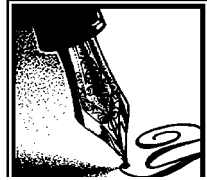




# The Echoes

October 2023

A monthly publication of the  
East Martin Christian Reformed Church



## A View from the Pew

### A Forever Costume: Saint or Sinner?

As far as the calendar goes, we've reached the end of October, complete with vibrant oranges, reds, yellows, even rich browns, that decorate our homes and definitely exhibit the splash of God's paintbrush on the landscape. Stores display costumes from scary to sublime, in preparation for Halloween, and maybe we think we shouldn't celebrate this very secular holiday. But if we delve into it a bit, we just might discover a reason for celebrating with sacred joy.

Historically, Halloween, a contraction of "All Hallows Eve," is observed on October 31, the evening before All Saints (or All Hallows) Day on November 1. While it originated in the festival of Samhain among the Celts of ancient Britain and Ireland with thoroughly pagan rituals, in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, Pope Boniface established All Saints Day (originally on May 13 but eventually moved to November 1). The evening before All Saints Day then became a holy, or hallowed, eve, "Halloween." By the end of the Middle Ages (circa 1400), however, the secular and sacred had merged, and later, among Protestants, the Reformation essentially put an end to the religious holiday.

So what? What impact might all this have today on Christians at East Martin Christian Reformed Church? Well, let's ask ourselves, "Who are we, really?" Due to the fall, every one of us is born dead spiritually. The solution to this predicament is to restore our relationship with God, to become spiritually alive. And, that's what only Jesus accomplishes.

Who *are* we? The moment we become a Christian, *that* becomes the defining moment of our lives. "If *anyone* is in Christ, he is a *new* creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (II Corinthians 5:17). Some—maybe many—think of ourselves as "a sinner saved by grace." Truthfully, we *were* sinners, and are saved by grace alone. Yet, "While we *were* sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). This means, if we are *in Christ*, we are *no longer sinners*. It's our inner person that defines our identity, not what we do. We are set apart, holy. Even if we cannot pinpoint the exact moment we became a Christian, the "inner we" changed from people who displeased God to those *clothed* in Christ. Messes we made and continue to make, notwithstanding, we're righteous, clean, and holy on the inside. To clarify, when God looks at us, He sees a new creation, beautiful, holy—a saint—and the Lord delights in us, and nothing can separate us from Him.

To be sure, a saint is not *sinless*. Violating God's commands, we will "do wrong." However, God promises, "If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sin and purify us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:5).

A few statistics should drive this home for us. Appearing over 300 times in the New Testament, the word “sinner” specifically refers to people who are *not yet* Christians. We virtually never see “sinner” applied to a Christian, at least not in terms of who we are now, only in terms of who we *used to be*. On the other hand, the word “saint” or “saints” occurs over 200 times, *always* pointing to *believers*. A quick visit to the opening verse(s) of several of Paul’s epistles will shed light on this truth: “To all the **saints** in Christ Jesus...” (Philippians 1:1). “To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be **saints**” (Romans 1:7). “To the **saints** in Ephesus and the faithful in Christ Jesus... (Ephesians 1:1). “To the **saints** and faithful brothers in Christ...” (Colossians 1:1).

Literally, throughout his epistles, repeatedly Paul refers to Christians as “saints”—“set apart ones.” Each of us is not a saint because of any worth of our own but due totally to unmerited favor. Each of us *is* a saint because we have been set apart by God’s wonderful, great grace to devote ourselves to a holy and pure way of life. This is our **fixed** position in Christ.

A forgiven sinner, therefore, is a thankful saint. With Halloween and all Saints Day in view, today and every day,

(Let’s allow Christ to clothe us with His own righteousness—II Corinthians 5:21[.]),  
and,  
wearing our forever clothing,  
let’s celebrate, joyously,  
maybe even like David (II Samuel 6:14-15), with reckless abandon.

