



Rockway and First (North Pelham) Pastoral Charge
5th Sunday after the Epiphany, February 8, 2026
Worship at Home

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: We come before God with our joys and our wounds, with prayers answered—and prayers still waiting.

P: We come trusting that God is love, present with us in every season of life.

L: The apostle Paul reminds us: “Now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.” (1 Cor. 13:13)

P: Root us in faith, uphold us with hope, and teach us to live in love.

L: Come, let us worship the God whose true power is love that gives life.

P: We open our hearts to God’s healing presence. Let us worship God together.

Hymn 324

Great is thy faithfulness

PRAYERS OF APPROACH, CONFESSION and The Lord’s Prayer

God of love,

We come before you, seeking to find you and to be found by your love. Will we find you in this hour? Will you find us? For some of us, O God, this is a difficult time. We struggle to feel your presence and love. We wonder if you hear our prayers or if you have abandoned us in our darkest valley. For others, this is a season of joy, a time of gratitude and strong faith, trusting that you are with us and love us as we are. For some, there is a gap between what we do and what we know we should do in a particular situation or relationship.

Hear us, O God, as we bring our silent confessions before you. (pause)

Hear us, O God. Receive us, O God. Ground us in your love, O God. Call us to abide in faith, in hope, and in love. Plant within us the seeds of new faith and fresh hope, that your love may grow ever deeper in us and bear fruit in our lives. We pray this in the name of Jesus, 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.

The Peace of Christ

Hymn 373 **Jesus loves me, this I know**

Children of God's Moment

Prayer for Understanding

God of love, open our hearts to Your truth. Strengthen our faith, renew our hope, and shape us by Your unfailing love. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Responsive Psalm 13

1 Corinthians 13:1–13; Luke 4:16–27

SERMON

Where God's Power Is Found

Have you ever experienced or witnessed God's power to heal physical illness? I want to begin with the story of Rev. Pearl, a faithful and sincere minister who served the congregations of Rockway and North Pelham for many years. Her ministry was deeply rooted in love. She preached with compassion, cared for people faithfully, and served God with humility and joy. Many lives were touched by her presence and her preaching.

But there came a time when Rev. Pearl became seriously ill. Because of her illness, she had to retire from her ministry earlier than she had hoped or planned. This was not an easy decision. She loved her calling. She loved the church. And yet her health made it impossible for her to continue in the way she once had. For a while, she struggled deeply with her illness, both physically and emotionally.

During that difficult time, Rev. Pearl held on to her faith and hope. She prayed, and many people who loved her also prayed for her. Slowly, in what many would call a miraculous way, her health improved. She overcame the illness that had forced her into early retirement. And then something unexpected happened—she returned to the pulpit. Rev. Pearl began preaching again, Sunday after Sunday, in many churches throughout our Presbytery. She became one of the most sought-after preachers. Many congregations wanted to worship under her leadership and hear God's Word through her voice. It was not easy to invite her, because her schedule filled up quickly. In many ways, it truly felt like a miracle: she was healed, she returned to ministry, and she continued to share God's message faithfully week after week.

This is a compelling and uplifting story of healing. However, as a pastor, I am also aware of many other stories.

I have ministered to many faithful Christians who suffered from serious illnesses such as cancer. They were sincere in their faith. They prayed earnestly. They were prayed for by their families,

their churches, and their pastors. They received the best medical care available. And yet, in many cases, their illness did not improve. Some struggled for a long time. Some died.

This raises difficult and painful questions: Does this mean God did not hear their prayers? Does this mean God was not active in their lives? Does this mean God did not love them?

These are not easy questions, and they deserve honest reflection.

I have been challenged over the years to think more deeply about how we understand miracles and God's power. I believe God knows us completely and loves each of us deeply. God is powerful, and God is compassionate toward human suffering. I also believe that God desires to give us life-giving gifts and blessings.

Today's scripture readings help us expand our understanding of what God's power looks like. They invite us to see love—rooted in faith and hope—as a spiritual gift that allows us to experience God's faithful presence in good times and bad times, even in moments when life feels hopeless or when our prayers are not answered in the way we hoped.

In today's Gospel reading from Luke, Jesus declares his mission. He says that he is anointed by the Spirit of God to bring good news to the poor, freedom to the captives, sight to the blind, liberation to the oppressed, and to proclaim the year of God's favor. These words sound full of promise and hope.

But the people in Jesus' hometown do not welcome this message. Instead of opening their hearts, they reject him. They are not ready to accept that God could be working through Jesus in a new and unexpected way. They want God to act only according to familiar rules and traditions. Their hearts are closed to the deeper power of love that Jesus proclaims.

