



Rockway and First (North Pelham) Pastoral Charge
Sunday May 1, 2022
Worship at Home

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

Our sincere thanks to **Matt Vizzari**
for leading us in worship today.

Call to Worship:

Sing praises to the Lord.

We will give thanks to God's holy name.

Weeping may linger for the night,

But joy comes with the morning.

We will give thanks to God's holy name.

God has turned our mourning into dancing.

Let us praise and not be silent.

Lord our God, we will give thanks to your holy name, now and always!

Hymn: **Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You** **#410**

Opening Prayer of Adoration and Confession:

God of the Risen Christ and the rising earth,
we come before you this day
giving thanks for all the wonder in your creation:
for the tiny perfection revealed in a baby's fingers grasping ours,
in each daffodil unzipping its jacket to greet the spring,
and each rock face worn by wind and water,
bearing its rugged beauty with your praise.
These details lift our hearts to praise you, too.
So let the details of the story the Risen Christ lift our hearts this day,
that we may greet a new week
as an occasion to discover him in our midst,
making all things new with the springtime of your Spirit.
Receive our heartfelt worship, O God,
Creator, Christ and Spirit,
ever Three and ever One,
now and evermore. Amen.

God of each and every life,
week by week we lay our lives before you,
acknowledging ways in which we fall short of your hope for us.
Today we confess we sometimes find it hard to forgive ourselves.

Things done long ago still haunt us.
 We hear your forgiveness proclaimed,
 yet your promise of a fresh start can ring hollow.
 Forgive us if we think we are the one sinner who cannot be forgiven.
 Forgive us when we cannot find the peace you offer.
 Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Friends in Christ, while it is true we have all fallen short of God's intentions,
 it is a greater truth that we are forgiven through God's love in Jesus Christ.
 To all who humbly seek the mercy of God, Jesus offers forgiveness and new life.
 So be at peace with God, with yourself, and with one another.

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

O God of the Resurrection,
 as we prepare to hear your word
 breath your Holy Spirit upon us now
 so that we may have the wind at our backs
 as we go out into the world and carry out your mission.
 Amen

Scripture Reading: Psalm 71: 1-6 ; Luke 4: 14-30

Message: What do you see?

Every once in a while,
 I get a reminder of how old I am getting.
 I am old enough
 that I have spent more years out of school
 than I did in school
 I still keep in touch with maybe a handful of people I went to high school with
 but the vast majority I only know through the Facebook world
 But every now and then,
 I run into someone I've lost touch with
 A few weeks ago,
 I bumped into the guy that was the quietest person I went to school with
 you know the type of person
 the one that would not say 'you know what' if he had a mouthful of it
 Never at the parties never on the sports teams never the one to ever draw attention to himself

Yes, that guy.

Well,

when I saw him a few weeks ago

THAT GUY was the one who came up and talked to ME

THAT GUY was the one who made small talk

THAT GUY was the one getting into his fancy German sedan

THAT GUY!!!!

I was amazed.

I looked him up on Facebook

He owns his own business now..... THAT GUY

He posts some of the funniest stuff I see on social media....THAT GUY

There is no way that guy I saw recently

was that guy from high school.

When I thought of that guy,

I thought of who he was.

the guy I remember from high school

Sure

I've changed since high school

of course I have

If my Catholic school teachers knew I was in seminary now,

they would never believe it

I can change

but not THAT GUY

I'm sure in some sense we all feel that way

we all have changed since we were younger

but some people never change

they will always be that person to us

The congregation in Nazareth all those years ago probably felt the same way we do

Imagine we were sitting in that synagogue

and THAT GUY got up to speak

yes, that guy

the one who seemed to keep to himself when we were younger

the one that disappeared alone into the hillside a lot

the one that always seemed just off for some reason

That is how we know him

sure he is about 30 now

and we heard that he was working for his father as a carpenter

we also heard that maybe he had hooked up with that weird guy named John,

that was living in the wilderness,

eating bugs

and baptising people in the Jordan

Yeah, you too!

You heard that as well.

What is THAT GUY

doing in our synagogue

telling everyone that he was fulfilling the scripture from Isaiah?

Isn't this Joseph's son?

That congregation,

like many of us today,
 even maybe some of us in this room....
 we have a tendency to live in the past.
 We struggle to balance the past, present and future.
 We all face this challenge every day when we get into our cars
 we all know our focus should be looking through the windshield
 but then we want to change the radio station
 or the cell phone rings
 or we start staring at that person in the rear view that seems to be too close to our bumper
 Our lives and how we look at people is similar.
 When I saw my old classmate,
 I was focused solely on the rear view mirror
 I was not seeing what was in the present
 The Nazareth congregation was the same,
 they did not focus on what Jesus claimed,
 they saw him as they remembered him,
 in the past
 I say that we struggle to balance the past, present and future
 because we do not want to completely throw the past out.
 We need the past to learn from,
 but we must be honest with our pasts as well
 Jesus reminds the congregation of this in our reading today.
 So much of Jewish identity and expectations at that time
 came from their past.
 the promises of God to Abraham, Moses, and the prophets.
 Jesus reminds them that they also bear some responsibility for their lot in life.
 He has come to bring good news to all nations,
 not just the chosen people
 He reminds them that in the past,
 when God was punishing Israel,
 the prophets went to Phoenicia and Syria.
 When famine hit Israel, Elijah went to a widow in Sidon.
 When there was a leprosy outbreak in Israel,
 Elisha went to Syria.
 Because of the past,
 the congregation had set their expectations upon God
 they had decided how they would be saved
 they also decided who would be saved.
 We all know that nothing good comes from projecting our expectations upon God.
 Because of the past,
 the Jews were expecting something from their Messiah,
 they wanted a military victory
 they wanted the Romans defeated with the sword.
 Again, these expectations based on the past were blown up by Jesus.
 Jesus reads a text from Isaiah, but interestingly he stops reading in the middle of a verse.
 Isaiah 61 verse 2 starts with
 'to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour'
 Jesus read that part, but then stopped

