



Rockway and First (North Pelham) Pastoral Charge
Remembrance Sunday
November 10, 2024
Worship at Home

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Happy are those whose hope is in the LORD,

P: For God keeps faith with us forever.

L: Praise God who brings justice for the oppressed and gives food to the hungry.

P: We will praise the One who lifts up all those who bear heavy burdens.

L: God will reign in mercy and righteousness for all generations.

P: Let us praise the LORD with our lips and honour God with our lives.

Hymn # 323 – Praise the Lord, ye heavens adore him

Prayers of Approach, Confession & The Lord's Prayer

God of justice and peace,
We gather at this solemn time of year,
aware of the costliness of human history.
In the face of hostility between nations and neighbours,
you have come to us in Jesus Christ,
carrying no sword, calling us to serve as peace makers.
In this time of worship, renew in us the hope
that you will turn swords into ploughshares ,
and lead the world you love away from making war for pride or profit.
By the power of your Spirit,
renew your promise of peace with justice for all your peoples.
May it be so.

**God of justice and mercy,
we confess that the world around us is in a mess.
Nations turn disputes over territory into acts of aggression.
Old enemies stir up conflict with their rivals.
Threats of violence keep us all on edge.
We confess we have not learned from past conflicts
what leads to peace with justice among nations and neighbours.**

Forgive us, and lead us in a better way.

We pray for strength through your son, Jesus
who taught us to pray together:

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.

Assurance of Pardon

Jesus said, Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Friends, through God’s mercy, our sin is forgiven. May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Hymn # 330 O God our help in ages past

Children of God Moment – In Flander’s Fields

**In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.**

**We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,
In Flanders fields.**

**Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.**

Prayer for Understanding

O God, as we turn to listen for your Word, send your Spirit among us. Open our ears to your truth. Open our minds to your challenge, and move our hearts to live out that challenge in the name of Jesus Christ, your Word made flesh. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Psalm 146; Hebrews 9:24-28; Mark 12:38-44

SERMON Honour and Sacrifice: Remembrance Sunday

One never knows what they might find when renovating an old house. There was a time, when almost anything was used to insulate homes. Veronique Cote knows that better than most. She was renovating her home in Chambly, Quebec. It was time to remove the old papers and put in proper insulation. She began the arduous task and was pulling out all kinds of old newspapers that had been stuffed between the wall when all of a sudden, an envelope fell to the floor. Inside the envelope was an 8-page love letter dated Sunday, May 23, 1943, written by Lt. Robert Macfarlane to his young wife Jean Macfarlane. A portion of the letter stated, "My dearest wife, I've just come in from a walk of a few miles and thought I would write down, if I could, some of the things I've been thinking about you, things that are deep in me but that I've expressed perhaps only rarely to you, I hope you won't find it too sentimental. I don't think you will, I know I never do when you write that way to me." Veronique says that it was a beautiful letter about how much this engineer serving in the Canadian Armed Forces overseas deeply missed his wife. Veronique wanted to know the end of the story. Did Lt. Macfarlane make it home? How did this love letter end? And what legacy did he leave behind?

Turning to social media, she posted a picture of the envelope online and hoped that she might learn a thing or two about Robert and Jean. The next day, while she was back at work removing the paper between the walls, there was a knock at the door. The 70-year-old man at the door introduced himself as Bruce Macfarlane, son of Robert and Jean. A friend had phoned him just 12hrs after the post went up. Macfarlane had grown up in Chambly and from the Facebook post describing the letter, he recognized the house where it had been found. He decided to drive from his home in the Eastern Township about 115 kilometres away and see the letter for himself. Robert did indeed return from the war and grew the Macfarlane family. This is just one of many stories of sacrifice that we know took place and takes place amongst our armed forces families. I am also certain that many of you have your own stories of sacrifice that you have experienced.

Sacrifice is a funny word because it is usually made in reference to an offering towards a deity, but in this case, we are talking about giving up or surrendering a part of ourselves in the service of others.

