

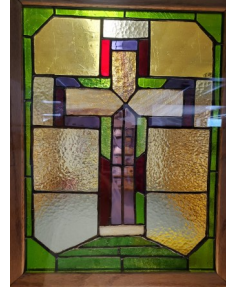


**April 2026**

A monthly publication of the  
East Martin Christian Reformed Church

## **Reflections from the Pulpit**

### **Lenten Season Sermons**



# The Echoes

#### **A People Drawn by Grace, Ruled by the King, and Called to Come**

During Lent, we have seen that God is not only calling sinners, He is revealing the heart of the King who saves and the urgency of responding to His grace. Through these passages, we are confronted with who we are, who Christ is, and how we must respond.

#### **A People Who Come Empty-Handed (Luke 18:9–14)**

In the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector, we are reminded that the greatest barrier to God is not our sin, but our self-righteousness. One man trusted in himself and left unjustified. The other came empty-handed, pleading for mercy, and went home right with God.

We are not saved by comparing ourselves to others or by balancing our good works against our sin. We are saved only by the mercy of God in Christ.

Reflection:

Am I trusting in my righteousness, or am I coming to God as a sinner in need of mercy?

#### **A People Compelled to Come (Luke 14:12–24)**

In the parable of the great banquet, we are confronted with the danger of presuming upon God's invitation. Many were invited, yet refused—choosing good things over the greatest thing.

But God's grace will not fail. The invitation goes out to the poor, the outcast, and the nations. And the call is urgent: "Compel them to come in."

We are reminded that it is not enough to be near the gospel, we must come to Christ in repentance and faith. And having come, we are sent to call others with urgency and love.

Reflection:

Have I truly come to Christ, or am I only near the invitation?

### **A People Who Bow to the True King (Luke 19:28–40)**

On Palm Sunday, we saw Jesus as the King who is both mighty and meek. He enters Jerusalem with humility yet fully sovereign over all that unfolds. He receives the praise of the crowds, yet weeps over their blindness.

He calls us not only to admire Him, but to surrender to Him, trust Him, and follow Him. True worship is not just expressed in words, but lived in humble obedience and compassion.

Reflection:

Do I truly receive Jesus as He is, the sovereign King who calls me to surrender and trust?

### **A People Who Rest in the Risen Christ**

On Easter Sunday, we were reminded that the resurrection of Jesus Christ redefines not only our hope but our rest. From the beginning, God created us to dwell with Him, finding our true rest in His presence, yet sin left us restless and striving. But “on the first day of the week,” Christ rose as the Light who overcomes darkness, restoring what was lost and inaugurating a new creation. Now, we do not work our way toward rest, we begin with rest in Him, living each day from the finished work of Christ rather than striving for it. Though we still experience weariness in this broken world, there remains a greater, eternal rest to come, secured by His resurrection. On the cross, Jesus bore our unrest; in the grave, He rested; and in rising again, He declared that redemption is complete. Therefore, our Sabbath is no longer merely a day we observe, but a Savior we trust—who calls us to come, cease striving, and find true and lasting rest in Him.

Reflection:

Am I truly resting in the finished work of Christ, or am I still striving to earn what He has already accomplished for me?

How does the promise of eternal rest in the risen Christ shape the way I face my present weariness and daily life?

## **Keeping Up With the Trinidads**

We invite you to continue walking with us in prayer as the Lord leads the Trinidad family through this important season:

### **1. Classis Examination**

Pastor Joel will be examined by Classis Kalamazoo for ordination as Commissioned Pastor of East Martin CRC on **May 19, Tuesday, at 6:00 PM** in the East Martin CRC sanctuary. All are welcome to attend.

### **2. Visa and Ministry Timeline**

Pastor Joel's international student visa expires on **May 16**. Following this, he will no longer be permitted to preach or perform any ministerial duties according to the US immigration law. His final Sunday in the pulpit will be **May 10**. His driver's license will also expire, and he will no longer be able to drive after **May 12**.

### **3. Ordination Service (Lord Willing)**

If he sustains the examination, an ordination service is planned for **June 7** at East Martin CRC during the morning service.

#### **4. Departure for the Philippines**

The Trinidad family will depart for the Philippines on **June 14**, following the morning worship service.

#### **5. Prayerful Anticipation**

As they begin the visa process, Lord willing, the family hopes to return to the United States in **early November**.

Please continue to pray for the Trinidad family as they wait upon the Lord's leading. Pray also for East Martin Christian Reformed Church—that the Lord would sanctify and strengthen the congregation during this season of waiting.

### **In Contact With Council**



Don Wubben opened the April Council meeting with devotions reading from James 1:22 through 24 and a devotion on Being Doers, Not Hearers Only and had opening prayer.

