



Rockway and First (North Pelham) Pastoral Charge
3rd Sunday of Easter, April 14, 2024
Worship at Home

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

L.O God, be gracious to me and hear my prayer.

P. Know that God has set us apart and hears us when we call.

L. O God, lift up the light of your countenance upon us.

P. O God be gracious to us and hear our prayer.

L. Let us worship God.

Hymn 3 O God, defender of the poor

PRAYERS OF APPROACH, CONFESSION

Almighty God, author of life, you have given us breath to praise you, eyes to behold your mercy, and words to proclaim your abiding love. You have set apart a people to worship you in thought, word and deed, and through Christ you have numbered us in the midst of them. We sleep with the assurance that you will never forsake us and we awaken each day to the glory of your creating goodness. Breathe upon us the promised Holy Spirit, that our minds may be opened to your wisdom and our tongues boldly declare that you alone are God.

O God, like bones in the desert our faith is dried up and lifeless. The wind of false doctrine sear our spirit; the heat of conflict saps our strength. We seek a safe place to escape your judgment; we wander aimlessly in search of direction. Have mercy upon us, and fill us anew with your Spirit. Give us counsel and guidance and forgive us. Amen

Assurance. Know that as you call on God's name, Christ intercedes on your behalf to deliver you in his righteousness, blameless before God as forgiven people. Praise be to God.

Hymn 251 Christ is alive

Prayer for Understanding

Gracious God,

As we gather today, we seek Your light. Help us embrace faith's journey, trusting in Your presence amid uncertainty. Guide us as we hear Your word. Illuminate our hearts to Your truth. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Psalm 4, Acts 3: 12-19, Luke 24: 36b-48

SERMON**Witnesses**

Seven years went by since my retirement. A lot has changed since then. One thing has not : walking with God every step of the way. See that is a strong suggestion in all our readings for today. You see when you set out in life saying : “ I am going to do this and that... “ most likely it will not happen. I remember putting together a whole week's schedule and being proud of my efficiency and at the end of the week nothing happened as I planned. Even these days if I dare to plan something seldom happens the way I think it should. You would think that by the tender age of 72+ I should get used to it, well it would be nice !

That is part of walking with God, that I mentioned before. The minute I feel that now I can do it on my own I am reminded that it is not so ! I am sure I am not telling you anything you haven't experienced yourselves ! Are we the only ones in our generation to feel this way ? Not at all !

RR. There is a great call, a summon from the psalmist in our RR.

“ Answer me when I call to you o my Righteous God. “

You see we as the psalmist are calling on God, talking to God on a regular basis. What we ignore, do not recognize, do not hear is the answer, God's answer. Why ? Because we want an answer and if it is not the one we imagine then we toss it aside, and demand the answer we want !

“ Let the light of your face shine upon us, O Lord ! “

What are the consequences of that light shining upon us ?

“ I will lie down and sleep in peace for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety. “

This is a gladness in our heart that is not attached to prosperity. Beyond the struggles over our daily affairs, our ambitions, our successes and our failures in personal and professional life, we can find mysterious grace in our relationship with God. For only you, Lord, make me dwell in safety. So you can consider all these from this point on as you walk with God and as you ask Him to answer your prayers.

II Reading. As you know between Easter and Pentecost the lectionary readings are suggesting two readings or three from the N.T. If we look at the chronological happenings of our two readings the events in Luke's Gospel are happening earlier than the ones in the Book of Acts. If we put them side by side we see a scared, doubtful crowd in Luke and a bold, hopeful one in Acts. That's why we need to compare the behaviour of the witnesses in both readings. Yes, the common theme is witness.

Funny, how people living and being in a fantasy world, or virtual world today grossly ignore and choose to question the mystery of God. Why ? That's a very good question for each and every one of you to answer ! What does it take for us, today's Christians, to elevate the Resurrected Christ from a ghost into our Messiah ? You see no amount of head explanation or broiled fish will do that. Ordinary acts and ordinary things take on a significance far greater than themselves and convey the divine presence of God to us. They make us witnesses 2000 years later to God's mystery, of the Resurrected Christ, our Lord and Saviour !

I Reading. That is all the difference Peter and John feel when they see the beggar at the portico of Solomon.

“ Silver and gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk ! ”

You see, Peter and John were considered first hand witnesses, because they walked with Jesus, yet they still had a little bit of doubt about the power of healing they received from Jesus. When they were able to heal the crippled beggar that was a sure sign that now they have to speak

up and witness to that in public. What a boldness, what a great power ! At the entrance of the Temple, where many people gather at the time of prayer, Peter speaks. He can go to prison , he can be killed, yet he doesn't care for his own safety, he decides to speak. He is confrontational, accusatory in his tone. " You killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. " What about us ? Can we witness to our faith, our own commitment to Christian faith as individuals and as faith community ? Peter has a suggestion to the crowd : "Repent and turn to God, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord " This is the message for us today ! Praise be to God. Amen.

