



First Presbyterian Church El Campo, Texas January 25, 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 25, 2026

11:00 am

Third Sunday after Epiphany

All Are Welcome to Worship at First Presbyterian Church!

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

PRELUDE

Toccata on WEDLOCK

Gordon Young, 1982

God Is My Strong Salvation

Toccata on WEDLOCK – Gordon Young transforms the sturdy hymn tune for *God Is My Strong Salvation* into a bright, rhythmic toccata. The piece opens worship with energy and assurance, celebrating God as our refuge and strength. Its sparkling figuration showcases Young's signature American organ style (see #841 in *GtG*).

WELCOME

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?

All: **The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid?**

One: We gather in the presence of God.

All: **Let us open our hearts and minds in worship.**

*HYMN #14 *For the Beauty of the Earth* (stanzas 1, 4, 5)

*CALL TO CONFESSION

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Gracious God,
when despair and suffering overwhelm us,
we cry out for you and feel abandoned.
We doubt your presence and your promises.
We believe you have turned away from us in anger.
We ask why you have forsaken us.
In these moments, strengthen us in faith
and fill our hearts with courage.
We believe, God. Help our unbelief. Amen.**

For the Beauty of the Earth – This beloved hymn invites us to notice the everyday gifts of creation and respond with gratitude. The gentle DIX tune lifts the text into a joyful thanksgiving that prepares our hearts for worship.

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON/DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

One: The Psalmist declares,
“The steadfast love of the Lord
is from everlasting to everlasting.”

**Please stand in body or spirit.*

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

Isaiah 9:1-4

But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish.
In the former time he brought into contempt
the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,
but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of
the sea,
the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.
The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.
You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.
For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day
of Midian.

One: The Word of our Lord.

All: Thanks be to God!

ANTHEM *Peace Like a River* (with Amen) Douglas E. Wagner, 1980

*Peace Like a
River* (with Amen)

— Wagner's arrangement takes the familiar spiritual and infuses it with bright energy and rhythmic drive. Syncopated accompaniment and lively choral writing give the piece a buoyant, forward-moving spirit. It becomes a joyful affirmation of God's peace — not quiet or subdued, but vibrant and overflowing.

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING

1 Corinthians 1:10-18

Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power.

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

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

All: **Thanks be to God!**

SERMON

Unity

Rev. Jim DeMent

1 Corinthians 1:10: Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose.

*HYMN #826 *Lift High the Cross*

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

CALL TO GIVE

OFFERTORY *The King of Love My Shepherd Is*

arr. Cindy Berry, 2014, (with *The Lord's My Shepherd*)

The King of Love My Shepherd Is
(with *The Lord's My Shepherd*) –
Cindy Berry blends two beloved shepherd hymns into a tender, lyrical meditation. The arrangement highlights God's guidance and care, moving gently between themes of trust and comfort. Its reflective character invites us to offer our gifts with gratitude (see #802 in *GtG*).

Lift High the Cross – A processional-style hymn that calls the whole church to gather under the sign of Christ's redeeming love. Its strong, triumphant and steady refrain echoes the unity and hope we share as followers of the risen Lord.

*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 the Brief Statement of Faith*
In life and in death we belong to God.

**Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit,
we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel,
whom alone we worship and serve.**

**We trust in Jesus Christ,
fully human, fully God.**

**We trust in God the Holy Spirit,
everywhere the giver and renewer of life.
The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith,
sets us free to accept ourselves
and to love God and neighbor,
and binds us together with all believers
in the one body of Christ, the Church.**

**With believers in every time and place,
we rejoice that nothing in life or in death
can separate us from the love of God
in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

PRAYER CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

One: In your mercy, O God
All: hear our prayers.

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,

Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty – A vibrant hymn of praise drawn from Psalm 103 and 150. The sturdy German chorale tune, written in 1665 by an anonymous composer, gives the text a sense of confidence and joy as we bless God for sustaining grace.