Minutes were read from the previous meeting. A motion to approve passed.

Pastor's report - Reviewed the pulpit supply schedule while Pastor Joel is gone. He met with RJ and his family, Betty DeMann, Jeannie Katje, Joyce Ritchie, had four meetings with classis, meeting with Jeff Brower every Friday to help study for his examination, hosted Bruinsma's for supper, met with Nick Shealy and family, and attended a Gideon's meeting.

Deacon's report—The General fund is 2% behind and Ministry shares 24% behind. The offering schedule was presented. A motion to approve passed.

Building and grounds: the sound system will be updated.

Finance committee—the proposed budget for 2026-2027 was reviewed. A motion to approve passed.

Council visits—3 were made.

Old business—Pastor Joel's trip to the Philippines: a motion to approve \$12,000 in gifts from the congregation and the difference will be made up as bonuses as needed was supported and passed.

New business—a letter of call is needed for a commissioned Pastor. A congregational meeting will be held on May 3. Classis meeting at EMCRC at 6 PM on May 19 for Pastor Joel's examination. Ordination, installation and communion will take place on June 7.

Angie Walker is looking for support and would like to come talk to us regarding what she has planned.

The next meeting will be held on May 10. Harold closed with prayer and has devotions at the next meeting. Motion to adjourn passed.



## **We got to go to Elizabethton, Tennessee for spring break**

First, we were going to North Carolina and then we were going to Kentucky but in the end, God led us to Elizabethton TN. Once again, we can see that God knows best.

Our group of 16 people left on Saturday morning at 6am with Elizabethton on the google maps app and 11 hours of seat time ahead. Except for some traffic backups in Cincinnati, we made decent time and arrived in TN between 5 to 6 depending on which direction you went through Cincinnati. The right one, or the wrong one!

During the week before leaving Martin there were several changes to our housing due to issues in host churches in Elizabethton. On Friday we found out we were going to be staying with another group of 25 from western Tennessee at Hunter First Baptist Church. The group of 25 from western TN were going to be staying in the gymnasium and we would divide into 4 Sunday school rooms in the church education wing. Both groups would eat together for the evening meal prepared for us by the Hunter FBC on Monday through Thursday. The church family of Hunter FBC were welcoming, friendly and showed us the love of Christ. Once again, we can see that God knows best.

Carter County Long-Term Recovery Group (the organization we worked through) supplied us with Red Cross cots to sleep on and a shower trailer to wash up in after work. On Sunday after church, we went to Roan Mountain, which is in the Blue Ridge Mountains, Cherokee National Forrest. We hiked to Peg Leg Mine and found no ore. Then we drove to the top of Roan Mountain, 5512 feet elevation. We even saw icicles coming out of the side of the mountain and it was 55 degrees that day. It was a great day of worship, both in church and seeing His great beauty in creation. Once again, we can see that God knows best.

Each day started with a breakfast of eggs, bacon or sausage, blueberry breakfast bake and pancakes made by the East Martin Chef Committee. Then came, making your own lunch, cleaning up, devotions and then heading to one of 2 worksites.

One site helped Jennifer and her family by laying hardwood flooring throughout a 1500 square foot house, installing seven interior doors, designing, sourcing, delivering and installing kitchen base and wall cabinets, installing base board trim, and drywall closets and finish for painting.

The second site helped Brandi and her family by adding several coats of drywall mud and sanding between coats, installing and painting several interior doors, painting several rooms with several coats of paint after sealing the drywall, installing trim and extension jambs to upstairs and downstairs windows, painting baseboard trim for a later team, installing hardwood flooring in basement and removing a stump from the yard and landscaping.

The roads around Elizabethton were quite often a topic of conversation at the end of the day. They were paved but were not straight nor wide. Once you left the main road you had to be watchful around the corner ahead because you might see a car appear out of nowhere. Sometimes you had to stop to let a car pass and then continue.

After work, anywhere from 3:30 to 6pm, we would meet back at Hunter FBC and use the showers to get cleaned up before the evening meal which was served at 6pm. After the meal we helped install a new playground and get rid of the old one. We had a time of sharing and devotions led by different individuals in our group. The group then played cards, shot pool, or relaxed. Everyone took their turn cleaning the kitchen, cleaning tables, and church household chores. By 10pm it was "lights out" in anticipation of the new sunrise in the morning.

On Friday evening one of the construction coordinators took anyone that wanted to go — caving. They wore helmets with lights on them and went back into the inner tunnels of the

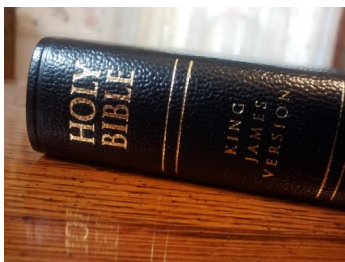
mountain. It was an experience that they are still talking about.

