



The El Estero Echoes
El Estero Presbyterian Church
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Pastor Ted Esaki

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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

Christmas 2022

Christmas
for **Christ**

Dear El Estero Church Family and Friends;

As we turn the calendar once again that brings us to the celebration of Christ's birth, the question that I am asking is, "Why can't Christmas be more like Thanksgiving?"

No, I don't mean being stuffed with turkey and all the other delicious foods that we consume this time of the year. When you think about it, with very few exceptions, the world of advertising has restrained themselves from commercializing on Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is a pretty strait-forward holiday, an honest celebration. Thanksgiving, if we choose, is a time to sit back and reflect upon the wonderful blessings that God has so richly bestowed upon us.

For generations, the recipe for Thanksgiving has included roast turkey and dressings, liberally applied to a mixture of relatives and friends. Families gather together to talk, laugh, watch football games, all the way through their helpings of turkey, cranberries, pies, and cakes.

The ingredients for Thanksgiving have not changed much through the centuries. We have not added any overweight, bearded, midnight chimney sweeps bearing gifts or forest creatures pulling sleighs through the fog. There are no carrot-nose snowmen to detract from us the warmth of the hearth and home. No North Pole, toy buildings or little elves. There are no full-colored catalogs inviting us to spend, spend, spend and then ask, "Is this all?" when the last wrappings fall to the ground.

Thank God Thanksgiving has no Santas, snowmen, or jingle bells. Thanksgiving is just Thanksgiving. Why can't Christmas be just CHRISTmas? One reason is because Satan, not Santa, always fogs in the crucial. Thanksgiving is harmless for everyone except the turkeys.

But for someone to discover and respond to the mysteries of Bethlehem and Calvary, it knocks the props out from the evil one's plans to keep men from knowing Christ. The reindeer on the roof overshadow donkeys beside the manger. Gifts under the tree detract from the GIFT on a tree. Wrapping paper and ribbon divert attention from the wrappings that first clothed Christ in his swaddling cloths. Cash registers and MasterCards drown out the MASTER.

Madison Avenue replaces the little town of Bethlehem. Salesmen, ignoring the fact He was already sold for thirty pieces of silver, continue to market Him.

Today it seems that someone has changed all the price tags. Either the wise men were foolish, the shepherds deceived, or the propaganda of the evil one has succeeded. Although Satan's puppet, King Herod, failed to murder the infant Jesus, his contemporary counterparts have succeeded in devaluing Him.

This Christmas, may God help us to cut through the maze of tinsel, snowmen, Santa's, reindeer, and Christmas trees, and come as wise men to the cradle of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. May we shout, "Emmanuel" God is with us. May Christmas be Thanksgiving, Thanksgiving for the Incarnate Word, for Jesus the Christ, for the holy and anointed one of God, the Savior, the Great High Priest, the Wonderful Counselor, The Almighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace.

My hope and prayer for you this Christmas is that your Christmas may be Thanksgiving. Please come and join us this Advent and Christmas Season as we give Thanksgiving for the indescribable gift we have through Christ.

In the name of Bethlehem's Babe,

Pastor Ted



Joys and Concerns

Please continue to pray for



Anne Bevier, Bill Bevier, Don and Dori Chin, Alan Durant, Bill Esaki, Pastor Ted and Sherry Esaki, Cary Gota, Tom Gunter, Rick Hattori, Nancy Hollingsworth, Nancy Ichijuji, Wendy Ichijuji, Adele and Marian Kageyama, Mike Kelly, Kiku Kuwatani, Hiro Manaka, Helen Nakano, Bob McIntyre, Joan Ouye, Lyle and Meja Quock, Robert Suzuki, Jean Tanaka, Tomi Tanaka, Magdalena Thomas, Rev. Sam Tonomura, Nami Uyeda, Hedy Yamamoto, Setsuko Yamanishi, George Wooding. Shirley and the Wong family with the passing of Patrick. Gary and Judy Yamashita and their family with the passing of Judy's brother, Stanley.

Prayers for our church family, for members who are ill, those away from their loved ones, and those who are concerned for family and friends.

Prayers for the citizens of our world that we may defeat this Coronavirus.

Prayers for our medical professionals, first responders, emergency workers, caregivers, grocery clerks., teachers

Prayers for those who have been laid off or are without income.

Prayers for our research and medical scientists as they work for vaccines and a cure for COVID19.

Prayers for our world leaders as they deal with the complex issues facing their nations and our world community.

Prayers for the people of Ukraine and Eastern Europe.

Prayers for our state and local leaders as they work to keep our communities safe.

Prayers for social justice, racial equality, and peace.

