



"You ascended before our eyes, and
we turned back, grieving, only to find
You in our hearts.

~ Augustine of Hippo
354-430 CE

May 17, 2026

Seventh Sunday of Easter

9:30 a.m.

Prelude

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

Alleluia, alleluia. Alleluia, alleluia.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, allelu-ia.

*Call to Worship c.Christine Sine, godspace-msa.com

Because Jesus ascended and sits at the right hand of God,
a new world has broken into ours—

**a world in which justice does come for the poor,
freedom comes for the prisoners,
and healing for the sick.**

Because Jesus ascended and sits at the right hand of God,
a new community has been formed—

**a community that loves and cares for all members,
a family that welcomes all who are abandoned and rejected,
a place where all find a place of belonging.**

Because Jesus ascended and sits at the right hand of God,
a new creation has begun—

**all that was distorted is being restored,
all that is corrupted is being renewed,
all that was broken is being made whole.**

Because Jesus ascended and sits at the right hand of God,
God's new world has begun.

*Hymn 382

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

* Indicates all who are able may stand

Please silence your cell phones

Unison Prayer

Ascended Christ,

We confess that we have our eyes set in the clouds instead of on the earth God have given us. We desire heavenly treasure but we keep believing that worldly means will help us attain it.

Forgive us for our short sightedness. Draw us away from the temptations to seek worldly measures of success. Call us to the down-to-earth message of Your love, to care for the needs of those around us.

May we seek you not in the clouds beyond, but in serving the people all around us. Amen.

Children's Time

Scripture

Acts 1:1-11

Dear Theophilus, in the first volume of this book I wrote on everything that Jesus began to do and teach until the day he said good-bye to the apostles, the ones he had chosen through the Holy Spirit, and was taken up to heaven. After his death, he presented himself alive to them in many different settings over a period of forty days. In face-to-face meetings, he talked to them about things concerning the kingdom of God. As they met and ate meals together, he told them that they were on no account to leave Jerusalem but “must wait for what the Father promised: the promise you heard from me. John baptized in water; you will be baptized in the Holy Spirit. And soon.”

When they were together for the last time they asked, “Master, are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel now? Is this the time? Jesus told them, “You don’t get to know the time. Timing is God’s business. What you’ll get is the Holy Spirit. And when the Holy Spirit comes on you, you will be able to be my witnesses in Jerusalem, all over Judea and Samaria, even to the ends of the world.”

These were his last words. As they watched, he was taken up and disappeared in a cloud. They stood there, staring into the empty sky. Suddenly two men appeared—in white robes! They said, “You Galileans!—why do you just stand here looking up at an empty sky? This very Jesus who was taken up from among you to heaven will come as certainly—and mysteriously—as he left.”

Ephesians 1:15-23

That’s why, when I, Paul, heard of the solid trust you have in the Master Jesus and your outpouring of love to all the followers of Jesus, I couldn’t stop thanking God for you—every time I prayed, I’d think of you and give thanks. But I do more than thank. I ask—ask the God of our Master, Jesus Christ, the God of glory—to make you intelligent and discerning in knowing him personally, your eyes focused and clear, so that you can see exactly what it is he is calling you to do, grasp the immensity of this glorious way of life he has for his followers, oh, the utter extravagance of his work in us who trust him—endless energy, boundless strength!

All this energy issues from Christ: God raised him from death and set him on a throne in deep heaven, in charge of running the universe, everything from galaxies

to governments, no name and no power exempt from his rule. And not just for the time being, but forever. He is in charge of it all, has the final word on everything. At the center of all this, Christ rules the church. The church, you see, is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to the church. The church is Christ's body, in which he speaks and acts, by which he fills everything with his presence.

*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

"The Ascension"

Rev. Karen E. Gale

Hymn 248

How Firm a Foundation

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 for ever. 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 c.Discipleship Ministries

**God of all time, even as Christ ascended, you did not leave us alone.
While he was blessing the disciples, you were preparing us to carry the story forward, to be your witnesses, to live in hope and power.
In this act of giving, we return a portion of what you have entrusted to us.
May these gifts be a blessing to others, as Christ has been to us.
Clothe us with courage. Remind us that your Spirit goes with us.
And send us, renewed and ready, to be your church in the world. Amen.**

*Hymn 361

My Faith Looks Up to Thee

*Benediction

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.



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

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

Prayer Lists are available at the back of the sanctuary.

Listening Devices are available at the back of the sanctuary.

Televised Worship Services are broadcast on BCAM: Verizon Channel 28, Comcast Channel 9, on Saturday at 8:00 AM and Sunday at 10:00 AM.

First Church Office Hours are Monday through Friday, 9:00am—1:00pm.

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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