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The First Congregational Church of Old Lyme
Pastoral Prayer for June 14, 2026

In the 17th chapter of the gospel of John, as Jesus prepares to leave this world, he prays to the Father for the ongoing safety of the disciples, the friends he has come to love, saying, “I (will) no longer be in the world, but they are in the world. Keep them safe, guard and protect them, that the scripture might be fulfilled... that we are might all be one.” (abridged from NRSV)

Would you join me in prayer...

Loving God, our lives spin out in a world of contrasts; and we live in the hope that the force of your love reconciles the differences we can only feel. The early morning holds spectacular beauty, from the dew clinging to the tender leaves of grass to the cacophony of bird song; and yet the mourning dove calls out a hauntingly, plaintive song of sorrow for *all that is*... a cry poignant beyond words.

We live our lives amidst these contrasts day in and day out. Joy and sorrow ... beauty and degradation... chaos and serenity. Help us, God of all life, each and every day, to find the strength and wisdom to walk through this world of contrasts with as much love, empathy and compassion as we can muster for the people and the natural world around us. People are precious and fragile. The natural world and its creatures are temporal and easily trodden down. We are called to walk amidst it all with integrity, and with love and respect for all.

Today we celebrate the lives of the young graduates and confirmands among us. We are proud of all they have done. We are hopeful for their future and encouraged by the compassion and wisdom they bring to this ever-evolving world. But we say to ourselves, and in prayer to You, “Keep them safe, God of the ages, for they are now to be *in the world* and we cannot be beside them always. Guard them, protect them, nurture them forward in a world that is full of contrasts; a world that can be as confusing and confounding, as it is beautiful.” As these young people go forth into the world, stay with them, always., we pray. To protect and guide and stay.

This day we pray for *the world* all around us. We pray for people who live in fear of harsh, irreparable and unjust levies of laws which they thought might protect them from harm. We pray for children who know not where their parents are... and for parents whose every step is in

search of a path where their children can know safety and success. We pray for families the world over who suffer under harsh regimes that leave them little or no path into the future. We pray for the people who make the laws, and the people who enforce them; that their hearts might somehow lead them to render their work with compassion and mercy. We pray for those the world over who sit in the highest seats of government and shape the lives of people whose life-stories they cannot even imagine. Where there is pain, God of love, somehow administer the balm of your presence, we pray.

In this place where generations have gathered to seek understanding, we thank you, God, for the rich diversity of cultures and faiths that have made up this broad world we are but a fraction of. Help us to remember that it is that which makes us different from one another that makes our common life all the richer. Give to us more mercy, more wisdom, more grace, and more breadth of understanding with every passing day.

All this we pray in the name of a God who is big beyond naming, but who we have come to know as Jesus the Christ, son of man and son of God. Amen.