



Rockway and First (North Pelham) Pastoral Charge
Pentecost 4 Sunday, July 6, 2025
Worship at Home

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Come, beloved of God—each of us different, yet joined as one body in Christ.

P: *“Just as the body is one and has many members... so it is with Christ.”* (1 Corinthians 12:12)

L: Jesus set his face toward Jerusalem, choosing love over comfort, and calling us to follow.

P: **We come to follow—not for gain, but to give ourselves fully in love.**

L: When one rejoices, we all rejoice. When one suffers, we all share the pain.

P: **Together, we are the body of Christ.**

L: Let us worship the God who calls us to live, love, and serve—without calculating.

P: **We come with open hearts to worship the God of grace.**

Hymn 479

The church’s one foundation

PRAYERS OF APPROACH, CONFESSION and The Lord’s Prayer

We long to go deeper, O God: deeper into your love, deeper into your truth, deeper into a life shaped by your Spirit.

Life is good for many of us, yet we know that nothing is guaranteed. As human beings, we have lived—and will live—through seasons of fear, crisis, pain, emotional turmoil, shame, regret, rage, humiliation, and failure.

And yet, O God, we also know life’s richness: its beauty, its joy, its goodness—moments when we glimpse your love in the relationships and communities you give us. We do not want to lose these gifts. We want to take them all in—fully, gratefully.

But we also know how easily life’s struggles can cloud our joy, how pain can narrow our hearts, and how fear can hold us back from love. So now, O God, in silence, we lay down our burdens before you. (pause)

Hear us as we confess our sins to you. (pause)

Hear us as we open ourselves to your goodness and choose it as our way forward. (pause)

We are here, O God, to go deeper.

Meet us here. Meet us wherever our thoughts may wander, wherever our hearts may carry us—whether we rise or fall. Meet us, and begin the work of transformation, starting in this hour of

worship. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Saviour, 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 645

Follow me, the Master said

Children of God Moment

Prayer for Understanding

Loving God,

by your Spirit, open our hearts and minds to receive your Word with full commitment, that we may follow Christ not halfway, but all the way—with love, without calculation. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Responsive Psalm 77: 1-2, 11-20

1 Corinthians 12: 12-27; Luke 9: 51-62

SERMON

God's Vision for Human Community

In today's world, we often calculate when we form relationships. Even if we don't say it out loud, many of us quietly think, “If I give something, what will I get in return?” We might offer our time, love, or help, but we often hope for some benefit in return: appreciation, support, maybe even something material. And when what we hoped for doesn't happen, we feel disappointed. That disappointment can grow into resentment.

So here's the real question: Is there another way to live?

The first thing we should ask ourselves is what we want out of life. This question is where we find Jesus in our gospel lesson. Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem. He has “set his face,” as the passage tells us, to go to Jerusalem for the big Passover festival. He is beginning to prepare his friends for what is going to happen there. He is experiencing growing hostility from those in power in his society, so he knows he doesn't have their support. He knows how this is going to turn out. And it becomes clearer and clearer as he gets closer to Jerusalem.

And so, in light of this cost, he says some difficult things, to challenge people: Are you in this all the way? Or are you in it only halfway? If you're in all the way, you have to give all the way. You can't form relationships that are contractual and calculating. You have to come with me all the way; otherwise, it won't work. And so one person replies: “I will go with you wherever you go.” Then Jesus says something that is hard to understand. He says, “Foxes have holes, and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lie down and rest.” In other words, if you're committing to me because you're calculating that you're going to get a material benefit out of this,

you are wrong. You're not going to get more money. You are not going to get more comfort. You are not going to get a better return on your financial investment. That's not going to happen. Probably, a lot of other things will happen, but you can't calculate the benefit in that kind of way.

There are others who are prepared to follow Jesus, but want to take care of business first. And Jesus' reaction is to warn them that they need to be in it all the way, because he knows that they won't last. They won't be in it all the way. And finally, he says something else when they are passing through unfriendly Samaritan territory. Samaritans and Jews don't mix because they are centuries-old enemies. The disciples are deeply upset about this and want to retaliate against the Samaritans for their inhospitable behaviour. Jesus says, "No." In the Kingdom of God, community is based on love; we don't treat our enemies in that manner. In fact, we open a door. We move on. We open a door and we make our peace.

According to the scriptures, a human community inspired by God works very differently, and to appreciate the benefits of this, we have to understand what we have to commit.

The apostle Paul in our New Testament reading from Corinthians is writing to a community based in the city of Corinth. It is a very diverse city, somewhat like Toronto, where there are vast gaps between people with considerable wealth and those with desperately little. It is a city where there are people of various cultural, moral, and spiritual backgrounds. All of this diversity is brought into the church. I think this is great. It is great to have this diversity in the church, because the church should reflect the world around it in terms of its diversity, although not in terms of its conflict. So the apostle is challenging this divided community, where people compete with one another and there is rivalry and there is grievance, and where people are cautious about their relationships and enter into them in a calculating way to measure what they are going to get back.