he didn't finish the verse.
 He left out 'and the day of vengeance of our God'
 Why would he leave that part out?
 For a church that lives in the past,
 it would have known that the good news promised in Isaiah
 was the same good news God always promised
 Vengeance!
 Vengeance against the Gentiles
 Payback against the enemy
 For Isaiah,
 the enemy were the Babylonians
 For the Nazarenes,
 the enemy was Rome
 And here is the carpenter's son,
 standing up in front of them
 and telling them this isn't going to happen
 their expectations are not going to be met
 even worse,
 their expectations were wrong.
 No wonder they reacted with the anger that they did.
 no wonder they wanted to throw him off a cliff
 no wonder I felt the pangs of jealousy when I ran into my old classmate.
 It is a crushing blow when your expectations are shattered
 when you spend time building a ladder to get over a wall
 only to find out you picked the wrong wall
 A plight for humans since our existence has been picking the wrong wall
 not learning from the past
 not being willing to surrender to God
 spending too much time focused on the rear view mirror.
 By staring in the rear view,
 the congregation missed Jesus' manifesto
 they missed his vision of the future
 they missed him resetting the expectations of human beings
 And thank God he did
 because as I stand in front of you at 46 years old
 I do not want you to judge me based on how I acted in high school
 I do not want you to set your expectations based on who I was
 but I want you to focus on who I am becoming
 Isn't that exactly what forgiveness is?
 when we look at someone and make the decision to turn from their past
 and look to their future
 to change our focus from the rear view
 to the windshield
 to move from sitting knee to knee with them
 and instead stand shoulder to shoulder with them
 That is what Jesus did.
 Jesus isn't interested in who we were
 He is interested in who we can be.

He took that long walk to Calvary
 so that we may be absolved of our pasts
 and given new life in the future
 through Him
 God forgives us always
 every time we ask
 God sees the best in us
 God sees what we can become
 When we look at others,
 what do we see?
 For Luke gives us warning in today's Scripture
 what can happen if we continue to cloud our vision
 if we continue to let the past blind us
 if we do not forgive
 if we continue to hold on to our expectations instead of following Christs'
 Christ can pass right by us unnoticed,
 we can lose sight of him
 we can get so blinded by our wants and needs,
 that Christ falls out of focus
 Jesus wants us to clear our eyes
 clear old grievances from our hearts attic
 clear old expectations from our minds database
 And put our focus where it belongs
 on Him.
 Amen

Hymn: **Blessed Assurance** #687

Our Offerings:

Prayer of Dedication

Blessed are you, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have these gifts to share. Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom. Blessed be God forever. Amen.

Prayer of the People:

Lord Jesus Christ,
 We draw near to you in prayer this day,
 trusting that your love does change lives
 and your resurrection brings renewal and redemption into the world God loves.
 As we lay before you the concerns on our hearts today,
 we pray that you will draw near to the people and situations we name
 and bring each one the gift that is needed:
 In your great mercy,
 Hear our prayers.

We lay before you, Lord, the concerns we share from the news headlines
 and the many world situations where hope and change are desperately needed.

Today we specifically pray for all of those affected by the war in Ukraine. Watch over them Lord and keep them safe

In your great mercy,
Hear our prayers.

We lay before you, Lord, those who are in hospital or care
and all those who struggle with illness, pain or health burdens of any sort;
and we remember those facing grief and loss, bearing burdens of sorrow and worry.
In your great mercy,
Hear our prayers.

We lay before you, Lord, families under stress, relationships that are strained,
friends and neighbours in need of reconciliation,
and we pray for the healing of divisions in our country.

In your great mercy,
Hear our prayers.

Lord Jesus,
we believe that you hear our prayers and will be faithful to our requests and concerns.
Use us in every opportunity that presents itself to serve you
by serving our neighbours near and far.
And so we pray together the words you gave us:

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be 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,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory,
forever.
Amen.

Hymn: We Are One in the Spirit #471

Benediction

May the grace of Christ attend you,
 the love of God surround you,
 and the Holy Spirit keep you now and forevermore.
 Amen.

**We acknowledge that we meet on the traditional territory of the
 Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe**

Announcements:

Next Sunday worship will be at Rockway at 10:00 am with Rev. Martin

Wed May 4 -The RPCW will meet at 1:30 PM at the church

**Tues May 10 -The WMS will meet at 10:00 AM at North Pelham
 Mission outreach this month is facial tissues for Pelham Cares.**

Upcoming Sales : May 21 – Rockway Yard Sale

May 28 – NP Plant and Bake Sale

**Please keep both these sales in mind when spring cleaning or working in your gardens -
 good saleable items and plants and baking needed.**

Moment for Mission – Sunday May 1, 2022

Since the Taliban took control of Afghanistan in August 2021, an atmosphere of uncertainty has prevailed in the country. Large numbers of people fled to urban centres in hopes of escaping the country, leaving their homes and livelihoods behind. As a result, many are struggling to make ends meet and many more are facing severe hunger. Presbyterian World Service & Development is responding by providing emergency food assistance. Through an ecumenical collaboration with members of Canadian Foodgrains Bank, monthly cash distributions will be supplied to some of the families experiencing the greatest need. As a result, around 2,550 families will be able to purchase food and pay for necessary items. This emergency food assistance is supported by Presbyterian World Service & Development, in collaboration with Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

