



# El Estero Echoes

El Estero Presbyterian Church

490 Camino El Estero, Monterey, CA 93940

Office 831.375-6622 Fax 831.644-0597

E-Mail: [elesteropc@gmail.com](mailto:elesteropc@gmail.com) Web: [elesteropc.org](http://elesteropc.org)

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## Thanksgiving Thoughts

### Living a Life of Thanksgiving to the Lord

For God's people, Thanksgiving is far more than a special day on the calendar. The Bible urges us to live a life of thanksgiving each day. Being thankful to God for all of His blessings is truly a mark of the Christian. So let me give you four biblical ways to express your thanksgiving to the Lord at this wonderful season of the year. The base I want to build on is Psalm 100, a song of praise to God as our Creator, Sustainer and Redeemer.

I see at least four ways that Psalm 100 instructs us to praise and worship God. Some may be a little scary to those who are not used to joyously expressing praise, but I encourage you not to be afraid!

#### 1. Don't Be Afraid to Shout Praise to the Lord.

The Bible says, "Make a joyful shout to the LORD" In the Bible, shouting is associated with great achievement or joy. Joshua told Israel to march around Jericho for six days and on the seventh day to lift a great shout. When they did, the walls fell down .

When you are thanking and praising God, don't be afraid to be a little loud. God loves to hear our praises, and it will also make you biblical!

#### 2. Don't Be Afraid to Serve the Lord with Gladness.

"Serve the LORD with gladness" Gladness means mirth, gaiety and happiness. No service to the Lord, whether great or small, should be done grudgingly.

Sincere and true delight in service to God should accompany our words and deeds of worship. When you are serving the Lord, don't be afraid to do it with a glad heart—and don't be afraid to smile!

#### 3. Don't Be Afraid to Come into the Lord's Presence.

"Come before His presence with singing" God calls us to come into His presence privately each day and together in corporate worship. "Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice."

It was said of the fledgling New Testament church that they met daily in the temple for teaching from the Word, fellowship, worship and praise. Little wonder that Hebrews 10:25 begs us not to fail to regularly assemble with other believers in thanksgiving, hearing the Word and worship.

#### 4. Don't Be Afraid to Get to Know the Lord.

The rest of Psalm 100:says, "Know that the LORD, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture" (emphasis added). The psalmist calls the people to recognize and "know" God's words, works and ways.

He wants us to know that He is Jehovah God and we are not, that He is the Creator and we are His creatures and that we are His sheep and He is our Shepherd.

The heart-longing of every godly person is to get to know God more intimately.

Let's make it our determination to praise and worship God this holiday season!

From: <http://www.backtothebible.org/>

## **A Christmas Message**

"...Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning...." ~ *James 1: 17* (NKJV)

We rush around so much at Christmas time trying to find the perfect gift for someone. It can be a very stressful time, and can take our focus off the real meaning of Christmas.

Most of what we buy is only for a moment in time. There's no real lasting value, especially when buying for Kids! We may lose interest, or it's finished with, or kids toys get broken and clothing is outgrown. Every good and perfect gift comes from God the Father, and His gifts are eternal. He has given each of us 'gifts' to do His will. But the most important gift of all was the gift of His son - Jesus.

Each good and perfect gift that's given comes down from above, from our Father in Heaven.

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**Christmas Offering envelopes are enclosed for your convenience**

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## **ADVENT**

Advent season is the time for the preparation of the coming of Christ on Christmas. It is the beginning of the church year. The season of Advent begins on the fourth Sunday prior to Christmas Day or the one closest to November 30th and ends on Christmas Eve. In the case where Christmas Eve falls on Sunday the fourth Sunday of Advent will be Christmas Eve. For this year it begins on Sunday, November 30th. Traditionally each of the Advent candles are lit each Sunday with a fifth candle lit at the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service.

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## **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**

Please join us in celebrating Christmas Eve with carols, hymns and lighting of the fifth advent candle.  
Service begins at 6:30 PM - Cookies, beverages and fellowship to share afterwards.

