



**Rockway and First (North Pelham) Pastoral Charge**  
**Christian Family Sunday, May 11, 2025**  
**Worship at Home**

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

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

L: Sing praises to the Lord, you faithful.

**P: We will give thanks to God's holy name.**

L: Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

**P: We will give thanks to God's holy name.**

L: God has turned our mourning into dancing! Let us praise and not be silent!

**P: Lord our God, we will give thanks to your holy name, now and always!**

Hymn #459 O servant of God (vs. 1,2,4)

**PRAYERS OF APPROACH and CONFESSION**

Holy God,  
 the power of your love is beyond comprehension,  
 the breadth of your compassion without measure,  
 the depths of your wisdom knows no bounds.  
 In Jesus Christ, you meet us in the midst of life's joys and challenges  
 to show us what it means to love and be loved.  
 Today you surround us with the reassurance of new life,  
     in the nodding sunny heads of daffodils,  
 the cheerful nesting of chitter-chattering birds  
 and the abundant blooming of fruit trees.  
 We offer you our love and loyalty, and  
 our prayers and praise;  
 through the power of your Spirit,  
 draw us closer to you and closer to each other  
 as followers of Christ, our Risen Lord.  
 Merciful God,  
 You know that we want to strive toward following the ways of Christ,  
 and yet we get confused,  
 and other priorities distract us.  
 We are convinced that little things matter more  
 than they ever would to you.  
 We hold onto what matters to us, more than what really matters to you.  
 Forgive us.  
 Redirect our priorities,  
 and renew our commitment to live out your love,

even when that demands more of us than we expect.  
 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**

The good news of the gospel is proclaimed  
 through the voices of many.  
 In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven and made new  
 by God's generous grace.  
 May we carry that news with us and act accordingly.

Hymn #650 He leadeth me (vs. 1,2,4)

### **Prayer for Understanding**

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

### **SCRIPTURE PASSAGES**

#### **Responsive Psalm 23**

**The Gospel:** Luke 24: 13-35

### **SERMON**

#### **What we learned after Easter**

Long before I became an ordained minister, at the beginning of my working life I was an elementary school teacher -teaching little children how to read, and to write, and make sense of the world. There are three main types of learning styles, and each one of us has a dominate style. Visual learners learn and remember best what they can see, auditory learners rely mostly on what they hear for learning and tactile learners make connections by what they can feel, learning predominantly through their sense of touch.

This might be news to you this morning or you may very well know which way you, yourself learn best. For instance, I am a strong visual learner and a rather weak auditory learner, so if someone gives me directions by saying,

“You just go straight down this road, and turn left at the stop sign,  
 then hang a right and it's on your right.....”

Oh boy! All I can remember is to go down the road!  
 But draw me a map, and let me see it with my own eyes  
 and then I'll be able to get where I am going!

So you can imagine then how my heart was burning inside me one morning -

early, early, on my very first day in the city of Dublin, Ireland. Our plane had landed at 5 o'clock am in the morning. Our hotel room would be ready at 1 o'clock pm. Somehow my husband, Trevor and I had to fill in time in this brand-new city which happened to be very cold, that September morning.

At 9:00am The National Gallery of Ireland opened, and admission was free. We walked through hall after hall of incredible paintings by renowned artists, and classical artists and some modern artists, until quite by mistake we wandered into the room of Christian Art.

Now at this point my husband was so tired he sat on a bench, and I am pretty sure he was sleeping with his eyes wide open, ..... but not me.

For me it was like stepping right into the Bible, visually able to drink in story after story which I had almost exclusively read or heard, but not ever seen in living colour.

The canvasses were floor to ceiling, the familiar people depicted in them were as large - sometimes larger, than I was.

-the chaos and confusion of the feeding of the five thousand,

-the prodigal son, with eyes only for the money bags and no one else,

-and The Supper at Emmaus by Jacob Jordaens.

I bought a postcard of that one in the gift store before heading to our hotel.

We read, "As they walked... Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing him." This is what I could see in that painting:

Three men are seated around a square table, already laden with bowls of food.

The sommelier, a big official looking man with a towel thrown over his shoulder is dramatically pouring wine from a silver decanter into an ornate cup.

