



Rockway and First (North Pelham) Pastoral Charge
All Saints Sunday
November 2, 2025
Worship at Home

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: “Do not use harmful words, but only helpful words — the kind that build up and provide what is needed, so that what you say will do good to those who hear you.” (*Ephesians 4:29*)

P: **We come to be centred again in God —to face what we should not do but often do, and what we should do but often neglect.**

L: “Get rid of all bitterness, passion, and anger. No more shouting or insults, no more hateful feelings of any sort. Instead, be kind and tenderhearted to one another, and forgive one another, as God has forgiven you through Christ.” (*Ephesians 4:31–32*)

P: **We come to be inspired by Christ —to receive his forgiving love and to follow his call in our lives. Let us worship God together!**

Hymn 299

Holy, holy, holy

Prayers of Approach and Confession

We are here, O God, stealing a few quiet moments from the rest of our lives to reset our connection with You. We come looking for perspective, O God. We come seeking inspiration, greater abundance and purpose, and peace. We come seeking a way through conflict toward reconciliation where possible, or toward acceptance where reconciliation is not. We come looking for hope, and strength, and determination for the work and study ahead.

We are also here, O God, with our failures. We are not always the people we want to be, or hope to become. We are not always peaceful or inspired. We lose our perspective, our sense of purpose, our strength and patience. We are not always ready to let go or to look for ways toward healing and acceptance. Instead, we react. We push and we pull. We express our anger outward in frustration and distress, or we turn inward in weariness and despair.

Hear the confession of our hearts, O God. We confess our pain and hurt. (pause)

We confess our frustration and anger. (pause)

We confess our sin and failure. (pause)

We confess our longing for a way through —a way that brings life. (pause)

Come to us, O God, during this time of worship. Come to us as forgiveness. Come to us as inspiration, as abundance, as peace. Come to us as the rock upon which we lean, the light that shows us the way forward, the embrace that helps us let go and trust. Be the ground beneath our

feet, assuring us that all shall be well, even when change lies ahead. Come to us, O God, in this hour of worship. We pray in Jesus' name, 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.

Sharing the Peace of Christ

L: May the Peace of Christ be with you all.

P: And also with you. (*congregational response*)

Hymn 378

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus in the morning

Prayer of Understanding

Gracious God,

open our hearts and minds by Your Spirit, so that as we hear Your Word, we may understand the way of giving and forgiving that Jesus shows us. Teach us to live in Your love and to share it freely with others. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Scripture Passages

Responsive Psalm 119: 137-144

Ephesians 4: 25-32; Luke 19: 1-10

Sermon

The Gift of Giving

There are three distinct ways people relate to each other in society: taking, exchanging, and giving.

Taking is one way people relate to each other, by taking whatever they can take: stealing, bullying, manipulating, threatening, lying, cheating, and using all kinds of resources for their own ends. If you can take it and you want it, go for it. Sometimes people who are rich strive to own multiple properties by using the system of mortgages the bank offers and renting them out to poor people who cannot own their own homes. Then they buy another property by taking out second and third mortgages. It never ends. This is one of the factors that contributes to the rise in rents in cities.

There is no rule but the rule of not getting caught. Sadly we live in a world where many will take whatever they can and often with little regret or shame about what they do in order to take. This happens a lot not, only with money but also in relationships and what we do to one another.

Yet revenge or retaliation always escalates the damage. It happens in our families or between individuals who have done things to each other, and over time things only get worse, with feuds and conflicts, breaks in families, even wars. Before the civil war in Korea, which divided the country into two, people in the same villages had cooperated for many generations in very close

relationships. Once soldiers from North and South Korea fought in the villages, people began taking sides. As families were taken from their homes, neighbors took advantage of the situation and went in and took whatever they could get, benefitting themselves from their neighbors' misery.

Let us think about how taking works even in our own lives. How do we treat people around us? Do we take from them more than we give to them? Do we take advantage and steal because we are hungry and feel the void in ourselves? Sadly many of us do such things even when we are not aware of it. Many people are ready to give to us and we can take advantage of that. Sure we justify the fact that we have need of people's help and consideration, their time and attention. God has blessed them so that they can bless us. But have we ever had the courage to see this as theft or stealing?

Exchange is the second way we relate to each other in society. This way of relating is about the world of commerce and finance, material goods and service. We buy, sell, and trade goods or services. I will do this for you and you can do this for me. We expect a fair price on whatever it is we have to offer, and we are prepared to pay a certain price for whatever it is we want to receive. Exchange is also about relationships we have with each other. We expect a give and take with the people we relate to.

