



Rockway and First (North Pelham) Pastoral Charge
Pentecost 14 Sunday, September 14, 2025
Worship at Home

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

Welcome and announcements

Call to Worship

Come, people of God,
 let us worship the One who listens to our prayers.
Come, people of God,
 let us worship the One who watches over us.
Come, people of God,
 let us worship the One who offered his life for us.

Hymn #746 What a friend we have in Jesus (vs. 1-3)

PRAYERS OF APPROACH, CONFESSION

O God,
in love you created us and in grace you sustain us.
We are blessed by creation which provides for all our needs
and delights our senses day by day.
You made us all part of the web of life in these changing seasons
on this beautiful earth.

Help us to appreciate your gifts in nature,
and give us sharing hearts
which seek to pursue peace and abundance in all our relationships.
In that way we praise you and cherish all that your hands have made.

Make us partners in the flourishing of all life
to the glory of your name.

Lord, we confess that we have been too much in a hurry,
too much concerned with our own selves,
or too frustrated with worries and restrictions and each other.

We have drifted away.
Lord, forgive our impetuosity and our arrogance.
Lord, forgive our distractions with little things and our petty grievances.
Lord, forgive our short-sightedness
and restore us to walk in the way of your Son our Saviour,
Amen

Assurance of Pardon:

Through Christ, God has redeemed us.
 Healing and reconciliation has been offered to us.

Thanks be to God that we can all make a new start,
because we have been forgiven
this day and every day!

Hymn 495 The heavens declare your glory Lord (vs. 1,2,4,5)

Children of God Moment – What about bugs?

Prayer for Understanding

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

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES James 3: 1-18
Psalm 19

SERMON

My Rock and My Redeemer

It's been just 2 weeks back to school for most students now.

Back to school time has always been a special time unto its own.

Many of us can remember it ourselves, and some of us are re-living it right now through our own children, grand children or maybe even great-grandchildren.

It's that time of year when the air has a little nip in it early in the morning for those walking to school or waiting for the school bus, and a time of first week jitters, excitement and anticipation.

My friend Nancy Warden and I were reminiscing about those days as mothers; eagerly waiting for our children to arrive home at the end of the school day full of chatter about the comings and goings, their thoughts, their feelings and the news, the teacher-talk, the names of brand new students, the subjects they would be studying.

Now having three very different children myself, I heard three very different observations on those first days back to school. One of our children always dutifully reported on what the class rules were:

- she had to put her hand up when she wanted to speak,
- she had to get in a line when leaving the class -
- right down to the fact that she had to push in her chair before walking away from her desk.

Another child of ours,

always commented on the teacher's fashions.

It was going to be a great year when she had a young, stylish teacher

with a plentiful wardrobe,

a good selection of shoes,

and an eye for colour combinations.

But agony was the year she got the teacher who repeatedly wore the same cow-print jumpsuit.

Our third child was much more introspective. He didn't talk about the rules, or the teachers, or the subjects. He talked about himself and how he felt, and how really if he never had to go back to school again that would be fine by him.

"How many more days left, Ma!?"

This morning, I would like to focus our attention on Psalm 19.

It's not too often any of us gets to hear a sermon with a Psalm as the main scripture.

This psalm however, Psalm 19 has inspired many great pieces of music including 5 pieces in our own hymn book, one of which we just sang by Isaac Watts.

Psalm 19 is attributed to the thoughts and writings of King David.

And it has 3 parts -

although that might not have been obvious to us after our first reading.

The first part reminds me of my child who always wanted to talk about the fashions at school, always wanted to tell about what she could know by what she could see.

The heavens declare the glory of God;

The skies proclaim the work of his hands.

Day after day they pour forth speech;

Night after night they reveal knowledge.

What can we know about God?

What is God saying to us?

Look around you. Look at nature.

Ask yourself what is God saying when we look at the skies?

What is God saying when we look at the mountains?

What is God saying when we look at a honeybee

collecting nectar from a flower?

What is God saying in the changing of the seasons?

I like the analogy of the sun as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,

"like a champion rejoicing to run his course".

I remember when I attended the World Masters Track and Field championship in Ritzioni, Italy.

Countries from around the world sent athletes to compete, from 40 years old to 90 years old.

I happened to be at the starting line when the Men's 400M race competitors, aged 70–75-year-olds prepared to run their heat.

I wondered to myself what on earth this would look like.

Out came the men; proudly wearing the bright colours of their countries,

from Italy and Japan, from Poland and South Africa, from Canada and Sweden.

And they were pumped!

and they were proud!

and most of all they were full of joyful anticipation just to be able to be primed and ready to go, -

"champions rejoicing to run their course".

That, says David is what God has done in creating the sun.

Day after day,

"It rises at one end of the heavens

and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is deprived of its warmth".

The sun is 4.6 billion years old, take a few years or so.

What David is saying is that God is constant.

God shows up!

God is continuous and never failing in giving good things.

God brings light, energy and life into our world.

And we can count on this God to be present, powerful and faithful.

The second part of the Psalm is about the Law which God has given.

For us today, rules and laws sound less like gifts and more like expectations which carry consequences and punishments if they are not followed.

This part reminds me of my child who always wanted to recite the classroom rules to me after her first day of school.

Those classroom rulers were her security blanket which helped her feel safe.

Six times David tells how God's law is something good for himself and everyone else too.

The Law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul.

The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

David saw the Law as a comfort.

The Law showed him where he was in the grand scheme of things, and how he could live a good life. The Law was like a trustworthy roadmap, given to him by someone who cared enough that he stay on a safe path, a good path, and far away from corruption, and evil side-streets.

The Law gave David security,

just like the classroom code of conduct gave my child security.

It was given to protect from the threat of chaos.

