



Rockway and First (North Pelham) Pastoral Charge
2nd Sunday of Easter, April 12, 2026
Worship at Home

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." (Psalm 23:1)

P: We come to worship, trusting in God who cares for us like a shepherd.

L: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." (John 10:11)

P: We come to follow Jesus, and to learn how to love as he loves.

L: "The Lamb... will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to the water of life." (Revelation 7:17)

P: We come seeking God's guidance for our lives.

All: Let us worship God together!

Hymn 11 **The Lord's my shepherd** (Psalm 23)

PRAYERS OF APPROACH, CONFESSION and The Lord's Prayer

Lord Jesus, our Good Shepherd,
 as a shepherd gathers the flock, you have gathered us here today. You welcome us into your care
 to feed us, refresh us, and give us rest.

Some of us come rejoicing, because our path has led through green pastures, and you have filled
 our lives with goodness. Some of us come tired and burdened, because our path has led through
 dark valleys, and we long for your strength to restore us. And some of us come like wandering
 sheep, ashamed because we have gone our own way instead of following you. And so we come,
 seeking your forgiveness.

Let us now take a quiet moment to bring before God the things we carry in our hearts. (silence)

If we have followed the crowd, forgetting your way and your voice, bring us back, O Lord. If we
 have chosen our own way instead of acting in love, lead us again on the right path. If we have
 been too busy or distracted to listen for your voice, open our ears to hear you once more.

Good Shepherd, help us to know your voice and to follow where you lead. Guide us in your
 ways of justice, peace, and love in a world that is often hurting. Bring us back when we wander,
 and set our feet again on the path of life. Teach us to love as you love, day by day. And remind
 each of us that we are known, we are cared for, and we belong to you. We pray all this in the
 name of Christ, our Good Shepherd, who taught us to pray, 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 Jesus Christ

Hymn 249 **The day of resurrection**

Children of God's Moment

Prayer for Understanding

Good Shepherd,
 open our hearts to hear your voice. Guide us in your truth, and teach us to live in your love.
 Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Responsive Psalm 23
John 10:1–11; Revelation 7:9–17

SERMON The Risen Shepherd Walks With Us

Picture an elderly woman sitting alone in a hospital room. The tests are done. The waiting is hard. And softly, almost without thinking, she begins to whisper words she has known since childhood: “The Lord is my shepherd... I shall not want...”

She is not simply reciting a poem. She is holding on to a promise. That is what Psalm 23 has always been—not just beautiful poetry, but a lifeline. Words that have carried people through their darkest moments for generations. And today, alongside our readings from John and Revelation, these words help us see more clearly who God is—and how God calls us to live.

The Bible uses many pictures to help us understand God. God is beyond anything we can fully explain with words. And so the Bible gives us images—a creator, a king, a father, even a mother. But one of the most tender and meaningful images is this: God as a shepherd.

To say “God is my shepherd” is not just a comforting phrase. It tells us something deep and true about how God relates to us. A shepherd is not distant. A shepherd lives with the sheep, walks with them day and night, and watches over them with patient, steady care.

Psalm 23 is also honest about life. It speaks of green pastures and quiet waters—places of rest and renewal. But it also speaks of “the valley of the shadow of death.” It does not pretend that life is without darkness.

And many of us know that valley well. Maybe you are carrying grief right now—the loss of someone you loved deeply. Maybe your health has changed, and things you once did easily are now difficult. Maybe you sit in a pew on Sunday morning, look around at fewer faces than before, and quietly wonder, “Does what we do here still matter?”

These are real valleys. And Psalm 23 does not turn away from them. But right in the middle of that darkness, we hear these words: “I will fear no evil, for you are with me.” God does not promise a life without struggle. But God promises something even deeper. God promises presence. God promises to walk with us—through grief, through uncertainty, through long and difficult days.

The shepherd’s rod and staff are not just symbols. They are tools of guidance and protection. They remind us: you are not alone. Someone is watching over you. Someone cares. And notice how personal this psalm is.

“The Lord is my shepherd... He restores my soul...” Not just a shepherd of crowds. Not just a God of history. But your shepherd. My shepherd. A God who knows your name, walks your path, and carries your burdens with you.