God blessed us richly with this experience and we pray that His name was glorified through us. Thanks to all for your prayers and financial support before, during and after our trip. If you have questions you can ask anyone who went on the trip. They are: Mary and Randy Bouman, David and Jacob DeYoung, Glenn and Nancy Leep, Les and Rena Lynema, Bruce Mejeur, Adrian Norris, Cece Sutherland, Isaac Suk, Bruce Tiemeyer, Henry and Violet Tuinstra and Don Wubben.



We would like to thank you for the cards, wishes and cake for our anniversary. Above all we thank our God for giving us so many years together. You all sure made it a very special day.

Thank you,  
Adrian and Wilma



## Bible Sunday

Bible Sunday is scheduled for May 3. Receiving Bibles will be Everett DeMaagd and Spencer Tucker.



## Young @ Heart

The first session of Young @ Heart meets on May 21 (the 3rd Thursday of each month). Please come at 11:30 for fellowship; lunch will be served at noon.

We hope to see you there.



## Martin Area Resource Center

When you are grocery shopping in May please remember those who are less fortunate in our community. Martin Area

Resource Center needs the following:

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



## What's New in our Library

ON LIVING STONE: SALOME'S STORY—HEATHER KAUFMAN (Women of the way) A very worthy read

TAME YOUR THOUGHTS—MAX LUCADO

Three tools to renew your mind and transform your life.

A DEEPER WELL—JILL EILEEN SMITH The Story of the Woman at the Well.

EVEN AFTER THIS—DEBORAH CLACK (Shelter and Sky #1)

FAITHFUL OF HEART—TRACIE PETERSON  
 (Minnesota Legacy #1)  
 THE RANCHER'S UNEXPECTED BRIDE—  
 LAURALYN KELLER (Second chances in  
 Harmony Springs #1)  
 THE REVEREND'S SECOND CHANCE—  
 LAURALYN KELLER (Second chances in  
 Harmony Springs #2)  
 THE DOCTOR'S CONVENIENT  
 MARRIAGE—LAURALYN KELLER (Second  
 Chances in Harmony Springs #3)  
 PILGRIM'S PROGRESS In Today's English—  
 JOHN BUNYAN Retold by James H. Thomas

Karen Misner received recognition at a recent Bible League meeting in Crete, Illinois. The citation reads as follows.



We award the 2026 Fundraising Recognition to Karen Misner. Karen showed exceptional initiative by stepping forward with a fresh fundraising idea. Her 'fundraiser within a fundraiser' was a used jewelry market. She identified an opportunity within our current fall conference and leveraged that to create momentum. The idea that the Kingdom can be impacted through old jewelry was a marvel! Thank you for bringing additional excitement to the conference and for raising funds for children and youth.

Congratulations Karen.

Anyone from our church who has or will be graduating during the current school year from 8th grade, high school or college, please contact a member of The Echoes staff by next copy deadline so the graduation information can be listed correctly. If graduating from college, please include your degree.



## Golf Outing

The annual East Martin Christian School Golf Outing is Saturday, June 20th, at Mullenhurst Golf Course in Delton. The day includes 18 holes of golf, a shirt, Chick-fil-A lunch, and a chance at prizes. The 4-person golf scramble begins at 8 a.m.



If you are interested in playing or sponsoring this event, please call/text Kelvin DeVries at (616) 481-3872.

## Greeters

May 3: AM—Dave & Jean Mejeur, Dennis DeYoung; PM—Les & Rena Lynema  
 May 10: AM—Jim & Cindy Mejeur, Vern Klaasen; PM—Tim & Terri Miller  
 May 17: AM—Cathy McMullin and Nancy Minegar, Dave Misner; PM—Keith & Deb Smit  
 May 24: AM—Dave & Wilma Persenaire, Cameron Tuinstra; PM—Bruce & Sue Tiemeyer  
 May 31: AM—Don & Nancy Smith, Harold Wykstra; PM—Henry & Nancy Tuinstra

## Ushers

May 3: Dean VanderMeulen, Luke Watson, Seth Watson  
 May 10: Tom Westendorp, Bruce Aukema, Randy Bouman  
 May 17: Joe DeKoekkoek, Kevin DeKoekkoek, Chase DeMaagd  
 May 24: David DeYoung, Jacob DeYoung, Levi DeYoung  
 May 31: RJ Dillenbeck, Steve Heffron, Bob Katje

## Nursery

May 3: Jessica Tucker  
 May 10: Rebekah Westendorp  
 May 17: Jen, Violet and Willow Tuinstra  
 May 24: Laura DeMaagd  
 May 31: Riley and Addison Tuinstra