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## **PRAYER CONCERNS** Let us continue to pray for:

Bill & May Wong - Hiro & Royal Manaka  
Bobby Kuwatani - Hedy Yamamoto—Cary Gota—Skye Gota  
Clifford & Nancy Nakajima and son Scott—John & Susie Mitchell  
Bob & Joan Ouye - Hisao & Setsuko Yamanishi  
Susie Marquez—Miles Marquez in Afghanistan

Marilyn Uwate's father who turned 100 years  
Karen Kakishiba, Kiku and Taye's niece  
Those families who have lost loved ones

Pastor Craig and his family  
El Estero Church during this period of transition

**Devotion:**

Pastor George Doyal, moderator for session. John 16:33 “These things I have spoken to you, that in me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

What does that mean? Trials, hardships and difficulties? Being a Christian doesn’t mean you don’t have any trials, tensions and stresses like those in a family. Focus on the peace you have in Christ.

He is with you, will strengthen you.

**Church Corporation:** Don Chin, Chair. Stewardship Pledge letter has been developed and will be distributed to the Congregation along with proposed church budget for 2015 and pledge cards to be returned. Presbytery of San Jose: Elder Frank Bernstein, Liaison to El Estero Presbyterian along with Rev. Chris Williams and Ret. Rev. Jay Bartow who are members of the Committee on Ministry attended the Session Meeting. They indicated their feeling it is important for the church to consider hiring an Interim Pastor. The salary package of an Interim must earn no less than what the previous pastor received. Session members were able to speak with them and ask questions about the process of searching for a new pastor.

**Deacons:** emailed report received. Deacons wish to discontinue hand washing for Communion. Session will invite the Deacons to the next Session meeting to discuss the service and Celebration of the Lord’s Supper. Deacons wish to discontinue support of Nancy’s Project. Session voted to continue Outreach support of Nancy’s Project, as well as continue support of food drives for Loaves & Fishes, the Salvation Army and the Monterey County Food Bank by rotating which organization has a barrel on church premises.

**Administrative Branch: Building & Grounds:** Work on the Stair Replacement project is continuing. Worship Service will be moved downstairs temporarily when the outside stairway is removed. Janitorial service hours will change to Thursday morning every other week. Session expressed appreciation for Gene Lee who has been setting out the ramps and opening gates to the back parking area on Sunday mornings. The front doors to church were found ajar twice in the past 3 weeks. The locking mechanism might not always latch securely. A lock smith will be called. The downstairs locks have been changed for better security. **Safe Church:** Mandatory Reporter Training was completed by Teruyo Petrocelli and Yuri Wong on November 8<sup>th</sup> at Foothill Presbyterian. Training is required by the Presbytery of San Jose for all officers, staff, Sunday school teachers and those who come into contact with young children and the elderly in their church ministries. **Church Nominating Committee:** has met to review desired qualities of officers according to the Bible and Book of Order.

**Outreach Branch:** 10 members plan on attending the Organic Outreach Conference later this month.

**Commissioner to the meetings of the Presbytery of San Jose:** Dick Wong has been appointed commission to represent El Estero at San Jose Presbytery meetings.

### **Vacant Pastor Position**

Session had its first meeting with the Commission on Ministry representatives of the San Jose Presbytery. They have provided direction, guidance and prayers in our search for a new pastor. It may be a lengthy process which the session is embarked upon. Please pray with the leadership that God in his infinite wisdom and love will show us His plan for El Estero.

### **Deacons Notes**

Junki attended Nomination meeting before Service Nov 9. Aiko and Kaz finishing one year terms. Kaz declined another term, Aiko to consider another term. The Board unanimously decided to discontinue symbolic/ritual of Hand Washing for future Communion Service. Foods will be collected during November for the Loaves and Fishes food pantry. Canned and dry goods, breakfast food appreciated. Deacons will make toiletry packages on Dec 14 after Worship Service/Brief Deacons Meeting. Anyone willing to help after Service is invited. Deacons will not collect children gifts this year. Christmas cards to be sent out to friends Dec 7 after Worship. File of Life update cards will be distributed in January 2015.

*Aiko Matsuyama, Moderator*

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### **Pledge Letter**

By now you should have received the annual Pledge Letter containing the 2015 budget that has been approved by session. Please fill out the enclosed pledge card and return by the end of the month in the envelope provided. Your tithes and gifts are a blessing and go toward doing God's work. A congregational forum is planned to discuss the budget and other important church matters as we join together to move El Estero ahead.

