



Meditation: Do you fast? Give me proof of it by your works... Do not let only your mouth fast, but also the eye and the ear and the feet and the hands and all the members of our bodies...For what good is it if we abstain from birds and fishes, but bite and devour our brothers?

~ St. John Chrysostom (347-407CE)

February 22, 2026

First Sunday of Lent

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

Tree of Life

**Tree of Life and awesome mystery,
In your death we are reborn,
Though you die in all of history,
Still you rise with every morn,
Still you rise with every morn.**

**From the dawning of creation,
You have loved us as your own;
Stay with us through all temptation,
Make us turn to you alone.
Make us turn to you alone.**

*Call to Worship c.Bruce Prewer, bruceprewer.com

Lent is not a time for being miserable, but for taking stock and resetting our aims for following Christ.

Loving God, in you we trust, let us never fool ourselves.

Lent is an opportunity for healthy repentance-
repentance for our indifference in face of suffering and evil in the world,
repentance for personal sins which we have glossed over as "mere foibles."

According to your loving kindness, remember us, God of goodness and saving grace.

Lent is a time for the exhilaration that comes-
from defying temptations,
from turning our face to the light that shines on the narrow path of Christ Jesus,
from walking into adverse winds and enjoying small victories day by day.

Make me to know your ways, O God, teach me your paths, for you are the God of my salvation and my true happiness.

*Hymn 173

Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days

* Indicates all who are able may stand.

Please silence your cellphones.

Unison Prayer of Confession c.Rev. Scott Mckenna, Church of Scotland

**Ever Faithful God,
we bring to this sanctuary and place before you
our burdens and brokenness,
our self-image, bruised and hurting,
our fears, shame, doubts and anxieties,
the raw materials we ask You to bless and change,
that in our dark tunnels we may begin to see light
and in our desert experiences we may find You. Amen.**

Children's Time

Scripture Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?'" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.' " But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die, for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

Matthew 4:1-11

[After his baptism] Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "

Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.' " Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' "

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.' " Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

*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

"Jesus and Temptation"

Rev. Karen E. Gale

*Hymn 389

Be Still My Soul

Prayers 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

Seek Ye First

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 c. John Birch, adapt.

**Jesus, you came that we might have life, and have it abundantly.
You poured living water into lives that were parched and thirsty.
You fed souls that were hungry with the bread of life.
You brought healing through a touch that knew no prejudice or barrier.
You brought comfort to the sorrowing, liberty to the poor.
You accept us as we are and mold us into the people we were meant to be.
You enable broken lives and relationships to be made whole again.
Accept these gifts in thanks for all the ways you have saved us and for the
journey of Lent. Amen.**

*Hymn 390

It is Well With My Soul

*Benediction

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.

First Congregational Church of Braintree
Holy Week 2026



Palm Sunday
March 29 at 9:30am
in the Sanctuary &
streaming live
With special music.



Maundy Thursday
April 2 at 6:00pm
in the Sanctuary &
streaming live
Tenebrae Service
Candlelight service
with communion



Easter Sunday
April 5 @ 9:30am
Worship
& Communion
in the Sanctuary &
streaming live



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