Now, if this is who God is—this close, this caring, this gentle—then an important question follows: How does this shape the way we live with one another? Because if we are honest, there is something in us that reaches for control. We want things to go a certain way. We want people to act as we expect. We want to feel secure by managing what happens around us.

But the image of God as shepherd gently challenges that impulse. It invites us into a different way—a way of walking with people rather than pushing them, of trusting rather than forcing, of caring rather than controlling.

This brings us to our Gospel reading from John 10, where Jesus says, “I am the good shepherd.” And what He says next is striking. The sheep know the shepherd’s voice. They follow—not because they are afraid, not because they are forced—but because they trust him. They recognize his voice. They know he is safe. This is the kind of relationship Jesus offers us. Not fear. Not pressure. Not control. But trust, freedom, and love.

Jesus also speaks of others—those who come not to care for the sheep, but to use them. Thieves and hired hands who look out for themselves. This is something we still see in our world—power that takes rather than gives, leadership that demands rather than serves.

But Jesus, the good shepherd, says: “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” And then He says something even more powerful: “The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” This is love in its deepest form.

Jesus does not control the sheep. He gives Himself for them. And this kind of love changes us. When someone loves you like that—truly, sacrificially, without conditions—your heart begins to

open. You begin to trust. And slowly, you begin to love others in the same way. This is the way of God. Not control, but love.

And then, in our final reading from Revelation, the image becomes even more surprising. John sees a great vision—people from every nation, every background, gathered together in worship. And at the centre of it all is not a warrior, not an emperor, not a ruler surrounded by power. At the centre is a Lamb. A lamb that was slain—and yet is alive.

In the time of the early church, the most powerful ruler in the world was the Roman emperor. His power was built on force, fear, and control. People obeyed because they had no choice. But the Bible shows us a completely different kind of power.

The one who truly reigns is not the one who dominates—but the one who gives. The Lamb who was slain is now the one who leads. This is one of the most surprising truths in the Bible: real power—lasting power, healing power—comes not from force, but from love that is willing to give, willing to suffer, willing to lay down its life.

And what does this Lamb do with that power? He wipes away every tear. He feeds the hungry. He leads his people to living water. This is the God we worship—not a God of dominance, but a God of deep and tender mercy.

So what does all of this mean for us—here, in our lives, in our small and faithful congregations? It means we are called to reflect the Shepherd. To reflect the Lamb. In our homes, we can choose to listen more and demand less. In our church, we can create space for people to be themselves, loved as they are. In our community, we can offer grace where others offer judgment.

None of this is always easy. There will be moments when we want our own way. Moments when we feel frustrated, tired, or afraid. But God is not asking us to be perfect. God is asking us to keep walking with Him—to trust His voice, to follow His way, and to lean on His care.

And here is something beautiful about small congregations like ours. You already know this way of love. You show up for one another. You notice when someone is missing. You bring food when someone is ill. You sit with those who are grieving. You pray for one another by name. This is the way of the Shepherd. This is the way of the Lamb. It may seem small. But in God's kingdom, this is exactly what matters.

There will come a day—Revelation promises it—when every tear is wiped away. When the long journey is complete, and we find ourselves beside still waters that never run dry. Until that day, we are not alone. We have a shepherd who walks with us through every valley. We have a Lamb who loved us enough to give everything. We have a God who calls us by name.

So let us not be afraid. Let us follow His voice. Let us trust His care. Let us walk in His way. And day by day, step by step, let us learn to live not by control but by love. Amen.

Hymn 635

Brother, sister, let me serve you

Invitation to the Offering

Doxology

Prayer of Dedication

Gracious God, our Good Shepherd,
receive these gifts we offer. Use them to share your love, to care for others, and to guide your people in your ways. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and for the People

God of wonder, God of grace, God our Shepherd,
You meet us in every season of our lives. Even as you call us to grow, you love us just as we are. Even as you see who we can become, you welcome us where we are today, with all our struggles and questions.

