



**Rockway and First (North Pelham) Pastoral Charge**  
**6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Easter, May 25, 2025**  
**Worship at Home**

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

### CALL TO WORSHIP

**L:** Jesus asked the man at the pool, “Do you want to be made well?” (John 5:6)

**P: We come to worship on this Sabbath, taking time to pause and ponder our lives before God.**

**L:** We come with our past behind us, living in the present, and looking with hope toward the future.

**P: We bring our fears and our faith, our doubts and our dreams, our wounds and our longing for love.**

**L:** In the midst of life’s limitations and unexplored possibilities, we come seeking the wholeness that only God can give.

**P: May the words, the prayers, the silence, and the music draw us into the healing presence of Christ. Come, let us worship God together, with open hearts.**

**Hymn 299                      Holy, holy, holy**

### PRAYERS OF APPROACH and CONFESSION

#### **Giver and Healer of Life,**

We come before you as your beloved children, bringing with us our joys and hopes, our burdens and wounds, our frustrations, fears, and longings.

You have created us in grace, imperfect and flawed, yet held in your boundless mercy. Your glory is beyond our understanding. Your healing power knows no limits. Your love cannot be measured.

You offer us life—renewed, restored, and eternal. Yet too often, we forget your power to heal us wholly—in body, mind, and spirit. We are worn down by stress, betrayal, disappointment, and loss. We speak of pain, but not always of transformation. We close our hearts to protect ourselves, afraid to trust, afraid to change. But still, you call us to rise, to walk, to live anew. Hear now our silent confession, as we open our hearts to you. *(pause)*

#### Forgiving God,

forgive what we have been, help us to grow into what we are, and guide us into what we may yet become. Touch us with your gentle and healing hands. Renew us where we are broken. Strengthen us where we are weary. Restore us to wholeness—body, mind, and spirit—that we may live as your beloved children, healed, hopeful, and whole.

Grant us new faith, living hope, and deeper love as we renew our relationship with you and with those you place in our lives. This we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our compassionate healer, 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 78                      **This is the day**

### **Prayer for Understanding**

Gracious God,  
 You see us as we are—wounded, waiting, and longing to be made whole. As we hear your Word, stir our hearts. Help us to listen not only with our ears, but with our will, so that we may rise from what holds us back and walk in the healing hope of your love. Amen.

**SCRIPTURE PASSAGES                      Responsive Psalm 67; John 5: 1-18**

### **SERMON                                      Do You Want to Be Made Well**

Healing is an essential part of our human journey. As individuals, we are imperfect and flawed, and make mistakes and do wrong things. As social beings, as a whole, we make mistakes and do wrong things as well. These unavoidable mistakes and wrongs hurt God as the source of all life, ourselves, and others, physically, mentally, and spiritually. That's why healing is not just something physical that happens with the right medication, surgery or therapy. Healing is also internal. It touches our hearts, our minds, and our spirits. It is both seen and unseen, both physical and deeply personal.

In today's gospel reading, there are many sick people around a pool of water near the temple. The tradition of the time has it that when the water is stirred, the first person who gets in will mysteriously experience healing. Jesus encounters a man who is the main character in the story. He is an invalid, who has been unable to walk properly for thirty-eight years. The sick man can't walk and can't do the kinds of things ordinary people can do. This can be pretty depressing and demoralizing. This is the kind of man Jesus encounters.

On the one hand, who can blame the man? Living with a debilitating condition is brutal, as some of us here know very well. This sick man has become consumed by his physical illness. And this is the part that Jesus focuses on. Jesus asks him a question: "Do you want to get well?" Jesus notices him in particular and chooses to address him in particular among a crowd of many other people all gathered around the pool with various ailments and conditions.

Healing is not a passive event, but an active one, because holistic healing needs to take place in body, mind, and spirit. What Jesus offers the man is his healing ability within himself. What Jesus invites this man to do is in fact change: his relationship with his illness, his relationship with himself, and God.