This story reminds us that, as limited human beings, we can experience God's blessings only when we are open to them. If we focus too narrowly on one specific outcome—on one particular way we want God to act—we may miss how God is already at work in other parts of our lives. Like the people in Jesus' hometown, we can unintentionally resist God's presence when it does not match our expectations.

The second reading, from the apostle Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, speaks to a church that is struggling. The Christians in Corinth wanted to be spiritually impressive. They wanted visible power, dramatic gifts, and outward signs of success. Paul reminds them that they are one body in Christ, and that the greatest spiritual gift is love.

For the apostle Paul, love is not just a feeling. Love is a way of living. It is the ability to care for others not only when life is easy, but also when life is painful. Love matters in joyful relationships and in broken ones. Love remains when we feel appreciated, and even when we feel ignored, misunderstood, or hurt.

This kind of love has power. It can renew our strength. It can help us discover new meaning and new life, even when the life we once knew cannot continue in the same way.

Paul tells us that love grows in the soil of faith and hope. Faith is trust in God in the present moment. Hope is trust in God's goodness, even when we do not know what tomorrow will bring. Together, faith and hope make space in our hearts for love to grow.

One of the most mysterious miracles God gives us is the birth of love in difficult circumstances—when the ground of our lives feels hard and painful. This raises an important question: How do we cultivate love when life does not go as we planned?

We begin by recognizing that God's power does not always appear in the form of the outcome we want most. When our prayers are not answered in the way we hoped, it does not mean that God has ignored us or rejected us. If we remain open to God, even in disappointment or loss, new possibilities can emerge—possibilities we could not imagine before.

I believe that God, as the source of life and love, does not control everything that happens to us. This does not mean God is absent, weak, or uncaring. Rather, God's true power is the power of love. Love does not force or control. Love respects freedom.

Without freedom, genuine love is impossible. God created the world with freedom so that real relationships, compassion, and generosity could exist. This is how love works—and this is how God works.

Love creates new possibilities when life feels broken. Love allows us to suffer with others, to grow in compassion, and to discover what truly matters. God does not always take us out of the storm, but God always walks into the storm with us. God transforms pain into healing energy—not necessarily by erasing our scars, but by ensuring those scars do not have the final word.

If we are sick, or if someone we love is sick, we pray for healing. And we should. But we also trust that love grounded in faith and hope opens the greatest possibility for healing—whether physical, emotional, or spiritual. Even when physical healing does not come, love can still bring unexpected blessings to us and to others.

Life is full of mystery. We will all face loss, pain, and death. Yet we are also created in the image of an eternal God. Alongside suffering, there is joy, gratitude, peace, and deep meaning to be found. Following Jesus does not mean avoiding hardship. It means discovering new faith, new hope, and new love—even in the darkest valleys.

May we trust that God journeys with us in every season of life. May we remain open to God's presence in both joy and sorrow. And may we continue to cultivate love through faith and hope, so that we may live the abundant life God desires for us all. Amen.

Hymn 749

Be still, my soul

Invitation to the Offering

Doxology

Prayer of Dedication

Loving God, we offer these gifts as an expression of our faith and hope in You. May they be used to share Your love, bring healing, and open hearts to Your presence. Shape us to be instruments of Your grace, that we may reflect Your unfailing love in all we do. Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and for the People

Awesome God, Maker of heaven and earth, in this sacred moment we turn our hearts to you in thanksgiving. So often we dwell on what is broken in our world and in our lives. Yet when we forget to give thanks for what is beautiful, life-giving, and transforming, we miss the strength and love you are already offering us.

O God, we need your renewing presence: love that strengthens us and reveals abundant life in ways beyond our understanding. We need to know your love as solid ground beneath our weary hearts, to trust it when we feel inadequate or broken, and to believe that you still have a purpose for us, even when life's struggles remain unresolved.

You bless us when we open ourselves to your presence, however it comes, and through whatever challenges we face. In love, you heal and restore us. In faith, you lift us up when we stumble. In hope, you remind us that our story is not only written in time, but held in eternity.

Loving God, hear us now as we lift before you the needs of the world you love so deeply. Our world feels fragile and uncertain. In times of conflict between nations, within communities, and even among families, it is not always easy to trust that love will prevail.

We pray for the people living with uncertainty and longing for justice and stability; for other nations across South America; for all who live with the growing fear that violence may draw closer. We pray for the people of Iran, facing economic hardship and political oppression, where daily life has become heavy and exhausting. In all these places, O God, let your love be stronger than fear, your compassion deeper than cruelty, and your hope brighter than despair.

