



**Rockway and First (North Pelham) Pastoral Charge**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Epiphany Sunday, January 12, 2025**  
**Worship at Home**

**Email:** [northpelham.rockwaypc@gmail.com](mailto:northpelham.rockwaypc@gmail.com) **Website:** <https://northpelhamrockwaypresbyterian.ca>

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

L: Beloved, God chooses us and calls us by name.

**P: We belong to God. Alleluia!**

L: Our lives have purpose because we belong to God.

**P: We are called to be like Christ and follow him.**

L: We will find joy, peace, and restoration through God's amazing grace.

**P: Let us worship God who claims us and loves us! Praise be to God!**

Hymn #689 Simply trusting every day (vs. 1-3)

**PRAYERS OF APPROACH, CONFESSION and The Lord's Prayer**

God at the beginnings and the endings,  
 on this first day of the week, you began creating,  
 bringing light to shine and bringing order out of chaos.  
 On the first day of the week, you began your new creation,  
 raising Christ out of death,  
 breathing new life into the world.  
 On this fresh, new Sunday of the year,  
 you call us to waken from sleep  
 bundle up from the cold and damp  
 and gather in your holy name.  
 So we come to listen and wonder,  
 to sing, to pray, and to be fed.  
 By the gift of your Holy Spirit,  
 make us your instruments of hope in a hurting world,  
 in answer to the prayer and praise we offer this day.  
 God of majesty and mercy,  
 we confess to you our wrong-doing:  
 things we have done knowingly  
 and things we have left undone;  
 hurts we inflicted unintentionally  
 and hurts we have tried to disguise.  
 selfish things we have done just to please others,  
 and those just to please ourselves. (Silence)  
 Forgive us,  
 and in the year ahead, help us choose a better way.  
 Praying in the words Jesus taught us to pray:

**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:**

Hear the good news! Who is in a position to condemn?

Only Christ, and Christ died for us,

Christ rose for us, Christ reigns in power for us,

Christ prays for us.

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven

and set free to make a new start.

**Hymn #203** When Jesus the healer passed through Galilee (vs. 1,2, 6,7)

**Prayer for Understanding**

May the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be pleasing unto you O Lord,  
Amen

**SCRIPTURE PASSAGES**

**Psalm 103: 1-14;**

**Mark 2: 1-17**

**SERMON****Unroofing the Roof**

It was just about this time last year actually that my husband, Trevor and I stayed in an *Airbnb* for the first time.

Staying with his parents is no longer possible so we thought we would try this out as an option.

After all it's what our children tell us is the way to go these days.

It's different from what we're used to though.

It's not a hotel with a front desk clerk, parking valet and chocolates left out on your pillow.

It's not a motel, with identical rooms housing guests all lined up in a row, and easy access to an outdoor pool or your car.

It's not a Bed and Breakfast because no one there will be making you a 'three egg, sausage, and scones with homemade jam breakfast',

– although you can put your own tea and toast together .

Staying in an Airbnb was like being allowed to occupy someone else's apartment for a time, coming and going freely, while living independently in a different city.

This place we stayed in was quite comfortable and we liked that flexibility quite a bit.

The only challenge *I* had was getting into it.

Access to the apartment was from the side of the house.

I had to put in the code 1226 on the key pad on the exterior door, then walk through the garage, open that house door, go down a little flight of stairs and unlock the door to our apartment with a key.

No problem in the day light, but...

once it got dark outside there were no working lights to guide me.

How hard it was, to enter 1226 on a key pad that I could not see!

After stepping over the threshold I had to make my way through a pitch dark garage to the inside door, walking like a blind person, feeling only with my hands.

Do you know how hard it is to find a door knob in the complete darkness?

Even the fact that there was only one key given to us for the apartment door meant Trevor and I had to be careful not to lose it, and always remember to be the one who had it when we were entering separately.

So my review is;

this Airbnb was a nice place to stay.

Entering was a definite challenge....

And that's exactly what Jesus is concerning himself with in our passages from Mark this morning!

Peter has just declared to Jesus,

“Everyone is looking for you!”

And now that he is home in Capernaum it seems like they have all found him because;

“They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door.”

I imagine that the 4 guys are late because it took some time for them to rig up the palette to carry their friend.

It probably took even *more* time to get their friend ready and onto the mat.

It might have required some adjustments to carry a paralyzed man in a way that he was not half sliding off or dragging a foot.

Their friend was powerless after all to get himself to Jesus, and we too know that it takes extra time to go anywhere when physical impairment is part of the scenario.