You meet us in our weakness and accept us in our imperfection. You see goodness in us, even when we cannot see it in ourselves. You continue to love us, even when we fail to love others, or think too highly of ourselves. With patience and mercy, you lead us to change. You guide us toward humility, toward truth, and toward a life shaped by love. So help us, O God, to see as you see, and to love as you love. We believe, help our unbelief.

Loving God, our Good Shepherd, we bring before you the needs of the world.
There are places of war and unrest, places where people are hungry and in great need, places where many suffer without care or help.

We pray for those who are afraid, for those who have lost homes or loved ones, and for all who long for peace. We pray for our world, for our leaders and governments, that they may act with wisdom, courage, and compassion.

We pray for our own country, for those who struggle with rising costs, for those waiting for care, and for strong and caring communities. Help us to live together with respect and understanding, honouring all people, including our First Nations.

Gracious God, thank you for all that you have given us. Continue to shape us into people of love, that we may care for one another. In a moment of silence, we bring before you the concerns closest to our hearts. (silence)

Good Shepherd, when we feel uncertain or afraid, remind us that you are with us. When life feels heavy and painful, help us to trust in the hope of the risen Christ. Even when it is hard to believe, help us to hold on to your promise of new life. Your light shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it. Lead us in your love, renew us in your grace, and fill us with your peace.

We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, the risen Lord and gentle Lamb. Amen.

Hymn 485 **Saviour, like a shepherd lead us**

BENEDICTION

May the love of God our Shepherd, the grace of Christ the Lamb, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit lead you in love this Easter season and forevermore. And all God's people said, "Amen."

Sung Response- Go Now In Peace

Postlude

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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***Worship on Sunday, April 19, at North Pelham**

***Easter Breakfast – With Thanks:** We give thanks to God for our joyful Easter Breakfast as we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. Special thanks to **Asa** for generously donating organic eggs for our Eggs Benedict, to the **young people** who prepared and served the meal, to the **Willing Workers** for preparing coffee, tea, and juice and to all who came, enjoyed the breakfast, and gave donations. We are thankful that **\$522** was collected, and **all proceeds will be sent to Rose City Kids in Welland** to support children and youth in need.

***Magazine Donations Requested:**

Kristen Young, a member of our congregation and a Recreation Therapist in the mental health department at Niagara Health, is looking for old or used magazines for art and craft activities with patients as part of their therapy and healing. If you have magazines you no longer need, please consider donating them. You may give them to Kristen or Rev. Jacob. Thank you for helping extend care to those in need in our community.

***Monday Tai Chi & Qigong Resumes:** After our Easter Monday break, Tai Chi & Qigong classes will resume tomorrow, Monday, April 13. The first class begins at 1:30 p.m. and the second class at 2:30 p.m. We look forward to gathering again for gentle movement, peaceful breathing, and joyful fellowship.

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

***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.

***Remembering Catherine Tirpko at North Pelham:** Next Sunday, April 19, we will take a moment during our worship service to remember and celebrate the life of Catherine Tirpko, a beloved member of our North Pelham congregation. Following the service, Catherine's family will graciously prepare and serve refreshments for a time of fellowship together. All are warmly welcome to stay and share in this meaningful time of remembrance.

***Mission Awareness Sunday – April 26 at Rockway**

On Sunday, April 26, we will welcome Mackenzie Warren, Donor Relations Specialist from Pathstone Mental Health, as our guest speaker for Mission Awareness Sunday. Pathstone offers compassionate support to children, youth, and families facing mental health challenges in Niagara. Special envelopes will also be available for those who wish to support this loving ministry for children in need. Please join us for this meaningful Sunday.

***Steve Bell Concert – April 12**

Knox Presbyterian Church (St. Catharines) will host Canadian singer-songwriter Steve Bell in concert on Sunday, April 12 at 7:00 PM (53 Church St.). Tickets: \$25 through the Knox church office (905-641-8868) or \$26 online at SteveBell.com. All are welcome.

***Prayer Requests and Pastoral Care:**

If you or someone you know is facing illness, grief, or any need, please contact your elder or Rev. Jacob: **Phone: 289-213-2797; Email: jacoblee0501@gmail.com** We are here to pray and care for one another. “Carry one another’s burdens.” (Galatians 6:2)