



**First Presbyterian Church
El Campo, Texas
January 18, 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

January 18, 2026

11:00 am

Second Sunday After Epiphany

All Are Welcome to Worship at First Presbyterian Church!

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

PRELUDE *Lift Every Voice and Sing* arr. John G. Barr, 2016

WELCOME

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: God calls us here together —
each of us, all of us, our whole selves.

All: **We bring our questions, our longings,
our hopes, our dreams, and our fears.**

One: Jesus invites us to come and see where God is at work.

All: **Across the street and across the globe, Jesus is present.**

One: Within these walls and within our hearts, God is here.

All: **Let us worship the God who reaches out in love
and invites us to come and see!**

*HYMN #37 *Let All Things Now Living*

*CALL TO CONFESSION

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Saving God,
we confess that we often have not waited patiently for you.
We have preferred to sing our own song,
to go our own way,
and to put our trust in idols, institutions,
and individual strength
rather than trusting you.
We confess that it is easier
to bring you sacrifices and offerings,
rather than offering our lives to you.
We search for delight in all the wrong places.**

*Lift Every Voice
and Sing* –
Written in 1900,
this hymn became
a defining song of
hope and
resilience
throughout the
civil rights
movement. The
organ setting
preserves the
dignity and quiet
strength of the
melody while
giving it a sense
of spacious,
prayerful
anticipation.
Beginning
worship with this
piece honors the
generations who
sang it as both
lament and
proclamation
(#339 in *GtG*).

**Please stand in body or spirit.*

**We keep quiet about the ways
we have experienced your love and presence,
and we fail to invite others to come and see you,
the source of life and love, at work all around us.
Forgive us, God.
Abide in us until your new song of hope
and redemption pours from our lips,
and your love is shared in our words and deeds. Amen.**

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON/DECLARATION OF
FORGIVENESS**

One: God inclines to us, rescues us,
and sets us again on solid ground.
God has not withheld mercy from us.
Believe in God, friends!
Believe the good news:
in Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

All: Thanks be to God!

***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

CONVERSATIONS WITH THE CHILDREN

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Amos 5:6-12, 21-24

Seek the Lord and live,
or he will break out against
the house of Joseph like fire,
and it will devour Bethel, with no one to quench it.
Ah, you that turn justice to wormwood,
and bring righteousness to the ground!
The one who made the Pleiades and Orion,
and turns deep darkness into the morning,
and darkens the day into night,
who calls for the waters of the sea,

*Let All Things
Now Living* – This
hymn of gratitude
echoes the joyful
resilience that
sustained many
communities
during the civil
rights era. Its
lilting Welsh tune
has a processional
feel, reminding us
that thanksgiving
itself can be an act
of strength and
witness.

*My Savior and My
God* – Althouse's
anthem offers a
gentle, heartfelt
confession of trust,
echoing the
devotional spirit
that sustained so
many during the
long struggle for
justice. Its warm
harmonies and
expressive lines
invite a moment of
personal
reflection,
grounding the
service's themes in
the steady love of
Christ. This
anthem is based on
an 1882 hymn, *I'll
Live for Him*,
which was
certainly sung at
Ebenezer Baptist
Church in Atlanta,
GA, where Rev.
King preached.

and pours them out on the surface of the earth,
the Lord is his name,
who makes destruction flash out against the strong,
so that destruction comes upon the fortress.
They hate the one who reproves in the gate,
and they abhor the one who speaks the truth.
Therefore because you trample on the poor
and take from them levies of grain,
you have built houses of hewn stone,
but you shall not live in them;
you have planted pleasant vineyards,
but you shall not drink their wine.
For I know how many are your transgressions,
and how great are your sins—
you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe,
and push aside the needy in the gate.

I hate, I despise your festivals,
and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.
Even though you offer me
your burnt offerings and grain offerings,
I will not accept them;
and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals
I will not look upon.
Take away from me the noise of your songs;
I will not listen to the melody of your harps.
But let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

One: The Word of the Lord

All: **Thanks be to God!**

ANTHEM *My Savior and My God* Jay Althouse, 1994

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING *Matthew 23:1-3, 23-28, 33-39*

Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples,
"The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; therefore,
do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as
they do, for they do not practice what they teach.

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For
you tithe the mint, dill, and cummin, and have neglected the

*What a Fellowship,
What a Joy
Divine* – A beloved
hymn within the
Black church
tradition, this song
offered comfort
and solidarity long
before and
throughout the civil
rights movement.
Its message of trust
in God's steadfast
presence made it a
natural companion
for those facing
danger with
courage.

*Every Time I Feel
the Spirit* – This
spiritual has long
been cherished in
African American
worship for its
joyful testimony to
God's presence in
times of struggle.
Though it became
famous during the
American Civil
War, this song
wasn't published
until 1907.
McDonald's
arrangement brings
rhythmic vitality
and expressive
warmth, echoing
the energy with
which the song was
sung in churches,
marches, and
community
gatherings (#66
in *GtG*).

weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel! "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside also may become clean.

