



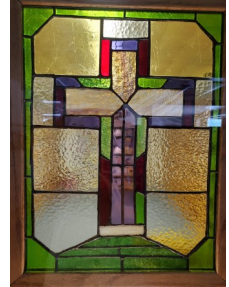
The Echoes

August 2025

A monthly publication of the
East Martin Christian Reformed Church

Reflections from the Pulpit

A New Sermon Series: Dear Church – Christ's Letters to the Seven Churches



This past month, we have journeyed together through the first four churches in Revelation 2, listening to Christ's living words for His people. These letters remind us that Jesus still walks among His church—with eyes that see, a voice that speaks, and a love that calls us back to Himself.

Ephesus (Revelation 2:1–7)

A church strong in truth but cold in love. Christ calls us not only to right doctrine and faithful service but also to rekindle our first love for Him. Our devotion must never become duty without delight.

Smyrna (Revelation 2:8–11)

A persecuted church fragrant with faithfulness. Christ calls us to endure trials with courage, trusting that even suffering can become a testimony of His worth, crowned with eternal life.

Pergamum (Revelation 2:12–17)

A church tempted to compromise. Christ calls us to resist cultural pressures and hold fast to His Word, reminding us that His obedience and sacrifice empower our faithfulness.

Thyatira (Revelation 2:18–29)

A church growing in love and service, yet in danger of tolerating sin. Christ's fiery eyes see both our faithfulness and our failures, calling us to holy discernment and deeper allegiance to Him, the bright Morning Star.

As we continue with the final three churches in the coming weeks, may East Martin CRC be found faithful—holding truth with love, enduring with hope, rejecting compromise, and growing in devotion to Christ. His Word is clear: those who overcome will share in His victory.

Pastoral Visits and Ministry Opportunities:

This month, we concluded our membership class and rejoiced in seeing God at work, drawing people into His church.

♦ **Adult Baptism and Profession of Faith:**

We have six adult baptism candidates—Kenlee, Eden, Rozalyn, Luke, Keri, and Kelsey—and two making their profession of faith, Steve and Seth. They will meet with the Council on the last Sunday of August.

♦ **Welcoming New Families:**

I had the privilege of visiting the Watson family (Seth, Keri, Luke, and Kelsey), who began attending in May. Let us warmly welcome them, walk alongside them, and show the love and hospitality of Christ as they join our church family.

♦ **Bible Class at East Martin Christian School:**

I began teaching a Bible class with seven students. We are walking through the books of the Old Testament together. It has been a joy to open God's Word with them, and I am eager to know my students personally so I can minister more effectively. May the Lord use this opportunity to bless the school community as we grow together in love for God and His Word.

♦ **Visits and Fellowship:**

We enjoyed a wonderful visit with the Smit family—Keith and Deb, their son Joe, his wife Jen, and their children. Together with JC and our kids, we toured the farm, shared food and fellowship, and watched the children enjoy swimming—a refreshing reminder of the joy of Christian community.

- ♦ We also shared a joyful dinner with Wayne and Denise, their daughter Brooke and her family, and Rachel, who will soon begin a year-long teaching program in Vietnam. Together, we prayed for God's guidance and blessing over Rachel's time abroad.

♦ **Weddings, Baptisms, and New Members:**

We celebrated the beautiful wedding of Sam and Julia. Over the past month, we also rejoiced in the baptism of five children: Ayden John Petrie, Wesley Kyle Hoysradt, Charlotte Zhou, and twins Jett Andrew and Josephine Willemmina Leep. We warmly welcomed new members Brad and Maria, parents of the twins, along with their eldest son, Jack. Additionally, we celebrated the return of Paul and Betty DeMann to church membership.

♦ **Pastoral Visits and Rest:**

I had the privilege of visiting Paul and Betty DeMann, spending time in fellowship and prayer with them. We also enjoyed a refreshing time of fellowship and rest with Merrie Beth at Grand Haven State Park, appreciating God's creation together.

Looking Ahead to September:

As we enter September, we eagerly anticipate the resumption of Bible study groups, GEMS, CADETS, Sunday School, and other fellowship activities. We also look forward to our Communion Sunday on the second Sunday of September, where we will joyfully baptize six adults, celebrate two professions of faith, and welcome a total of eight new members into the East Martin CRC family.

