



Rockway and First (North Pelham) Pastoral Charge
Sunday September 25, 2022
Worship at Home

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

Our sincere thanks to **Kent Reynolds**
for leading us in worship today.

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: We gather because we are God's people.

P: Day by day, Sunday by Sunday, we praise the Living God.

L: We are a community in Christ Jesus.

P: In praise, in prayer, in teaching and fellowship, we are sustained by our Lord.

Let us worship God

HYMN # 706 Come, let us sing

OPENING PRAYER OF ADORATION

God of all peoples, in all times and places;

Your creation sings your praise.

Your son teaches us the ways of love, justice and peace.

Your Spirit emboldens our hearts and hands to build the world according to your will.

We confess our brokenness:

We do not hear the cries of those who are suffering because it is inconvenient and costly to respond.

We do not acknowledge truths that make us uncomfortable.

We reject and belittle those who are different than we are.

We are blind to the ways we benefit today from a legacy of hurt against Indigenous people.

Too often we love imperfectly, speak harshly, and judge quickly.

A moment of silence

Reconciling God,

We are called to gentleness, to compassion and to radical acceptance of difference.

In Christ Jesus, we are learning to walk in new ways with new companions.

We are learning to surrender the need to justify, to explain and to fix.

We are learning to listen: when creation groans, we groan as well.

When your people speak out against injustice, we honour their courage and stand with them.

Spirit of God, create in us feeling hearts, clear eyes, and open minds. Amen

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

In Jesus Christ, the old has passed away and the new has come. The Good News is that, because of God's resurrection and power, death has died and sin is forgiven. Hallelujah. Amen.

HYMN # 723 Lord, in this broken world

Presbyterians Sharing video <https://youtu.be/9JgWSY3YHQs>

Prayer for Understanding

Lord, open our ears, unveil our eyes and soften our hearts, by the power of your illuminating Spirit, to hear with fresh awareness the message of God's Holy Word. Amen

RESPONSIVE READING- Psalm 121

SCRIPTURE: Daniel 9: 4-9
2 Corinthians 5: 17-21

SERMON: Every Child Matters

Today, I'm going to talk about a sensitive topic that is near and dear to my heart, because our son Clayton, is part Indigenous. I hope to do it in an informative and respectful way, and I'm not about to tell anyone how they should be feeling or not feeling or to impress upon you thoughts that are not your own. I stand before you today, wearing an orange shirt which is a symbol of hope, forgiveness, healing and reconciliation.

This Friday, September 30 is National Truth and Reconciliation Day and is also known as "Orange Shirt Day."

I'd like to share with you the origin of the orange shirt and why it is so important for us to consider. In 1973, at the age of 6, Phyllis Webstad entered the St. Joseph Mission Residential School in BC.

I'm going to let Phyllis share with you her story (play video)

<https://youtu.be/c3q7byZhbaI>

Phyllis' story:

Orange Shirt Day began in 1973 when six-year-old Phyllis Webstad entered the St. Joseph Mission Residential School in B.C. Young Phyllis was wearing a new orange shirt that her grandmother had gotten for her for her first day of school—but the Mission Oblates quickly stripped her of her new shirt and replaced it with the school's institutional uniform.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada acknowledges its role with Residential Schools and much of what I am sharing with you, I've taken from the Presbyterian Church website.

The church ran 11 schools: Ahousaht Residential School in British Columbia, Alberni Residential School in British Columbia, Birtle Residential School in Manitoba, Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School, first located in Shoal Lake, Ontario and relocated to Kenora, Ontario, Crowstand Residential School in Saskatchewan, File Hills Residential School in Saskatchewan, Muscowpetung (later known as "Lakesend") Residential School in Saskatchewan, Portage la Prairie Residential School in Manitoba, Regina Residential School in Saskatchewan, Round Lake Residential School in Saskatchewan, and Stoney Plain Residential School in Alberta).

Residential Schools were a significant part of colonization and attempts to erase Indigenous identity and culture. They were structured on and reflected the idea that European colonial powers had a right to appropriate lands, possessions and even people, and to treat Indigenous people as undeserving of rights. The idea that European Christians were superior to non-Christian people was set out in a series of 15th century papal bulls or decrees which are called the Doctrine of Discovery.

