Rev. Rebecca Crosby
The First Congregational Church of Old Lyme
Pastoral Prayer - October 25, 2026

Henri Nouwen writes, “Friendship is one of the greatest gifts a human being can receive. It is a bond beyond common goals, common interests, or common histories. Friendship is being with the other in joy and sorrow, even when we cannot increase the joy or decrease the sorrow. It is a unity of souls that gives nobility and sincerity to love.”

Friends, please join me in prayer.

Loving God, we come to you with gratitude in our hearts for the beauty of your creation. All around us the trees burst forth with a kaleidoscope of color to dazzle our eyes and awaken our senses. Our neighborhoods and surroundings are seen anew with fresh eyes, and it feels like a blessing for the day. Bestow upon us this sense of wonder with each new dawn and help us to realize this beauty is your love on display in the world. It is a divine gift. Grant that we all walk lightly on your creation and treat mother earth with dignity and the care she needs and deserves.

We gather together seeking from one another a harmony of spirits, a community wanting to feel your presence, wanting to hear your guidance and feel hope. Yet all around us in contrast to the beauty, we see ugliness. We know in our hearts that peace, hope, unity and love are stronger than hate, violence, and greed. Encourage us to not be overwhelmed with the rhetoric of lies and discord. Give us patience to continue the work we must do together; to be the harmony of spirit we wish to see in the world.

We are encouraged by the youth in our midst who exemplify the meaning of hope, compassion and encouragement as they fed the homeless community in New York City and distributed clothing that will assist in keeping their bodies warm over the winter months. Help us to continue to encourage the youth of our community and our world to engage with the immense problems that we face, to live each experience fully so that it permeates their young hearts, help them to feel the joy of giving, to feel the humanity and dignity of every person. We all must invest in our youth at this impressionable time in their lives – they are the hope for the future.

God of healing and new beginnings, we hold in our hearts all who suffer from illness and grief, all who have lost their jobs, lost their sense of self-worth, who are challenged with poverty and debt. We pray for the homeless, battered, neglected, and unloved, for the children and elderly who live in dire situations. We pray for the imprisoned and those in hospitals with difficult diagnoses. We lift- up to you all those who live in war-torn areas of violence and despair. We especially hold in prayer Haiti, Palestine, Ukraine, and Sudan.

God of justice we witness the grave plight of the immigrants and refugees, who live in fear of deportation and ICE. Many have been deported to unknown lands, where they know not the

language or worse to prisons in places known for their inhumanity. As we are in the midst of the mid-term elections, we pray for new leadership for our nation so that with compassion they come together in a bipartisan effort to work toward a just immigration policy and path to citizenship.

Many of us came this morning with concerns about loved ones or problems on our minds. We pause now for a moment of silence.

May those we have lifted to you today feel your presence and unbounded love and gain strength to persevere with hope and reassurance. Help us open ourselves to you and receive your wisdom and guidance as we face each day. Remind us always that we are your beloved children, and we love each other because we first were loved by you. You are the essence of love itself. Let us live our lives in that spirit striving always for kindness. In Jesus name we pray. Amen

Rebecca Crosby