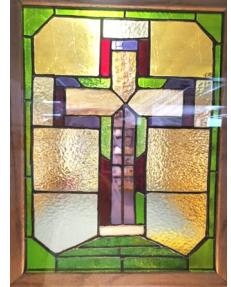




June 2026

A monthly publication of the
East Martin Christian Reformed Church

Reflection



Do People Hear Your Christian Accent?

Reflection Questions

- ◆ If someone spent a week with you, what would convince them that you belong to Christ?
- ◆ What words, habits, attitudes, and priorities make your faith visible to others?
- ◆ Can your neighbors, coworkers, classmates, and family members "hear" your Christian accent?

One of the very few things I enjoyed during our recent travel from Michigan back to our home country, the Philippines, was spotting Filipinos everywhere and trying to start conversations (boy, how I hate flying!).

Sometimes identifying fellow Filipinos is easy. There were many Filipinos working at Chicago O'Hare Airport. Our airline check-in agent was a Filipina. I greeted her in Filipino, and she responded in Filipino. Later, we bought distilled water from another Filipina. I said, "Kamusta po?" and she answered with a smile. Even the person holding a boarding sign and helping passengers turned out to be Filipino.

But appearances do not always tell the whole story.

While waiting for our connecting flight in Tokyo, I approached a man in a lounge and called him, "Pre" (short for pare—a common Filipino expression similar to saying "bro" or "buddy"). He did not respond. So I tried again and said, "Bro." He finally looked at me, and I asked, "Are you Filipino?" He replied, "No, I'm Indonesian."

Oops.

Looks are not everything.

But there is one thing that often gives us away: our accent.

Many times when we call hotels in the United States, I can immediately tell when the person on the other end of the line is Filipino. I cannot see them, but I can hear it. If you know, you know.

When we first arrived in the United States four years ago, I made it a goal to improve my English pronunciation. Since then, I have been blessed with several "English teachers" from churches where I served during seminary. One gracious lady in rural Iowa regularly gives me a list of

words I mispronounced after every sermon. Another, a retired English teacher from Indiana, enjoys discussing idioms with me, and it's always a joy to pick his brain. Yet another studied at Oxford University and kindly offers pronunciation tips whenever needed.

By God's grace, I have improved. Listening to recordings of my sermons has helped as well. Yet no matter how much I improve, it seems that my Filipino accent will always remain. And perhaps that is not a bad thing.

Accents reveal where we come from. They remind others that we belong somewhere. As Christians, we should have something like a "Christian accent."

When Peter describes believers as "sojourners and exiles" (1 Peter 2:11), and when Paul reminds us that "our citizenship is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20), they are teaching that Christians belong to another kingdom. We live in this world, but we are not ultimately from it.

I do not merely mean a way of speaking. Certainly, our speech should be different (Ephesians 4:29; James 3:9–10). But our entire manner of life should be distinct. Our words, attitudes, priorities, relationships, and conduct should all reflect our heavenly citizenship.

Paul says that believers are to live their lives in every way they will make "the teaching about God our Savior attractive" (Titus 2:10). In other words, our lives should make the beauty of the gospel visible.

Can people hear your Christian accent?

Can they hear it in your patience when others are difficult?

Can they hear it in your honesty when no one is watching?

Can they hear it in your kindness toward those who can give you nothing in return?

Can they hear it in your words, your work ethic, your marriage, your parenting, and your love for your neighbor?

A Christian accent is not something we put on for Sunday morning. It should be evident throughout the week.

Farmers display a Christian accent when they work diligently, trust God's providence through uncertain seasons, and treat workers fairly.

Mothers display a Christian accent when they lovingly disciple their children, serve their families with joy, and model Christlike patience.

Fathers display a Christian accent when they lead their homes spiritually, love their wives sacrificially, and point their children to Christ.

Children display a Christian accent when they obey their parents, show respect to adults, and treat siblings and friends with kindness.

Neighbors display a Christian accent when they offer practical help, show hospitality, and pursue peace within their communities.

Teachers display a Christian accent when they teach with integrity, encourage what is good and true, and care for those entrusted to them.

Blue-collar workers display a Christian accent when they work honestly, keep their word, and perform every task as unto the Lord.

