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The First Congregational Church of Old Lyme

Pastoral Prayer for April 19, 2026

Recently, in the very early morning, I looked out over the lake where I stay. The surface of the water and the air were absolutely still. And for a brief, crystalline moment in time, the shoreline across the way was reflected perfectly in the mirror of the water below it. Nature surrendered its constancy of change to just a minute or two of perfect serenity. “Savor this,” I said to myself. “For the world so seldom knows this kind of peace.” **Now** is only and ever that of which we can be assured. That still point in a turning world -that precious and beautiful **now** is a gift. To hold it in reverence is life-sustaining wisdom.

Would you join me in prayer...

Loving God, who somehow presides over the beauty and abundance we cherish, remind us each and every day to savor rare moments of the natural world’s perfection... the intricate trumpet of the daffodil... the unforgettable fragrance of a paperwhite... the music of a stream bubbling over rocks.... the crystal clarity of a mirrored reflection on still water. These are some of the still points in an ever-changing world that call to us to contemplate signs of the eternal that flourish *if ever so briefly*.

God of mercy, we grieve for children orphaned by war, and families whose lives have been ravaged by violence. Extend a measure of mercy to them, somehow, we pray. We grieve for all those who carry the heavy burden of grief or loss, illness or despair, through long days and even longer nights. We pray that you would minister to them, somehow, with your everlasting grace, and the strong arms of your compassion. Living in one of the richest nations of the earth, we shudder at the knowledge that so many of our brethren are without adequate food and shelter. Protect them, somehow, with the shelter of your love. Grant to us hearts that are open- wide to be of help, and minds that freely imagine new ways to configure a world where justice is real, and peace is cherished...where equanimity is our stance and courage is our mantra. You are with us, God of the ages, as the sturdy backbone that enables us to remain strong and upright though the winds of a changing world swirl about us.

We are sometimes timid, God, when confronted with the knowledge of what we could do to help others. Remind us of our strength, we pray. We are sometimes baffled by the complexity of the challenges that rage around and about us. Remind us, we pray, of your eternal wisdom that exceeds our own. We are sometimes weary and disheartened when we look at the road ahead. Remind us, we pray that you have promised to walk beside us.

In the week to come, help us to remember to stand very still and savor every small gift – every precious **now** - that, though fleeting, speaks ineffably of all that is eternal. There are still points in this changing world that have the ability to restore us; if we but hone our skills to recognize and cherish them. There are precious, brief moments in time when the world rests in perfect peace. Guide us to store them in the treasure trove of our minds, so that we can then rise up to do thy work among all the people of this broad and wonder-filled world you so loved.

This we pray in the name of a God who is too big to be given a name at all. But who we have **known** in the person of Jesus the Christ, our friend and redeemer. Amen.