

First Presbyterian Church
El Campo, Texas
November 29, 2026

First Presbyterian Church seeks to provide a spiritual home that proclaims God's presence and love to all people by creating a welcoming environment for Christian spiritual growth through worship, fellowship, and education, joyfully celebrating God's love as disciples serving the community and the world.

203 W. Calhoun El Campo, Texas 979-543-3658
www.firstpresbyterianelcampo.org Facebook: firstpresbyterianelcampo

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

November 29, 2026 11:00 am 1st Sunday of Advent

All Are Welcome to Worship at First Presbyterian Church!

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

PRELUDE *Voluntary on "Prepare the Way, O Zion"*
Matthew McConnell, 2025

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP
One: Listen to the Spirit urging us to get ready—
All: Our calendars are jam-packed full.
One: Listen to the Spirit calling us to wait—
All: We've already been waiting; there's a line everywhere we go.
One: Listen to the Spirit inviting us to walk in the way of the Lord—
All: This is good news!
One: The way of the Lord is the path of hope.
All: We are glad to be in the house of the Lord!
One: May the Advent blessing of hope be with you.
All: We rejoice, for we are blessed to walk in the light of God!

OPENING PRAYER

*HYMN #**83** ***Come Thou Long Expected Jesus***

ADVENT WREATH CANDLE LIGHTING
One: Dear God, as we begin our Advent pilgrimage, grant us the courage to hope. Hope for your presence. Hope for your peace. Hope for your promise.
Many: In a world where so many have lost hope, we call upon you, Lord of Hope, to come.
One: In this season of Advent, we wait for the coming of Hope into our world. We await the birth of the Christ-child, the coming of God into our lives in a new way.
Many: Come, Messiah, come, and save us.
Light the first purple candle.

Please stand in body or spirit.

Voluntary on "Prepare the Way, O Zion" – McConnell's setting is based on the beloved Swedish Advent hymn BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN – known in English as *Prepare the Way, O Zion*. Its lively and expectant character reflects Advent's call to watchfulness and preparation as the Church anticipates Christ's coming. The tune is a Swedish folk-hymn melody by an anonymous composer, first published in *Then Swenska Psalmboken* of 1697. (see #106 in *GtG*)

CANDLE LIGHTING SONG **#85** ***Light One Candle to Wait For Messiah*** **(verse 1)**

*CALL TO CONFESSION

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION (in unison)

Loving God, over and over again in scripture, we hear your dream of a beautiful world. We hear your dream for peace and reconciliation. We hear your dream for harmony and togetherness. We hear your dream for community and hope. We hear your dreams, and yet, we do not open our eyes. We continue to live with the curtains drawn, the covers pulled tight, eyes shut to the realities of the world. Forgive us. Spark in us a hope that will burn through the darkest nights. Give us the strength and the will to keep awake in a sleeping world. Amen.

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON/DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

*GLORIA PATRI

Glory be to the Father,
And to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be:
World without end. Amen. Amen.

HEARING OF THE WORD OF GOD

A CONVERSATION WITH OUR CHILDREN

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING **Psalm 80**

Hear us, Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock.
You who sit enthroned between the cherubim, shine forth before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh. Awaken your might; come and save us. Restore us, O God; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved. How long, Lord God Almighty, will your anger smolder against the prayers of your people? You have fed them with the bread of tears; you have made them drink tears by the bowlful. You have made us an object of derision to our neighbors, and our enemies mock us. Restore us, God Almighty; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved.

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus – Written by Charles Wesley in 1744, this Advent hymn text gives voice to Israel's longing for the Messiah and the Church's continuing hope for Christ's coming. The 1715 tune STUTTGART carries its message with warmth and confidence as believers await the fulfillment of God's promises.

Let your hand rest on the man at your right hand, the son of man you have raised up for yourself. Then we will not turn away from you; revive us, and we will call on your name. Restore us, Lord God Almighty; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved.

One: The Word of the Lord
All: Thanks be to God!

ANTHEM Andrea McCann, soloist

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING **Mark 13:24-37**

But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake – for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.

One: God always blesses the reading and hearing of Holy Scripture.
All: Thanks be to God!

SERMON

*HYMN OF RESPONSE **#357 *The Days Are Surely Coming***

The Days Are Surely Coming – Based on the prophetic words of Jeremiah, this hymn looks forward to God's promised reign of justice and righteousness. Its Advent theme of expectation reminds worshipers to watch for signs of God's kingdom already at work among us. The hymn tune LLANGLOFFAN (in minor mode) is actually a Welsh folk melody; it was first published in 1872.

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (responsive)
One: We believe in God.
All: We believe that God has dreams for humanity.
One: We believe in the Holy Spirit.
All: We believe that the Holy Spirit comforts us when our dreams turn to nightmares.
One: We believe in Jesus.
All: We believe that Jesus walked this world to wake us up, inviting us to be the church in the world.
One: We believe in dreams.
All: We believe in the power that dreams have to show us a new way.
One: So, in this Advent season,
All: We are those who dream and those who wake up.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE
In the hushed anticipation of your coming, O Lord, remind us that you are always with us, that like Joseph we might always be eager to fulfill your will, and be eager to pray:

O God, in days to come the mountain of your house will be established, and your joy shall reign. We pray for the church (especially…), that you might teach us your ways and that we might walk in your paths.
Come Lord Jesus, **hear our prayer.**

Out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and you, O God, shall judge between the nations. We pray for our nation, and all nations, that your peace would be manifest in every corner of the earth.
Come Lord Jesus, **hear our prayer.**