The apostle says this has to change, and to help in doing so, he brings us the wonderful metaphor of the body. There are two things Paul says about the body. First, the body that Paul is talking about is a body where Christ is the head and the inspiration. This inspiration is not about making money, about being recognized and popular, or about being at the pinnacle of power. It is Christ who is the head, because Christ is the heart, the soul, and the brain of this body.

The body has diversity and differences within it. Paul explains this difference in the way we are all different as people. Our differences are infinite. Everyone is different in terms of tastes, opinions, and views. We are different in terms of our personalities, our backgrounds, our culture and the languages we speak. We are different in terms of our abilities, our talents and gifts.

Paul says, secondly, that even though we are different, the body works with Christ as head when we know that we all belong to each other. We don't stand alone. We work best when we are all together. We work best when those who are the most significant take the time to honor those who are less significant. We work best when we are complete as one. This means when there is someone in pain, when someone is hurting, when someone is mourning, we all mourn together. That is how the body works best. In the same way, when someone is celebrating and being

honored, we all rejoice together. We honor and we mourn. We are only complete when everybody is a part.

In God's vision, human community means there is a way of living where it is possible to give and take without calculating. I'm going to give and I'm going to give all the way. I'm going to love and I'm going to love all the way. I'm going to serve and I'm going to serve all the way. What I'm going to get back is not something that I calculate. When I don't calculate, I get back in ways I could never have imagined. I may not get back anything directly from you. It is the spiritual joy of an abundance, a fullness, and a peace that I get back. That spiritual joy and truth are infinite in their ability to nourish me, renew me, and focus me in terms of what is really wonderful about life.

God loves us unconditionally—not because we earned it, but simply because we are precious to God. God's love is not measured or calculated. It is a gift. It's not always easy for us to love that way. But we are followers of Jesus. We are learning. We are practicing. We are building a new way of living—a glimpse of heaven on earth.

So let us be citizens of God's Kingdom, living in a way that shows the world an alternative. Let us give without expecting. Let us love without measuring. Let us follow Jesus, who prayed that God's Kingdom of love would come "on earth as it is in heaven.

May we take that first step today with courage, generosity, and joy. Amen.

Hymn 471 **We are one in the Spirit**

Invitation to the Offering

Doxology

Prayer of Dedication

Generous God,

we bring these gifts as signs of our commitment to your Kingdom, rooted in love. Use them and use us to love, serve, and build up the body of Christ, with open hearts and without counting the cost. Amen.

Prayers of Thanksgiving and for the People

You have given us life, O God. But what is it for?

Many of us live for many reasons—to have fun, make money, travel, build relationships, get married, raise children, succeed in work, enjoy retirement, and live a long, good life.

But is there a glue, O God, a truth that holds all of life together? Is there a unity bound by a higher, spiritual purpose?

We thank you that you have given us a blueprint—a way we are made. And this design is revealed most clearly in Scripture and in Jesus Christ, who shows us our true purpose.

We are here to learn how to love—and to love deeply. This love comes from you, O God. It nourishes and inspires, grounds us and gives us strength. It finds us when our hearts are open and focused on your goodness. You give us human community, and especially church community, to learn how to love not only those who are easy to love, but also those beyond our comfort zone.

You invite us to give and serve, to share and care, not with calculation or expectation, but with trust and full commitment. And in doing so, we receive a peace and joy beyond what we could ever measure. We thank you, O God, for the gift of experiencing this sacred love in community.

And in love, we now reach out in prayer for the world around us. There is so much violence and war. Tyrants crave wealth and land, consuming your beautiful creation—which now burns and suffers in response. Save us from complacency. Save us from fear. Empower us to press our leaders to treat the climate crisis as urgent and sacred, a priority we must all carry together.

We pray for those with no home in the summer heat. For those facing abuse or neglect in places meant to be safe. For refugees fleeing war, rejection, or persecution. For victims of accidents—on the road, in the air, at sea, or at home. For all who grieve sudden loss or live with lasting pain. For those with chronic or terminal illness, longing for purpose, peace, and relief.

You know every need, O God. You carry each one in your eternal heart. Send your healing love to those who suffer, and stir compassion in those who can help.

Finally, we take a moment of silence to name before you, O God, those situations and persons for whom we carry deep concern at this time. (silence)

For healing, we pray, O God. For blessing and for new life, we pray. And for peace — a deep peace stronger than pain or fear, we pray. We lift all these prayers, spoken and unspoken, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and our hope. Amen.

Hymn 592 **I, the Lord of sea and sky**

BENEDICTION

May the grace of Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit go with you, as you live with full commitment and open-hearted love. Amen.

Sung Response- Go Now In Peace

Postlude

<p>We acknowledge that we meet on the traditional Territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe</p>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***Next Sunday Service, July 13, at 10:00 am at North Pelham**

***Wednesday Bible study – Summer Break:** Our Wednesday Bible Study, led by Diane McMillan at 10:00 AM at North Pelham Church, will pause for the summer and resume on **September 10**. We look forward to gathering again in the fall!

***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 or 289-213-2797.