A View from the Pew

Things God Cannot Do: God Can't Deny Himself

With this edition of the View from the Pew, we come to our final consideration of things God cannot do, specifically, that God cannot deny Himself. What do we mean by this? God cannot deny His own nature: a holy "Person" of love, mercy, compassion, and faithfulness.

In his second epistle to Timothy (2:11-13), the apostle Paul alerts us to this fact.

If we died with Him,
we will also live with Him.
If we endure hardship,
we will also reign with Him.
If we will disown Him,
He also will disown us.
If we are faithless,
He remains faithful,
for **He cannot deny Who He is.**

While we humans cannot fully plumb the depths of God's character, we should make a concerted effort to explore more intimately Who He is. In II Corinthians 1:3, Paul pens, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Father of mercies and God of all comfort.*" Reformed pastor Dane Ortlund fleshes out this idea for us when he writes, "Yes, the Father is just and righteous. Unswervingly, unendingly. Without such a doctrine, such a reassurance, we would have no hope that all wrongs would one day be righted. But what is his heart? What flows out from his deepest being? What does he beget? Mercies."

Frequently in the Old Testament, the Lord describes (a testimony to the character of God) Himself as merciful or compassionate, most notably first in Exodus 34:6-7 ("And He passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, 'The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin. Yet He does not leave the guilty unpunished; He punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.'")—later quoted in Psalm 86:15; 103:8; 145:8. Further, He reiterates this in various narratives, as when He relents from punishing Israel after their sin. "Nevertheless in Your abundant compassion, You did not utterly consume them nor forsake them, for You are God, gracious and compassionate" (Nehemiah 9:31).

The New Testament scriptures continue this idea when they consistently narrate for us that, when people flock to Jesus, He "ha[s] compassion on them and heal[s] their sick" (Matthew 14:14 and many more). *Splanchnizo*, the word Matthew employs here for compassion, indicates "*deeply moved in*

your gut, in a yearning, visceral way."

Not only do Paul and Matthew paint God as love, mercy, and compassion, but so, too, does James in his letter. However, here, when James uses the word *compassionate*, "he adds a prefix (*polu-*) meaning 'much' or 'greatly.' The Lord, according to James 5:11 is '**much compassionate.**' And that the Lord is **much compassionate** or **greatly compassionated** is synonymous with saying that he is merciful," explains Ortlund. "To speak of God the Father as '*the Father of mercies*' is to say that he is the one who multiplies compassionate mercies to his needful, wayward, messy, fallen, wandering people."

In the Old Testament, when Moses asks God who he should say sends him to Pharaoh, the Lord responds with "I am who I am." When we think about *I Am*, we should recognize "[t]he triune God as three in one, a fountain of endless mercies extending to, meeting, and overflowing providing for us in all our many needs and failures and wanderings" (Ortlund). The bottom line is that He is our *Father* and Christ "the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature" (Hebrews 1:3).

Over the past six months we examined things God cannot do, beginning with God cannot learn; then God cannot be seen; God absolutely cannot not tolerate wrong; God cannot change; God cannot be tempted; and now, God cannot deny Himself. So let's enthusiastically sing the Sunday school song

My God is so great, so strong and so mighty,
there's nothing my God cannot do!

At the same time, let us give thanks for these six "activities" our God cannot do.

At the beginning of this article, we read II Timothy 2:13, which solidifies the beauty of all of this. Indeed, the Lord remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself. Underscored in the Old Testament, we know, "His goodness and mercy follow us *all the days of our lives* (Psalm 23:6a).