White-collar workers display a Christian accent when they refuse dishonesty, treat others with dignity, and use their influence for the good of others.

In every station of life, Christians are called to live in such a way that others can recognize that they belong to Jesus Christ.

The question is simple: Can those around us hear our Christian accent?

In Contact with Council



Kevin opened the Council meeting of June 9 with devotions from James 1:2-4 and a reading from a TODAY devotional. Kevin opened with prayer.

Minutes from the May meeting were read. A motion to approved passed.

Pastor's Report: not present

Deacon's Report: The General Fund is ahead by 5.77%; Ministry Shares behind by 9.98%. A motion to approve the July offering schedule passed. The deacons will make contacts with members who may have needs.

Worship committee, Education committee and Executive committee did not meet.

Outreach committee: Metal recycle monies from Martin Trash Days will go into the East Martin Mission fund. VBS is scheduled for June 22-25. Six volunteers have signed up. An opportunity to rescue a playground set for June 13 is a possibility for Tall Oaks Camp run by the Rillema family.

Old Business: Angie Walker is meeting with the Outreach committee in July. Jen and Violet will leave for Uganda to visit the Shaarda's in mid June. Julie Wubben requested financial support to go to Cuba to teach music. The motion passed.

New Business: Election of Officers: Chair—Randy Bouman; Clerk—Cameron Tuinstra; Vice—Dennis DeYoung

Council Districts:

A-DenBoer
Dendel—G. Leep
N. Leep—Rillema
Rook—VanderMeulen
VanElderen—Z

Elder—Harold Wykstra
Elder—Cameron Tuinstra
Elder—Keith Smit
Elder—Dennis DeYoung
Elder—Dave Misner

Deacon—Seth Watson
Deacon—Kevin Bouman
Deacon—Ryan Tucker
Deacon—Doug DeMann
Deacon—Vern Klaasen

Committee Assignments:

Worship—Harold Wykstra; Education—Keith Smit; Outreach—Cameron Tuinstra; Building and Grounds—Dave Misner/Vern Klaasen; Church Safety—Kevin Bouman

A motion to adjourn passed. The next meeting will be held on July 14. Randy closed in prayer.

Did You Know?

Hailey Tuinstra graduated from Western Michigan University this spring with a Bachelor of Science degree in Occupational Therapy.

Riley Tuinstra also graduated from Western Michigan University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Early Education. She has a job as a preschool teacher in Dorr.

Congratulations ladies on a job well done.



Riley is engaged to Aaron Keck. Riley and Aaron are expecting to be married in November. They have purchased a house in Hastings. They are excited but also very busy.

Congratulations! We pray for God's blessing in your marriage.



Congratulations to Maria Leep on her new position as the Martin Township Treasurer. Maria, we know we are in good hands with you on board.

A big thank you to Sue Tiemeyer for holding that job for 20 years.

It's a Groom's Shower

You are invited to participate in a Groom's Shower for Sam Katje. Sam and Katey Conklin are planning an August 15 wedding. A tool belt will be hung in the church narthex for the next few weeks. Please place your gift for Sam and Katey in the tool belt. Your gift can be in the form of cash or gift cards. If you wish to provide a wedding card, please place that in the tool belt also.

Thank you for supporting this marriage with your gifts and prayers.

The East Martin CRC Mission Fund benefits from Martin Trash Days. Each year at the trash day in Martin a group from our congregation



volunteer to help unload trash from residents' vehicles and fill up 6 huge dumpsters with the trash they want to get rid of. During the unloading process if any metal scrape is found they set it aside and load it on other trailers to bring to metal scrap recycle yards for money.

This year the scrap collected and sold was 8,737 pounds of metal and raised \$866.65.

Summer Session of Men's Bible Study

A summer session of Men's Bible study will meet the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month at 7:00 pm. The Bible study method we will use is called "Bible reading for common people". We will be studying the book of James. Hope you can join us for an evening of exploring God's Word.