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside look beautiful, but inside they are full of the bones of the dead and of all kinds of filth. So you also on the outside look righteous to others, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

You snakes, you brood of vipers! How can you escape being sentenced to hell? Therefore I send you prophets, sages, and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town, so that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. Truly I tell you, all this will come upon this generation.

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you, desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord."

One: God always blesses the reading
and the hearing of Holy Scripture.

All: Thanks be to God!

SERMON Letters from the Birmingham Jail Rev. Jim DeMent
Amos 5:24: But let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

*Mine Eyes Have
Seen the Glory –*
Originally a Civil
War hymn of
liberation, this song
was later embraced
by civil rights
leaders who heard
in it a promise that
God's truth *still*
marches on. Its
prophetic energy
resonates deeply
with Dr. King's
conviction that the
moral arc of the
universe bends
toward justice.

*HYMN #837 *What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine*

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

CALL TO GIVE

OFFERTORY *Every Time I Feel the Spirit* arr. Mary McDonald, 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.**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH *from A Declaration of Faith*

**We know our efforts cannot bring in God's kingdom.
But hope plunges us into the struggle
for victories over evil that are possible now
in the world, the church, and our individual lives.
Hope gives us courage and energy
to contend against all opposition,
however invincible it may seem,
for the new world and the new humanity
that are surely coming.
Jesus is Lord!
He has been Lord from the beginning.
He will be Lord at the end.
Even now he is Lord.**

PRAYER CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND 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.

*HYMN #354 *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory*

This Little Light of Mine – A simple children's song became a rallying cry during the civil rights era, sung in mass meetings and on the front lines as an act of fearless witness. Its message – to let one's light shine in the face of injustice – resonated deeply with Dr. King's call to moral courage. Ending the service with this tune sends the congregation out with that same bright, determined hope.

*CHARGE

*BENEDICTION

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

**Seek ye first the kingdom of God,
And his righteousness,
And all these things
shall be added unto you,
Allelu, alleluia!**

**Ask and it shall be given unto you.
Seek and ye shall find.
Knock and the door
shall be opened unto you.
Allelu, alleluia!**

POSTLUDE

This Little Light of Mine

Anonymous

One License A-736067; CCLI #11514120 & 2046772

WORSHIP LEADERS

Rev. James DeMent, Interim Pastor
Dr. Karl Paoletti, Choir Director
Ted Lashley, Music Director
Derek and Katie Treybig, Ushers

SANCTUARY FLOWERS: Please sign up in the Church Narthex.

THIS WEEK AT FPC:

Monday, Jan. 19 6:15 p.m. – Session Meeting
Wednesday, Jan. 21 6:00 p.m. – POW gathering
Sunday, Jan. 25 11:00 a.m. – Worship Service

Prayer List

Dr. Bill and Deida Bourne	Charlie Van Eman	Esther Bender
Steve Porter	Colby Hauser	Kin & Carol Halamicek
Scott Mollnar	Avely Miller	Suzanne Hauser
Sue Zane Urbis	Cindy Kovar	Adam Catete
Bro. Rick DuBroc		

Pastor's Note

Rightly so, Martin Luther King, Jr. is best known for his leadership of the civil rights movement in this country in the 1950s and 1960s. The changes he and the movement made in our American society cannot be fully appreciated unless you experienced them firsthand, as your pastor did.

For purposes of our worship service this morning, however, your pastor wants to emphasize that Martin was also a profound follower of Jesus Christ, although fallible like the rest of us. He was a minister, the senior pastor at the same church that his father had led, Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia, and he was a gifted scholar, having earned a Bachelor of Sociology, a Bachelor of Divinity, and a Ph.D. in Systematic Theology from Boston University.

Many of us have seen and heard Martin's famous "I Have a Dream" speech, delivered on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on August 28, 1963, as part of the civil rights movement's 1963 March on Washington. Fewer of us, however, are familiar with his equally powerful "Letters from the Birmingham Jail." As a theologian—some would say prophet—Martin could write as powerfully as he could preach.

This morning, your pastor will read excerpts from Martin's letters written while he was imprisoned in Birmingham, Alabama, where he had been leading a civil rights march. In those letters, Martin has a message not just about racial equality in America, but also, equally important, about the current state of complacency in the Church of Jesus Christ. Listen to Martin's words not just as addressing the issue of civil rights in the segregation era but also as a call to the Church to be active, vital, and alive in "practicing what it teaches," a call not to just give lip service to the Gospel but a call to live it, an exhortation to work for the kingdom of God on earth as we await the kingdom of God in heaven.

