



The grace that shone forth like a torch from your mouth illumined the universe.
– Prayer to St. Chrysostom, [4th century](#)

May 3, 2026

Fifth Sunday of Easter

9:30 a.m.

Prelude

Simone Mead, piano

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Karen Gale

Passing the Peace [1st century, the oldest liturgical practice](#)

Peace be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pass the peace with one another..

*Introit

Halle Halle Hallelujah

Alleluia, alleluia. Alleluia, alleluia.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, allelu-ia.

*Call to Worship [The Clementine Liturgy, 3rd century](#)

O God, who is the unsearchable abyss of peace, the ineffable sea of love, the fountain of blessings and the bestower of affection, who sends peace to those that receive it:

Open to us this day the sea of your love and water us with the plenteous streams from the riches of your grace.

Make us children of quietness and heirs of peace.

Kindle in us the fire of your love. Sow in us your fear;

Strengthen our weakness by your power; bind us closely to you and each other in one firm bond of unity;

For the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

*Hymn 484

The Church's One Foundation [19th century](#)

Children's Time

* Indicates all who are able may stand.

Please silence your cell phones.

Readings

Acts 2: 42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Letter of Pliny the Younger to Roman Emperor Trajan in 112 CE [2nd century](#)

That [Christians] were wont, on a stated day, to meet together before it was light, and to sing a hymn to Christ, as to a god, alternately; and to oblige themselves by a sacrament [or oath], not to do anything that was ill: but that they would commit no theft, or pilfering, or adultery; that they would not break their promises, or deny what was deposited with them, when it was required back again; after which it was their custom to depart, and to meet again at a common but innocent meal.

*Gloria Patri [2nd century words, 4th century inclusion in liturgies](#)
**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.**

Sermon

"In the Beginning: Early Church Life"

Rev. Karen Gale

Musical Reflection

Prayer of the People/Pastoral Prayer

Lord's Prayer [1st century](#)

Our Father (Creator), 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 for ever. Amen.

Dedication of the Offering

*Doxology [16th century](#)

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow. Praise God, all creatures, here, below.
Praise God, above, ye heav'nly hosts. Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

*Prayer of Dedication *Liturgy of Adai and Mari, early 4th century, the oldest liturgy in constant use*
And may there come, O Lord, thine Holy Spirit and rest upon this offering of thy servants and bless it and hallow it that it be to us, O my Lord, for the pardon of offences and the remission of sins and for the great hope of resurrection from the dead and for new life in the kingdom of heaven with all those who have been wellpleasing in thy sight. Amen.

The Sacrament of Communion

Invitation to the Table

Prayer of Confession *The Liturgy of St. Gregory the Illuminator, 4th century*

**Lord God, who knows the thoughts of [humankind], and who searches the hearts and kidneys,
Remember, O Lord, my weakness, and forgive me all my sins.
And the place wherein my sin increases, may Your grace abound there more.
Remit, pardon, and forgive my transgressions, O God, whether done willingly or unwillingly, in knowledge or in ignorance. Hear me in this time of silent confession...(silence)...**

Words of Assurance

Hymn 524 *Let Us Break Bread Together 20th century spiritual*

Words of Institution

Prayer of Consecration

Prayer of Thanksgiving *Prayer of St. Basil, 4th century*

I thank You, Christ and Master our God, King of the ages and Creator of all things, for all the good gifts You have given me, and especially for the participation in Your pure and life-giving mysteries. I pray to You, therefore, good and loving Lord, keep me under Your protection and under the shadow of Your wings.

Grant that to my last breath I may with a pure conscience partake worthily of Your gifts for the forgiveness of sins and for eternal life. For You are the bread of life, the source of holiness, the giver of all good things, and to You we give glory, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

*Hymn 41 *To God be the Glory 19th century*

*Benediction *Numbers 6:24-26 7th century BCE*

Postlude

WELCOME to this Service of Worship at First Congregational Church.

Of all the things you could have done this morning, we're glad you chose to be with us.

We are live-streaming today's service. Playback is available on our YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTaGrBGnYzfM66pS7Bd4PvA>



The First Congregational Church of Braintree is an Open & Affirming Congregation working in partnership with all churches of the United Church of Christ. We welcome all God's children into Christian faith regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, political stance or theological perspective, national origin, mental health status, physical and cognitive abilities, and the many diverse forms of family configurations. We proclaim and affirm that full and equal participation in the life and leadership of our church is open to all. We seek to continue learning and growing together as the inclusive Body of Christ. We are committed to spreading the light and love of Christ into the world through worship and service.

Whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.



Rev. Karen E. Gale, Interim Pastor ❖ revkarengale@gmail.com
Keith Ciccone, Director of Music ❖ keciccon@aol.com
Mattie Gietman, Dir. Children's Ministry ❖ mattie@firstchurchbraintree.com
Deb McMartin, Administrator ❖ office@firstchurchbraintree.com
Valerie Fink, Bookkeeper ❖ finance@firstchurchbraintree.com