**Sing** to the Lord, you saints of His; praise His holy Name. (Psalm 30:4)

**Love** the Lord, all His saints! The Lord preserves the faithful... (Psalm 31:23)

**Fear** the Lord, you His saints, for those who fear Him lack nothing. (Psalm 34:9)

Alleluia!



## **In Contact With Council**

1. The Council meeting of October 17 was opened with devotions and prayer by Ryan Tucker. Ryan read from Psalm 18:29.
2. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved.
3. Communications: The membership of Joyce Ritchie was received from the First Christian Reformed Church of Byron Center.
4. Pulpit supply is covered through most of November.
5. Deacons’ Report: The offering schedule was made, supported and passed.
6. Worship committee: The Christmas Candlelight service will be held on December 17 in the evening; December 24 (Christmas Eve day) there will be a morning service only; Christmas Day there will be a morning service only.
7. Education Committee: the *Coming Alongside Grieving People* class started. Twenty-three people met for the first class. It is a 6-week class.
8. Evangelism: November is Mission Emphasis month and Faith Promise.
9. There were 6 Council member visits made.

10. A motion to adjourn was made, supported and passed. Keith Smit closed in prayer. Jon Kalkman has devotions next month.

Please join in showering Jared and Hannah Westendorp with gifts as they await the arrival of their baby in early January.



Please place your gifts in the pack 'n play in the narthex.

Jared and Hannah are registered at Amazon and Target if you would like to purchase something from their wish list.

Instead of a card you may sign a children's book so Jared and Hannah have some books to read to their new baby.

## Graduate's Plans

Caleb Tuinstra graduated from Hopkins Public High School. He attended the building trades program at the Vo-Tech Center in Allegan.

During his sophomore year he was on the football team and in his junior year he was on the track team. During school he worked at Clearview Dairy Farm.

Caleb enjoys hunting and working on vehicles. Presently he is working with his dad at Tuinstra Custom Welding.

## Thanksgiving Offering Envelopes

The Deacons will provide envelopes for the Thanksgiving Day offering. You can select from several options listed. Any monies not designated will be used for Benevolence.

## Food Drive

We will be able to participate in a food drive for Martin Resource Center on Thanksgiving Day. Please bring staple foods for MARC on Thanksgiving Day morning.



## Thanksgiving Day Breakfast

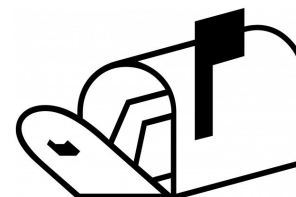
Serving from 8 to 9:15 am.



Everyone is invited to come enjoy pancakes, breakfast casseroles, sausage links, apple juice and coffee before the Thanksgiving Day service.

Come enjoy the fellowship and support the High School Youth Group.

## Christmas Card Service



The High School Youth Group will provide a Christmas card delivery service beginning the first Sunday of Advent, December 3. Just place your Christmas cards, along with your donations, in the basket by the church mailboxes. The cards will be delivered to the proper mailboxes by the Youth Group.

GEMS and CADETS have kicked off their season! Girls from 2nd to 8th grade and boys from 4th to 8th grade are invited to come for a fun night of fellowship and activities. We meet every 1st and 3rd Wednesday, September through April from 6 to 8pm.

Check us out on Facebook or call Scott Tuinstra (269-225-9531) with any questions.

Hope to see you there and feel free to bring a friend.



## Check Out the New Books in the Library

A BRIGHTER DAWN —  
LESLIE GOULD (Amish  
Memories #1)

FAIREST OF HEART — KAREN  
WITEMEYER (Texas Ever After #1)  
LETTERS OF TRUST — WANDA  
BRUNSTETTER (Friendship Letters #1)  
THE LORD'S PRAYER — HAROLD L.  
SENBEIL — Primary  
ESCAPE from AMSTERDAM — LAURALEE  
BLISS (Heroines of WWII)  
FACING THE ENEMY — DIANN MILLS —  
Suspense  
A NEW KIND OF NORMAL— CAROL KENT  
— Hope Filled Choices When Life Turns  
Upside Down  
WILDFLOWERS FALLS — DENISE HUNTER  
GOD NEVER GIVES UP ON YOU — MAX  
LUCADO  
THE LAST EXCHANGE — CHARLES  
MARTIN