We aren't told how far they had to carry him to get to the house, but it was far enough in that heat, only to realize that the way forward was blocked.

I wonder what it must have felt like to finally come upon that source of healing only to be greeted by the backs of people turned away from them?

That's a question for the modern church if I have ever heard one!

What does it feel like to have peoples' backs turned toward you at the door of worship and healing?

But thankfully this man has creative, determined friends which, by the way is a real blessing.

Lots of people like the paralyzed man are completely isolated.

Can we imagine now, what it was like for these friends to carry a full grown man and his palette up an outside flight of stairs to a roof top?

Not easy!

That took persistence – and whether out of faith or desperation; these guys were committed to their friend's healing.

Then they start dismantling the next obstacle, which is the roof, taking it apart piece by piece, “digging through it” the Bible says

until they have a human-sized opening to lower him down through.  
 Not easy! No Robaxosil for their backaches later!  
 How much trust they must have had in each other!  
 How much trust the paralyzed man had in them!  
 How much trust they had in Jesus!  
 What did Jesus see when he looked up?

The faces of four friends who have gone through so much to break through all the physical barriers in their path to get their friend to Jesus so he could heal him. It says, "When he saw *their* faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man; 'Son, your sins are forgiven.'" Now let's slow down and consider this for a moment since we all think we know this story so well from our days in Sunday School.

The guys managed to creatively and determinately present their paralyzed friend to Jesus in hopes of healing.

And Jesus does not heal the man.

He says, "Son, your *sins* are forgiven."

First of all, he calls him "son", meaning Child of God, worthy of a relationship with God, "who crowns you with love and compassion... as a father has compassion on his children." Psalm 103

The friends think that the most important thing is for a body to be healed.

I bet most of the people there thought the exact same thing and that is why there were crowding around, but it's *forgiveness* that's the most important thing to Jesus;

"Son, your sins are forgiven."

Forgiveness is more important

– forgiveness so our sins are no longer held against us, and no separation exists between ourselves and God.

And the man was made whole before his body could walk.

But who knows really?...

Who actually sees that a person's sins are forgiven?

What does it matter that this man named, Jesus said that?

What authority does he have?

That's what the leaders of the synagogue are thinking and Jesus knows it.

So the physical healing that was so desired by all in attendance was also granted.

"Get up, take your mat and walk."

Now, the crowd parts for him.

Which is easier asks Jesus –

forgiveness or healing -

and there is no answer given.

Except that Jesus is going to die for the forgiveness of sins-

and a plan is hatching in this very house

with that hole dug through the roof

exposing the heavens.

Whoever died for putting on a cast,

or doing knee surgery,  
 or a chiropractic realignment? - No one.  
 But Jesus will die for the forgiveness of all our sin and then rise up.  
 So this man's sins are forgiven, -the burden of them removed,  
 not by anything the paralyzed man did,  
 but by the faith of his friends  
 and the power and compassion of Jesus.  
 The Pharisees aren't that impressed by Jesus.  
 He's smashing through their established rules by  
 eating with tax collectors - and sinners too.  
 The exact offenses of tax collectors and sinners  
 are hard to puzzle out, if you think about it.  
 By their society's standards they were ceremonially unclean due to their line of work and the  
 people they are in contact with and perhaps because they are religiously unobservant, not taking  
 their commitment seriously.  
 Also in this group are; camel drivers, tanners, weavers, toll collectors, shepherds and more.  
 So their entry into a relationship with God is blocked up, impeded, barred by obstacles in their  
 lives or people in power who turn their backs and clog up the entrance way.  
 Jesus said,  
 "Follow me! Let's sit down together in the intimate act  
 of having a meal together."  
 And you know what?  
 Those tax collectors and sinners piled in for lunch because the door was opened,  
 and the opportunity to start something new was offered to them.  
 When the religious leaders asked, "What is this going on?  
 This is not our understanding of how to be in relationship with God!"  
 "Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.  
 I have not come to call the righteous, but the sinners."  
 Too often we Christians have thought of Jesus as opposed to Judaism.  
 We feel like we have the better way, the only way.  
 And you might be in that group too.  
 Except that Jesus was a Jew. His parents were Jewish, his siblings were Jewish and all his  
 friends were Jews.  
 Jesus is acknowledging that there is a structure of worship, prayer and praise that works well for  
 some, but it does not work for all.  
 There needs to be a new way that embraces those who are left out.  
 And that is what Jesus is doing, investing his time with the powerless, the broken, the lost.  
 Its scandalous, this radical embrace of outsiders, offering them entrance to the Kingdom of  
 Heaven!