While we have worship services on ZOOM, please let Pastor Ted know via email or a phone call if you have any prayer requests.



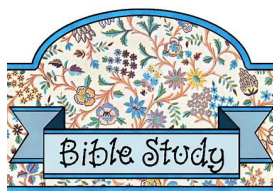
Deacons Monterey Foodbank Fundraiser

The Deacons had a very successful drive for Food Bank for Monterey County. This year we requested only monetary donations. We had 29 donors and raised \$4,320. Thank you everyone for your very generous support. This will make a difference for many people in need in our community.

COME AND JOIN A BIBLE STUDY

*Magnify * Maturity * Membership * Ministry * Mission*

Please join us.



Let's learn together.

Daily Devotional: Everyday Pastor Ted writes a Daily Devotional that you can receive online through our church webpage: elesteropc.org and click on This Week

Wednesday Bible Study: Every Wednesday morning, 10:30 – 11:45 am, online through ZOOM. 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. Please watch for Pastor Ted's invitation to join each Wednesday's Bible Study on ZOOM. If you would like to join a ZOOM online Bible study, please contact Pastor Ted for more information.

Thursday Evening Q&A: Every Thursday evening, 7:00 pm, Pastor Ted will host a session of questions and answers about Christianity and the Bible. You may submit your questions to Pastor Ted via email and he will respond to your thoughts on Thursday evening. All are welcome to join the group for discussion and in depth learning. Please contact or email Pastor Ted if you are interested and your questions.

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Watch for Saturday Hiking Fellowship information for Saturday, January 28, 2023. The hike will be around Lake El Estero. Followed by a birthday celebration for Tomi 100 years "young". More information to follow.





ADVENT

Advent means “ coming ”. This is the time of year when Christians celebrate the awaiting of the birth of Jesus. Tradition includes lighting of the Advent Candles to signify Hope, Peace, Love, Joy, and the birth of the Christ Child. El Estero Church will be observing the first through the fourth Sunday of Advent beginning on November 27 until Christmas Day. Thank you if you wish to send a Christmas Offering to El Estero Church in the spirit of giving during this joyous season.

Our annual Per Capita Dues are due to the Presbytery.

Per Capita dues for 2023 is \$41.50 per member. You may send your Per Capita check to the church with your offering or pledge. Please make your check payable to El Estero Presbyterian Church. Indicate “Per Capita” on your check and please keep your per capita check separate from your offering or pledge. Sending separate checks helps our counting and book keeping.



Thank you for attending to this compensation for the Presbytery.

Our El Estero Christmas Card



Participation in our photo Christmas card was so well accepted that the file is HUGE ... so I have created 6 smaller cards with three pages each. I will email each of the cards to everyone as separate email letters, apart from “The Echoes.” Each mailing may take a few minutes to download. You will receive 6 emails for our El Estero Christmas Card. Thank you for your response to our Merry Christmas Card project.

JANUARY 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Worship Service in church and on ZOOM starts at 10:30 am. Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of each month						
1 HAPPY NEW YEAR 10:30 am Worship Service Communion			4 10:30 am Bible Study on ZOOM	5 7:00 pm Q & A on Christianity and the Bible on ZOOM		7 10:00 am ART on ZOOM
8 10:30 am Worship Service Session Mtg			11 10:30 am Bible Study on ZOOM	12 7:00 pm Q & A on Christianity and the Bible on ZOOM		14 10:00 am ART on ZOOM
15 10:30 am Worship Service			18 10:30 am Bible Study on ZOOM	19 9:00 am Session/Deacons Mtg. 7:00 pm Q & A on Christianity and the Bible on ZOOM	20 Echoes Articles Due	21 10:00 am ART on ZOOM
22 10:30 am Worship Service			24 10:30 am Bible Study on ZOOM 7:00 pm Spiritual Growth Mtg.	26 7:00 pm Q & A on Christianity and the Bible on ZOOM		28 9:30 am Art and Hiking Fellowship
29 10:30 am Worship Service	30	31				

El Estero Church's ZOOM worship service on Sundays, 10:30 am, please contact Pastor Ted Esaki and watch for his email invitation. To access the "Sermon Outline" and the "Worship Bulletin" for Sunday's worship service, go to our website elesteropc.org and click on Messages.

To join our Wednesday morning Bible Study 10:30 am on ZOOM, please contact Pastor Ted and watch for his email invitation.

To join our Thursday evening Q & A session 7:00 – 8:00 pm on ZOOM, please contact Pastor Ted and watch for his email invitation.

To join our Open Art Studio on Saturday, 10:00 am on ZOOM, please contact Bob McIntyre and watch for Lynn's email invitation.

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*Every good and perfect gift
Is from above.*

James 1: 17