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The First Congregational Church of Old Lyme
Pastoral Prayer
October 18, 2026

Autumn

The morns are meeker than they were,
The nuts are getting brown;
The berry's cheek is plumper,
The rose is out of town.

The maple wears a gayer scarf,
The field a scarlet gown.
Lest I should be old-fashioned,
I'll put a trinket on.

by Emily Dickinson

Hello, God. Thank you for being here with us. Did you like the poem? Emily's great, isn't she?

So, God, we're a bit rattled by the political uncertainty and turmoil these days, needing, looking for some comfort and clarity — maybe you need some of that, too, from us.

We thought we'd take a trip down memory lane to get our bearings and direction — a quick trip through the Bible's stories from beginning to where we are now.

In the first story, you created us in your image — and then you created a beautiful garden for us — to enjoy and to tend to.

We didn't measure up to the task, and we were put out of the garden to learn to fend for ourselves.

Sometimes we got it right, and sometimes we got it wrong. Sometimes we took advantage of others, and sometimes others took advantage of us — so badly that we were enslaved at one time.

We had to cry out to you, and you freed us and guided us to a new land, where you gave us rules and regulations on how to get along better.

You taught us how to grow and harvest our food, and always to leave enough for the poor and wildlife, and to treat the people and animals who worked for us thoughtfully and kindly.

We had trouble remembering to take care of the poor, and at times you had to send a prophet like Isaiah to scream at us for not caring or a prophet like Micah who told us to walk humbly with you.

We didn't quite get the part about walking humbly with you until you and Jesus tag-teamed us in a conversation in Matthew's Gospel and said that we meet you when we serve the least among us.

And we were surprised to learn that you are not simply AMONG the least among us, but you are ONE of the least among us whom we can and should serve and meet.

And then later Jesus told us that we no longer serve you, we are no longer servants, but your friends, your partners, your equals — you are our loved one.

This is a difficult transition for us — from seeing you as the one who gets us out of trouble, to one with whom we work together to solve the problems.

The world frightens us right now like never before, we feel helpless as we see a way of life slipping away, we're scared — but it makes sense that we need to change ourselves, change our role, and face today as we haven't before — as your partner, helper, supporter sharing the burden and work — as well as the joy of creating heaven here on earth with you.

The times require that we step up to what needs to be done — to challenge you and to be challenged by you, to make demands on you and not to quiver under the demands you make of us, to take the initiative in doing what needs to be done instead of always waiting for you to do it for us.

Well, Buddy, we are in for one hell of a ride — but as the Bible stories tell us, it's rarely been smooth sailing.

Thank you for being here today. Stay for Fellowship afterwards and the talk about elections if you can. We'd love to hang out for a while longer. We always need you, and we now know you need us.

Take care, Buddy.

We love you much.

Amen