



**The El Estero Echoes**  
**El Estero Presbyterian Church**  
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Pastor Ted Esaki

**December** Vol. 2017. Issue 12

The Mission of the El Estero Presbyterian Church is to Glorify God  
through a Grateful Commitment  
to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.

Pastor Ted's Message



**Trusting God Even When We Don't Understand**

December 19<sup>th</sup>, marked the 2nd year anniversary since my daughter Sherry was suddenly afflicted by a mysterious illness that left her without feeling from her shoulders down.

Over the past two years, we have often wondered what was the cause of her idiopathic transverse myelitis. Was it too much zinc in her system from cold medicine? She did battle a cold two weeks before her illness. Was it a copper deficiency? Blood tests revealed her low copper levels. Despite all the medical tests, including genetic testing, it remains inconclusive as to what caused her illness.

Fast forward two years, we are grateful and praise God for her continued recovery. Going from being unable to move her entire body, to a wheelchair, to two long years of physical therapy, we do see God moving and strengthening her day by day. Although she lives with constant nerve pain and has little feeling below her knees, we thank God that she has more mobility, can walk with a trekking pole, and can even begin to drive again. This past week we went to Watsonville to get hand controls installed in her car.

We believe that God has been teaching us a special lesson; **trust God even when you don't understand.** It has been hard for me as a father to watch my daughter go through so much adversity at such an early stage in her life. The physical, emotional, and spiritual trials are far beyond what most 21 year olds have had to go through, and even beyond what many people go through their in entire lives.

Learning to trust God in adversity has been a long and slow process for us. It is a lesson that we need to learn each and every day. This lesson of learning to trust God is not just for Sherry and I, but also a lesson that all believers go through. We ask ourselves such questions as, "We know God, love God, and serve God, so why did this bad things happen? Is God really Sovereign and in control of all of life's circumstances? If God is truly in control

of our lives, why did this person come down with this illness?" And as someone who has been a pastor for nearly 30 years: "Can I truly believe what I preach?"

As I write this article for "The ECHOES", I know that others in our congregation also go through challenging times of adversity. I also know that there are no "easy answers" to these trying times. I didn't understand when my first wife Cheryl was killed in an automobile accident 12 days after we were married; I didn't understand when my wife Kazuko passed away four years ago from liver and lung disease, and I don't understand why Sherry has to suffer daily with nerve pain from her transverse myelitis.

What I do know is that **God is good**. All the time God is good. In the 42 years since I became a Christian, I have experienced too much of the love of God, his presence, and the countless "miracles." So much so that I can not deny his existence.

*Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your path." The Lord still has a unique plan for each one of us no matter what struggles come our way: "For I know the plans I have for you" declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11*

This is our faith, this is our hope, and this is what I pray will encourage you as you face life's challenges. In Christ, Pastor Ted



We welcome **Nancy Hollingsworth** as a new member of our church. Nancy grew up in Pennsylvania in a devoted Christian family. She met Mark while he was in the Navy. Mark pastored a small church in Gustine. Nancy worked as a Hospice nurse. They have 3 sons and 5 grand children. When Mark and Nancy retired they moved to the Monterey Peninsula. We are blessed to have both of them in our church family.



### **Joys and Concerns**

Please continue to pray for



Sherry Esaki, Seon Hashimoto, Ralph and Ginny Heun, Reiko Kageyama, Junki Kitahara, Kiku Kuwatani, Dorothy Maceira, Royal and Hiro Manaka, Susie Marquez, Franco and Renee Mola, Bob, Joan, and Val Ouye, Lyle and Meja Quock, Tomiye Tanaka, Lily Uyeda, Nami Uyeda, Hisao and Setsuko Yamanishi, May Wong, George Wooding, the Oka family with the passing of Miyo, the Fukuhara family with the passing of Evelyn, the Yokogawa family with the passing of Jerry .



### **Ukulele Visits in December**

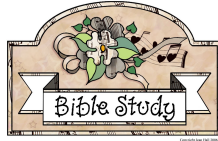
We visited May Wong at Sunrise House, Nami Uyeda at Canterbury Woods, and Royal and Hiro Manaka at their home.



# COME AND JOIN A BIBLE STUDY

*Magnify \* Maturity \* Membership \* Ministry \* Mission*

Please join us.



Let's learn together.

**Prayer Meeting:** Every Sunday, 8:30 – 9:15 am.

**Adult Discipleship:** Every Sunday morning, 9:30 – 10:15 am.

This Bible Study is structured as small group studies, 4, 5, or 6 people in a group. The focus is on Discipleship and we will proceed with a study of the Book of Acts. There is a weekly study guide for your daily Bible reading at home and questions to guide your studies. Discussion follows in the small groups on Sunday morning. We will resume Adult Discipleship on Sunday, January 7, 2018. Everyone is welcome to join us at any time.