Our God is Who He is, forever faithful. Omniscient (all-knowing), He is also omnipresent (everywhere present), and

omnipotent (all-powerful), and praise His Name that He is the Great I Am, and **He cannot deny Himself!**

*All quotes from Pastor Dane Ortlund come from *Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers*.
All emphasis, from this "View from the Pew" writer

"Praying for the Nations"

Pray for Thailand

117 People Groups
71,266,000 People
1.84% Christian Adherent
Unreached People - 61,274,000

Pray for more missionaries to go and proclaim the Gospel to the people of Thailand
Pray for the missionaries and organizations who are already working in God's Kingdom-building in Thailand
Pray for the protection of and provision for the families of the missionaries
Pray for Christians and the Churches in Thailand to boldly proclaim the gospel to their family and neighbors

In Contact With Council



- ◆ Kevin Bouman opened the August 12 Council meeting by reading from Luke 8:4-9 and prayer.
- ◆ Minutes from the last meeting were read. A motion to approve passed.
- ◆ Pastor's report:
Pastor Joel reported on several visits that were made.
Six adult baptisms and two Professions of Faith are scheduled. Baptism for Catarina Lopez will be rescheduled and completion of classes is necessary for Henry Tuinstra and Cece Sutherland prior to Profession of Faith/ baptism.

Pastor Joel and his family enjoyed 12 days of vacation.

Pastor Joel met with all three parents of babies that were baptized.

- ◆ Deacons' report
General Fund 9.7% ahead, Ministry Shares 25.1% behind.
The offering schedule was presented. A motion to approve passed.
The Deacons did some tree work at Larry Lynema's home.
- ◆ Executive—no meeting
- ◆ Worship committee—met
- ◆ Education committee—no meeting
- ◆ Evangelism/outreach—met
Family fun day set for August 23.
At Martin Days on August 9 cards were distributed listing church activities for the year.
Provided cake after the baptisms.
- ◆ Building and grounds:
Sidewalks were poured at the parsonage.
August 23 the cracks will be sealed in the parking lot.
- ◆ Finance committee—no meeting
- ◆ Church safety—AED training was done
- ◆ One Council visit was made.
- ◆ Women's Bible study would like approval for new Bible study books. Motion to approve passed.
- ◆ Homeschool football teams would like to use The Anchor field for practice. Need to get release documents signed saying we aren't liable. A motion was made to let homeschool football team use the field and Anchor bathrooms after waivers are signed releasing us from any liability. Passed.
- ◆ A motion to adjourn passed
- ◆ The next meeting is scheduled for September 9. Doug DeMann has devotions and closed with prayer.

Bible Study Opportunities at East Martin

Sunday School and Catechism

It's hard to believe that the fall education season is almost upon us. This year our Sunday School and Catechism classes begin on Sunday, September 21st.

Jonathan Kalkman will once again be teaching the high school classes (9-12) in the room directly off the sanctuary. They will be completing their study "What We Believe" and will begin a study of the Heidelberg Catechism.

Bruce Tiemeyer will teach middle school (5-8) in the fellowship room by the kitchen. They will begin with a study of I Samuel to Esther then finish the year with a study of Job to Malachi.

Libby Dendel will be teaching 2nd through 4th grade.

Amy Kalkman and Nancy Leep will be teaching our Prek - 1st grade in a classroom off the fellowship area. They team together to do various stories from Old and New Testament and do singing in the basement.

Our annual Christmas program is scheduled for December 21 during the morning service.

For 2025, we will run every Sunday from September 21-December 7th.

We will be off December 14th for the Lord's Supper (the Sunday School will have a brief practice after the service).

Our Christmas Break will be from December 21 after the Christmas program until January 4th.

In 2026, we will run from January 4-March 1. We will take March 8 off for the Lord's Supper, and then resume March 15-22.

Spring Break will include the Sundays of March 29 and April 5. Classes resume on April 12 and run through April 26th.

Bible Sunday is scheduled for Sunday, May 3rd during the morning service.

Girls Everywhere Meeting the Savior

GEMS will begin on September 17 for girls 1st through 8th grade. They will meet from 6-8 pm on the first and third Wednesdays of the month in the church fellowship room.

Cadets

Cadets will begin on September 17 for boys 4th through 8th grade. They will meet from 6-8 pm on the first and third Wednesdays of the month at The Anchor.

Youth Group

This year's youth group is expanding as we are allowing those who graduated high school this past year to continue meeting with us.

Our regular meetings will be on the 2nd and 4th Sunday evenings following the evening service (7:30ish) and will include Bible study, a meal and some free time for games.

