
Prayers Of the People

The Reverend Dr. Lawrence W. Johnson Award
Lay Minister of the Year 2016

ESMERALDA TEO CHI YAUN



Natively Chinese and educated in the United Kingdom, Esmeralda shares that her early faith formation was in a small Presbyterian church in London, England. Currently serving at Singapore General Hospital, Dr. Esmeralda Teo Chi Yuan, a hematology-oncologist, joined the department as a specialist because she was touched by the indomitable spirit of the patients she encountered. Esmeralda decided to take 2014 as a sabbatical year from the department to accompany her husband, Dr. Mingyann Lim who was pursuing a Fellowship in Head and Neck oncological surgery at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, Texas.

Receiving a National Medical Research Council Scholarship, Esmeralda was able to conduct research at MD Anderson Cancer Center, specifically, investigating drug synergy in lymphoma cells as part of stem cell research, supervised by Drs. Ben Valdez and Borje Andersson. Esmeralda had long sensed God calling her to learn how to spiritually support patients. Fortuitously, she and Mingyann chose First Presbyterian Church as their community of faith where Esmeralda completed the Prayers Of the People (POP) Lay Ministry Training course. Her Clinical Training for POP took place at MD Anderson and she continued to provide spiritual care for patients and their families throughout her sabbatical year.

In reflection, Esmeralda offers, "I encountered many patients who shared with me their stories, and I had the privilege to be part of their journey. One dying patient told me of how he prepared to be with the Lord. His son prayed such a beautiful prayer of dedication that really left me speechless. Many patients left their homes to come to MD Anderson for treatment, and they felt isolated and lonely without their families. The more I visited, the more confidence God gave me to be a channel of His blessing and to pray with them. After returning to Singapore, I continue to utilize the empathetic and compassionate listening skills I experienced to be so valuable in caring for the patients. I believe God is revealing to me my place in my department – to be involved in supportive/palliative oncology. I am very grateful to Prayers Of the People for the training I received, which is shaping me to provide a deeper level of care for my patients."

AnneMarie Wallace-Flato comments on Esmeralda's ministry – "From the outset, Esmeralda sought out the POP Lay Ministry Training with a tremendous passion. As a physician and researcher, she was deeply focused on learning how to hear the patient's spiritual language congruent with their physical manifestations. Her patients will sense the loving presence of God through her care.

Esmeralda often closes her communications with favorite Scriptures,
illuminating the source of her peace.

*"When I discovered Your words, I devoured them. They are my joy and my heart's delight,
for I bear Your name, O LORD God of Heaven's Armies."*