



Rockway and First (North Pelham) Pastoral Charge
4th Sunday after the Epiphany, January 26, 2025
Worship at Home

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: “For just as the body is one and has many members, so it is with Christ.” (1 Corinthians 12:12)

P: We gather as one body in Christ, united in faith.

L: “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it.” (1 Corinthians 12:26)

P: We come to care for one another in love and compassion.

L: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to bring good news to the poor.” (Luke 4:18)

P: We gather to hear and live out Christ’s mission.

L: Let us worship the One who calls us into community.

P: We come to serve, love, and worship together.

Hymn 350

To God be the glory

PRAYERS OF APPROACH, CONFESSION and The Lord’s Prayer

God of all life,

You gather us from our separate lives to hear your Word and respond to your revelation. You have called us to the life and work of your Church and our church. We seek your guidance, your wisdom, your passion, and your way. Help us to perceive and understand your law of love, and to follow you faithfully as your people. Bind us together with you in worship, and transform us from distinct, unique individuals into the living Body of Christ, alive with your Spirit in this place.

We confess to you, Gracious God, that whenever we come home to you, we realize how far we have strayed and how much we have forgotten your love and compassion. We have not loved you with our whole hearts, nor have we loved our neighbors as ourselves, because it is never easy to overcome our self-centered human desires. Too often, we view your love and compassion as a burden, not a gift; as an inconvenience, not a blessing. Hear us, O God, as we make our silent confession to you. (pause)

Meet us here, O God, in this place and in this hour. Meet us as an invitation to forgiveness. Meet us as a challenge to change our ways. Meet us as a source of spiritual understanding, as the ground of faith, the wellspring of hope, and the Spirit who transforms us into the loving human beings we long to be. We pray this in Jesus’ name, who taught us to pray together, saying:

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 571 Lord, I want to be a Christian**Children of God's Moment****Prayer for Understanding**

Loving God,

As we hear your Word, open our hearts to your truth. Unite us as the body of Christ and guide us to live in love and service, reflecting your compassion in the world. In Jesus' name, we pray.

Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES**Psalm 19**

1 Corinthians 12: 12-27; Luke 4: 14-21

SERMON**United in Christ's Mission**

In his 2025 inaugural address, with boldness and an air of unwavering authority, Mr. Donald Trump declared, "We will put America first." His tone left no room for doubt about his confidence in his power as President of the United States. These strong words reflect a mindset focused on prioritizing one's own needs and interests. While this sentiment resonates with many as a call to strength and self-reliance, it also serves as a striking contrast to the teachings of Jesus. Christ's message challenges us to put others first, emphasizing compassion and community rather than personal or national dominance. Today's Scripture invites us to reflect on this tension and consider what it means to live as members of Christ's body.

We live in a society shaped by values like capitalism and individualism. These forces drive innovation and economic growth, but they can also lead to isolation and a loss of community. When we prioritize personal success or national achievements above all else, we risk forgetting our connection to one another as God's children.

Many people today feel disconnected, confined to narrow spheres of work, family, or small social circles. This fragmentation mirrors the challenges Paul addresses in his letter to the Corinthians, where divisions and rivalries threatened the unity of the church. Just as the Corinthian community needed to rediscover their shared identity, we too are called to embrace the interconnectedness that God intends for us.

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus begins his ministry with a powerful declaration of purpose. Reading from the prophet Isaiah, he proclaims that he has been sent to bring good news to the poor, freedom to captives, sight to the blind, and liberation to the oppressed. This mission is radical in its scope, extending to all people and challenging the status quo of power and privilege.

Unlike Trump's call to prioritize one's own nation, Jesus' message calls us to prioritize the needs of others, particularly those who are marginalized. His inaugural sermon in Nazareth sets the tone for a ministry rooted in love, service, and justice. It reminds us that the Church exists not to serve itself but to serve the world, reflecting God's heart for the vulnerable.

Paul's metaphor of the body in 1 Corinthians 12 expands on this vision. He describes the Church as a living body with many parts, each playing a vital role. "The body is one," Paul writes, "but it has many members." No part is more important than another, and every part is essential for the body to function properly.

This metaphor speaks to the unity and diversity of the Church. Just as a body cannot function without its different parts working together, the Church cannot fulfill its mission without the contributions of every member. Paul's words challenge us to value and honor one another, recognizing that when one part suffers, the whole body suffers. Consider how the pain of stubbing your toe affects your entire body. Though small and often unnoticed, the toe's injury disrupts your balance and focus. In the same way, when the most vulnerable members of society are neglected, the whole community is weakened. Paul's teaching calls us to care for one another, ensuring that every person is valued and supported.

What does it mean to live as members of Christ's body in today's world? It means shifting our focus from individual achievement to collective well-being. It means using our unique gifts to serve others and build up the community. It means recognizing that our strength lies not in self-sufficiency but in our unity grounded in love as God's people.

Trump's slogan, "putting America first," highlights a common human tendency to prioritize our own needs and interests. Yet Jesus calls us to a higher standard: to put others first, especially the poor, the oppressed, and the forgotten. This call challenges us to think beyond ourselves and embrace a vision of shared responsibility and mutual care.

Jesus' mission, as outlined in Luke, is not just a lofty ideal but a practical challenge. As members of Christ's body, we are called to be his hands and feet in the world. This means bringing good news to the poor, advocating for justice, and offering hope to those who feel forgotten.