**Wednesday Bible Study:** Every Wednesday morning, 10:30 – 12:00 noon.

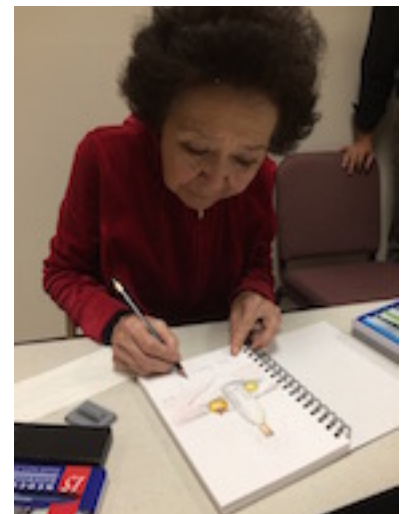
A follow up of Pastor Ted's Sunday Worship Service message. Discussion follows a review of Sunday's sermon with the Sunday worship study guide.

**Evening Bible Study:** Bible study at Pastor Ted's home will meet on the first and third Friday of each month, 7:30 – 9:00 pm.

Our church will be hosting an **OPEN ART STUDIO** twice a month, in the Fellowship Hall. We will be meeting on the first and third Saturday of each month, from 10:00 am to Noon. Absolute beginners to advanced artists are welcome. Please bring your own art supplies. We will have a still life or a flower arrangement for your inspiration. Maybe even a live model. Or you may bring postcards, photos, greeting cards, calendar pictures, book illustrations, or your ipad, etc to work from. We are looking forward to learning together and enjoying each other's creativity. Watch for more art news in The Echoes.



Our first meeting will be on Saturday, January 6, 2018, 10:00 am to noon.  
Everyone is welcome.



**Our next Fellowship Hike** is planned for the Saturday, January 27, the time and place to be determined. If you are interested, please RSVP to Pastor Ted [pted.eepc@gmail.com](mailto:pted.eepc@gmail.com) We will announce the time and place at worship service and we will return your email.




Bay School to Ribera Road above the lagoon.



Thank you for the festive and delicious Christmas Cookies on  
December 24.  
Thank you everyone!

### Our Service Volunteers for January 2018

January	Leader	Greeters	Ushers	Coffee	Flowers
7 Communion	Pastor Ted	Chihiro T. Greg M.	Lyle Q. Junki K.	Jean T.	  El Estero Yvonne H.
		Communion Servers Elders: Don C. and Yae K. Deacons: Junki K. and Marilyn K.			
14	Pastor Ted	Dorothy M. Bob McI.	Taye S. Robert S.	Yuri W.	
21	Pastor Ted	Marian K. Adele K.	Yuri W. Yae K.	Nora S.	
28	Pastor Ted	Sherry E. Nancy N.	Tom G. Henry M.	Dori C.	

#### VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED TO FILL WORSHIP TEAM ASSIGNMENTS

Please let Dori know in which position you may be called to serve. New greeters, ushers, and coffee volunteers are welcome. Please see the sign up sheet on the hallway bulletin board. You may sign up with a relative or a friend. Please let Dori or the church office know in advance if you need to make a change or substitution.



# January 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Sunday Worship Service starts at 10:30 am Communion will be on the first Sunday of this month.						
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 9:30 am Finance Meeting	<b>3</b> 10:30 – 11:45 Bible Study	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> 7:30 – 9:00 pm Bible Study at Pastor Ted's home	<b>6</b> 10:00 – noon Open Art Studio
<b>7</b> 8:30 –9:15 am Prayer Meeting  9:30 – 10:15 am Adult Sunday School  Ordination and Installation of Elders and Deacons  Communion  Children's Sunday School  Noon Outreach Meeting	<b>8</b> 10:30 am Ukulele Practice	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> 10:30 – 11:45 Bible Study  12:15 Ukulele Practice	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>14</b> 8:30 –9:15 am Prayer Meeting  9:30 – 10:15 am Adult Sunday School  Children's Sunday School  Noon Session Meeting	<b>15</b> 10:30 am Ukulele Practice	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 10:30 – 11:45 Bible Study  12:15 Ukulele Practice	<b>18</b> 9:00 – noon Quarterly Session Deacons Retreat	<b>19</b> Echoes Articles Due  7:30 – 9:00 pm Bible Study at Pastor Ted's home	<b>20</b> 10:00 – noon Open Art Studio
<b>21</b> 8:30 –9:15 am Prayer Meeting  9:30 – 10:15 am Adult Sunday School  Children's Sunday School	<b>22</b> 10:30 am Ukulele Practice	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 10:30 – 11:45 Bible Study  12:15 Ukulele Practice	<b>25</b> 10:00 Fold and mail The Echoes	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> Hiking Fellowship
<b>28</b> 8:30 –9:15 am Prayer Meeting  9:30 – 10:15 am Adult Sunday School  Children's Sunday School	<b>29</b> 10:30 am Ukulele Practice	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> 10:30 – 11:45 Bible Study  12:15 Ukulele Practice			

## **El Estero Presbyterian Church**

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*"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your  
God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my  
righteous right hand."  
Isaiah 41:10*