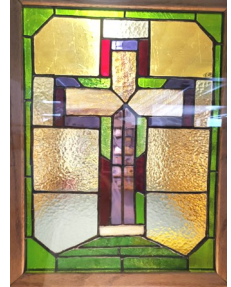


**July 2026**

A monthly publication of the  
East Martin Christian Reformed Church

## **Reflection**



### **Home, Yet Homesick**

It has now been a little over a month since our family arrived in the Philippines, and by God's grace, it has been a full and joyful month. We have had the privilege of worshiping with seven different churches, preaching and teaching in several places, reconnecting with dear friends, and making many new ones along the way. We are deeply grateful for the warm hospitality and encouragement we have received everywhere we have gone.

Ironically, however, one of the strongest feelings we have experienced since returning to our home country has been... homesickness.

Perhaps that sounds strange. After all, this is the Philippines. This is where we grew up. This is where our families and many of our closest friends still live.

Yet over the past month, we have stayed and slept in sixteen different places. Our original Airbnb, where we planned to stay for the remainder of our visit, turned out not to be suitable because the roads leading to it flooded whenever it rained. We eventually moved to another place, which has had its own share of challenges—broken showers, leaking faucets, very little furniture, and a number of other inconveniences.

More than once, we have caught ourselves saying, "We miss home."

I miss my bed and my pillows, especially pillows!

The children miss their rooms and their friends!

JC especially misses her kitchen.

We even miss our own bathrooms!

But more than our house, there is another home we miss even more.

Although we have worshiped in seven different churches since arriving in the Philippines, and although it has been a tremendous blessing to fellowship with God's people here, there is something special about gathering with the same church family every Lord's Day. We miss

# **The Echoes**

worshipping with our brothers and sisters at East Martin Christian Reformed Church. We miss seeing familiar faces, hearing familiar voices, lingering after the service, and spending the whole Lord's Day together with our spiritual family.

The longer we have been away, the more we have realized that East Martin has truly become home.

As I reflected on that feeling, my mind kept returning to Paul's words in Philippians. He reminds believers that our true citizenship is in heaven. In Philippians 1:27, he literally tells the church to "live as citizens" in a manner worthy of the gospel.

That language has taken on fresh meaning during this trip.

Homesickness reminds us that we belong somewhere.

As Christians, that longing points us beyond any earthly address. Even the best homes are only temporary. Even the happiest reunions are only a foretaste. God has given us wonderful gifts to enjoy in this life—our families, our churches, our friendships, good food, meaningful work, and the beauty of His creation. Christians should receive those gifts with gratitude, not guilt. We should love them because they come from our Father's hand.

Yet none of them can ultimately satisfy the deepest longing of the human heart.

Why?

Because we were never created to find our final home here.

The very fact that we can love our earthly homes so deeply, and yet still find them unable to satisfy completely, reminds us that we were made for something greater. Every comfortable home points beyond itself. Every faithful local church points beyond itself. Every joyful family gathering points beyond itself. They all awaken within us a longing for the day when we will finally dwell with Christ in the new heavens and the new earth.

Until then, we live as pilgrims.

We thank God for every earthly home He gives us. We serve Him faithfully wherever He places us. We enjoy His gifts with grateful hearts. But we never mistake the gifts for the destination.

Our true home is where our true King is.

Thank you, East Martin Christian Reformed Church, for praying for us while we are here in the Philippines. We miss you more than you know, and we look forward to worshipping with you again in the Lord's good time.

Until then, may we all continue living as faithful citizens of our heavenly home while serving Christ wherever He has placed us.



## **In Contact With Council**



Randy opened the Council meeting of July 14 with devotions from Mark 10 and prayer.

The minutes of the June meeting were read. A motion to approve passed.

Correspondence: The Homeschool group asked to use the Anchor soccer field and bathroom facilities. The motion to use the grounds was approved with signed waivers.

Deacon's Report: The General Fund is behind 54.38% and Ministry Shares is behind 47.95%. The August offering schedule was presented. A motion to approve passed.

Outreach: Vacation Bible School is rescheduled for August 3-6. Angie Walker will meet with the Outreach committee in August.

Building and Grounds: A chairperson is needed. Looking at new water filters for the parsonage.

Six Council visits were made.

Old Business: Julie Wubben to go to Cuba. There are openings for Josh Shaarda to preach/teach from September to January. The Worship committee to check to see if it's a fit.

New Business: Ideas/discussion for young adults church involvement. Possibly wait until Pastor Joel returns for input/involvement. Praying for guidance.

