



Rockway and First (North Pelham) Pastoral Charge
Good Friday, April 18, 2025
Worship at Home

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

P: Were you there when they nailed him to the cross?

L: Were you there when they pierced him in his side?

P: Were you there when the sun refused to shine? (Silence)

L: This is a day of sorrow — a lonely, desolate day.

P: This is a moment of mourning — a time of tears and aching hearts.

L: This is the hour to remember: Jesus died alone — abandoned, mocked, and rejected.

P: This is the hour to reflect on the cross, the suffering, the death of the Messiah. (Silence)

L: May the pain and weight of this day soften our hardened hearts and awaken us from spiritual numbness.

P: May it open our eyes to the brokenness around us and within us and stir us to deeper faith and compassion.

PRAYERS OF APPROACH, CONFESSION and The Lord's Prayer

Compassionate God,

we are here to worship you, because we trust that you hold the key to unlocking what opens the door to life—life abundant. Sometimes, the path before us is anything but clear. There is much clutter in our souls. There is much that is painful, uncertain, and fearful. And we have not been able to sort it out, or find peace with it, O God. Sometimes we try hard to keep it all bottled up, to store it in some quiet, hidden place. We're afraid of what might come out if we let the darkness within us show itself in how we relate to others.

And yet, O God, we must confess: that darkness still shows itself—in words and actions that hurt, in moments of anger, sorrow, or deep dissatisfaction. We have said and done things—things that are unkind, selfish, dismissive, or cutting. How dare we treat the life you have created with such disregard?

Hear us now, O God, as we bear, before you, the confession of our hearts. (silence)

You know us inside and out, O God. That truth is fearful—and yet, it is also full of grace. You love us even though we are imperfect. That is the most unbelievable part. You love us—with everything inside us, the light and the darkness, the good and the bad.

May your love become real to us again this Good Friday—in the face of the crosses we bear, and the crosses we place on others. May your indestructible love meet us there.

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven. You are set free—to be who you truly are: not a distortion of yourself, not a false or fearful self, not a destructive self, but your God-created self. Be what you are. We pray all this in the name of Jesus, the same Jesus who taught us to pray, 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 233

Were you there

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Responsive Psalm 22: 1-11

Mark 15: 25-41

Reflections of Women at the Foot of the Cross

Opening Scripture

“Near the cross of Jesus stood His mother, His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.” (John 19:25)

(Brief pause)

Violin solo – “Were You There When They Crucified My Lord”)

The music fades slowly as the scene begins.

Salome: Mary, why has this happened? My heart is breaking, and I don’t know if I can stay here. How can we remain after everything that has happened today?

Mary: I don’t know why all of this has happened. All I know is—I have to stay, even though all I feel is pain and sorrow.

Salome: Remember when He spoke about coming to Jerusalem to suffer? I didn’t understand what He meant. All I wanted was for my sons, James and John, to sit beside Him in His Kingdom—one on His right and one on His left. I thought only of their greatness. But now I see—the kingdom He spoke of isn’t about greatness. It’s about serving. If only we had understood that sooner.

Mary:

None of us truly understood, Salome. You only wanted what was best for your sons. I wanted the same for my James and Joseph. At first, we didn't see clearly. But as we listened, as we followed, we came to learn that Jesus showed us what real joy and greatness truly are. Still... it's hard to feel joy right now.

Salome: I still don't understand. Jesus did nothing wrong. He was always more concerned for others than for Himself. People constantly came to Him for healing, for help. He never turned them away. He gave them hope. But now... it all feels so hopeless.

Mary:

Do you think He knew what would happen today when He sat with us at dinner last night? There was something in His eyes—as if He understood. But if He knew... why didn't He stop it?

Salome: He spoke of a new covenant—His body, His blood. And now, His body is broken. His blood has been shed. But for what purpose? Even Peter didn't understand that night. And then everything got so much worse. How could he deny Jesus three times?

Mary: Peter is ashamed. He never believed he would deny Jesus—never. But now they've all left. Did they think walking away would ease the pain?

Salome: We gave up everything to follow this man, and now here we are... watching Him die on a cross. What do we do now?

Mary: We stay. We remain. We cannot leave now. Look—they're taking His body down from the cross. Let's follow. Let's bring the spices and ointments. We will prepare His body for burial. Let us follow Jesus to the grave today.

(Hymn 239 – O Sacred Head, Sore Wounded)

Mary's Sister: How I longed to protect my sister Mary from the unbearable agony of watching her son die. All I could do was stand beside her, reminding her she wasn't alone. My heart broke too—but not into as many pieces as Mary's. Everyone was weeping, but Mary's cries... they came from the deepest sorrow. She lost her son right before her eyes. I believe, in some way, she always knew this day would come. But knowing doesn't make it easier. A mother should never have to witness such a death.