What's New in our Library

CHASE THE LIGHT—SUZY WOODS FISHER
(National Parks)
HARBOR POINTE—IRENE HANNON (Hope
Harbor Novel)
THESE EMPTY PLACES—SARAH LOUDIN
THOMAS
SCENT OF HOPE— SUSAN MAY WARREN
(Call of the Wild #2)
A CHANCE FOR CALLIE MAE—ANN H
GABHART
TEACH ME TO PRAY—KRISTEN
WETHERELL (Praying God's Word from A-Z)

Bible League Conference

*You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope
in Your word.* Psalm 119:114 NKJV

Adults and teens are invited to a Bible League
Conference on Friday, September 11, at
Friendship church in Byron Center, hosted by
Bible League Volunteer Ambassadors.
Together, we'll focus on the hope and
forgiveness that can only come through Jesus.

Bible League guests include President Jos
Snoep, Andrew Earnshaw and a powerful
ministry update from Romi Barcena in the
Philippines. Donations will be accepted to
support this mission.

Keynote speaker, Gayle Haas will bring to life
the testimony of Corrie ten Boom, who was
known for helping hide and protect Jewish
people during the Nazi occupation in World
War II. Through her powerful narrative, your
heart will be stirred, challenged, and forever
changed.

Ticket fees help cover event expenses.
Registration is \$40 with lunch or \$27 without
lunch. Sign up at bibleleague.org/tickets
(lunch seating is limited).



Martin Area Resource Center

When grocery shopping please
remember Martin Area Resource
Center. In July they need cleaners: Laundry
soap, fabric softeners, dish soap/ dishwasher
soap, window wash, disinfectants, (toilet,
household), mops, brooms and sponges.

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



Blueberry-Lemon Muffins

3/4 cup sugar
3 Tbsp oil
1 egg or egg substitute
3/4 cup milk mixed with 1 Tbsp lemon juice
1 tsp baking soda
1 tsp cinnamon
1 tsp salt
1 1/2 cups flour (1/2 whole wheat; 1/2 white)
1 cup blueberries (fresh or frozen)

Mix sugar, oil, egg, milk and lemon juice
together by hand or with a mixer on low. Add
baking soda, cinnamon, salt and flour. Fold in
blueberries. Bake 400 degrees 20-25 minutes.
Yield: 12 muffins

Greeters

July 5: AM—RJ Dillenbeck, Vern Klaasen;
PM—Libby Dendel
July 12: AM—Steve & Sara Heffron, Dave
Misner; PM—Kenlee Funk
July 19: AM—Bob & Ruth Katje, Keith Smit;
PM—Glenn & Nancy Leep
July 26: AM—Wayne & Denise Leep,
Cameron Tuinstra; PM—Wes & Darlene Leep



Ushers

July 5: Henry M Tuinstra, Scott Tuinstra,
Dean VanderMeulen
July 12: Luke Watson, Tim Westendorp,
Thomas Westendorp
July 19: Dean Wubben, Don Wubben, Bruce
Aukema
July 26: Joe DeKoekkoek, Kevin
DeKoekkoek, Chase DeMaagd

Nursery

July 5: Riley and Addison Tuinstra
July 12: Jessica DeMaagd
July 19: Rebekah Westendorp
July 26: Jen, Violet, and Willow Tuinstra

Library

July 5: Ida Westendorp
July 12: Rena Lynema
July 19: Nancy Tuinstra
July 26: Carolyn VanderMeulen

Shaarda Correspondence

July 5: Keith & Deb Smit
July 12: Henry & Nancy Tuinstra
July 19: Scott & Jen Tuinstra
July 26: Randy & Mary Bouman

Tithes and Offerings for May

General Fund	\$23,442.50
Ministry Shares	5,915.00
Faith Promise	
East Martin Missions	2,813.10
Shaarda	227.50
Smit	227.50
Tiemeyer	227.50
Walker	227.50
East Martin Christian School	1,731.00
SON-Life Camp	502.00
Martin Area Resource Center	318.00
Project Hope	470.00
Right to Life Education Fund	359.00
Mel Trotter Mission	462.00
Total	\$36,922.60

Offering Schedule for July

July 5: AM—General Fund/Ministry Shares;
PM—Freedom in Christ (Shaarda)
July 12: AM—East Martin Christian School;
PM—Kalamazoo Christian High School
July 19: AM—General Fund/Ministry Shares;
PM: Bible League International
July 26: AM—General Fund/Ministry Shares;
PM—Youth for Christ

