



Q: What excuse did Adam give to his children as to why they no longer lived in Eden?

A: Your mother ate us out of house and home."

February 15, 2026

Holy Hilarity Sunday

9:30 a.m.

Prelude

Keith Ciccone, organ

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Karen E. Gale

Passing the Peace

Peace be with you!

Peace be with you!

Let us pass the peace with one another...

*Introit

As We Gather

As we gather, may Your Spirit work within us.

As we gather, may we glorify Your name.

Knowing well that as our hearts begin to worship,

We'll be blessed because we came,

We'll be blessed because we came.

*Call to Worship

God calls us to a life of joy.

With God, joy cracks through the bonds of despair

With God, joy bursts forth from moments of quiet pleasure.

With God, joy gilds the edges of even ordinary days.

This is the day which our God has made.

Let us laugh, let us sing, let us rejoice. Thanks be to God!

*Hymn

I've Got that Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy

I've got that joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart (Where?)

Down in my heart (where?) down in my heart.

I've got that joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart (Where?)

Down in my heart to stay!

I've got that love, love, love, love down in my heart (Where?)....

I've got that peace, peace, peace, peace down in my heart (Where?)....

Baseball was mentioned in the Bible. It all started in the "Big Inning",
and ended when the prodigal son had a 'home run'.

Unison Prayer

Living, Loving God,

You are the beginning of our journeys, our guide

And our destination.

There is no joy like the joy of your presence in the midst of your people.

With thanks for the dawn that comes at the end of night,

With thanks for laughter that comes in the midst of pain,

With thanks for companions who lift our spirits,

We arrive here today ready to receive and to share in your love. Amen.

Children's Time

[What kind of brakes did Paul install?...Antioch.](#)

[Who had the greatest handshake in the New Testament?...Herod Agrippa.](#)

Scripture:

Psalm 100

On your feet now—applaud God!

Bring a gift of laughter, sing yourselves into God's presence.

Know this: God is God, and God, God.

God made us; we didn't make God.

We're God's people, well-tended sheep.

Enter with the password: "Thank you!"

Make yourselves at home, talking praise. Thank and worship God.

For God is sheer beauty, all-generous in love, loyal always and ever.

Romans 12:1-8

So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for God. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what God wants from you, and quickly respond to it.

Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you. I'm speaking to you out of deep gratitude for all that God has given me, and especially as I have responsibilities in relation to you. Living then, as every one of you does, in pure grace, it's important that you not misinterpret yourselves as people who are bringing this goodness to God. No, God brings it all to you. The only accurate way to understand ourselves is by what God is and by what God does for us, not by what we are and what we do for God.

In this way we are like the various parts of a human body. Each part gets its meaning from the body as a whole, not the other way around. The body we're talking about is Christ's body of chosen people. Each of us finds our meaning and function as a part of his body. But as a chopped-off finger or cut-off toe we wouldn't amount to much, would we? So since we find ourselves fashioned into all these excellently formed and marvelously functioning parts in Christ's body, let's just go ahead and be what we

were made to be, without enviously or pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be something we aren't.

If you preach, just preach God's Message, nothing else; if you help, just help, don't take over; if you teach, stick to your teaching; if you give encouraging guidance, be careful that you don't get bossy; if you're put in charge, don't manipulate; if you're called to give aid to people in distress, keep your eyes open and be quick to respond; if you work with the disadvantaged, don't let yourself get irritated with them or depressed by them. Keep a smile on your face.

*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

"High Hopes: Holy Hilarity Sunday"

After the church service, a seven year old boy said to the preacher:

'When I grow up, I'm going to give you some money.'

'Well, thank you,' the preacher replied, 'but why?'

'Because my daddy says that you're one of the poorest preachers we've ever had.'

*Hymn 35

All Things Bright and Beautiful

Prayer of the People/Pastoral Prayer

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 for ever. Amen.

Musical Offering

High Hopes (see insert)

Dedication of the Offering

Everybody knew the roof was leaking, but the church kept putting off replacing it. Finally, the ceiling in the sanctuary began to sag. The church called a congregational meeting. A wealthy member rose and pledged \$300 toward fixing the roof. Just then, a small piece of the ceiling fell and hit her on the head. Somebody in the back of the church said, "Hit her again, Lord!"

*Doxology

*Prayer of Dedication

**We offer our money and our time. We offer our gifts and our talents.
Today, we also offer our laughter, joy, hope, celebration, praise
and delight. Thank you, God, for all that is good. Amen.**

*Benediction

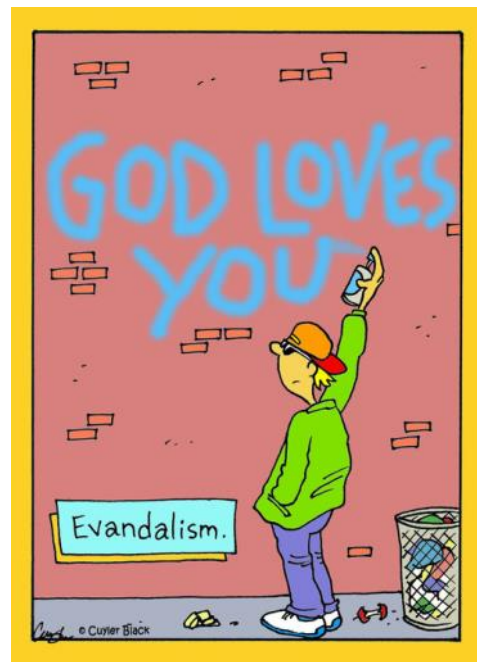
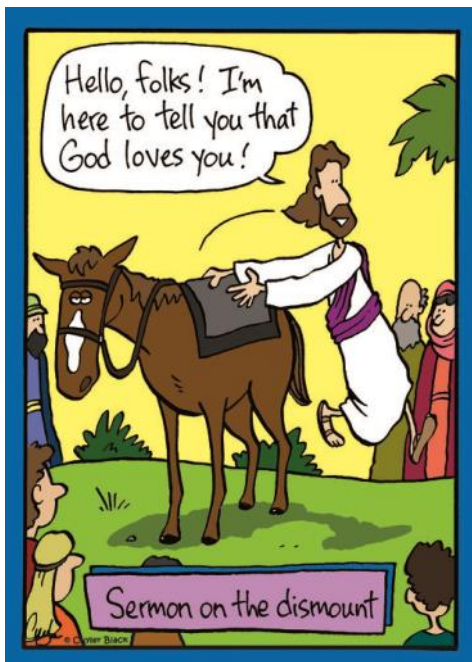
Did you hear about the quarterback who switched teams after being sacked 7 times?? The grass was greener on the other side of de-fense.

Postlude



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