Life hasn't been easy for Mary. As her sister, I've tried to stand by her. I remember when she was pregnant—how the whispers followed her. But sisters protect each other. I remember when Jesus was born, and how I held Him in my arms. He was so small. And then... they had to flee to Egypt, escaping Herod's cruelty. We were so relieved when they returned safely. Jesus grew quickly, as children do. I still remember when He was twelve, and we lost Him on the way back from the Passover. Mary seemed to know He was safe. They found Him in the temple, sitting with the teachers. They all listened to Him—even then. He was where He needed to be. And then He grew up—and life was never the same.

After His baptism, Jesus traveled through the countryside, preaching the Kingdom of God. Mary understood His calling, but it was hard to watch Him grow so weary. The crowds never left Him alone. Still, I think she knew He had a greater purpose. Some listened, and their lives were changed. I saw it. I felt it. I came to believe that Jesus wasn't just my nephew—He was the Messiah. God's own Son.

Not long ago, He said He would go to Jerusalem. I wish we'd tried harder to stop Him. But His heart was already set. The people welcomed Him with palm branches, but He must have known it wouldn't last. He said the Son of Man would suffer, die, and rise again. We didn't understand. Suffering? Dying? What could possibly come after that?

As I reflect on these past days, I'm thankful that Mary wasn't alone. Others stood with her—faithful women who followed Jesus, right until the very end. But I still don't understand why the men left. Why did they abandon Him so quickly? Only John remained. He's been a comfort to Mary. Jesus must have known John would stay. Even on the cross, as He drew near death, He found the strength to say to Mary, "Dear woman, here is your son," and to John, "Here is your mother." It was sorrowful... and beautiful. Even in His suffering, He thought of His mother. My sister.

How do we keep following Jesus now? I don't know. But I believe He has called us to continue—to share His message of love and forgiveness. We must do that. We must not let His voice be silenced. We must look to God for strength. I keep hearing the words of the psalmist: *"Turn for help to the One who is your strength. Seek God's presence continually."* We are not alone. Even in this darkness, we are not forgotten. And somehow... Jesus will show us the way. O God, give us strength.

Let us pray.

Lord, in the sorrow of this day, keep us faithful. In the silence of the tomb, help us to trust. May we, like the women at the cross, remain near to You, even when we do not understand. Hold us close until joy breaks through the dawn of resurrection. Amen.

Hymn 254 (R)

Near the cross

Prayer of Thanksgiving and for the People

O God of mercy and sorrow,
On this day, when the world grew still, and the sky grew dark, we thank you for the depth of your love—a love that entered into pain, a love that did not turn away from suffering, a love that stretched wide its arms to embrace the world. We thank you, Lord Jesus, for bearing the weight of our brokenness, for choosing the cross out of compassion for all people, and for walking through the valley of death so no one would ever walk it alone. We thank you for the quietness of this holy day, for space to weep, to remember, to reflect. We thank you for the truth that even in grief, your presence remains.

And now, O God, we lift before you the concerns of our hearts: For those who are grieving—grieving losses old and new, missing loved ones whose absence is heavy—Lord, be near. For those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit; for the sick, the lonely, the exhausted, the ones waiting for news, for healing, for peace—Lord, be near. For those in places of violence and unrest; for all who live under fear, whose lives are marked by injustice or cruelty—Lord, be near. For those whose burdens are hidden, whose pain is quiet but deep; for the ones who feel forgotten or afraid—Lord, be near.

In the stillness of today, we dare to place all these lives into your care, trusting that your love is deeper than death and your mercy reaches even the darkest places. Give us rest today, O God. Give the world rest. And if we must sit in the silence of the tomb, let it be with the hope that you are not finished yet. We pray all this in the name of Jesus, the crucified one. Amen.

Hymn 352

And can it be that I should gain

BENEDICTION

The blessing of God, eternal, the peace of Jesus, who gave his life for us, and the fellowship we share in the Holy Spirit be with us all—this Good Friday 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, April 20, at North Pelham**

***Easter Breakfast & Service – April 20:** Join us for Easter Sunday at North Pelham! We'll begin with a delicious Eggs Benedict breakfast at 9:00 AM (Freewill offering to benefit Rose City Kids, supporting children and youth in Welland). Our Easter Worship Service follows at 10:00 AM. All are welcome!

***Spring Tea & 150th PCC Celebration – May 3:** Celebrate 150 years of the Presbyterian Church in Canada at the Spring Blessings Tea on May 3, 2025, at 2:00 p.m., hosted by Central Niagara congregations at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Welland. Enjoy worship with a joint choir, interactive Bible reflections through stained-glass art, kids' crafts, and fellowship over tea. Please bring: Donations for St. Andrew's Outreach (toiletries, hygiene items, reusable bags). Free will offering. All welcome.

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