

Rev. Rebecca Crosby
The First Congregational Church of Old Lyme
Pastoral Prayer – August 23, 2026

Gracious God of compassion and love we come before you on this drizzling August morning. Some of us come with reluctance, and some with joy, some with sadness, and others with many worries, yet we know you receive us as we are. Touch us with your healing fire. Speak to us through your word. Awaken our senses to feel you all around us through the light that falls on our faces, through the laughter of a friend, through the smile of a stranger, the silliness of a giggling child, the beauty of the fog lifting off the river, the melodious songbirds in the early morning. Grant that we may feel connected to You through the pleasures of our daily life and help us to remember that life is very good, even though there are times of deep sadness. Fill us with love and kindness for we know in our hearts that You are the creator of life, and your very essence is love. Help us to share your love and compassion with others.

God of many names, we give thanks for the safe return of Steve and his fellow travelers from Brazil. Grant that the sharing of their experiences will further enhance our faith as we gain a new understanding of the many ways that people worship You. Let us always have an open mind and respect for the diversity of religions and faiths in this vast world.

God of reconciliation, help us to strive for the unity of this country during this time of political debate. Give us courage to speak up when we hear the rhetoric of hate and division. Grant us your wisdom and courage to respond with a voice that echoes Your commandment ‘to love our neighbors,’ even though we know how tough this can be. For we know that this country needs compassionate leaders, leaders who are willing to communicate truthfully, stand up to actions that are blatantly wrong, hurt others, and deepen the divisions in our country and world.

God of peace, we pray for an end to violence and aggression. We know that an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth does not bring about change but only perpetuates the cycle of hate. We hold this ideal of peace in our hearts, yet we live in a violent world with no end in sight. We continue to pray for a just and true peace between Israel and Palestine, Lebanon and Syria, between Russia and Ukraine, between the US and Iran. We pray for peace in Haiti, and in Sudan and around the world. When will the violence end, O Lord? When will children safely play on the streets? When will daily life without fear come to be? When will there be food, housing, medical care, education for all? Guide us in the work of peace making and striving for equality for all your people.

God of healing and strength, we pray for all people in our midst and in our community at large who struggle with illness, addiction, injury, depression, homelessness, loneliness, and grief. Grant them an inner peace and the comforting feeling of your continued presence. We pray for those whose lives are shattered from natural disasters. May they experience your love and hope through the hearts and hands of others.

And now we come to you with our prayers in silence....

May our prayers be lifted up to you, and may we feel you by our side as we walk through the trials and joys of life. In Jesus Christ’s name we offer our humble prayer. Amen.