By comparison, the exchange way of relating is far better than the taking way of relating. In Canada and any other civilized society, there are rules of exchange and a system of law that protects the powerless and vulnerable. Without predictability and agreed expectations, we would live in fear and chaos.

The third way of relating to each other is giving. Today's gospel story tells us of this special way of giving and forgiving. Let us explore the story as a classic example of how the relationship works. In the story we are told about a man named Zacchaeus. He was hated and rejected by most people, even though he was an important member of the early Christian community. This is because, as a tax collector, he made money bullying people to pay taxes upon taxes: first to Rome and then to himself. He worked for Rome, but he was taking advantage of his own people and making real money off the backs of the poor. As a rich chief tax collector, he had to walk around with bodyguards to stay safe.

In the story, however, he hears that Jesus is coming through, so he climbs a tree to get a better look. And Jesus notices who he is. It is surprising that Jesus doesn't condemn him for what he is and what he has done to this people. This is the first difference between Jesus and other leaders of the people. While others would condemn Zacchaeus and make an example of him, Jesus sees him as a lost soul: a human being in need of compassion and understanding like any other human being. Just as God has no partiality, Jesus also shows love, the offer of compassion and even forgiveness.

This way of giving love and forgiving everyone attracts more and more people to Jesus. And this is what makes the religious leaders feel he is a threat and needs to be discredited and stopped. Unlike the leaders, Zacchaeus is overwhelmed. Jesus invites himself over and Zacchaeus has a

banquet prepared. But the most important thing is that the heart and spirit of Zacchaeus are completely changed. He says to Jesus: “Listen, sir! I will give half my belongings to the poor, and if I have cheated anyone, I will pay back four times as much.” (v.8) Jesus responds quickly: “Salvation has come to this house today, for this man, also, is a descendant of Abraham. The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” (v.9)

Let us now think about the exchange between Jesus and Zacchaeus. Unlike the ways of taking or exchanging that people usually use to relate to each other, Jesus approaches Zacchaeus with total acceptance and love, without any condition and without justifying what Zacchaeus has done, who he is, or anything else. He simply treats him with compassion and openness like anyone else. This is a gift beyond anything Zacchaeus can repay. But Zacchaeus offers to give away a pile of his money and restore funds to those defrauded well beyond anything he took from them.

This is Jesus declaring how salvation works and how a relationship with God works. Love is not a matter of fair exchange. Love is something that comes from the heart, free, voluntary, and abundant. It is a gift. When love is experienced this way, it inspires a return of gift that brings about gratitude and generosity. Moreover, it appears in the form of forgiving others in return and letting go of hurts and grievances in advance of anything others may or may not do in return.

This is the heart of God. This is the heart of a faithful and practical Christian community that follows the heart of Jesus. Love and forgiveness come first if the community has the same heart as Jesus. Gratitude and repentance come afterward and are inspired from the heart rather than being simply a necessary and expected exchange. Conditions may sometimes be necessary in the world in which we live. But if we want to inspire rich relationships of giving and receiving, we have to go beyond setting conditions. As learners and followers of Jesus, we have to risk offering freely, abundantly, even lavishly in the name of love, trusting, hoping, and praying that the Spirit of God and Jesus will inspire more gift giving in response.

May we find ways and means to give to each other better than we do, and may we recognize that God is the one giving to us all the time, inspiring us to respond in kind in a world of pain, lack of compassion and generosity, betrayal, and mistrust. Amen.

Hymn 634

Will you come and follow me

Invitation to the Offering

Doxology

Prayer of Dedication

Thank you, O God,

for giving us the opportunity to give not only because we feel we must, but because our hearts are moved to do so. Bless these gifts, and bless every act of giving done in Your name and for Your glory. Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession

Fall is upon us, O God — and the first stirrings of winter.

We marvel at the change of seasons: the beauty of color, the cool air, the rhythm of life. These changes remind us of how life itself changes, O God. Some changes are part of life's natural cycles; others mark a turning point that feels permanent.

We thank You for the changes that bring new life, for moments of beauty and joy even in the midst of stress, pain, or loss. We thank You for love that sustains us, for growth that deepens our faith, and for the goodness that shines through even when we feel lonely or weary. (pause)

As we give thanks for the blessings we know, we also remember others —our neighbors near and far who share this world with us, and who long, as we do, for peace and healing.