The young ladies will also have meetings on the 1st and 3rd Sunday evenings where we will be studying the ladies of the New Testament.

We also hope to have some other activities throughout the year including possible gatherings with other area youth groups. There also may be opportunities for service projects.

We will have a signup sheet soon if you would like to provide a meal.

Coffee Break

Coffee Break Bible study will begin for the new season on September 17. We will meet every Wednesday morning in the church narthex from 9:45 to 11 starting with 15 minutes of coffee time and fellowship followed by a Bible study and time of prayer.

We will be studying "Am I My Sister's Keeper" by Barbara Geer. Through this study we will strengthen our relationship with our Heavenly Father as we deepen our relationships with our "sisters in Christ".

If you would like to join us, please talk with Deb Smit or Denise Leep for details or to get a book.

Ladies' Evening Bible Study

There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex if you would like to be a part of the Ladies' Evening Bible Study. We will meet on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month at 6:30 pm. Our first meeting will be September 8. We will finish our book the first part of December. The book we will be studying is "Excelling in Relationships" by David Meengs.

Everyone is surrounded by relationships. First, and foremost with God, our Creator; then with others including family, friends, fellow workers, and casual acquaintances; and finally, ourselves. *Excelling in Relationships*, is a clear and simply written guide for daily Christian living and a biblical guide for solving and overcoming present and potential pitfalls that we all face at some time or another in our everyday interpersonal relationships.

Throughout the lessons Meengs makes a strong argument for following Christ's directions found in Matthew 25:35–40 for putting God first, others second, and then self. He also emphasizes the need to fix our own hearts through confession, forgiveness, and repentance before we can fix our own problems properly. The final lesson is devoted to a study of Psalm 23.

If you have any questions, please see Sue Tiemeyer.

Men's Bible Study

Men's Bible study will begin again on October 1 at 7pm. We meet on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month. We have a few lessons from our study on David and then we will be starting a new study. If you need a book please contact Kieth Smit and he will be able to get you one. Come and enjoy studying God's word and sharing time with fellow brothers in Christ.

Graduate Plans — Henry Tuinstra

I attended Martin High School, earning my diploma and graduating with an EMT license.

I'm currently working for Wayland EMS as a part-time EMT, using my emergency medical skills to assist the community. Simultaneously, I'm working for the Allegan County Sheriff's Office as a cadet.

This fall I'll be attending KVCC to start working toward an associate degree in Criminal Justice.

*Thank
you!*

**To thank you for your
kindness
and sympathy
at a time
when it was
deeply appreciated.**

Thank you for the prayers and kind words with the passing of my wife, Eleanor.

Joe

How adventurous are you?

It has been about 5 years since our church has had a serve trip to help other people who have been affected by natural disasters. There is a core group of people who would like to offer that opportunity to our church again.

In the past we have focused on the Youth Group and additional individuals have come along as adult sponsors. We will probably plan the trip during school spring break to give that age group the opportunity to participate, and all individuals who are interested are encouraged to join.

As we have done in the past, we hope to work through World Renew to help us find the place where our group could best be used by God to help others.

If you have questions feel free to contact Randy and Mary, Bruce and Sue or Don Wubben. There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex if you are interested or want more information. There will be informational meetings coming nearer the first of the year. Please give this prayerful consideration as to God's direction for your participation.



Check Out the New Books in our Library

OF SILVER AND SECRET—MICHELLE
GRIEP (Time's Lost Treasures #2)
YOU WILL BE PETER—JERRY LATHAN
PERILOUS TIDES—ELIZABETH GODDARD
(Hidden Bay #2)
FIRE MOUNTAIN—DANA MINTIN
(Elements of Danger #1)
VANISHED—DR. DAVID JEREMIAH
WHO IS MARY?—LINDA BYLER (Stepping
Stones #1)
A PLACE CALLED HOME—LINDA BYLER
(Stepping Stones #2)
TOUCH CHOICES—LINDA BYLER (Stepping
Stones #3) Not the typical Amish story. Very
Good. Need to read in order.
DESIGNED WITH LOVE—TRACIE
PETERSON (Hope of Cheyenne #2)
THE FILLING STATION—VANESSA MILLER

Trash For Treasure



Each year during the Martin Trash Day clean up in May, several volunteers from our church help to unload trash from resident's vehicles and get it into the proper dumpsters. They also keep an eye out for any materials that could be saved for recycling. The metal that is collected is brought to the metal recycler and the money received is given to the East Martin CRC Missions Fund.