Amanda Brobst-Renaud, a Theology Professor, analyzes our reading from Mark. The text presents both a caution, "Watch out for the scribes who devour the houses of widows", and an example "Look at this widow, who put in her whole life." While the caution against pursuing honour seems relatively clear, the example of the widow is less clear. Many interpretations present the widow's offering as an example of discipleship in keeping with loving God with all one's heart, soul, mind, and strength. This widow's home is devoured by the scribes, but she still places her whole life in the treasury because she trusts God with all she has and all she is. The widow's offering is both an expression of trust in God in the midst of the world comprised of broken people, systems, and communities of faith. Yes, this is a story about stewardship and giving all that we are to God. But, what perhaps we might begin to wonder is, in relation to

Jesus' warning about the scribes devouring widow's houses, why is the widow who gives two copper coins so poor? And why is she giving to a clearly broken system? Why does this woman sacrifice everything to an institution that has devoured her house?

Jesus is transforming our understanding of honour and sacrifice when he tells his disciples the poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others, because the others gave out of wealth, but the widow gave out of poverty. Jesus is declaring that it is the widow who sacrifices much and therefore it is the widow who deserves honour.

This isn't necessarily saying that everyone needs always to give everything. Instead, the widow has decided that her money, what little of it she had, belonged to God. This text, then, consistent with Mark's overall agenda, is about perspective and re-evaluation. The things that are valued in the Kingdom of God differ from the human realm. Should we give our money to fund a new air-conditioning unit for the church? Should we give money so that our name goes on a plaque? Are those the things valued in the kingdom? Or, should money be given to relief organizations? Food pantries? Homeless shelters? Rather than lifting up those with power and influence in the community, Jesus identifies the widow as having given more: she gives herself."

Our congregations are extremely generous and it is evident through the causes we support; we are trying to have a positive impact in a broken world. When we give of ourselves and give what we can, we are giving with genuine intentions and a giving heart therefore, extending the work of Jesus Christ. Jesus is our example.

Hebrews 13:16 says:

"And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."

We are encouraged to be mindful of doing good and showing generosity towards others. It reminds us that God is pleased when we offer sacrifices of love, whether it be through acts of kindness, sharing our resources, or lending a helping hand. We are reminded that our actions of caring for others bring joy to the heart of God.

Similarly, in our passage from Hebrews, we read about Christ's self sacrifice. Unlike the high priests who enter the temple time and time again to offer sacrifices, Christ's sacrifice happened once to take away the sins of many and to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. When we consider honour and sacrifice, we must consider this ultimate sacrifice for all of us. God saw the brokenness of the world and knew that if there was to be any hope, Jesus Christ would have to take his place in heaven for our sake. What a gift!

Between today and tomorrow, we take a moment to reflect and remember people who sacrificed their youth, their love, their efforts, gave themselves up for our country, an often-broken country, but this sacrifice represents hope, and for many, trust in God. Giving of our whole lives to God means that the systems that are broken have a chance to be fixed. It forces us to ask the question, where do we put our energy, our finances, our time, our sacrifice, and

our patience? Who do we honour? How do we give of ourselves so that the kingdom of God, the realm of peace, and hope, and love, has a chance? When we remember- it is also an opportunity to reflect on how we can do our part to make it better.

Today we try to remember. We remember the victims of war and all those who have died to help bring freedom and to help make the world a better place to live in. But today is also a stark reminder that our world is deeply broken and divided because of human violence. As we think about how we can give of ourselves to fix a broken world or system and to demonstrate our trust in God, I'm going to close today's meditation with words written by F.B. MacNutt from his book *A War Primer: An Anthology of War Prayers, Intercessions, and Prayers of Devotion*:

We arise today with the power of God to guide us, the might of God to uphold us, the wisdom of God to teach us, the eye of God to watch over us, the ear of God to hear us, the word of God to give us speech, the hand of God to protect us, the way of God to direct us, and the shield of God to shelter us.