Paul's metaphor of the body reminds us that no role is too small and no person is insignificant. Whether you are a teacher, a caregiver, a listener, or a helper, your contributions matter. Each act of kindness, no matter how small, strengthens the body of Christ and advances his mission in the world.

In a world often divided by competition, power, achievements and self-interest, the Church is called to be a beacon of unity and love. We are not isolated individuals but members of one big

human family of God, bound together by God's grace. This connection is both a gift and a responsibility, calling us to care for one another and work together for the common good.

How can we restore this sense of connection in our own lives? It starts with small steps: reaching out to someone in need, offering encouragement to a struggling neighbor, or simply being present for a friend. These acts of love reflect the heart of Christ and remind us that we are never alone.

Donald Trump's words about "putting America first" challenge us to reflect on our own priorities. While the world may value power and self-interest, Jesus calls us to a different way of life. His mission, rooted in love and compassion, invites us to put others first and embrace the unity of Christ's body.

Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians reminds us that every member of the body is essential. When we live out this vision of mutual care and interdependence, we reflect the heart of the Gospel and bring hope to a divided world.

Let us recommit ourselves to Christ's mission, embracing our role in the body of Christ by using our gifts to serve others and build up the Church. In God's kingdom, greatness is measured not by power or wealth but by love and service. May we always remember that, in Christ, we are one body, called to share in His mission and to live as His hands, feet, and heart in our church, community, and the world.

This week, let's intentionally put others first—whether by reaching out to someone in need, offering a helping hand, or simply listening to someone who feels unheard. Each act of kindness, no matter how small, reflects Christ's love and strengthens the community we are called to build. Amen.

Hymn 635 Brother, sister, let me serve you

Invitation to the Offering

Doxology

Prayer of Dedication

We offer these gifts to you now, O God, as symbols of ourselves, that you may take us, bless us, and shape us into the hands, feet, voices, and heart that embody Christ today. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and for the People

Awesome God,

You have given us a rich life to live and a rich world in which to live it. Though we often associate richness with money and the things it can buy, when we step back from the frenzy, we

realize that the most important things that bring abundance and peace have little to do with money. We worry about bills and finances, and dream about what we could do if we had more, but there are many more substantial things we can do right now that have nothing to do with money.

There are people in our lives with whom things are not right. We carry anger, sorrow, helplessness, and frustration within us. Inspire us, O God, to choose each and every day to take a step that can improve our inner state of being in relation to someone else. There are also ways to care for others and for the world that will directly affect the worry we carry. Instead of feeling paralyzed and helpless, we can pick up the phone, send a note, take a walk, write a letter, or pray for others and ourselves, opening up space for faith to believe that You can create change in our stress-filled hearts.

We pray for a world in need, O God. As we face uncertainty in Canada with the election of a new leader and decisions on federal government policies, we ask for wisdom and justice to prevail.

We pray for Donald Trump, the newly inaugurated president of the United States. Grant him wisdom and guide him with your love and compassion. May he exercise his authority with mercy, especially toward the most vulnerable—those who live in fear, including undocumented migrants and LGBTQI individuals. Inspire him to honor their dignity and act justly, reflecting the mercy you have shown to us all.

We also pray for the people of Gaza and Israel in their ceasefire agreement and the people of Ukraine as they endure war with Russia. May there be increased humanitarian aid, the safe return of hostages, and a real opportunity for lasting peace. Bring stability and good relations between nations, and inspire courage and hope for those rebuilding their lives after loss or devastation.

For many of us, O God, hope and joy feel distant. We are afraid—afraid for our health, our immigration journeys, or the burdens of caring for loved ones. Some of us grieve the deep loss of loved ones, struggle to rebuild after the end of a primary relationship, or are worried about our children's future. Come to us, O God, as your beloved children in need of your grace and mercy. Ground us in your love and give us hope for what life can yet become, despite our struggles and pain.

Now, in the silence of this moment, we name before you the situations and individuals weighing heavily on our hearts. (pause)

Work your restoration in our hearts and lives, reminding us that we are one body in Christ, called to care for one another. Pour out your abundance, that gratitude may overflow even in times of pain or loss. Just as Jesus proclaimed good news to the poor and freedom for the oppressed, work your peace in our world and in our lives, so we may embody your justice, compassion, and hope. We pray all these things in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Hymn 471

We are one in the Spirit

BENEDICTION

Now may God, who unites us in love, Christ, who leads us to serve others, and the Holy Spirit, who empowers us to live as His hands and feet, remain with us, keep us, and bless us today and always. Amen.

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***Worship on Sunday, February 2, at Rockway**

***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.

***Out of the Cold Meal Service:** Rockway will serve hot meals to those in need at Knox Presbyterian Church, St. Catharines, on February 14 at 6:00 pm as part of the Out of the Cold program.

***Annual Congregational Meetings:** The 2024 Annual Congregational Meeting for Rockway will occur on **March 2**, immediately following the service. The meeting for North Pelham is scheduled for **March 9**, which also follows the service.

Committee reports are essential for providing a comprehensive overview of our church activities. We kindly ask committees to submit their reports by **February 16** for Rockway (to Bonnie) and **February 23** for North Pelham (to Janice or Carole)

Thank you for your cooperation and timely submissions!

***Connect with your Minister Jacob** at jacoble0501@gmail.com or 289-213-2797 for spiritual support, discussions, or getting acquainted.