The waitress is young and plump with rosy cheeks from the effort of serving their guests.

Her hair is bound in a light cap and she holds a platter of food aloft as she approaches the table.

You can tell this isn't one of those slow nights in the restaurant either- the room contains passion and animation and energy.

There are animals in the picture too, a bird perched outside the open door, a dog under the table and a small cat under the chair that Jesus sits on.

These animals look less like cuddly pets and more like they are hungry, preoccupied with catching and eating any morsel that might fall from that table.

The three men are seated.

One of them is Cleopas in a golden tunic, the other, his companion. Neither man is one of Jesus' disciples, but part of a larger group called the multitude. Both men are leaning in toward Jesus, intently concentrating on his face, their arms are outstretched and hands gesturing, like they are trying to tell him something very important.

And Jesus sits at the head of the table, clothed in blue robes, with feet bare.

He is glancing up and past them- like he sees something beyond that none of the rest of them are seeing.

In his left hand, he holds a small loaf, and he has just torn the top off of it...

That's the moment Jacob Jordaens freezes and captures The Supper at Emmaus.

I've looked and looked at this picture and hard as I try, I cannot spot any remnant of blood or scar

on Jesus' hands and feet. His hands tearing open the loaf are placed just so, his right foot behind the leg of the table, I myself can't see for the life of me

the marks that would be the dead give away of who Jesus really is.

The people in the picture aren't looking there and there, (indicate middle of each palm) they don't know to look of course -

But we have heard the Easter story before and so has the artist and yet the fresh wounds are not ours to see.

Cleopas and his companion had been despondent out on the road when they explained, "The chief priests and the rulers handed [Jesus] over to be sentenced to death and they crucified him, but we had hoped he would be the one to redeem Israel."

The people hadn't done this, according to Luke. It was the powers of the world, the power systems that dominate the world - Those in control, who stand in opposition to God and God's kingdom come. This was not what they had expected either.

They use the word to redeem, which means to free a person or nation, to buy them back out of bondage, to tear the hard-pressed thumb of oppression off them. And this is when Jesus calls them 'foolish' and 'slow to see'. Had it not been told once, twice and three times, in detail what had to happen?

We heard it too, you and I.

And it says, "he explained again what was said in all the scriptures concerning himself." I bet they nodded their heads 'yes' as he spoke but really, they still did not catch more than the first thing he said. Then, they invited him in to stay for dinner, they extended hospitality to him although they did not know who he was. And it was at the table, with the hungry animals hoping for crumbs to fall, and the serving staff anxious to please, and the animated conversation swirling, that they saw him breaking the bread. and they remembered...

It was like Jesus was showing them - you have seen me doing this before, on the hill with 5000 hungry people, in the upper room and in that sensory visual moment they remembered and connected what they had heard on the road.

Scripture by itself didn't do it... Oh boy, but when the connection was made, a spark was struck, and their hearts were burning in their chests. We read: "When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight." That last part is harder to understand. Why did Jesus have to vanish just at the moment of realization?

This is what we learn after Easter.

Jesus Christ can not be pinned down. As much as they wanted to, they could not hold onto him. As much as we may want to we cannot examine him closely to satisfy our curiosity or doubt. We get glimpses through the Holy Spirit, but this gift is not to be held down or grasped - knowing fully is always just beyond each one of us.

Here is what did happen; Cleopas and his companion "got up and returned at once to Jerusalem." It was already evening, and the sun was setting.

They had urged Jesus to stay with them, to have dinner because it was not safe to be out on the roads after dark.

But this, this was too important, and they took the risk and hurried back to the city, pulled back in to community. There is no doubt in their minds now, they know what they know.

It says, "There they found the eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon. "Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread." We are never introduced to Simon

but it is possible they met him on their way back and he too had an encounter with the risen Lord

which he shared with them. So now they are pushed back together, back together as a community: The women had shared their part of the story;-they told that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive.- Some of the others had run back to the tomb and found it as the women said but did not see Jesus.- Simon had an experience all of his own- And now Cleopas and his companion were there breathlessly telling what they saw too.

They are back in community remembering together, each with a slightly different part to share, each with a different piece of the puzzle. Notice how it is through hospitality, inviting someone other in to share their unique and nuanced experiences that makes understanding possible. This opportunity to listen to truths from others is a gift.