**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 #35 *Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty*

*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!**

Musique Royale – Delalande served at the French court, where his music accompanied the 'Soupers du Roi,' the formal evening meals of Louis XIV and XV. Pieces like *Musique Royale* were part of rotating ceremonial suites that filled Versailles with stately brilliance. This postlude carries that same regal energy as it sends us out in joy.

POSTLUDE *Musique Royale* Michel-Richard Delalande, 1736

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:

THIS WEEK AT FPC:

Thursday, Jan. 29	FPC+EC Manna Meals
Sunday, Feb. 1	11:00 a.m.–Worship w/Communion

PRAYER LIST

Dr. Bill & Deida Bourne
Steve Porter
Kin & Carol Halamicek
Sue Zanne Urbis
Avely Miller

Charlie Van Eman
Colby Hauser
Suzanne Hauser
Bro. Rick DuBroc
Linda Collins

Esther Bender
Scott Mollnar
Cindy Kovar
Adam Catete



POW HAS RESUMED AND THE SOUPER BOWL OF CARING IS UNDERWAY!

Our Youth and their leaders have resumed their Wednesday evening gatherings in the New Year. Please pray that not only that everyone will have a good time but also that they will grow in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

POW's first project this year is to round up canned goods, cereals, and other non-perishable items for Mission Presbytery's 2026 *Souper Bowl of Caring* competition. Help the youth recapture their title as Souper Bowl champions by contributing generously, with gifts in kind or in cash, to their efforts.

And on a final note, we need KP volunteers to procure, serve, and clean up a meal after each meeting. Can you help us out? The church will reimburse you for any purchase of chicken, pizza, tacos, or other food items. Please call Diane at the church office (979.543.3658) to sign up for this important support of our Youth program.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2026
FOLLOWING THE 11:00 A.M. WORSHIP SERVICE

Pursuant to a call by the Session, notice is hereby given of a Congregational Meeting of the members of First Presbyterian Church of El Campo to be held at the conclusion of the 11:00 a.m. Worship Service on Sunday, February 8, 2026.

The purposes of the Meeting will be to consider a report from the Session regarding (a) nominations of two persons, namely, B.J. Swenson and Debra Hamman, to fill vacancies on the church's Nominating Committee (Class of 2027) and nomination of a person, namely, Doug Vackar, to fill a vacancy that has occurred on the Board of Trustees for the Class of 2027, (b) to elect, in accordance with the will of a majority of the Congregation present, persons to serve in the vacancies that have occurred on the Nominating Committee and the Board of Trustees, and (c) to dismiss, with the heartfelt thanks of all the members of our church, the Pastor Nominating Committee.

PASTOR'S NOTE

The painting on our bulletin cover, by an anonymous painter, is a religious icon characteristic of the Christian art found in Eastern Orthodox churches. "We preach Christ crucified" is a theological summation of 1 Corinthians 1:17 ("For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power").

Paul's confession that he is called to "proclaim the gospel," is the great commission of all evangelists who followed in the footsteps of Paul, the Apostles, and all who have preached the word of the Lord through the centuries. The justification for such evangelism, "that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power," directs our attention to the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord.

So often, as was the case with the early church in Corinth, Christian congregations get embroiled in theological, social, and political arguments about what it means to follow in the way of Jesus. Paul admonishes us, however, that the power of God is to be found in the cross and the miracle that it symbolizes. Debates over who should lead the church, who can preach in the church, who shall be welcomed or excluded from the church, create divisions in the church (as was the case in Corinth and in many churches today) which distract us from the central core of our salvation.

Such arguments are ancillary to our faith; such divisions are corrupting distractions from the foundation of our Christian belief. To those of us who seek salvation from our evilness, sin, and folly, the power of God to redeem us is not to be found in charismatic leaders, entertaining preachers, or esoteric theological debates; such power is found exclusively in the mystery and the power of the cross.