Hymn 250 I danced in the morning

Invitation to the Offering

Doxology

Prayer of Dedication

Giver of eternal gladness, Fountain of life from whom flow endless blessings, all that we have is a gift of your love. Accept now these offerings of thanksgiving as symbols of our grateful response to Christ's sacrifice for us. Use our gifts to spread the good news of repentance and forgiveness of sin. May they bring times of refreshment as results of Christ's presence. Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and for the People

God our Maker, source of Easter power and hope, you have walked with your faithful people through many generations, people facing challenges and uncertainty, people seeking your purpose and promise. We still face challenges and uncertainty even with Easter in our hearts. Walk with us and with those for whom we pray on this day, so that your resurrecting power may lead us in lives of faithfulness. In the name of Christ our risen Lord

Hear our prayer.

We pray for children and young people who must think about the future in uncertain times facing threat old and new. Give them hope rooted in the knowledge that their lives matter to you. Show them how to make a difference in the world, whatever threats they face as they grow. In the name of Christ our risen Lord

Hear our prayer.

We pray for people for whom age or experience, illness or disability create barriers to full participation in your world. Surround each one in pain or despair with your comfort and renew in each one a sense of dignity and purpose. Show them how much they matter to you and to us. In the name of the risen Lord

Hear our prayer.

We pray for all those facing grief and any kind of loss. Give them strength and comfort. We pray for communities challenged by forces beyond their control : natural disaster and environmental threats, conflict and violence, economic hardship. Give courage for those facing the challenges and wisdom to those who lead, so that well being may be restored and hope for the future prevail. In the name of the risen Lord

Hear our prayer.

As signs of Spring emerge, we pray for your creation, for creatures losing habitat and unique species at risk, for oceans clogged with plastic and the earth aching for moisture as the climate

warms. Jesus you are the first born of all creation. Help us to honour you by caring for the earth and its fragile balances in the ways we live and the priorities we set. In these ways too we would be your disciples. In the name of Christ our risen Lord

Hear our prayer.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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 692 Where charity and love prevail

BENEDICTION

May God's eternal blessing, the peace of the Risen Jesus, and the fellowship we share in the Holy Spirit be with us all this day and forevermore.

Sung Response- Go Now In Peace

Postlude

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank you to Rev Pearl for being with us today and leading us in worship

***Worship on Sunday, April 21, at Rockway**

***Rescheduled Joint Session Meeting:** Wednesday April 24 at Rockway - Rockway Session will meet at 7 pm, North Pelham will join at 7:30 pm

***Special Guest Speaker on Mission Awareness Sunday, April 28:** Exciting News! Join us on Mission Awareness Sunday, April 28th, as we welcome guest speaker Dr. Allyson Carr, Associate Secretary of Justice Ministries in The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Dr. Carr recently penned the compelling article, "*Love and Hate in a Time of Fear*," featured on the front page of the spring edition of the Presbyterian Connection newspaper. Don't miss this opportunity to hear her insights and be inspired.

***Willing Workers' Clothing Drive:** The Willing Workers will be holding a clothing drive from April 14 to May 22nd. This is in partnership with the Kidney Clothes fundraising program from the Kidney Foundation of Canada. Clothing bags and a list of what is accepted are available from the Willing Workers in North Pelham.

***Bible studies:** Join us for Wednesday Bible study at 10:00 AM at First Church, led by Diane McMillan. Our Thursday Bible study has been suspended.

***Outreach - Thursday Walking:** Join us for the Wellness Walk and Coffee Chat! We gather at 9:30 a.m. at Canada Games Park to start our walk together. After the walk, we meet at Rockway for a joyful chat over hot and fresh coffee at 10:45 am.

***Spring Book Sale by the Canadian Bible Society:** The Niagara Branch of the Canadian Bible Society will host a Spring Used Book Sale at Fairview Mall on April 19-20, 2024. Please spread the word and bring books, DVDs, and CDs early on those mornings. Assistance in setting up tables and refreshing displays is appreciated.

***Eclipse Glasses Recycling** - there is a drop box here today and will be one next week at Rockway for you to recycle your glasses.

***OPP Chorus Concert at Pelham Community Church**

Saturday May 25th @ 3:00 pm

Cost \$10.00 per person - To purchase tickets call, Bonnie - 905-892-3492 or Jackie 905-892-8726

***Connect with your Minister Jacob for pastoral visits.** Reach Jacob at jacoble0501@gmail.com or 289-213-2797.