A motion to adjourn passed. Doug DeMann closed in prayer and has devotions at the August 11 meeting.

## **Our Church Family**

Dave and Wilma Persenaire were members of Faith Christian Reformed church in Tinley Park, IL since 1993 where Wilma has served as a deacon and Dave as an elder. They built their home within walking distance of the church in 1989.

Wilma has worked as the Director of Admissions at Chicago Christian Schools in Palos Heights, IL for the past 20 years and is looking forward to retirement at the end of July. Dave has been retired since 2021 and has been working on building their home and remodeling the old home prior to its sale. Dave worked in the financial industry his entire career working as an internal compliance professional and for the regulator. The last eleven years up until retirement Dave worked for Morgan Stanley.

Dave and Wilma have two daughters and 3 grandchildren. The oldest daughter, Melissa is married to Earl Bloom and lives in Tinley Park, IL. The second daughter, Anna is married to Davis Konynenbelt and lives in Zeeland, MI.

Wilma and Dave met on a commuter bus while travelling to work in 1985. They dated and soon were married in August of 1986. They both enjoy travel, riding bikes, camping and baking/cooking. Dave has a few extended hobbies that keep him busy; golf, hunting and homebrewing beer to mention a

few. Wilma travelled many times to The Netherlands as a child due to the family business. Wilma is also fluent in Dutch.

Both Wilma and Dave were raised in the Christian Reformed Church and came to faith in very traditional fashion. Due to their newly retired status, they both will enjoy a bit more travel and will search for the Lord's leading in any future role in His Church.

## What are Our Grads Doing

### Hailey Tuinstra —

In 2026, I graduated with honors from Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan, earning my Bachelor's degree in Occupational Therapy Assistant. Reaching this milestone is something I am incredibly proud of, as it represents years of hard work, perseverance, and personal growth. Occupational therapy is a profession that helps people do their everyday life and tasks from cleaning and cooking to parenting and self care.

Throughout my college career, I was fortunate to receive several scholarships that helped support my academic journey. While pursuing my degree, I also worked part-time, balancing my job responsibilities with the demands of coursework, clinical experiences, and studying.

One of the most rewarding parts of my education was completing internships in a variety of settings. Some of my favorite experiences were at Northeastern Elementary School and NovaCare Kids in Kalamazoo, where I had the opportunity to work with children. I also completed internships at Heritage Nursing and Rehabilitation in Zeeland, Riverside Nursing and Rehabilitation in Grand Haven, and Kalamazoo Psychiatric Hospital. These experiences allowed me to develop valuable clinical skills while learning how occupational therapy can positively impact individuals across all stages of life.

I am scheduled to take my board examination in July and hope to begin my career as an Occupational Therapy Assistant in the Plainwell or Kalamazoo area. I look forward to applying the knowledge and skills I have gained through my education and fieldwork to help others live fuller and more independent lives.

My college experience came with many challenges and tested my faith in ways I never expected. However, those challenges helped shape me into the person I am today. Through it all, I gained not only an education but also a beautiful friendship that became one of the most meaningful parts of my journey. I leave college with a deeper sense of purpose, lasting memories, and gratitude for everyone who supported me along the way.

As I begin this next chapter, I hope to continue serving people to the best of my ability, as helping others has always been my passion. I am excited to see where this career takes me and look forward to making a positive difference in the lives of those I have the privilege to work with.



## New Books in Our Library

SILENT HORIZENS—  
CHAD ROBICHAUX & JACK STEWART (A  
Military Thriller #1)  
RIPTIDE—CHAD ROBICHAUX & JACK  
STEWART (A Military Thriller #2)  
OVER THE EDGE—SUSAN MAY WARREN  
& TARI FARIS (Summer Rangers #1)  
THE SECRETS OF EMBERWILD—  
STEPHENIA H. McGEE  
SILENT MENACE—ANGELA CARLISLE  
(Secrets of Kincaid #1)  
THE BRUNSWICK—CALLIE MURRY (WWII  
Novel of the American South)  
IN TOO DEEP—SUSAN MAY WARREN  
(Summer Rangers #2)

## 47th Annual Fall Regional Conference for Bible League

Adults and teens are invited to the Bible League Conference, Hope and Forgiveness in the Midst of Evil, on September 11 at Friendship CRC in Byron Center.

Keynote speaker, Gayle Haas, will lead our sessions as Corrie ten Boom. The realities of WWII will come to life, and you will be stirred by the hope that can only come through Jesus.