On our own, we catch glimpses but a community of sharing becomes a community of a wide variety of experiences and knowing. The messages of the scriptures are very important but they can seem abstract, until through the act of sitting down together, sharing our own experiences of the Holy Spirit with each other- they become personal.

We can't hold onto Jesus but we have been given the gift of community. It's like a puzzle, and each one of us holds a piece. It's only when we put our pieces together, fit them in alongside each other that a bigger, clearer picture starts to emerge.

This congregation, these two-sister congregations have gathered together in community for many years -to share your own experiences and knowledge, your truth, your trust and your doubts, your challenges and your joys as a people of faith following the way of Jesus Christ.

May you continue to see the importance of practicing hospitality.

And the importance of listening to each other through the Holy Spirit.

And may your hospitality be a blessing to each other and to those whom God will introduce to you in the future. Amen

Resources: *The Supper at Emmaus* by Jacob Jordaens, viewed at The National Gallery of Ireland in September 2024

BibleWorm Podcast with Dr. Amy Robertson and Dr. Bob Williamson, #234 published April 4, 2021

Hymn #474 The love of God comes close

**Invitation to the Offering** - Let us now share the gifts and blessings of our lives.

### **Doxology**

#### **Prayer of Dedication**

Gracious God, of gifts and blessings both big and small, visible and invisible, requested and misunderstood we thank you, asking you to bless these humble gifts we return to you as our commitment to share what we have in this world you love.

Amen

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

Lord Jesus Christ,

You came to us bearing God's love  
to live with us, to walk with us,  
and to show us how to love.

You pray with us and for us day by day.

Today we turn to you with our hopes and our concerns.

Draw near to us and to those for whom we pray,  
so that your love will be known in our world this day.

Lord Jesus,  
 on this Christian Family Sunday,  
 we pray for the families we belong to -  
 Thank you for parents, grandparents and great-parents,  
 for the generations who started our families  
 and all they have given to us.  
 Today we thank you especially for our mothers,  
 and pray for all the mothers around the world.  
 Give mothers hope for their children,  
 and peace in the world to raise their children safely.  
 Comfort and support each member of our families,  
 and guide each child and young person into the future.  
 Lord Jesus,  
 we pray for families in our community and in your world  
 We remember families in need:  
 Families who are struggling under economic pressures...  
 Families who know sorrow because someone has died or gone away...  
 Families who live in fear  
 because they are in the midst of some kind of trouble...  
 Surround these families with your love  
 and bring them courage to face whatever tomorrow brings.  
 Lord Jesus,  
 We pray for each other and for our church family:  
 Thank you for the friendship and fellowship we share,  
 and the unique gifts each one brings to our life together.  
 Show us our paths into the future,  
 and give us important things to do in your name.  
 We bring to you in prayer this morning  
 those whose names and situations are on our own hearts... (silence)  
 God our Maker,  
 hear our prayers, spoken and unspoken,  
 and use us in ways we may not yet imagine to respond to others  
 with the love and humility we see in Jesus Christ.  
 Amen

Hymn #757 Come sing, O church in joy!

### **BENEDICTION**

May the love of the Father, the tenderness of the Son, and the presence of the Spirit, gladden your hearts and bring peace to your souls, this day and all days.

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

### **Postlude**

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

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Happy Mother's Day!!**

**Thank you to Rev. Anita for leading us in worship today**

**\*Worship on Sunday, May 18, at North Pelham**

**\* Plant, Bake Sale and BBQ at North Pelham –  
Saturday May 24, 2025, from 9:00 am – 1:00 pm  
BBQ will start at 11:00 am**

**\*Lincoln Pelham Library Bookmobile – beginning Monday  
June 2<sup>nd</sup> from 5:15 pm – 6:30 pm, the bookmobile will  
come to North Pelham Church for anyone in the  
community to access library services. This will happen bi-  
weekly**

**\*Wednesday Bible study:** Diane McMillan will lead Wednesday  
Bible study at 10:00 AM at First Church.

**\*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  
[jacoble0501@gmail.com](mailto:jacoble0501@gmail.com) or 289-213-2797.