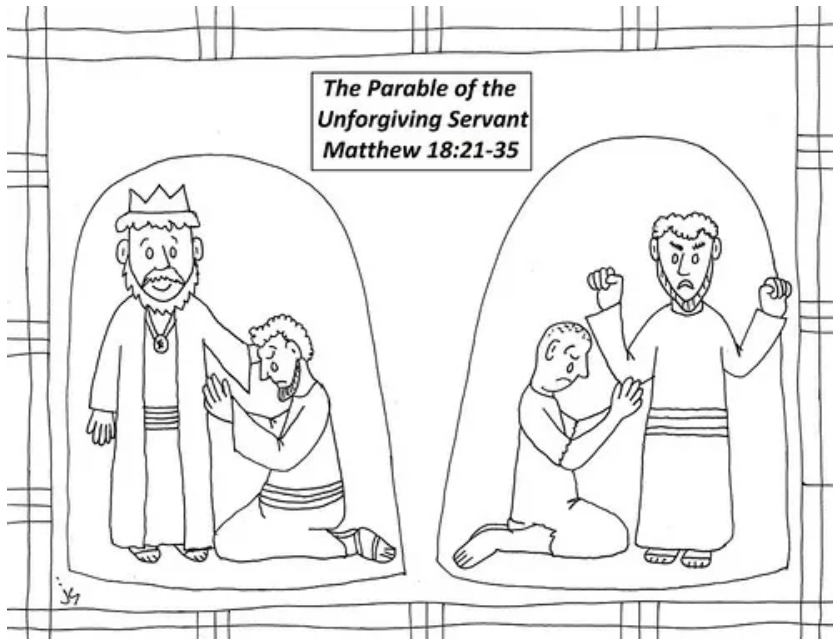




First Presbyterian Church
El Campo, Texas
September 13, 2026

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](https://www.facebook.com/firstpresbyterianelcampo)

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

September 13, 2026

11:00 am

16th Sunday after Pentecost

All Are Welcome to Worship at First Presbyterian Church!

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

PRELUDE *Festivity on AZMON* Douglas E. Wagner, 2025

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP (responsive)

One: Sing praise to God who rescues us when we fall!

All: Sing praise to God who walks with us on all our journeys!

One: Even though we fall, God lifts us and places us on paths of peace.

All: Even though we stray, God finds us and brings us back to live lives of hope.

One: Thanks be to God, whose love is continually with us.

All: Thanks be to God, whose mercy is over us all.

OPENING PRAYER

*HYMN #619 *Praise, My Soul, the God of Heaven*

*CALL TO CONFESSION

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION (in unison)

Just like Peter, Lord, we want to get specific about forgiveness. We want to know if one time to forgive someone is sufficient. We might even be willing to extend forgiveness twice, but we have a tendency to follow the saying, “once burned, twice shy.” Teach us to be humble and merciful. Remind us of the many ways in which you have offered, time and time again, your forgiving love to us.

**Please stand in body or spirit.*

Festivity on AZMON – This lively prelude sets a tone of energetic praise, drawing on the familiar hymn tune AZMON. Wagner’s writing adds rhythmic sparkle and fresh harmonic color, giving the congregation a spirited welcome into worship. It’s a joyful reminder that God’s mercy is something to celebrate.

Praise, My Soul, the God of Heaven – This grand hymn lifts the congregation into the wide, steady mercy of God, echoing Psalm 103’s language of compassion and steadfast love. Its soaring tune invites us to praise with confidence, knowing the One we worship remembers our frailty yet crowns us with grace.

*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 TIME WITH OUR CHILDREN

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm 103:8-13

The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him.

One: The Word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God!

ANTHEM

Sing Forever to the Lord

Jon Paige, 1992

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 18:21-35

Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but I tell you, seventy-seven times." For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same

Sing Forever to the Lord – This anthem offers a joyful, confident declaration of praise, echoing the psalmist's call to bless the Lord with all that we are. Its bright choral writing reinforces the theme of steadfast love that runs through today's readings. Scriptural allusions in this text include Psalm 89:1, Psalm 104:33, and Psalm 96:1–2.

slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

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

SERMON “When Grace Stops Counting”

*HYMN OF RESPONSE *#444 Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive*

READER’S THEATRE

ANNOUNCEMENTS, JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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.**

*Forgive Our Sins
as We Forgive –*
Rooted directly in
Jesus’ teaching
from Matthew 18,
this hymn reminds
us that forgiveness
is not merely
received but
offered. Its plain,
folk-like tune is set
in a minor mode,
giving the text a
gentle seriousness
that fits the
challenge of
extending mercy to
one another.
Singing it invites us
to consider how
grace reshapes
even our hardest
relationships.

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY *Here Is Love* *arr. Tracey McKibben, 2018*

*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)

Lord, you have blessed our lives in so many ways. In gratitude for all these blessings and in confidence that our gifts will be used for ministries of peace and hope, we offer these gifts. Amen.

*CLOSING PRAYER (responsive)

One: May you know joy and progress in your faith. May this be a week of spiritual growth for you.

All: May Christ dwell in us and among us. May the faith of the gospel empower us.

One: In all your struggles, know that Christ is with you. In all your labors, the love of God surrounds you.

All: Glory be to God's holy name. Let all who seek God be assured and rejoice.

One: God surprises us and provides for us. Trust and give thanks for God's wonderful works.

All: Praise God for all the wonders of this life. Praise God for opportunities to serve in Christ's name. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN #435 *There's a Wideness in God's Mercy*

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Postlude in B-flat* *Humphrey John Stark, ca. 1878*

Here Is Love – This gentle piano arrangement reflects on the deep, self-giving love of Christ, expressed so tenderly in the original Welsh hymn. The tune name CYMRAEG simply means “Welsh,” pointing to the melody’s cultural character rather than its composer. McKibben’s setting offers quiet warmth and flowing lines, inviting listeners into a moment of reflection. It pairs beautifully with today’s theme of forgiveness offered and received.

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy – This beloved text celebrates the immeasurable breadth of God's compassion, far deeper and wider than our own. Singing it helps us rest in the truth that divine mercy always exceeds human limits and calls us toward a more generous heart.

Postlude in B-flat – This Victorian postlude carries the bright, confident character typical of late-19th-century English church music. Stark's writing features sturdy harmonies and clear cadences, offering a spirited conclusion to worship. Though little is known about the composer, the piece's style places it comfortably in the flourishing organ-voluntary tradition of the era.

Pastor Kristine Shultis
Ronda Paoletti, Choir Director
Ted Lashley, Music Director
Kim Mickelson, Ushers
Elizabeth Rasmussen, Elder of the Month

THIS WEEK AT FPC:

Prayer List

Colby Hauser
Avely Miller
John Minkert
Willie Bender
Ruben Sabrsula

Jimmy Barger
Linda dale Raun
Carole Halamicek
Carole Rodes

CHURCH OFFICERS

Class of 2026

Jimmy Barger

Donnie Kainer

Youth Elder: Porter Beechwood

Donnie Clapp

Mindi Snyder

Class of 2027

John Kalina

Arlette Pustejovsky

Ester Latapie

Elizabeth Rasmussen

Class of 2028

Shawn Beechwood

Melba Clapp

Debra Hamman

B.J. Swenson

CHURCH STAFF

Pastor – Kristine Shultis

Choir Director – Ronda Paoletti

Adult Music Director – Ted Lashley

Financial and Administrative Assistant – Diane Barger

Communications Assistant – Leigh Ann Neel

203 W. Calhoun St., El Campo, Texas 77437

979-543-3658

www.firstpresbyterianelcampo.org

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