We pray for all who live in conflict zones: for those seeking safety, food, shelter, welcome, and simply a chance to live in peace. Soften hearts, O God, and strengthen the will of leaders to choose justice, mercy, and peace.

We also pray for many who struggle with the rising cost of living and housing, who find it difficult to receive timely and caring health care, who are worn down by caregiving responsibilities, or who wrestle with their own mental health, or with concern for someone they love.

When it becomes hard to believe that love can open new paths, grant us courage, patience, and trust. Remind us that your love is stronger than all that threatens our human vulnerability.

As we move forward, grant us joy—or joy renewed. Grant us a sense of abundance, even when we must count carefully. Grant us peace as we face uncertainty in health and relationships. And grant us faith when doubt feels close at hand.

Now, in the quiet of our hearts, we name before you those people and situations we carry with special concern. (Silence)

Loving God, we hold before you Roy, as he grieves the deep loss of his beloved wife, Fran. In his loneliness and emptiness, surround him with your gentle presence. Let your comfort be near when the days feel long and the silence feels heavy.

We pray also for those in need of your healing grace: for Robert Lampman, Susan Grimwood, Jean Rubel, Arlene Burrige, and Janice Wiley; for those who care for them with faithful love; and for all who suffer quietly, carrying burdens known fully to you alone.

O God, may your peace, which passes all understanding, take root in our hearts. As we leave this place, strengthen us in faith, steady us in hope, and renew us by the life-giving power of your love. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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

BENEDICTION

May God's love sustain you, Christ's grace renew you, and the power of the Holy Spirit fill you with faith, hope, and love, 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

***Next Sunday Worship on February 15, 2026, at Rockway**

Holy Communion – February 15: Holy Communion will be celebrated next Sunday, February 15. All are warmly invited to the Lord's Table to receive God's grace, nourishment, and peace as we share in this sacred meal together.

***Prayer for Roy Johnson:** We continue to hold **Roy** in our prayers as he grieves the loss of his beloved wife, **Fran**. In this season of sorrow and adjustment, may God surround Roy with comfort, strength, and peace. We are also invited to share God's love through our care by visiting, calling, or offering a quiet word of encouragement.

***Christmas Eve Offering – With Gratitude**

We give thanks for the generous spirit shown at our Christmas Eve service. A total of \$600 was collected and shared with Pelham Cares to support their compassionate work with those in need. Thank you for offering your gifts in the spirit of Jesus' birth and for being a blessing to our wider community.

***Monday Tai Chi & Qigong Continues!**

Looking to refresh your body and mind this week? Join us on Mondays at North Pelham for our uplifting Tai Chi & Qigong classes!

- **1:30 PM** – Standing-focused group
- **2:40 PM** – Seated-focused group

No experience needed—just come as you are and enjoy gentle movement, peaceful breathing, and joyful community. Everyone is welcome! Questions? Please speak to Joy or Rev. Jacob.

***Tuesdays – Quilting at North Pelham - starting at 9:00 am**

***Wednesdays - Bible Study:** Join us every Wednesday at 10:00 AM at North Pelham, led by our spiritual leader, Diane McMillan.

*** Out of the Cold Dinner, Friday:** Rockway will serve supper to those in need at Knox in St. Catharines as part of the Out of the Cold program on February 13 at 5:00 pm.

***Thursdays – Outreach 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.

Annual Congregational Meetings: Rockway's Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on March 1, and North Pelham's Annual Congregational Meeting will take place on March 8. Members are encouraged to attend these important meetings as we reflect on the past year and look ahead together. Please ensure that any required reports are prepared and submitted in advance. Your presence and participation are greatly valued.

***Rev. Jacob's Presbytery Ministry Update:** Jacob has concluded his service as Interim Moderator of Stamford Presbyterian Church. In addition to continuing as Interim Moderator of Kirk on the Hill Church in Fonthill, he will begin serving as Interim Moderator of Smithville Presbyterian Church in Smithville as of February 1. He is grateful for the opportunity to serve Christ and the wider church through Presbytery ministry.

***Prayer Requests and Pastoral Care:** We are a church family, and we are here to pray for you. If you or someone you know is facing illness, surgery, hospitalization, grief, or any other need, please contact your elder or your minister, Jacob, so we can pray with you and offer pastoral care and support. Jacob's contact information: **Phone: 289-213-2797; Email: jacoblee0501@gmail.com** Your sharing helps us care for one another faithfully, so that no one walks alone. "*Carry one another's burdens.*" (Galatians 6:2)