



**Rockway and First (North Pelham) Pastoral Charge**  
**World Communion Sunday, October 5, 2025**  
**Worship at Home**

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

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

**L:** "...I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine respectable people who do not need to repent." (Luke 15:7)

**P: We come to worship, facing our lives before God in all their truth.**

**L:** We come knowing that there is brokenness and sin in us.

**P: We come opening our hearts to the beauty and goodness God sees in us, even when we do not see it in ourselves or in others.**

**L:** We come so that God's love may find us, heal us, and transform us in the realities and relationships of our lives.

**P: We come to sing and pray, to listen and meditate, to eat and drink Christ: God-with-us. Find us in this time of worship, O God, wherever we are.**

Hymn 425

**We praise you, O God**

**PRAYERS OF ADDORATION and CONFESSION**

We come, O God, to worship and pray.

We come to give, and to receive. We come to learn and to be renewed. Your love is simple, O God, yet we are so complex. We love — and we love a lot. We love our families and friends, the people in our work, our homes, our schools, our community.

But in our loving, other currents flow: sometimes resentment, sometimes a longing to be noticed or appreciated, sometimes the thought that the person we love is not fully deserving, sometimes the fear of being taken advantage of, made a fool of. And sometimes we are simply tired, exhausted, stressed, so that our love feels thin and weary. We feel depleted inside.

Hear us now, O God, as we make our confession to you in silence. (Pause)

Sometimes our confession has words; sometimes only feelings too deep for speech. Sometimes it feels as if we are in a vast ocean, with no shore in sight.

Meet us in this hour of worship, O God. Meet us with forgiveness. Meet us with renewed energy to love. Meet us with freedom and confidence to be more truthful with ourselves and with others. Meet us with your grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn 373

**Jesus loves me, this I know**

### **Prayer for Understanding**

God of grace,

open our hearts to your Word, that your forgiving love may heal our guilt, free our denial, and transform us into your beloved children. Amen.

### **SCRIPTURE PASSAGES**

**Psalm 14, 1 Timothy 1:12-17, Luke 15: 1-7**

### **SERMON**

### **The Guilt-deniers and the Guilt-ridden**

It can be said that there are two kinds of people in the world. The first are those who deny guilt. Their main way of dealing with the bad in themselves is to pretend it isn't there. And yet, we know that all of us carry limits and imperfections as human beings.

But this guilt-denying group tends to push those limits aside. If someone points out their faults, they silence them, ignore them, or get angry. Sometimes they even blame others for their own mistakes. And often they minimize their wrongs: "It's not that bad, is it?" "There are worse things." "You'll get over it." We all do this sometimes — softening the reality of our wrongs. But this group leans heavily on self-justification: "If you weren't so bad, I wouldn't act this way." "You're partly to blame, so don't put it all on me."

The second group is the guilt-ridden. They constantly feel guilty, ashamed, and hopeless about themselves. They are weighed down by their flaws and mistakes, and sometimes this is even harder to deal with than denial. It can be just as difficult to reach someone who always feels crushed by guilt as it is to reach someone who always blames others. When people never stop blaming themselves, it leaves little room for real change — because others spend their energy trying to lift their burden rather than inviting them to take responsibility.

So, the question is this: How can we live in a constructive, life-giving way — personally, in our relationships, and in society? How can we deal with the bad that is part of life without falling into either denial or despair?

As imperfect beings, and as Christians, we need regular moral and spiritual renewal. That is one of the important reasons we gather in church. Week by week, we uncover ourselves before the gospel of Jesus Christ. Here, we find cleansing, refreshment, and a new start. We are reminded that we can live in ways that nourish, heal, and transform.

Just as we must care for our bodies and minds, so too we must care for our spirits. Without this, we risk being trapped in negative self-images or destructive patterns of relating. Worship re-centers us in God's love and sets us back on the path of grace.

In today's gospel lesson, Jesus is speaking to two groups of people. On one side are the tax collectors and other outcasts, who are called sinners. On the other side are the Pharisees and teachers of the law.

The Pharisees and scribes are like the guilt-deniers. They think they are righteous. They justify themselves. They look down on others. They believe they are the ones who hold society together, but in reality, their arrogance and judgment make them part of the problem.

Meanwhile, the tax collectors and outcasts are like the guilt-ridden. They know their lives are full of compromise and wrongdoing. They feel shame. They hate themselves and assume God must hate them too. They hear the judgment of the Pharisees and agree: “Yes, that’s who I am. A sinner. A failure.”

Into this tense setting, Jesus tells a simple parable. A shepherd loses one sheep out of a hundred. He leaves the ninety-nine behind and goes searching. And when he finds the lost sheep, he lifts it onto his shoulders, rejoices, and calls his friends and neighbors to celebrate.

The message is clear: God rejoices when the lost are found. Heaven celebrates when sinners come home. The sheep represents anyone stuck in regret, shame, or denial. The shepherd represents God — persistent, searching, and full of love.

Notice what Jesus is really saying. To the Pharisees and scribes, he says: “Stop judging. Don’t condemn your fellow Israelites who are overwhelmed by life. Love them instead. Love is what changes people.”

And to the guilt-ridden sinners, he says: “God loves you even though you are broken. Don’t stay stuck in shame. Open yourself to God’s love, because that love will give you hope and energy to change. You are more than the sinner you see yourself to be. You are a precious child of God. God sees beauty in you, because God put it there. Believe it. Live into it.”

The truth is this: condemnation rarely changes anyone. But when we experience generous, unconditional love, we begin to want to live differently. Love energizes us to confess, repent, and make amends. Love gives us courage to take responsibility and try again.

