And I Will Give You Rest #3)
FRAGILE DESIGNS—COLLEEN COBLE (A Good Read)
WHEN THE WATERS CAME—CANDICE SUE PATTERSON (Good Book)
DAUGHTER OF EDEN—JILL EILEEN SMITH (Eve's Story)
DOUBLE TAKE—LYNETTE EASON (Lake City Heroes #1)
A MILLION LITTLE CHOICES—TAMERA ALEXANDER



Calling all Cookie Bakers

We will be packing boxes for our military personnel and college students who live away from home on Tuesday, March 12.

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 microwave popcorn, wrapped chocolates, cheese/cracker packs 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.

Homecoming at Tri-Unity Christian

Justyn Rillema was on Homecoming Court representing his Junior Class on February 9. Congratulations Justyn!



Wild Game Dinner

There were approximately 300 in attendance for this event.

We enjoyed an abundance of wild game dishes and delicious desserts.

David ZuiderVeen spoke to us about coyote hunting with infra red scopes and range finders.

A coyote hunt was held the night before with 14 teams participating. A total of 28 coyotes were taken.

Approximately \$21,000 was raised for our East Martin school.

The Lord truly blessed us with a wonderful evening of food and fellowship with family and friends.



Martin Area 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.

Thank You Sue!

We would like to thank Sue for her years of serving as the treasurer/bookkeeper at EMCRC. We wish her the best as she transitions into this next phase of life. Thank you, Sue!!

Chocolate Chip Breakfast Squares To-Go

4 cups rolled oats
2 2/3 cups applesauce or mashed bananas
3/4 cup water
1 tsp salt
1/2 cup or more mini chocolate chips
1/4 cup oil, nut butter or additional water
Pinch stevia, or 1/2 cup pure maple syrup, honey or agava
(if only using stevia then add an additional 1/2 cup water
2 tsp vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a 9x13 with parchment paper.

In a large bowl stir all ingredients until well mixed. Smooth into the pan. Sprinkle additional chocolate chips on top if desired. Bake on the center rack 28 minutes. Then do not open the oven door but turn the heat off and let sit in the closed oven an additional 20 minutes. Slice into bars or squares. Leftovers can be refrigerated 3-4 days or freeze to have on hand anytime.

Once Upon a Mattress presented by Kalamazoo Christian High School

Kalamazoo Christian High School will present the musical *Once Upon a Mattress*. The performances will be held on March 21, 22 and 23 at 7pm. There will be matinee performance on March 23 at 2 pm at the Comstock Community Auditorium. Watch the bulletin for more details.



January Tithes and Offerings

General Fund	\$ 7,045.00
Ministry Shares	1,278.00
Faith Promise	
East Martin Missions	166.00
Shaarda	360.00
Smit	1,666.00
Tiemeyer	206.00
Walker	226.00
Guatemala Orphanage	86.00
Hannah Damsteegt	40.00
Benevolence	450.00
East Martin Christian School	170.00
Barry County Christian School	70.00
Heritage Christian Academy	150.00
Kalamazoo Christian High School	95.00
Tri-Unity Christian School	180.00
Zion Christian School	70.00
World Renew—DRS	70.00
Right to Life Education Fund	1,064.00
Martin Resource Center	621.00
Reframe Ministries (Back to God)	257.00
Christian Neighbors	70.00
Reaching the Forgotten	70.00
The Luke Society	70.00
Gideons	70.00
Mel Trotter Mission	70.00
Growing Hope Globally	70.00
Total	\$14,690.00
General Fund behind	2.8%
Ministry Shares ahead	6.7%

Offering Schedule for March

March 3: AM—General Fund/Ministry Shares; PM—Martin Resource Center
 March 10: AM—East Martin Christian School
 March 17: AM—General Fund/Ministry Shares; PM—World Renew
 March 24: AM—East Martin Christian School
 March 31: AM—Benevolence; PM—Luke Society

Greeters

March 3: AM—Wayne and Denise Leep, Scott Tuinstra; PM—Stan Leep
 March 10: AM—Elders, Tim Westendorp; PM—Wes and Darlene Leep
 March 17: AM—Les and Rena Lynema, Dean Wubben; PM—Dave and Jean Mejeur
 March 24: AM—Bruce and Joanne Mejeur, Don Wubben; PM—Dave and Karen Misner
 March 31: AM—Scott and Becky Rillema, Jon Kalkman; PM—Keith and Deb Smit

Ushers

See the church bulletin

Nursery

March 3: Rebekah Westendorp
 March 10: Jen, Violet and Willow Tuinstra
 March 17: Laura DeMaagd
 March 24: Hailey and Kylee Tuinstra
 March 31: Riley and Addison Tuinstra

Library

March 3: Rena Lynema
 March 10: Linda DeYoung
 March 17: Ida Westendorp
 March 24: Rena Lynema
 March 31: Linda DeYoung