Lest we forget

Amen

Hymn # 794 Abide with Me

Invitation to the Offering

The Scriptures today speak of generosity and the risk it involves, as well as God's faithfulness to generous actions. In this season of Remembrance, the risk and generosity of others is often on our minds. Let their legacy inspire us to risk generous gifts as we present our offering.

Doxology

Prayer of Dedication

Receive our gifts this day, O God, and bless them with your love and power. Use them in the work for justice and peace to prevail. Bless all who take a stand against injustice, here and everywhere, in the name of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and for the People

God of all the ages past, hope of years to come:

We gather in this season of remembrance,
grateful that you hold each one of us in your memory and your mystery,
now and for all the time to come.

Today we remember all those who have served to uphold justice and freedom
in the wars of the last century,

in conflicts of our own generation,
and in peace keeping and relief efforts around the world.

Especially we pray for those who have died in this service
and for those who carry scars on body & soul, having returned from conflict.

We remember their courage

and we pray for their families who still ache for lives surrendered at great cost. (Brief silence.)

Faithful God,
Remember them now and for all the time to come.

O God, we remember before you the victims of current conflicts,
hiding in forgotten corners of the world, longing for safety and peace... (Brief silence.)
We remember victims of violence in our own country,
still fearful and uncertain about what the future holds for them... (Brief silence)
Give us the courage to speak out for their protection and recovery.
Faithful God,
Remember them now and for all the time to come.

O God, we remember those around us who carry on
under the burden of sad and hard memories;
those weighed down by grief, disappointment, anger, pain and loss. (*Brief silence*)
Inspire us to offer a listening ear and an understanding heart whenever we can.
Faithful God,
Remember them now and for all the time to come.

O God, we remember those around us who struggle to remember day by day;
those who fear forgetting those who matter most to them,
and those who face the fear of being forgotten.
Help us remember those in our midst who are struggling and in this silence, hear our own
personal prayers.
Faithful God,
Remember them now and for all the time to come.

God of all the ages past, hope of years to come,
help us remember you day by day.
Strengthen us to be disciples of your gospel
so that hope is renewed in our lives, your church and the world
for the sake of Jesus
Amen

Hymn # 315 A mighty fortress is our God
Hymn # 800 O Canada
Moment of Silence

BENEDICTION

Jesus said, Blessed are the peace makers for they shall be called children of God.
Go as God's children, to bring peace into the lives you encounter this week.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
That you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit
And the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

**Sung Response- Go Now In Peace
Postlude**

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next Sunday Service, November 17, at 10:00 am at North Pelham

*Thanks to the pop-up choir who sang on Anniversary Sunday! We are going to have another one for the Christmas benefit concert on November 23rd. All are invited to come to practices to prepare for this on the following dates at North Pelham church. Thursday November 14th and Friday November 22nd. All practices will be at 7:00 and will run for about 1 hour. Please let Jessica know if you wish to participate or have any further questions.

*Joint Session Meeting: The Session meeting for Rockway and North Pelham will be held on November 13 at Rockway, starting at 7:00 PM.

*Willing Workers Bazaar - Saturday November 16 from 10 am – 1 pm. This is also pick up day anyone who ordered meat pies.

*Presbytery Meeting: The Presbytery meeting will be held on November 20 at Scottlea Presbyterian Church, starting at 7:00 PM.

*Christmas Joy Benefit Concert, Saturday, November 23 | 2:00 PM, First Presbyterian Church, North Pelham: Join us for an afternoon of festive Christmas carols! A free-will offering will support the Open Arms Mission of Welland, helping those in need. Come and share the joy of the season through music

*Wednesday Bible Study: Diane McMillan leads this group at North Pelham every Wednesday at 10:00 AM.

*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.

*Connect with your Minister Jacob for pastoral visits. Reach Jacob at jacoblee0501@gmail.com or 289-213-2797.