And another thing about the gift of the Law;

it shows us, no matter how huge a tumble we may take,

how to get back with God.

For David the Law was not just about a set of rules,

it was God's gracious provision, forgiveness and restoration.

Herbert O'Driscoll writes,

“The law of God gives grace. Jesus is our Law.”

The third and last part of this Psalm is much more introspective.

After declaring the constant, dependable, day by day and night by night ‘Word of God’ coming to us through the majesty of nature; after declaring the security of a God-given Law that “refreshes the soul”, “is trustworthy”, “gives joy to the heart”, “gives light to the eyes “and “endures forever”,

David takes a hard look at himself and takes stalk.

Like my third child, he asks himself what this all means for me.

How can a person respond to such everlasting gifts of devotion?

His prayer of self-reflection goes like this:

But who can discern their own errors?

Forgive my hidden faults.

Keep your servant also from willful sins;

may they not rule over me.

Then I may be blameless,

innocent of great transgression.

David, in prayer admits that he isn't really good enough to be in a relationship with a God so majestic and true. He knows that sometimes he has sinned without realizing it, and people have been hurt, the earth has been damaged all because of his selfish, self-absorbed, careless ways.

And then if he gets really honest, there are the pre-meditated sins too; the times he consciously made decisions that hurt others or broke covenant because he knew it would benefit himself in the immediate future.

And so he confesses the truth about himself:

the outer and the inner truths –

*May the words of my mouth
and the meditation of my heart...*

David knows that God wants to be in a good relationship with him, and **he** wants to be in a good relationship with God. But he also knows his own mistakes and selfishness make him woefully unworthy as he falls short again and again.

So he prays to God for help.

For us, that help came in the form of Jesus Christ.

The bridge between this majestic, constant, life-giving God of ours
and us, came as the gift of Jesus.

The Redeemer arrived with the thin cry of a newborn baby into a dark and cold night.

Jesus came as the revelation of God, and the forgiveness of God, and the one through whom we are in relationship to God.

“Who do people say I am? Jesus asked.

“But what about you?

Who do you say I am?”

*May the words of my mouth
and the meditation of my heart
be pleasing in your sight, Lord,
my Rock and my Redeemer.*

Amen and Amen

Hymn 690

Fight the Good Fight (vs. 1-4)

Invitation to the Offering: As we have been given so many gifts let us return a portion of those gifts to God.

Doxology

Prayer of Dedication

Generous God, you poured out your love for us through Jesus Christ,
who gave up everything on the cross. We bring what we have to offer you in love and loyalty.
Receive our gratitude and bless all that our gifts can do to share your love for Christ's sake.

Amen

Prayers of Thanksgiving and for the People

Almighty God, Lord of heaven and earth, in whom we live and move and have our being;
You will be good unto all humankind, making the sun rise and shine on all of us, and sending rain on the just and the unjust. Look upon us with grace and favour though we know, this we do not deserve.

And yet, you surround us with abundance, and you present us with opportunities to do good things, and you heal us, and comfort us, and call us your beloved children.

Praise and thanks to you.

Lord, we pray for students and teachers as they make their way into this new school year, with many challenges and many opportunities.

We thank you that our children and grandchildren and great grandchildren can learn, without fear of repercussions or violence.

We pray for children around the world who do not have the means to go to school or who are prevented from studying because of their gender.

We pray this day for grandparents, and those who found room in their hearts to love and listen to children who need a grandparent.

For their patience, their understanding, the encouragement and their love, we thank you Lord for grandparents.

Lord, in this time of hostility and anger in the world and even in our community we pray for calm. For people to think carefully about the words they use, because words cannot be taken back, and they can cause unspeakable harm.

Lead us into our week now, knowing we will have many opportunities to speak.

May our words be kind and generous words especially when we are speaking to those who are sick, or anxious, or grieving, or struggling with mental illness -, words that will reflect your love Lord, for each one of us.

We pray now for those we name in our own hearts.... Silence.

As we prepare to leave this service, walk with us,
and show us how to live each day as those who follow Jesus,
for we dare to pray the words he taught us, saying:

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.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil,

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever, Amen

Hymn 743

Lead on, eternal Sovereign (vs. 1-3)

BENEDICTION

**Let the majesty of the Father
be the light by which you walk
let the compassion of the Son
be the love by which you walk,
let the presence of the Spirit
be the power by which you walk.
Amen.**

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank you to Rev. Anita Van Nest for leading us in worship today – Rev Jacob is leading worship at Kirk on the Hill this morning.

***Next Sunday Service, September 21, at 10:00 am at North Pelham**

*** Wednesday Bible study led by Diane McMillan at North Pelham at 10:00 am**

***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.

***Fall Fellowship at Rockway :** Join us on Sunday, September 28 at Rockway for a special day of worship followed by a joyful outdoor lunch together! The church will provide a delicious meal free of charge. We invite everyone to bring along a salad or dessert to share, and don't forget your grass chairs for comfort. Bring your family, friends, and a thankful heart—it will be a wonderful time of fellowship and celebration!

***World Day of Communion** - Sunday October 5 at North Pelham: Christians around the globe celebrate World Communion Sunday. It is a day to remember that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church and that every Christian Church and any denomination that promotes Christian unity are one.

***Harvest Table Food Donation** - Sunday October 5 at North Pelham there will be a collection of non-perishable food items and fresh produce for Pelham Cares - if you wish to participate, please bring your donations to church - items will be dedicated and taken to Pelham Cares. Monetary gifts are also welcome as the need for food is great! - Thank you for your generosity.

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

***Mark your calendars** - Sunday October 19, 2025 is First Presbyterian Church North Pelham's 197th Anniversary service with guest minister, Rev. Mark Lewis.