This year the collected scrap amounted to over \$250 for the Mission Fund. The community is helped, the residents are helped and so is the mission fund, a win - win - win.

Prayer Line FYI

With the Prayer Line messaging system (broadcasts@schoolmessengermail.com) we can send a phone message, an email message, a text message or any combination of these three that you would like.

The phone and email messages are the full description of the prayer concern or information being shared. The text message is limited to 148 characters, so the text message needs to be shortened to fit that limit.

If you want to change any selections as to how you receive the Prayer Line information just let Randy Bouman know.

From Bible League International

Thank you for joining with friends of Bible League to provide God's Word! We appreciate the generous contributions. Together, our church was able to provide \$775 for ministry to children and youth. Continue to pray with us for the provision of God's Word to the lost and needy world.

Thank you for serving the under-resourced church.



Martin Area Resource Center

When grocery shopping please remember Martin Area Resource Center. In September they need Back to School "stuff". Peanut butter and jelly; mac and cheese; tuna, healthy snacks, graham crackers, cracker packs, puddings and jello, juice boxes.

Thanks in advance for helping those in our community who are in need.



Tithes and Offerings for July

General Fund	\$12,654.00
Ministry Shares	2,395.00
Faith Promise	
East Martin Missions	150.00
Shaarda	315.00
Smit	1,765.00
Tiemeyer	315.00
Walker	315.00
Guatemala Orphanage	20.00
GEMS	100.00
Cadets	70.00
Benevolence	200.00
Education Assistance	884.00
Church Upgrades	2,526.70
East Martin Christian School	2,159.00
Berry County Chrisitan School	70.00
Heritage Christian School	150.00
Zion Christian School	70.00
Tri-Unity Christian School	200.00
SON-Life Camp	70.00
Project Hope	414.00
Martin Resource Center	575.00
Reaching the Forgotten	461.00
Wycliffe Bible Translators	70.00
Gideons	300.00
 Total	 \$26,248.70

General Fund 9.7% ahead
Ministry Shares 25.1% behind

Offering Schedule for September

September 7: AM—General Fund/Ministry Shares; PM—SON-Life Camp
September 14: AM—East Martin Christian School; PM—Pine Rest
September 21: AM—General Fund/Ministry Shares; PM—Christian Neighbors
September 28: AM—East Martin Christian School; PM—Back to God Ministries

Greeters

September 7: AM—Joe DeKoekkoek, Wayne Leep; PM—Chase & Laura DeMaagd
September 14: AM—Doug & Jeanne DeMann, Dave Misner; PM—Merrie Beth DenBoer
September 21: AM—Sunday School Kids, Cameron Tuinstra; PM—Libby Dendel
September 28: AM—Dennis & Linda DeYoung, Vern Klaasen; PM—Bob & Ruth Katje

Ushers

September 7: Bruce Tiemeyer, Ryan Tucker, Henry Tuinstra
September 14: Henry M. Tuinstra, Scott Tuinstra, Dean VanderMeulen
September 21: Carsen DeMaagd, Boaz Katje, Landen Tucker
September 28: Thomas Westendorp, Bruce Aukema, Randy Bouman

Nursery

September 7: Jessica Tucker
September 14: Rebekah Westendorp
September 21: Jen, Violet, Willow Tuinstra
September 28: Laura DeMaagd

Library

September 7: Linda DeYoung
September 14: Ida Westendorp
September 21: Rena Lynema
September 28: Nancy Tuinstra

Summer Squash Casserole

3 summer squash — slice, boil until soft and mash

Place in a bowl and add the following:

1/4 cup butter

1/4 cup green pepper, chopped

1 Tbsp sugar

1 egg

1/2 cup mayo

1/2 cup cheese, shredded

Salt and pepper to taste

Pour into a casserole dish.

Sprinkle with bread crumbs or stuffing.

Bake at 350 degrees for 25-30 minutes.