Rev. Dr. Gary Comstock
The First Congregational Church of Old Lyme
November 15, 2026
Pastoral Prayer

Hello God,

We love you completely, and we want you to love us in the same way. We want to see you, hear you, smell you, taste you, and touch you. As Jesus tells us, we shall hug you, sweat with you, laugh, eat, and dance with you when we love and interact with the least among us. You once asked us to imagine a world in which the wolf dwells with the lamb and that their world is called your holy mountain where no one hurts or destroys. Meet us there, please.

Basically, we want a relationship with you that is direct, physical, and immediate.

We don't want to be afraid of doing the wrong thing. We want to feel free as we blunder along and try to do what is right. We want to be able to laugh at ourselves as we take ourselves seriously, make mistakes, but honestly want to help and be helped by our neighbors.

We do enjoy the benefits of getting instant information and making contacts instantly, we click and have what we want immediately, we make connections, we link, but to what, to whom? — we're never sure there's a real person at the end. "Comments" have become a wordless "thumbs up" and other emoji — and they're fun, appreciated, attractive — but we don't touch each other.

The benefits and convenience seem to outweigh negatives — so easy, so fast, without having to put up with the distractions and interruptions of annoying people.

But physical touch — nothing can replace it. We're created in your image; so, we know you know what we're talking about.

Of course, we turn to you — you know what it's like. We much too often see you as the man with answers, not as a person who is lonely, needy, vulnerable, wanting an embrace — but how could anyone have witnessed what humans have done during the past few years to cause the suffering of people, the starvation of children, the insertion of fear as the predominant feeling in our society — have seen all that — and not needed the comfort and respite that we might have provided you.

So, we oppose giving in; and, instead, elevate the positive parts of our tradition, we elevate the good — the good we do and have done — especially those good things we do that only you and each of us knows about — we put into perspective the news reports that give us a daily litany of horrors that immobilize and deplete us — and we replace that scripted message and addiction to tragedy with the good things we insist on doing — and we gain the strength to do so because we rest in your bosom and you in ours — steady, touching, not afraid to go against the grain, not afraid to say we love every wrinkle, every blemish, every flaw that we find in each other.

Yes, you are our buddy, but so much more — each of us has an endearing name for you — many names, but you are one — the one who touches us most deeply.

We love you, and we will continue to build, repair, and meet you on that metaphorical holy mountain that Isaiah presented to us with the assurance that none will harm or destroy on it.

Take care, steady goes it with us on your side, hang out with us for a while if you have the time; if not, see you later, Buddy.

Amen