The person healed is invited to become an actor in the healing process, a participant. He is challenged and provoked to do something, try something he hasn't done or tried or imagined before in the same way. The encounter with Jesus is a new opportunity to believe in the possibility of healing. It is an opportunity to awaken hope that may have been dormant or dead for a long time. It is a fresh attempt to ignite some energy and determination.

Jesus is asking the man whether he really wants to take the risk to change his life. He has lived a certain way for 38 long years. Is he ready to change? Sometimes, even though we are living a half-life, a compromised life, a limited life or whatever we want to call it, we develop a comfort with it. We develop an acceptance of a certain attitude toward life, toward certain people and certain relationships, toward what we can or cannot do. We simply give in when we could resist or fight or dream and work for some change. Unless we are ready to move toward something totally different we will remain stuck just where we are.

As fearful humans we often experience a certain comfort in misery, in living a half-life where we don't have to be challenged or provoked or pushed to rise higher or do better. This man has to think about all this in how he responds to Jesus. Is he ready to really be free, to be empowered, to shake off the chains and live a different life?

The man gives Jesus two responses that I believe all of us here can access in our experience. First, he says, "Sir, I don't have anyone here to put me in the pool when the water is stirred up." Can he not do anything even though he is disabled in some way and doesn't have the advantages others have? Can he not engage people to give him a hand at the right time? Does he have no family or friends, not even the local temple priests? When one door is closed, we either just stay frozen or paralysed in front of that door, or we get creative and constructive in finding other doors or a way around the door. No change, no healing, no movement and growth in life ever happens without creative, constructive faith and hope being activated in our lives. Certainly, this man has given up.

After the first response goes nowhere, the man tries a second one. He says, "while I am trying to get in, somebody else always gets there first." What the man is saying may be true. But couldn't he find any other options for healing, for overcoming his physical limitation, instead of complaining or blaming someone or something else for his failure?

The man tries both excuses on Jesus. But Jesus tells him flat, "Get up, pick up your mat, and walk." The man can stick to his usual responses, or he can allow some faith and hope to get ignited in him. He can dust off the spider's web of 38 years of living a certain way and say, "enough!" whatever enough will look like in his life. Jesus challenges him to take responsibility, to become a master rather than a passive and hopeless victim. Finally, the man is changed forever.

The story continues in a shocking way. When he is accused by the temple priests of breaking the religious law by carrying his mat on the Sabbath, he doesn't take responsibility. Instead he passes it on to Jesus. He blames Jesus for telling him to do it when Jesus is the one who has just healed him. How ungrateful and cowardly he is! But Jesus is not upset about it. Because healing is not about what we deserve or what we earn. It is a gift. The man wasn't healed because he was a good man. We pray to God for the gift of healing knowing that it is a gift. We don't make vows to be better if we are healed. We don't bargain with people to help us and say we will pay them. We receive what is given as a gift and our gratitude comes from the depths of our hearts.

This is because genuine holistic healing comes not only from our bodies and minds, but also from our spirits. It has to be open to the gift, unearned and undeserved. If we are living with trouble, illness or severe disability, and we cannot be inspired to discover the gift of life for which heartfelt gratitude is the appropriate response, we cannot experience true wholeness. Unless this man, healed by Jesus, discovers such gratitude soon, I fear that even though he may have his walking back, other things may not go so well.

So how deeply do we want to get well? For some of us it is not necessarily a physical thing. Maybe it is a mental thing, a relationship thing, a social thing, a financial thing, or a spiritual thing. Whatever the thing is, holistic healing is a life-long journey that takes on different dimensions as we experience different things in life, as different things befall us and those we love.

If we want a relationship with God that can be part of our healing journey, we need to face the ways in which we get stuck in our misery; the ways in which we make excuses, blame others, blame circumstances, avoid taking responsibility, and resist any risk or change that would require creativity and constructive effort.

We need the freedom and empowerment that come from God, the one who created us and walks with us. Faith, hope, and fresh love must flow like spiritual blood through our veins. Whether we are walking into healing or walking through hardship, may we keep discovering new forms of inner and holistic healing through our intimate relationship with God.