This is exactly what Paul is talking about in his letter to Timothy. Paul looks back on his life with honesty. He admits that he did terrible things. He persecuted Christians. He oversaw arrests, and some people probably died because of his actions. Small wonder that many Christians didn’t trust him at first. Even later, some doubted whether he could really be an apostle.

But Paul insists that the heart of his story is not his sin but God’s mercy. He writes: “Our Lord poured out his abundant grace on me and gave me the faith and love that are ours in union with Christ Jesus.” (1 Tim 1:14)

Paul sees himself as a living example of how even the worst sinner can be transformed. Like a lost sheep, he was found. And heaven rejoiced. God’s forgiving love reformed him, renewed him, and re-energized him. He couldn’t undo the past, but grace gave him a new future.

Here is the wonder of God's love: it is a treatment for the soul. It heals. It transforms. It opens doors we thought were forever closed. And it all begins when we confess honestly, take responsibility, and open our hearts to God's mercy.

Then, instead of seeing only our failures, we begin to glimpse the beauty God sees in us. And when that love fills us, it overflows. We find ourselves more patient, more compassionate, more ready to forgive. We discover new strength to bless the people around us.

So, we must each ask: What is our tendency? Do we deny, minimize, and justify our wrongs? Or do we beat ourselves up, stuck in shame that robs us of joy?

Either way, the way out is the same. God's love. Love that does not excuse our sin but heals it. Love that does not leave us in shame but lifts us up. Love that frees us to live differently.

The good news is that new beginnings are always possible. No matter how far we have strayed, God searches for us like a shepherd after a lost sheep. No matter how deeply we have failed, God pours out abundant grace, just as he did for Paul.

So let us be inspired by Paul's example. He faced his past, confessed his wrongs, and opened his life to God's transforming love. And God used him powerfully — not because he was perfect, but because he was forgiven.

May we do the same. May we confess honestly, accept God's mercy, and open ourselves to renewal. And may that love within us overflow to bless others. For in the end, the message of the gospel is this: God's forgiving love sets us free from denial and guilt, so we can live as beloved children who share that love with others. Amen.

**Hymn 371                      Love divine, all loves excelling**

**Invitation to the offering**

**Doxology**

**Prayer of Dedication**

We thank you, O God, that you walk with us in the good, the bad, and everything in between. We thank you for inspiring us to give. Bless these gifts for your holy work. Amen.

**Invitation to the Lord's Supper**

**The Apostles' Creed (p.539)**

**Hymn 548                      Let us break bread together (vv. 1-2)**

**Great Prayer of Thanksgiving & The Lord's Prayer**

**One:** The Lord be with you.

**All:** And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

**All: We lift them up to the Lord.**

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All: It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

**All: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

**All: Christ has died!**

**Christ is risen!**

**Christ comes again and again! Hallelujah!**

**All: “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.**

### **Words of Institution**

#### **Sharing of the Elements**

#### **Prayer after Communion (in unison)**

Thank you, O God, for feeding us at this table of grace. Thank you, Lord Christ, for meeting us in our weakness, forgiving our sins, lifting our guilt, and seeking us when we are lost. Thank you, Holy Spirit, for filling us with new life. Now send us out, transformed by your love, to live as your beloved children, sharing your compassion, forgiveness, and hope with one another and with the world you so love. Amen.

### **Hymn 548**

**Let us break bread together (v. 3)**

### **Benediction:**

May the forgiving love of God, the grace of Christ who seeks and restores the lost, and the renewing power of the Holy Spirit set you free to live as God’s beloved children. Amen.

### **Sung Response: “Go Now In Peace”**

### **Postlude**

**The Life and Ministry of our Congregations, led by Rev. Jacob Lee:**  
**Pastoral Charge of Rockway and First, North Pelham**

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

**\*Thanksgiving Sunday Service, October 12, at 10:00 am at Rockway**

**\*World Communion:** Today is World Communion Sunday, when Christians around the world share in Holy Communion. It reminds us that, even in our differences, we are one body in Christ.

**\*Joint Session Meeting:** The Sessions of Rockway and North Pelham will meet jointly on Wednesday, October 8, at 7:00 pm at Rockway.

**\*Thanksgiving Food Donations:** Thank you for your generous contributions today! This year we are collecting non-perishable food items and fresh produce for **Pelham Cares** on both **Sunday, October 5** and **Thanksgiving Sunday, October 12**. Together, your gifts will create a beautiful **Harvest Table**, a symbol of our gratitude and our commitment to caring for those in need in our community. Monetary donations are also welcome and deeply appreciated. Thank you for helping us share the joy of Thanksgiving with all.

**\*North Pelham's 197th Anniversary Celebration!**

Join us on October 19 as we joyfully celebrate North Pelham's 197th Anniversary with guest preacher Rev. Mark Lewis. Together, we will give thanks to God and support a special mission project for the Brock University Chaplaincy. Donations collected during the service will go toward helping students in need, and contributions made through the church are eligible for a charitable tax receipt. Let us come together in prayer and gratitude, sharing God's love as we celebrate this special milestone. We look forward to celebrating with you!

**\*Tai Chi & Qigong Class – Free 4-Week Program!**

Join us for a gentle movement class that strengthens body and mind. Instructor **Joy Joung** will lead us in Tai Chi and Qigong, with both standing and chair-based options. Classes begin **Monday, October 20 at 1:30 PM at First Presbyterian Church, North Pelham**, and continue on **Oct. 27, Nov. 3 & Nov. 10**. All are welcome—no registration needed! Come, move, and be refreshed. If you have any questions, speak to Joy or Rev. Jacob.

**\*Wednesday Bible Study:** Join us every Wednesday at 10:00 AM at North Pelham, led by Diane McMillan.

**\*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.