## Pepper Lunch (not spicy at all)

### Ingredients

3 cups cooked rice, warm  
4 tbsp maple syrup, or honey  
4 tbsp soy sauce, low sodium  
2 tbsp mirin  
2 tbsp water  
1 tsp garlic powder  
½ tsp black pepper, or more, to taste  
½ tsp onion powder  
1-1½ lb shave beef  
1 tbsp oil  
2 tbsp butter, divided in half  
¼ cup sweet corn  
¼ cup scallions, sliced

### Instructions

1. Cook Jasmine rice in your method of choice.  
(see the instruction how to cook the Jasmine rice below)
2. Make the sauce by combining maple syrup, soy sauce, mirin, water, garlic powder, pepper, and onion powder and set aside.
3. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, add a splash of oil and add the beef to it. Cook until 80-90% browned and drain any excessive liquid in the pan.
4. Push the beef to the side of the pan, making a large enough space in the middle of the pan for a bowl of rice. Add 1 tbsp butter to the middle of the pan and let it melt for a few seconds.
5. Tightly pack around 3 cups of rice into a bowl and invert it into the middle of the pan, over the butter.
6. Remove the bowl, drizzle the sauce over the rice and beef, and then top with the corn. Let everything cook together, untouched for 2 to 3 minutes. The bottom of the rice will get nice and crispy while the sauce cooks with the beef.
7. Top off with the rest of the butter and green onions before serving.

Steamed Jasmine Rice

### Ingredients:

NO RINSING METHOD:

1 cup Jasmine rice  
1 1/4 cups water (cold tap water)

RINSING METHOD:

1 cup Jasmine rice  
1 1/4 cups MINUS 2 tbsp water

NO RINSING:

Place rice and water in a medium saucepan (one with a tight fitting lid). Bring to rapid simmer with NO LID on medium high.

Turn down to low or medium low so it's simmering gently, then place lid on. Do not lift lid during cook.

Cook 12 minutes or until water is absorbed by rice – tilt pot to check (if lid not glass, then QUICKLY lift lid to check).

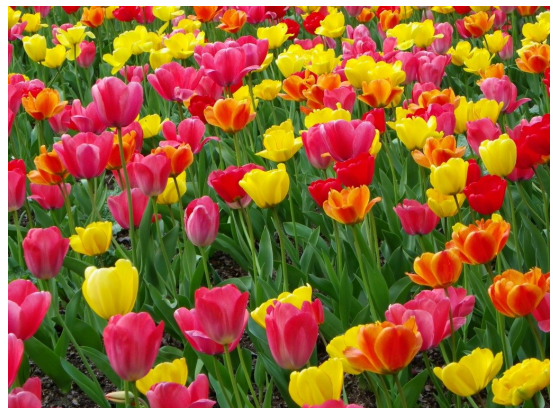
Keep the lid on then remove from heat. Stand 10 minutes, fluff with rubber spatula or rice paddle, then serve.

RINSED RICE:

Place rice in a bowl, fill with water and swish. Once cloudy, drain. Repeat 2 – 3 more times until water is pretty clear – it will never be completely clear.

Drain rice in a colander, transfer to saucepan.

Add water – 1 1/4 cups of water MINUS 2 tablespoons per 1 cup of rice. Follow cook steps above in No Rinsing.



## Library

May 3: Rena Lynema  
May 10: Nancy Tuinstra  
May 17: Carolyn VanderMeulen  
May 24: Linda DeYoung  
May 31: Ida Westendorp

## Shaarda Correspondence

May 3: Glenn & Nancy Leep  
May 10: Rena Lynema  
May 17: Keith & Deb Smit  
May 24: Henry & Nancy Tuinstra  
May 31: Scott & Jen Tuinstra

## Offering Schedule for May

May 3: AM—General Fund/Ministry Shares;  
PM—Martin Area Resource Center  
May 10: AM—East Martin Christian School;  
PM—Mel Trotter Ministries  
May 17: AM—General Fund/Ministry Shares;  
PM—Project Hope  
May 24: AM—East Martin Missions; PM—  
Right to Life Education Fund  
May 31: AM—General Fund/Ministry Shares;  
PM—SON-Life Camp



## Tithes and Offerings for March

General Fund	\$ 9,666.00
Ministry Shares	1,361.01
Faith Promise	
East Martin Missions	1,259.00
Shaarda	455.00
Smit	455.00
Tiemeyer	220.00
Walker	220.00
Spring Break Serve Trip	500.00
East Martin Christian School	2,429.50
Reaching the Forgotten	50.00
Bible League	453.00
International Campus Ministry	465.00
The Singing Crusaders	493.00
Total	\$ 18,026.51