In your Kingdom, O Lord, wolves lie down with lambs and children play with serpents without fear. We pray for the sick, the suffering, and those in distress of any kind (especially…); that you would heal all injuries, comfort all grief, and settle all wrongs.
Come Lord Jesus, **hear our prayer.**

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel – The ancient tune VENI EMMANUEL has become one of the defining musical voices of Advent. This arrangement captures the hymn's mixture of longing and hope, expressing the prayer that God will come and dwell among His people. Dating back to the 12th century (and possibly the 8th), this haunting and pleading tune beautifully supports the words of longing found in the text, with the hopeful change into the refrain. (see #88 in *GtG*)

Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken – John Newton's text celebrates the Church as the city of God. Sung during Advent, it points toward the fulfillment of God's purposes and the gathering of His people into His eternal kingdom. The tune AUSTRIAN HYMN was composed in 1797 by Joseph Haydn, an Austrian composer and early teacher of Beethoven.

In your Kingdom, O Lord, even the wilderness and dry land are glad and rejoice. We pray for those who rejoice this week as they celebrate their birthday (especially… and anniversaries…); that they might obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing might flee away.
Come Lord Jesus, **hear our prayer.**

In the fullness of time, O God, you sent your son, to be born of our sister Mary. And his name was Emmanuel: God With Us. We thank you for your Presence with us, and we pray that you might be always present with those whom we love but see no longer.
Come Lord Jesus, **hear our prayer.**

O Christ, hear our prayers, restore us, and show us the glorious light of your countenance, that we might be saved. **Come Lord Jesus. Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* arr. Sean Paul, 2026

*THE DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.
Praise Him all creatures here below.
Praise Him above ye heavenly host.
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*OFFERING PRAYER OF DEDICATION (in unison)

Gracious God, we give our best to you, not out of guilt or fear, but with gratitude and faith. You have been our support in times of need. Every breath we take is a gift from you. We would be awake and watchful for opportunities to make a difference, to help others be alert for your presence, to value life in all its fullness, and to learn to care. We dedicate this offering to you. Amen.

Postlude on GABRIEL'S MESSAGE – Based on a traditional 13th century Basque carol, this tune is associated with the hymn text *The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came*. David Lasky's setting concludes our worship with music associated with the angel's announcement to Mary. Its joyful energy points toward the good news that begins to unfold during the Advent season. Famous vocalists who have recorded *Gabriel's Message* include: Sting (single 1985 & album 2009), Jars of Clay (2007), Charlotte Church (2000), Dilya (2015), and Moya Brennan with Clannad (2005).

*CLOSING PRAYER (Responsive)

One: The time is coming when God will call us to account. Be alert and watchful, serving faithfully day by day.

All: We will look around us for signs of God's presence. We will open our eyes to ways to be helpful.

One: Use the gifts you have been given to the glory of God. Let the testimony of Christ strengthen you in every way.

All: We will share our spiritual gifts in word and deed. We will seek to be shaped by the potter's hands.

One: Grace to you and peace, from God and Jesus Christ. Know that God is faithful and Christ walks with you.

All: With hearts full of gladness, we will do what is right. With great joy, our lives will show forth our faith. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN #**81** ***Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken***

*BENEDICTION

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE **#92** ***While We Are Waiting, Come*** (verse 1)

*POSTLUDE *Postlude on GABRIEL'S MESSAGE* David Lasky, 2024

One License A-736067; CCLI #11514120 & 2046772

WORSHIP LEADERS

Pastor Kristine Shultis
Ronda Paoletti, Choir Director
Ted Lashley, Music Director
, Ushers

SANCTUARY FLOWERS: Placed today in memory of JoAnn Bender by John & Bill Bender.

THIS WEEK AT FPC:

Sunday, Dec. 6th **Christmas Cantata**

UPCOMING – Mark your Calendars

Sunday, Dec. 13th Youth Christmas Program and Cookie Walk
Thursday, Dec. 24th Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship, 4p.m.

Prayer List

Esther Bender	Colby Hauser	Jimmy Barger
Scott Mollnar	Avely Miller	Greg Montello
Suzanne Hauser	John Minkert	Kayleigh Newman
Gerald Grogan	Ruben Sabrsula	

Christmas Angels 2026:

This year we will again spread Jesus's message and share gift cards with three families. Here is how the process works.
Step One: Grab an angel or two from the Chrismon tree.
Step Two: Purchase gift cards from HEB or Wal-Mart and attach them to the angels.
Step Three: Place the angels and cards in the collection plate.

Christmas Cookie Walk Sunday, December 13, 2026

Get ready for a sweet way to celebrate Christmas and support First Presbyterian Church! Our Christmas Cookie Walk is a fun holiday fundraiser featuring a wonderful assortment of homemade Christmas cookies baked by members and friends of our congregation.
How does it work? Simply come to the Cookie Walk, choose your favorite cookies from the delicious selection available, and fill a box with at least one dozen cookies for just **$20 per box**.
Whether you're looking for treats for your family, cookies to share with friends, or a festive gift, the Cookie Walk is a wonderful way to enjoy the season while supporting the ministries and programs of our church.
We need cookie bakers! We invite as many people as possible to sign up to bake and donate their favorite Christmas cookies. The more bakers we have, the greater the variety we can offer! Not a baker? No problem! Come purchase a box (or two!) and enjoy the delicious results. **Bake some cookies. Buy some cookies. Support our church!** Thank you for helping make our Christmas Cookie Walk a sweet success!

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