### **El Estero Crafts and Food Fair**

The Committee for the El Estero Crafts Fair will be meeting in late November or early December to plan the affair tentatively scheduled for March 2015. Yae Kuwatani and Naomi Pich have stepped forward as co-chairs. For those who were helping before and still have crafts they are working on, please contact the chair and vice chairs for the fair. All who are willing to give us a hand with ideas and help are always welcomed. Information and future notices will be coming soon.

### **Nancy's Project**

For many, many years El Estero Presbyterian Church has contributed to Nancy's Project (Nancy Costello's Migrant Worker program). Every Christmas we have wrapped, labeled and donated gifts, which Nancy then distributed. This year the migrant workers have been hit hard financially...not as much work in the fields. Therefore, Nancy's Project decided to distribute Food Boxes this year instead of individual gifts. They felt that this would reach many more people and provide much needed food for the families. This year, please contribute generously. Nancy's Project is requesting donations of non-perishable foods (they **already** have bags of beans and rice to include in the boxes)...suggestions: canned soup, canned vegetables, flour, oil, canned meats/tuna Thank you so much for reaching out to those in need this Christmas season!

### El Estero Church Gifts

*Thank You for your most generous donations for the works of the Lord*

*10/26/2014 through 11/16/2014*

MM Ken Esaki   Rev.Ted Esaki   George&Cassie Escobar   Robert Kuwatani  
Zafar&Cindy Parvez   Nora Shen

Marilyn Uwate - JiroWatanabe 100yr Birthday   Yae Kuwatani -Budget

Royal&Hiro Manaka -Thanksgiving for Ted as speaker

James&Barbara Tabata -Lunch Bunch

Robert&Diane Uyeda - Lunch Bunch-Memorial Grdpa Oyster 20yr; Harry Manaka 10yr;

Remembering Grdma Oski Birthday

### MEMORIALS

Junki Kitahara -Wayne Shen sister, Jenny Loon

Kiku Kuwatani -Ichiuji Endowment, Memory of Jimmie, and mother Yukiko Okada

Takeko Nishida - Jack Nishida; Wayne sister, Jenny Loon

Joan- Ouye Shen/Montoya family   Dick&Yuriko Wong -for loss of Tiffany

### Peacemaking Offering

Takeko Nishida   Robert&TayeSuzuki   Hisao&Setsuko Yamanishi

### THANKSGIVING

Chisaki Paul & Diane   Gota Skye   Jun Susie   Kitahara Junki   Manaka, Royal&Hiro   Mitchell John

Nishida Takeko   Nishiguchi Morgan&Suzan   Okumura Mark Toshiki   Shiozaki Shizuko

Tabata James&Barbara   Tanaka George&Jean   Uyeda Doris   Uyeda Robert&Diane

Uyeda Namiko   Wong Dick&Yuriko   Wong May



Dec.	Leader	Greeter	Ushers	Coffee	Flowers
7	Richard Marquez	Lyle Quock	Junki Kitahara Yae Kuwatani	Deacons	<i>El Estero</i>
14	Lynn Gunter	Yae Kuwatani	Don chin Dori Chin	Yuri Wong	Ralph Heun
21	Don Chin	Aiko Matsuyama	Junki Kitahara Richard Marquez	Nora Shen	<i>El Estero</i>
28	Dick Wong	Ralph Heun	Lyle Quock Jean Tanaka	<i>El Estero</i>	IchiujiFamily

If unable to attend to your duties, please make other arrangements. Please sign up for Flower display.  
Help is needed for more **Ushers, Greeters and Coffee.**

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The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel—which means “God with us.”

*Matthew 1:23*

<b>DECEMBER 2014</b>						
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>
<b>Sunday Service 10:30 AM</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7 Worship Communion</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9 Session 6 PM</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>14 Worship Cong. Mtg</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>21 Worship</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24 Christmas Eve Service 6:30 PM</b>	<b>25 MERRY CHRISTMAS</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28 Worship</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>Happy New Year!</b>		