The racist belief in European Christian superiority underscored the process of colonization across the lands now called Canada and is seen in the establishment of laws, governments and societal norms that were based on European models—including within the church. While Canadian laws and government practices are changing over time, the long-term influence of racism and the beliefs that are articulated in the Doctrine of Discovery persist. This is painfully evident within the church through its complicity and participation in the Residential Schools system, the stated goal of which was the erasure of Indigenous identity and assimilation into "Canadian, Christian" society. The church has formally rejected the Doctrine of Discovery in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action 46ii (A&P 2019, pp. 35, 368–377), and offered a confession for our role in running Residential Schools. If you received the latest issue of the Presbyterian Connection, you can read more articles about Reconciliation. And if you don't receive the paper, there are a few copies at the door you can take.

Friends, reconciliation is a process. It's a time for educating ourselves and to better equip ourselves for understanding. This is a time for healing and forgiveness. The Pope recently visited Canada to address the role of the Catholic church in Residential schools and many felt it was too little too late. His words were idle and hollow. Others felt the visit was a step forward and with this visit there was hope. It's not my place to say if it was too little too late. I believe the decisions of the past were made with intentions meant to benefit and help. Possibly the decisions of the past were made out of ignorance and just simply not having a clue about our Indigenous Peoples and their way of life. Who were we to decide we knew better, and our thoughts were right and theirs

were wrong? It's a tough call and clearly it was not a good call. Somewhere over time, those intentions became blurred and misguided and ended up doing more harm than good. In 2015, the government released the Truth and Reconciliation Report consisting of 94 Calls to Action. And as I see you all slump in your seats, don't worry, I'm not going to go over all 94 – we'd have to serve lunch!

Reconciliation is to restore friendly relations – to have a new beginning, a new creation. 2
 Corinthians 5: 17-21 tells us that through Jesus Christ we have this ministry of reconciliation “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has gone and the new has come. All this is through God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are, therefore, Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” The good news is that we can acknowledge the truths of the past and we can ask for forgiveness allowing this reconciliation with God to move us forward to a better understanding to do better and to be better. This gift is given to us from God and is also given at a great loss, the loss of his son, Jesus Christ on the cross. We owe it to God and to our faith to learn from the mistakes of the past and in Jesus' name, be better ambassadors of his teachings.

A reflection from Rev Amanda Currie, the former moderator of the General Assembly, shares the gospels give us a picture of Jesus as one who respected and cared for children. He healed and helped children who were sick, welcomed the contributions of a boy who offered to share his lunch, and blessed the children who gathered around him as he taught the crowds. Although the church's intention has likely always been to care for children as Jesus did, our participation in the Indian Residential School System was so misguided that it contributed to the abuse of generations of children who attended the schools. Its inter-generational effects continue to harm Indigenous children today.

Daniel's Prayer from our Old Testament reading, praying for a broken Jerusalem and for restoration of the Jews is a parallel to many things going on in our world today. This prayer relates to our process of reconciliation and restoration for our Indigenous Peoples and gives us reassurance and hope. Even though we have “sinned and done wrong”, “been wicked and have rebelled”, “turned away from your commands and laws”, “not listened” and feel “shame for not being faithful servants” we know the Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we and the Church haven't always acted in the best way possible. Forgiveness paves the way for reconciliation and allows us to be better disciples. We have the example of how we are supposed to act, but we sometimes forget and falter, but thank God for his mercy so we can try again and again and again.

We are broken people living in broken relationships. Sin alienates us from each other and separates us from God. But the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ is that in him, our woundedness may be healed. Our sins are forgiven. We are called to build the world as God would have it be. In Jesus Christ, the barriers of separation come down. Just as Christ reconciles us to God, let us work for reconciliation with our sisters and brothers

Psalm 121 give us direction and comfort and reminds us in verse 2, that “My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth” This is what we need to remember - the Lord will guide us and forgive us. He will give us the strength to accept the truths of our past and to help us move forward and reconcile the future.

As I was writing this message, I was reminded of the Sunday School song, Jesus Loves the Little Children. And, although, the words may be deemed politically incorrect these days, I think the words tell a story of inclusiveness and love for all children:

*Jesus loves the little children
All the children of the world
Red and yellow, black and white
They are precious in His sight
Jesus loves the little children of the world*

Today is also Presbyterians Sharing Sunday, where we celebrate the good work of Presbyterians around the world sharing their talents and time to make the world a better place. Presbyterians Sharing helps congregations be intentional about supporting efforts of confession, truth and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and communities.