Peace, O God, feels so fragile between nations and peoples. Even though it is Your holy gift and calling, we know how easily it is torn apart by anger, bitterness, and grief. We think of Palestinians and Israelis —of those who hold power and those who suffer under it, and especially of ordinary people caught in the crossfire, with little left but grief and despair. May hope rise up from the ashes and the rubble, O God. Bring a new day beyond the cries of rage and sorrow.

We pray, too, for the people of Ukraine, for those weary from a long and devastating war. May the hope for peace not be uprooted again, but take root in courage and mercy.

There is hunger in many places, made worse by conflict and corruption. We remember Sudan and other nations where people cry for justice and bread. Let mercy flow in real and tangible ways, bringing light and a better future to those who seek it.

Closer to home, O God,
we pray for all who struggle here in Canada: for those burdened by the high cost of living, for those searching for affordable housing, for those uncertain about work or the future. We pray for our elderly, especially those with limited means or little support. We remember those struggling with mental health —with depression, anxiety, anger, frustration, or loneliness. Bring them comfort and renewed strength, O God.

We lift before You those facing major life transitions, those anticipating death, those who grieve, and those who live in seasons of loss. May Your love — flowing through human hearts, gentle words, and quiet companionship —carry each one through the valley and into the light of Your peace.

And now, O God, in a moment of silence, we name before You the people and concerns held deep within our hearts...(Silent prayer)

Grant healing where it is needed. Let faith, hope, and love rise up ever stronger within us. Grant us peace in this time —and peace eternal in Your presence. We pray all this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and our Friend. Amen.

BENEDICTION

May the grace of Christ, who gives and forgives, the love of God, who blesses us abundantly, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, who fills us with compassion and generosity, be with you always. Amen.

Sung Response- Go Now In Peace
Postlude

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***Next Sunday Service, November 9, 10:00 am at Rockway**

***Celebrating 150 Years of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, this afternoon:** An afternoon of worship and song celebrating 150 years of The Presbyterian Church in Canada will be held on Sunday, November 2 at 3:00 p.m. at Knox Presbyterian Church, St. Catharines. Enjoy joyful hymns, a message from Rev. Hannah Lovaglio, and stay for a cheesecake reception!

***RPCW Meeting:** The RPCW will meet on Wednesday, November 5, at 1:30 PM at Rockway church.

***Joint Session Meeting:** The joint session meeting of Rockway and North Pelham will be held on November 12 at 7:00 pm at North Pelham.

***Meat Pie Sale & Bake Table:** The Willing Workers are now taking orders for their famous Meat Pies! Choose from 9" Ground Beef or Chicken Pies, available for \$18.00 each. Pies are sold frozen and can be baked anytime. To order: Please speak with Janice Aulph at 905-246-9175. Pick-up Day: Saturday, November 22, between 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. There will also be a bake sale and a table of gently used items available that day. Anyone who wishes to contribute to baking is warmly welcome! Please note: *This is not a Christmas Bazaar*. All proceeds support the ongoing work of the Willing Workers and the sponsorship of foster children.

***Christmas Benefit Concert – Join the Pop-Up Choir!**

Everyone is invited to be part of our Christmas Benefit Pop-Up Choir! If you enjoy singing and would like to share in the joy of the season, please contact Jessica Stewart:

Jessica.stwrt@gmail.com, 905-641-5377, or speak to her in person. Practices: 7:00 p.m. on Nov. 13, 27, Dec. 4, and 11. Concert: Christmas Benefit Concert 2025 – Saturday, December 13 at 2:00 p.m. Come and lift your voice in celebration—all are welcome!

***Invitation to Church Membership:** Our churches, Rockway and North Pelham, have been home to faithful people for generations. Recently, two families who have worshiped with us decided to become members, and we give thanks for this joyful step of faith. If you have been part of our worship life and feel that this is your spiritual home, you are warmly invited to consider church membership. It's simple, meaningful, and a beautiful way to say, "This is my home. These are my people." Please speak with Rev. Jacob if you'd like to learn more. Together, we continue growing as one church family in Christ.

***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. Our third class begins tomorrow, **Monday, November 3, at 1:30 PM at First Presbyterian Church, North Pelham, and continues on November 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 our spiritual leader, 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 jacoblec0501@gmail.com or 289-213-2797.**