Rev. Carleen Gerber
The First Congregational Church of Old Lyme
Pastoral Prayer for November 1, 2026

To precede our pastoral prayer this morning, I offer these two quotes which have often been a kind of mantra for me:

From the cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead,

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

And from T.S. Eliot,

"We who are only undefeated because we have gone on trying."

Would you join me in prayer,

Loving God, we gather this morning in a place made holy by the sorrows and joys and strivings of the generations who have gone before us. We gather in gratitude for the cool, clean air and vibrant foliage of Fall. We gather in gratitude for the solace and courage we feel because we come together as one body, caring for one another and for the world around us, striving to make this world a better place for all people. Grant us wisdom and resilience, tenacity and strength; we pray.

On this All-Saints Day, help us to be mindful of the heritage that has brought us here: the saints of past years who have nurtured and guided us as we have strived to live in a world that can confound us. The grandmothers and grandfathers, the mothers and fathers, the teachers and poets and artists, the dear friends and lovers who have given us gifts that have sustained and nurtured and inspired us to be the people we are today. Ours is indeed a goodly heritage. Helps us to hold on to the wisdom and guidance those who have gone before us have imparted simply by being a part of our lives. We pause for a moment of silent prayer as we call to mind the memories of those we hold dear.……

God of truth, and God of the ages, help us to hold fast to the sacred substance of our mission in life: that we might be builders of a world of which our ancestors in faith could be proud. That working together we could fortify justice, amplify wisdom, sow love and compassion, and be agents of mercy, for Thy sake. This world and her people need thy mercy, God of love. And we are the arms and hands that extend your precious grace to those who live among us. Grant us all Thy peace, we pray. But let it be peace with justice. Peace that can endure and sustain. We pause in silence now to honor all those the world over – all those near and far- who live within the reign of terror and fear, poverty and displacement and want……

In this week ahead, we pray that You would be with us God as the critical election process unfolds in this country of ours. There will be uncertainty, we know. There will be confusion, we know. There will be rigid differences of opinion, we know. But, merciful God, we pray that You would help us steer clear of violence. The stakes are indeed high. Remind us to carry the values of our faith into the voting booth so that however we choose to cast our ballot, we do so with good conscience and in pursuit of the common good of all our brothers and sisters. We desperately need a mantle of grace to settle down upon the shoulders of our people, that we may come to a place of accord, in pursuit of a nobler future.

Be with each of us in the week to come, God of compassion. Help us to be more forgiving, more courageous, and more generous with our love. Help us to remember that You are always by our side, and within us, around us and above us to give us stability in whatever winds of change we must endure. Remind us that we are always undefeated if we go on trying.

We offer this prayer in the name of a God who is known by many different names, but whom we have come to know in the person of Jesus the Christ, our mentor and guide, our friend and counsellor. Amen.