Wearing an orange shirt on September 30 each year will not itself end the harm from the ongoing legacy of Residential Schools. But when we wear orange shirts, talk to others about why we are wearing them, and participate in events and activities that support truth, healing, and reconciliation, we help to create awareness of the individual, family and community inter-generational impacts of Residential Schools.

The orange shirts also honour the many Indigenous children who never made it home from the schools.

Through Jesus, the ministry of reconciliation exists for us all, let's stand witness to our faith and to the truth that “Every Child Matters” Amen

HYMN # 726 May the God of hope

PRAYER OF DEDICATION OF THE OFFERING

Lord God, receive our gifts offered in a spirit of generosity and humility. Bless and use them for the work that you long to do in the world in Jesus name. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND FOR THE PEOPLE

God of mystery and wonder,
 We look around at the beauty of this world
 and the worlds beyond us,
 and sense that you have given each precious thing its place
 and a way to sustain itself.
 Thank you for the care you hold for your whole creation.
 We also look around at the aching of the world
 and sense that many precious things are under threat.
 Too many pieces of your creation have fallen out of balance with each other.
 Show us how we can help restore that balance
 and protect what is at risk for the health of your whole creation.
 God of all creatures great and small,

Make us stewards of what is precious to you.

God of energy and life,
 We look around at the peoples of this world
 and see your image and dignity in every variety of face and culture.
 Thank you for the care you hold for all humankind.
 Yet we look around at the people of this world
 and see the aching of the hungry and hurting.
 we hear the groans of parents whose children die in their arms
 and feel the tears of children whose parents die too soon.
 We know neighbours who are suffering
 and hear of strangers who can't imagine how to make it through tomorrow.
 Awaken our generosity to offer what healing and hope we can
 to the lives you cherish in every neighbourhood and nation.
 God of all creatures great and small,

Make us stewards of what is precious to you.

God of promise and possibility,
 We look around at places where people collide with each other
 We hear the grumbling of nations locked into old rivalries and grievances.
 We watch the jousting of leaders impressed more by polls than effective policies.
 We worry about the future of our communities and our children.
 We hear your call to do justice and live generously.
 Guide us as citizens to act for justice that brings peace and well being
 to communities near and far.

Bless the ministries supported by Presbyterians Sharing
 across Canada and around the world,
 and grow in us the interest and intention to contribute to this outreach.
 God of all creatures great and small,

Make us stewards of what is precious to you.

God of faithfulness and surprise,
 We look at ourselves
 and sometimes doubt we can make a difference or have an impact.
 Challenge us to recognise the kinds of power we do have:
 The love and compassion,
 The courage and commitment,
 The laughter and friendship,
 The generosity and mercy
 You inspire within us.
 In all these gifts we know your power.
 Through all these gifts, our lives have been changed.
 Using these gifts in our lives,
 bring Christ's love and mercy to the world you love,
 And in one voice, we pray together as Jesus taught 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, the power, and the glory,
 forever.

Amen.

HYMN # 472 We are God's people

BENEDICTION

Empower us by your Spirit to love fiercely,
 to give and receive forgiveness fully,
 to pray daily, to serve cheerfully, to live simply,
 and to leave everything else to God. Amen.

SUNG RESPONSE- Go Now In Peace

<p>We acknowledge that we meet on the traditional Territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe</p>

TODAY is Presbyterians Sharing Sunday

Next Sunday worship will be at Rockway at 10:00 am with Rev Katie Campion - it is World Communion Sunday

Willing Workers Meeting – Tuesday September 27 at North Pelham at 2:00 pm

Search Committee Meeting – Wednesday September 28 at Rockway at 7:00 pm

Niagara Presbyterial's Many Years of Service to God – Wednesday September 28 at St. Andrew's Church, Welland at 1:00 pm – Guest Speaker will be Cathy Reid, President of the WMS

Unlocking Current Events Through Biblical Prophecy Event – Saturday October 22 from 1:00 – 6:00 pm at the Rose City Kid's Auditorium, Welland.

Thanksgiving Food Collection - October 9th is Thanksgiving Sunday - there will be a special food collection of fresh produce and canned goods to help the less fortunate. Please consider participating