



Rockway and First (North Pelham) Pastoral Charge
Sunday November 28, 2021
1st Sunday of Advent

Email: northpelham.rockwaypc@gmail.com **Website:** <https://northpelhamrockwaypresbyterian.ca>

Our sincere thanks to Rev. John Congram for leading us in worship today.

Call to Worship:

Leader: Who is he that is coming?

People: He is called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
 Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

Leader: He is also called the Bread of Life. Those who
 follow him shall not hunger.

People: he is called the Word, who has always been with
 God but became a human being and lived
 amongst us.

All: Let us worship him together.

Hymn # 118 Hark the glad sound

Advent Liturgy – the Candle of Hope

L: Hope is a flame that is given by God.

P: Hope for a new world burns in our hearts.

L: Hope burns in the message of the Law and the teaching of the Prophets.

P: Hope is revealed in Jesus Christ.

(The candle is lit.)

L: Let us pray:

P: Source of light, burn in our lives and in your world with your renewing hope. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Opening Prayer of Adoration and Confession:

Almighty God, light of the world, you caused light to shine out of darkness in the advent of Jesus Christ. You continually open to us the ways we are to prepare. We confess our unwillingness to see the light and to walk in your ways. We have not always opened our eyes to the needs of others, and our feet have wandered from the paths of justice and peace. We ask that the spirit of Christ be born anew within us, that our hearts may be stirred to glorify the nativity with acts of compassion and service. Thru Jesus Christ who taught us to pray together, saying, Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed by Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Friends, believe the good news of the gospel. In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Galatians 4: 1-7

Hymn # 119 Hope is a Star

Message: His folks

On this first Sunday in Advent it is interesting to consider how the gospel writers begin the story of Jesus. Luke begins with a baby born in Bethlehem, a story that catches the imagination of most of us. John begins with a grand sweep of history, "In the beginning was the word...." Mark on the other hand omits the birth stories altogether and instead begins his story with the ministry of Jesus.

Matthew begins his story in a rather strange way, at least to our ears with 17 verses of begats, listing the ancestors of Jesus. It would be hard to imagine a more boring way to start the story of Jesus unless you are a Jew. For Jews your ancestry was critically important. So Matthew lays out the genealogy of Jesus. Here is his pedigree. Examine it yourself.

But as you know if you have gone into your own family history you must be prepared for surprises. And that is true for the family of Jesus also. We would expect to find kings and princes in his lineage and there are some. No surprise David is there. But there are also folks found nowhere else in the Bible. Who knows where Matthew dug them up? They are the footnotes to history, the no names like many of us. And that should come as good news for us. People never remembered as playing a big part in history are there. We too are part of the heritage of Jesus.

Four women are mentioned. This is shocking in that in the culture of the time women would normally be listed with the household effects. But in Jesus' lineage women are full partners, good news for at least half the population. Ruth is included, not only a woman but also a gentile, not the right race. This is good news for all of us on the outside of the original covenant God made with Abraham. Gentiles like us can claim a part as well.

But the surprises continue in the kind of people in Jesus' genealogy. You might expect to find them in ours but not in the genealogy of the son of God, people who are less than outstanding in citizenship and morality, who have skeletons in their closets.

Here is Bathsheba whom David seduced. And Tamar who dubbed Judah and played the whore, and Rehab the most famous prostitute in Jericho. In some ways this becomes the best news of all for all of us who too often fail to live up to our Christian calling let alone to conventional morality. The good news is that we too are accepted into the family of God based not on what we do but what God does for us. As the gospel writer puts it, we love him because he first loved us.

So Matthew makes a good point, to tell the Christmas story, begin not with the baby Jesus but with a motley crew called Israel. The good news of Advent is not so much that a baby was born but that a family was created, a family that not only includes Abraham and Ruth but Harry and Mary down the street, and you and me.

This is the really good news of Advent. We too are his folks.

Hymn #529 O Holy Father, God most dear

COMMUNION

Our Offerings:

You are able to make your offering by sending a **cheque or using the PAR** (pre-authorized remittance). For Rockway contact Bonnie Roland (905-685-3985), 213 Rykert Street, St. Catharines, ON L2S 2B5 and for North Pelham contact Janice Aulph (905-892-5244) or mail 602 Metler Rd, Fenwick L0S 1C0 or drop them in the mailbox.

Prayer of Dedication

Thank you, God of love, for the promise of this season. We are grateful for the generosity aroused in us by Christ's coming into the world. May these gifts represent a new spirit of joyous sharing among us, for the sake of all your children everywhere. Amen

Prayer of Thanksgiving and for the People

Lord, that we are alive to greet another Advent season, that food is delicious to the taste, that rest can compensate for toil, your name be praised.

We thank you for friends who care, for ways that open when every door seems shut, for the reality of forgiveness (human and divine), for major purposes that make life's minor irritations bearable.

We thank you for yourself – ground and source of every good – especially for your love we celebrate during this season, that no resistance can diminish, and no need exhaust. With all your people in every corner of creation, we count it joy to praise your name.

Father, may this season of Advent renew our hope and trust in the future you have prepared for us.

May our hope be strong in the face of all that makes for despair, fear and unbelief: the cruelties we inflict on each other, the questions that cannot be answered, the uncertainty of our tomorrows.

May our trust grow strong, Father, as we celebrate the coming of Christ at the end of time, when pain, suffering, parting and death will come to an end, wars shall cease, hunger be no more and everyone will live secure in your love.

We pray for all those who wait for Christ with longing, especially those who endure hardship and injustice. We pray for those who live under tyranny, who await the day that Christ will set them free; those whose bodies are weak with suffering who yearn for the Christ who will make them whole; those whose dreams have died who look for a Christ who will make possible what seems to be impossible. We pray for all whose hope at this season of hope has been dampened.

We pray for Trish H dealing with two difficult bereavements at this time.

And for these congregations who also grieve the loss of a minister and friend.

We pray for members of our congregations and others known to us who we name in silence before you

Father, with the church in every century we pray, Come, Lord Jesus, come.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord who taught us to pray together...Amen

Hymn # 556 Now let us from this table rise

Sing: Go Now in Peace

<p>We acknowledge that we meet on the traditional territory of the Haudensaunee and Anishnaabee</p>
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Next week service will be at North Pelham at 10:00 am with Rev. Martin Wehrmann

The Mitten Tree at Rockway is accepting donations until Dec. 12. The donated items will go to Community Care of West Niagara.

Tree of Lights at North Pelham - donations being accepted in memory or in honour of loved ones - proceeds to Pelham Cares -place names and donation on collection plate or email reynoldsfamily@live.com

The RPCW will meet on Wednesday, December 8 at 1:30 PM at the church. Please note change of date. We will be preparing 3 Christmas cheer baskets.

Willing Workers will meet on Tuesday November 30th @ 2:00 pm at North Pelham Church