Worship will be led by Sara Denzel and Bible League leaders will share powerful updates about their ministry.

Register today at [bibleleague.org/tickets](http://bibleleague.org/tickets) — seating for lunch is limited.



### Martin Area Resource Center

When grocery shopping please remember Martin Area Resource Center. In August they need condiments: Ketchup, mustard, mayo/salad dressing, dressings (French, Ranch, etc), pickles, olives.

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

### Backpacks Needed

We are doing a backpack drive in August. We will be providing backpacks with school supplies to the needy kids in our area. There is a tote by the grocery cart to place them in.



### Marble Squares

1—8 oz pkg cream cheese

1/3 cup sugar

1 egg

Combine softened cream cheese and sugar, mixing until well blended. Add egg; mix well.

1/2 cup butter

3/4 cup water

1 1/2 (1 oz) square semi-sweet chocolate

Combine butter, water and chocolate in saucepan; bring to a boil. Remove from heat.

2 cups flour

2 cups sugar

2 eggs

1/2 cup sour cream

1 tsp soda

1/2 tsp salt

Stir flour, sugar, eggs, sour cream, soda and salt into the butter, water, chocolate mixture.

Pour into a greased and floured 15 1/2 x 10 1/2 inch jelly roll pan. Spoon cream cheese mixture over chocolate batter being sure to get it close to the edges. Cut through batter with knife several times for a marble effect.

1 cup semi-sweet chocolate pieces

Sprinkle with chocolate pieces. Bake at 375 degrees for 25-30 minutes.



## Greeters

August 2 — AM: Les & Rena Lynema, Seth Watson; PM: Tim & Terre Miller  
August 9 — AM: Bruce Mejeur, Harold Wykstra; PM: Henry & Nancy Tuinstra  
August 16 — AM: Jim & Cindy Mejeur, Kevin Bouman; PM: Scott & Jen Tuinstra  
August 23 — AM: Dave & Jean Mejeur, Randy Bouman; PM: Tom Rook  
August 30 — AM: Cathy McMullin and Nancy Minegar, Doug DeMann; PM: Tim, Thomas and Rebekah Westendorp

## Ushers

August 2 — David DeYoung, Jake DeYoung, Levi DeYoung  
August 9 — RJ Dillenbeck, Steve Heffron, Bob Katje  
August 16 — Glenn Leep, Wayne Leep, Les Lynema  
August 23 — Bruce Mejeur, Jim Mejeur, Tim Miller  
August 30 — Dave Mejeur, Dave Persenaire, Tom Rook

## Nursery

August 2 — Laura DeMaagd  
August 9 — Riley and Addison Tuinstra  
August 16 — Jessica Tucker  
August 23 — Rebekah Westendorp  
August 30 — Jen, Violet, and Willow Tuinstra

## Library

August 2 — Linda DeYoung  
August 9 — Ida Westendorp  
August 16 — Rena Lynema  
August 23 — Nancy Tuinstra  
August 30 — Carolyn VanderMeulen



## Tithes and Offerings for June

|                               |              |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| General Fund                  | \$ 7,232.75  |
| Ministry Shares               | 1,509.40     |
| Faith Promise                 |              |
| Shaarda                       | 130.00       |
| Smit                          | 130.00       |
| Tiemeyer                      | 130.00       |
| Walker                        | 130.00       |
| East Martin Christian School  | 2,058.00     |
| Zion Christian School         | 238.00       |
| Resonate Global Missions      | 393.00       |
| Martin Area Resource Center   | 1,278.00     |
| Philippines Earthquake Relief | 1,000.00     |
| Wycliffe Bible Translators    | 277.00       |
| Gideons                       | 380.00       |
| Total                         | \$ 14,886.15 |

## Offering Schedule for August

August 2: AM—General Fund/Ministry Shares; PM—Back to God Ministries  
August 9: AM—East Martin Christian School; PM—Gideons  
August 16: AM—General Fund/Ministry Shares; PM—LEMA Institute  
August 23: AM—Martin Area Resource Center; PM—Project Hope  
August 30: AM—General Fund/Ministry Shares; PM—Luke Society

## Natural Law of ...

The coffee law ... as soon as you sit down to a cup of hot coffee, your boss will ask you to do something which will last until the coffee is cold.

Law of Physical Surfaces ... the chance of an open-faced jelly sandwich landing face down on the floor, is directly correlated to the newness and cost of the carpet or rug.