

Rev. Laura Fitzpatrick-Nager  
The First Congregational Church of Old Lyme  
Pastoral Prayer  
Mothering Sunday 5/10/26

Hear this poem,

### Shoulders

*A man crosses the street in the rain, stepping gently, looking two times north and south,  
because his son is asleep on his shoulder.  
No car must splash him.  
No car drive too near to his shadow.  
This man carries the world's most sensitive cargo but he's not marked. Nowhere does his jacket  
say FRAGILE, HANDLE WITH CARE.  
His ears fill up with breathing.  
He hears the hum of a boy's dream deep inside him.  
We're not going to be able to live in this world if we're not willing  
to do what he's doing with one another.  
The road will only be wide.  
The rain will never stop falling.”*  
by Naomi Shihab Nye

Friends, let us pray...

Shouldering God,

Gather us in the arms of mercy this day as we pray for the healing of all

Blessed be the shoulders that have touched life, nurtured life  
Carried life in all its shapes and diverse majesty.

Blessed be the arms that have held pain and loss beyond words  
that have embraced with passion and protected with the fierceness of a mother lion.

Blessed be the shoulders that tend gardens, dig holes to sprinkle new seeds and midwife life to  
grow anew in all its forms.

Blessed be the shoulders that carry and bear, lift up and protect and offer us new visions from  
higher, drier ground

Blessed be the arms that have reached out, raised up, and received us with mercy

Blessed be the shoulders that shake in anger, round in sorrow, wait in the darkness.

Blessed be those shoulders that cleaned and carried, shaken with joy and shaken with grief.

Blessed be the shoulders that have become shrunken with age, softened by years of loving.

Blessed be the shoulders that no longer need to hold it all, who have passed on the responsibilities, a beacon of light glowing in the younger generations.

Blessed be the shoulders that shelter the heavy burdens of the world  
so that we might dance in the dawn.

We pray for those mothering figures in our lives that shape and sustain us  
Whose prophetic voices stand up for freedom, whose bodies seek to build bridges and say *No More War, Choose Love. Welcome home.*

We pray for mothers and fathers around the world. Those in Gaza, in the West Bank, in Ukraine, South Sudan, and South Africa, and Haiti In New London and In Old Lyme.

We pray for those who are missing their loved ones,  
those mourning the complications and losses of loving,  
Those who honor the imperfect memory of their mothers and daughters, sisters and godmothers,  
co-workers, and friends of the heart.

We pray for those bearing the grief of struggle and separation this day, those in prison  
Those separated from their loved ones by continents and unwelcome borders  
May healing be yours this day.

Blessed be, Shouldering God, all that stirs in this next moment of silence as we pray for one  
another and the world

Blessed be.

Today and always. As we offer these prayers in all the holy names of God, Amen.

Rev. Laura Fitzpatrick-Nager