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The First Congregational Church of Old Lyme
Pastoral Prayer for June 7, 2026

Alice Walker wrote a little book with a big message, the title of which is: “The Way Forward is With a Broken Heart.” It’s one of those books you might read – and read again and again– over the years. I recommend it for your bookshelf. I read to you this quote from her:

“We see that everything that is truly needed by the world is too large for individuals to give. (But) we find we have only ourselves. Our experience. Our dreams. Our simple art. Our memories of better ways. Our knowledge that the world cannot be healed in the abstract. Our knowing that healing begins where the wound was made.

(We need to be earnest speakers and fearless listeners ... to remake the world.)”

Would you join me in prayer,

God of the ages, it is You who has made this world. And it often confounds us. Our lives can be painful and confusing.... And yet we are surrounded by incredible natural beauty in this season of Spring’s glories. Our lives can present us with more questions than answers... And yet we know we can rely on your presence and your wisdom to be always beside us and within us. We sometimes stumble under the weight of our challenges and burdens... and yet we hear your voice assuring us that “All shall be well. All manner of thing *shall be well.*” Sometimes we feel as fragile as the intricate blossom of the short-lived Iris – and yet we know that we are stronger than we think we are when we rely on You, God.

We carry the burden of knowing about the pain our friends and loved ones endure, and we ask You to stand close beside them as they manage the challenges they face. We carry the knowledge of suffering beyond our ability to grasp in places like the Congo... and in the West Bank... and in southern Lebanon... in Haiti and on the streets of Soweto... and we ask that You, God of Mercy, might build bridges of compassion in those places that connect people to one another – for it is there, in human love and empathy, that your voice can be heard and your mercy felt. We read the news with the weight of a broken heart and we ask that You, God of the Prophets, reach deep into the hearts and minds of the political leaders of this world and enable them to hear truth in new and enlightened ways. In the alchemy of your love, give them the humility and vision they need to rule with grace and mercy.

In the week to come, grant that we might be earnest speakers and fearless listeners – standing closely beside the stress and pain of this world to hear, and to speak the truth- to offer encourage and forgiveness. This world cannot be healed in the abstract – and so we must do

what we **can** do, wherever we can do it, to be agents of compassion. We can hold onto to our dreams; and seek to see the world through the eyes of the heart. We can hold fast to the wisdom of the prophets; and speak with clarity to those who hold power so that they might finally hear that there is wisdom in mercy. We can listen fearlessly – turning not away from another’s pain.

All this we ask in the name of a God known by many names throughout this vast world... called by some Allah, the Merciful One, Jehovah, Unkulu Unkulu, Jesus the Christ, son of man, son of God. Amen.