## Martin Area Resource Center



When grocery shopping in November, please remember the needs of those less fortunate in our community. In November they need the following:

Soup, canned tomatoes, chili, beans, crackers (saltines, oyster, etc). spaghetti and sauce, tea and hot cocoa, boxed meals and foods, stuffings, rice mixes, etc.

**Daylight  
Savings Time  
ends on  
November 5**



## Pumpkin Cranberry Nut Bread

3/4 cup Butter (softened)  
1 1/2 cups Sugar  
3 Eggs  
1 (15oz) can solid pack Pumpkin  
1/2 cup Orange Juice  
2 tsp grated Orange peel  
3 1/2 cups Flour  
1 tsp Baking Soda  
1/2 tsp Baking Powder  
1/2 tsp ground Cloves  
2 tsp ground Cinnamon  
1 tsp Salt  
1 cup fresh or frozen Cranberries (unthawed)  
or Cran Raisins  
1 cup chopped Walnuts

In large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs one at a time beating well. Add pumpkin, orange juice and orange peel, stirring well. Sift together flour, baking soda, baking powder, cloves, cinnamon and salt. Add to pumpkin mixture and stir until just well blended. Gently stir in cranberries and walnuts. Pour batter into 2 greased and floured 9 x 5 bread pans. Bake in 350' oven for 50-60 minutes. (37-45 minutes for 4 mini loaf pans)



Many thanks to those who baked cookies and brought candy for our college and recently graduated singles. They will be appreciated.

## Greeters

November 5: AM—GEMS, Tom Rook; PM—Bruce and Renee Aukema  
 November 12: AM—Cameron and Kristie Tuinstra, Keith Smit; PM— Stan Leep, Earl Wykstra  
 November 19: AM—Joe DeKoekkoek, Harold Wykstra, Bruce Tiemeyer; PM—Wayne and Denise Leep  
 November 23 (Thanksgiving): Dave and Jeanne Mejeur, Ryan Tucker  
 November 26: AM—Scott and Becky Rillema, Scott Tuinstra; PM—Dean and Carolyn VanderMeulen

## Ushers

Watch the bulletin for the ushers schedule

## Nursery

November 5: Laura DeMaagd  
 November 12: Hailey and Kylee Tuinstra  
 November 19: Riley and Addison Tuinstra  
 November 26: Rebekah Westendorp

## Library

November 5: Carolyn VanderMeulen  
 November 12: Linda DeYoung  
 November 19: Ida Westendorp  
 November 26: Rena Lynema

## Listen | Learn | Discern

The Calvin University January series begins on January 15, 2024. Stay tuned for more details.



## September Tithes and Offerings

General Fund	\$ 7,907.00
Ministry Shares	2,106.00
Faith Promise	
East Martin Missions	200.00
Shaarda	152.00
Smit	172.00
Tiemeyer	97.00
Walker	142.00
Guatemala Orphanage	272.00
Guatemala Mission Trip	50.00
East Martin Christian School	1,177.00
World Renew—DRS	20.00
Reaching the Forgotten	289.00
Right to Life Education Fund	374.00
Martin Resource Center	898.00
Wycliffe Bible Translators	268.00
International Campus Ministry	231.00
Total	\$14,155.00

General Fund behind	34%
Ministry Shares ahead	3%

## Offering Schedule for November

November 5: AM—East Martin GEMS; PM—Zion Christian School  
 November 12: AM—East Martin Christian School; PM—Project Hope  
 November 19: AM—General Fund/Ministry Shares; PM—Mel Trotter Ministries  
 November 23: Thanksgiving—Benevolence  
 November 26: General Fund/Ministry Shares; PM—Pine Rest