Who are we in this story?

Who are you?

Are we so intent on looking the other way that we do not see who is being left out of a  
 relationship with God?

Are we so enamoured with rules and keeping them exactly the same  
 so those who can't or won't conform stay out of the inner circle?

Are we crowding around Jesus hoping to be healed or at least see a healing?  
 Are we like the guys who help their friend get a little closer even though we don't totally understand it all ourselves?  
 Despite our struggles are we ready to sit down to lunch with Jesus knowing we are not worthy and never will be?  
 Because here is the good news writes John Shea: "If sin alienates us, if sin alienates *anyone* from their Child of God identity, then forgiveness will restore it."

We can trust Jesus to guide us through the challenges, and remove the obstacle on our way home too. Amen

**Hymn #176** Songs of thankfulness and praise (vs. 1,2,3,5)

### **Invitation to the offering**

At a time when we start by remembering our blessings, let us share our tithes and offerings with God.

### **Doxology**

#### **Prayer of Dedication**

God our Maker, we offer our gifts to you in thanksgiving for your gifts to us in Christ and in creation. Bless what we bring and who we are, so that our gifts will bless the world you love in Christ's name. Amen.

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving and for the People**

God of Grace,  
 we turn to you in prayer with open and hopeful hearts.  
 We thank you for the work of your church in all its expressions and for all that brings your love, healing and justice into the world.  
 We pray for churches struggling financially, for churches enmeshed in conflict, for those that are tired and in need of renewal; and for congregations with a new sense of mission and purpose. Give them all wisdom and strength.  
 We thank you for the healing we have known in our lives:  
 For times we have been forgiven;  
 for relationships repaired and strengthened;  
 for comfort in times of grief;  
 for pain eased and recovery from illness.  
 While virus and infection are a reality in our communities especially at this time of year, we pray for those struggling to fight them in their bodies,

and those who continue to experience their long-term last effects.  
 And we pray for those in health care  
 coping with challenges that have no easy solution.  
 Give each one the hope and courage they need to face this new year.  
 We pray for people around the world  
 who must confront danger and conflict daily;  
 for those working for justice in the face of oppression;  
 and for all who know hunger and homelessness.  
 We pray for the many people faced with the devastation of a fire gone wild  
 in the winds of California,  
 and for the brave fire fighters who risk so much to save others.  
 Give them hope and courage to face this new year.  
 And now we bring to you in prayer this morning  
 those whose names and situations are on our own hearts... (silence)  
 Strengthen us to serve you not only with our words,  
 but also with our actions.  
 Help us to see others with your eyes,  
 and reach out with your compassion,  
 especially where differences divide.  
 Teach us how to work together  
 and show what it means to follow you in changing times.  
 In Jesus' name we pray, Amen

**Hymn #685** How firm a foundation (vs. 1,2,3,5)

**BENEDICTION**

May the grace of Christ be with you,  
 the love of God surround you,  
 and the Holy Spirit walk with you,  
 now and forever.

**Sung Response- Go Now In Peace**

**Postlude**

<p><b>We acknowledge that we meet on the traditional          Territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe</b></p>
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**\*Welcome and thank you to Rev. Anita Van Nest for leading us in worship today**

**\*Next Sunday Worship on January 19, 2025, at Rockway  
 10:00 am – Rev. Jacob will be back from study leave**

\***Quilting** Tuesdays at North Pelham at 9:00 am

\***Wednesday Bible Study** meets at 10:00 am at North Pelham

\***Outreach - Thursday Walking:** Join our Wellness Walk & Coffee Chat! Meet at Canada Games Park at 9:30 a.m. for the walk, followed by a joyful coffee chat at Rockway at 10:45 a.m.

\***Connect with your Minister Jacob** at [jacoble0501@gmail.com](mailto:jacoble0501@gmail.com)  
or 289-213-2797 for spiritual support, discussions, or getting acquainted.

\*The North Pelham Session decided to send a small floral remembrance to some of our friends, who are shut in, experiencing difficult times or lonely, this holiday season.

Messages of thanks were received from Fran Johnson, Catharine Tirpko, Mary Tirpko and Rosemarie Lampman.

Reaching out to let our friends know we are thinking of them is an important ministry for us to share in.

Others who received floral remembrances were Mieke Mander, Rose Molnar, Guy and Liz Cook and the Keenans.

\***Generosity this Holiday Season** – Open Arms Mission received \$745.00 from the Christmas Benefit Concert, and Pelham Cares received \$690.00 from the Tree of Lights - Thank you all for your kindness and generosity.