May we be challenged and provoked where we need to be challenged and provoked. May we find peace where we need peace. And may we, above all, receive the healing grace of God with open hands and grateful hearts. Amen.

Hymn 747                    **There is a balm in Gilead**

### **Invitation to the Offering**

#### **Doxology**

#### **Prayer of Dedication**

Gracious God, you offer us healing that renews body, mind, and spirit. As we return these gifts to you, may they be used to bring wholeness to others, hope to the weary, and signs of your love to a hurting world. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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

Great Spirit,

we give you thanks for the gift of this day, for the breath in our lungs, the beauty of creation, and the life we share with all living things. We thank you for your Son Jesus, who taught us how to love, how to serve, and how to live with compassion and grace.

Thank you for calling us to be your Church—a people shaped by mercy, hope, and healing. We thank you for recent blessings among us, for the love shared through community events, and for your Spirit at work in simple, generous acts.

We pray for all those places of suffering, O God, where there is conflict and war, displacing people and killing them, often indiscriminately. We pray for mercy and comfort to rise up, O God. How many innocent people must be scarred and killed to defeat an enemy? How inhuman do we have to become to shut off our hearts?

We pray for the people of Gaza, O God. The suffering is too overwhelming, and many of us feel helpless as we witness what is happening. Bring reason and heart to tyrants and their partners who play politics to save their skin while the bodies pile up. We also pray for Ukraine and other places of our world, too, O God.

On this Healing and Reconciliation Sunday to recognize the need for healing and relationship building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada, we pray for Indigenous peoples in our land, and all who carry the heavy burdens of pain, isolation, and despair. Bring your healing presence to their bodies, minds, and spirits.

Finally, we take a moment to name before you in the silence, O God, those particular situations and people in our lives deep in our hearts and concerns. (pause)

We pray for healing in all the ways healing can come when faith is rekindled, when hope is restored, and when love rises within us. Grant us strength for each day, courage for the unknown, and compassion that runs deep and true. Bring your peace—deep and abiding—into every place of pain, instability, and uncertainty. We ask all this in the name of Jesus Christ, our compassionate Healer and Redeemer. Amen.

Hymn 626

**Lord of all power**

## **BENEDICTION**

May the healing grace of God the Creator, the compassionate love of Christ the Redeemer, and the renewing power of the Holy Spirit go with you, now 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, June 1, at North Pelham**

**\*Rockway Cleaning Bee:** There will be a cleaning bee at Rockway on Tuesday, May 27, from 9:00 to 11:30 AM. Work will be done inside and out. Everyone welcome.

**\*Lincoln Pelham Library Bookmobile** – beginning Monday June 2nd 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

**\*Rockway's 216th Anniversary Celebration – Sunday, June 8!**

Join us as we give thanks for 216 years of God's faithfulness at Rockway! This special Sunday will include: **A powerful message** from our guest preacher, **Rev. Dr. Clyde Ervine**, a respected teacher, pastor, and leader in our Presbytery. **Our Anniversary Mission Project** in support of **The RAFT**, a local ministry that helps homeless youth in St. Catharines. All donations will go directly to their life-changing work and are eligible for a tax receipt. **A call to action:** Let's celebrate by blessing others. Your support will help The RAFT move closer to its vision of ending youth homelessness. Come celebrate, worship, and make a difference!

**\*Come Early to Sing with Joy!** As we celebrate Rockway's 216th Anniversary on Sunday, July 8, we invite you to arrive at the church by **9:45 AM** for a special pre-worship music practice. Let's gather early to lift our voices and prepare our hearts for joyful and blessed worship. Your presence will make our singing stronger and our celebration sweeter!

**\*Joint Session Meeting on June 11:** Rockway and North Pelham's joint session will be held on June 11 at 7:00 p.m. at Rockway.

**\*Communion at Rockway – Sunday, June 22:** Join us for Communion at Rockway as we share in Jesus' love and grace.

**\*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 [jacoblee0501@gmail.com](mailto:jacoblee0501@gmail.com) or 289-213-2797.