

Rev. Carleen Gerber

The First Congregational Church of Old Lyme

Pastoral Prayer for Sept 13, 2026

The Opening Day of Sunday School

On this day, as we gather with children and families at the beginning of another academic year, I offer you these words of wisdom from Mahatma Ghandi:

“A drop of water in the ocean participates in the immensity of the sea. It would evaporate if it were to assume an existence of its own, independent of the sea.”

Would you join me in prayer,

This morning, as summer is closing and the school year commences, we give thanks for the joy that comes from seeing young children gathering again around and about us. Their enthusiasm and playfulness nurture our tired souls like the rain that falls this day to enrich the earth. We need their youthful optimism as much as they need our wisdom and strength. We are blessed by their presence among us.

We give thanks this day for nature's gifts in these closing days of summer: for black-eyed Susans and migrating swallows, for gardens swollen with the bounty that will sustain us in the cold of winter, and for the blessing of cool, clear, starlit nights. Help us to stand in wonder and in gratitude for our many blessings. The changing of the seasons helps us to mark time; time that is precious and fleeting. Remind us to savor each day, and to wake each morning with a prayer on our lips of gratitude and hope for the future.

God of the ages, help us to hold fast to the promise that we are never alone. That together with You, and with all those gathered around us, we have a strength we could never hope to have hold of if we were on our own. We are far more than a single, isolated drop in the ocean. We are a part of something much larger and more powerful; a coalition of the faithful that has the power to shape the world. The prophets have called us to join together to be a force for justice and truth that can bring a home to those who are unhoused, care for those who feel abandoned, and food for those who are hungry. A coalition that will stand strong for peace where there is war, and

harmony where there is division. It is a holy calling. And we are not alone. We have one another, and we have You, precious God.

As this church year unfolds around us, guide us to be a people of hope. Help us to do whatever it is we *can do* to make this world a place where people live free from fear and want, free from degradation and oppression. There are times when we feel inadequate to the task. Be our holy backbone, we pray. Be the words in our mouth and the meditations of our hearts, we pray.

In the week to come, remind each and every one of us that we are called to love all those around us. We are called to be forgiving, to sow compassion, to be gentle with those who are broken on the wheels of life. But we are called to be strong for your sake, great God. And we are called to be tireless as we undertake the work that must be done, for the sake of your Son who taught us all we need to know of mercy and grace, of truth and resilience. In the coming days, keep reminding us that though alone we may be like a single drop of water, together we have the force of an ocean.

We offer this and all our prayers in the name of a God who is big beyond all names. But who we name in this place, this day, as Unkulu, Unkulu, Yahweh, Allah, and Jesus the Christ, friend and Redeemer, Savoir, companion and guide. Amen.