



Seeing reality for what it is is what we call discernment. The work of discernment is very hard.

~ Lewis B. Smedes

October 11, 2026

Twentieth Sunday After Pentecost

9:30 a.m.

Prelude

In the Breaking of the Bread

Keith Ciccone, organ

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Karen E. Gale

Passing the Peace

Peace be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pass the peace with one another...

*Introit

Sanctuary

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary,

Pure and holy, tried and true; with thanksgiving,

I'll be a living sanctuary for You.

*Call to Worship c. Bruce Prewer, adapt.

No one is an island. We are all joined in God and the life of Christ Jesus.

**Who else is like you, loving God? Who is like you: beautiful in holiness,
awesome in all the things you do for us.**

No one lives by themselves, no one dies by themselves.

Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

The Lord is our strength and our song, and has become our salvation.

Let us offer praise and thanks to the Lord. Amen.

*Hymn 382

A Mighty Fortress is Our God

**Indicates all who are able may stand.*

Please silence your cell phones.

Unison Prayer c.Thom Shuman, adapt.

When we look over our shoulders at fear shadowing us today, you go before us into tomorrow, making a path through the sea of yesterday's doubts.

When we turn our hearts into deserts of stony bitterness, you transform them into oases of joy.

When we would clasp old worries to our hearts, you open our eyes to that hope which paves the path ahead of us.

When we spend each day consumed with doubts and fears, you remind us that this day is the time to honor God, by serving God's children.

God in Community, Holy in One,

as you are all to us, so we would offer all we are to you,

With gratitude and hearts open to hear your word, we pray. Amen.

A Time for All Ages

Scripture:

Romans 12:9-21

Love from the center of who you are; don't fake it. Run for dear life from evil; hold on for dear life to good. Be good friends who love deeply; practice playing second fiddle. Don't burn out; keep yourselves fueled and aflame. Be alert servants of the Master, cheerfully expectant. Don't quit in hard times; pray all the harder. Help needy Christians; be inventive in hospitality.

Bless your enemies; no cursing under your breath. Laugh with your happy friends when they're happy; share tears when they're down. Get along with each other; don't be stuck-up. Make friends with nobodies; don't be the great somebody.

Don't hit back; discover beauty in everyone. If you've got it in you, get along with everybody. Don't insist on getting even; that's not for you to do. "I'll do the judging," says God. "I'll take care of it." Our Scriptures tell us that if you see your enemy hungry, go buy that person lunch, or if he's thirsty, get him a drink. Your generosity will surprise him with goodness. Don't let evil get the best of you; get the best of evil by doing good.

Exodus 14-15 Selections

*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.

Sermon

"What's Next?"

*Hymn 226

Spirit of the Living God

Prayer of the People/Pastoral Prayer

Lord's Prayer

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 forever. Amen.

Musical Reflection

Dedication of the Offering

*Doxology

**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

**O God who is greater than the most powerful forces in this world, enable us to be still and focus on your son, Jesus.
O Lord who answers out of the whirlwind of everyday life, breathe in us Your Holy Spirit to strengthen, comfort, and guide us in the midst of uncertainty.
O Creator who goes ahead of us as fire and cloud, lead us ever forward.
Bless these offerings and the hands that give them into your service.
Amen.**

*Hymn 357

My Faith, It Is an Oaken Staff

*Benediction

Postlude



Thank you to today's Deacon: Don Bisset
And to our Coffee Hour Host: Barbara Larsen

First Church Braintree Announcements

Church Council Meeting – Sunday, October 18 @ 11am in the Chapel

Book Discussion – Thursday, October 29, 2026 @ 7pm on Zoom

Thank you to all who donated to the Drive & Drop Food Pantry Collection this month.
The Marge Crispin Center greatly appreciates our contributions.

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.

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