



Rockway and First (North Pelham) Pastoral Charge  
*Third Sunday of Easter & Celebration  
of the Life and Faith  
of Catherine Tirpko, April 19, 2026*

**Worship at Home**

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

Gospel song            **This little light of mine**

**Call to worship**

**L:** Jesus said to his disciples, “Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” (Luke 24: 26)

**P: Like the disciples, we sometimes feel overwhelmed by suffering, fear, and uncertainty.**

**L:** Like them, we struggle to understand how the cross is not the end of hope, but the beginning of new life.

**P: We long for new life. We long for hope. We long for resurrection.**

**L:** Yet God does not stay far away. God comes to us, even in our darkness, walking with us and gently opening our hearts.

**P: Meet us where we are, O God, and awaken hope within us.**

**All: Come, let us worship God together.**

**Prayers of Approach, Confession and The Lord’s Prayer**

Here we are, O God.

You see us. You know us. You know what is in our hearts. You see the good within us: the faith, the hope, and the love we long to live by. And you also see the struggles within us: our fears, our worries, our doubts, and the ways we fall short.

When life is heavy, we become anxious. We turn inward. We lose sight of you and of one another. And so we come before you now in honesty and humility. In a moment of silence, we bring to you what we have failed to do and what we have done that has hurt others and ourselves.  
(Silence)

Gracious God, meet us where we are, just as you met your disciples on the road to Emmaus. Walk with us in our weakness and our confusion. Open our hearts, and renew our spirits.

Today, we also remember your beloved Catharine, and we hold her family and friends in your love and care. Surround them with your peace and your gentle presence.

Cleanse us with your mercy. Fill us with your love. Lead us again in your way of hope and life. We pray this in the name of Jesus, who walks with us and teaches 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.

May the Peace of the Risen Jesus be with your all

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

Hymn 794

**Abide with me**

**Prayer for Illumination**

Risen Christ,  
 walk with us as we hear your Word. Open our hearts, as you did on the road to Emmaus, so that  
 we may recognize your presence and be filled with hope and new life. Amen.

**SCRIPTURE PASSAGES**

**Responsive Psalm 23**

**Luke 24: 13-35**

**SERMON**

**Walking with the Risen Jesus**

How many of you have ever gone through a crisis? By "crisis," I mean a time when life feels too heavy — when something overwhelms you, shakes you deeply, or breaks your heart. It could be a health problem, a loss of someone you love, a struggle in a relationship, or worry about the future. In those moments, it can feel like everything is falling apart. When we are in a crisis, it is hard to think clearly. It is hard to sleep. It is hard to focus. Sometimes we don't even know what is real anymore. We feel lost. All we can feel is the weight of the present moment.

This is exactly where the disciples are in today's Gospel reading. It is still Easter day. Jesus has been crucified. They saw him suffer and die on the cross. They watched their hope disappear. And now, there are confusing reports that his body is missing. Nothing makes sense. Two of the disciples are walking on the road to a village called Emmaus. They are leaving Jerusalem — the place where everything went wrong. They are walking away from the pain, the fear, and the disappointment. They had believed in Jesus. They had hoped he would bring new life. But now, it seems like everything has failed.

So they walk. And they talk. And they try to make sense of it all. And then something unexpected happens. A stranger comes and walks with them. We know this stranger is Jesus. But they do not recognize him. Why not? Think about what they have just been through. They saw Jesus beaten, broken, and crucified. Those images are still in their minds. Their hearts are filled

with grief. When we are hurting deeply, it is hard to see clearly. Sometimes, even when God is near, we cannot recognize God's presence.

So Jesus walks with them as a stranger. He listens to them. He asks questions. He lets them speak about their confusion and pain. And then he begins to explain the Scriptures to them — helping them understand that suffering was not the end of the story. Their hearts were already being touched, even before they knew it was Jesus.

When they reach Emmaus, something quietly beautiful happens. The disciples say to the stranger, *"Stay with us, for it is nearly evening."* They do not want to be alone in the dark. And Jesus stays. He sits down at the table with them. He takes the bread, blesses it, breaks it, and gives it to them. In that moment, their eyes are opened. They recognize him. It is Jesus — the same Jesus who broke bread with them at the Last Supper. And suddenly, everything becomes clear.

That small plea — *"Stay with us"* — is one any grieving heart can understand. When the day grows dark and the loss feels too heavy, what we most need is not answers. What we most need is presence. Someone to stay. And this is exactly what the risen Jesus offers. He stays.

One of the most important things in this story is what Jesus says on the road: *"Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?"* Jesus is saying that the cross was not a mistake. It was not the end. God did not abandon Jesus in his suffering. God was working through it, and beyond it, toward resurrection and new life.

This changes how we think about our own suffering too. We often want God to fix our problems quickly — to remove our pain from the outside. But this story shows us something different. God does not stay far away from our suffering. God comes into it. God walks with us in the middle of it. And this is what it means that God works from within — not sending solutions from a distance, but drawing close, touching our hearts quietly, the way a friend sits beside us without saying a word and somehow makes the burden lighter.

The risen Jesus did not wait for the disciples to be strong or faithful. He met them when they were confused, afraid, and ready to give up. He did not force them to believe. He simply walked with them. He listened. He opened their hearts slowly, gently. This is how God works — not by force, not by control, but by love.

We can see this in our world today. We live in a time filled with struggle — wars, conflict, fear, and uncertainty. We hear about suffering in places like Ukraine, Gaza, and elsewhere. We see pain and division almost everywhere we look. But we also see something else. We see a grandmother in a war zone lighting a candle and praying quietly for peace. We see a neighbor showing up at the door with a warm meal for someone who is grieving. We see strangers holding each other's hands in the dark. In times of deep sorrow, something in the human heart becomes softer. And when we allow ourselves to feel that pain, love has a chance to grow.

And we know this kind of sorrow here, in this place, today. In a few moments, we will remember Catharine Tirpko, who passed away last November. Like those two disciples on the Emmaus

road, we know what it means to walk with sadness and unanswered questions — to feel the absence of someone we loved, to wonder where God is in the middle of that loss. Yet this story reminds us gently and firmly that even in our grief, we are not alone. The risen Jesus walks with us — faithfully and quietly — even when we cannot see him. And in time, just as he did for those disciples, he opens our hearts to hope again.

The disciples began their journey in fear and confusion. But after meeting the risen Jesus, they got up and returned to Jerusalem — different people. They carried hope instead of fear. They carried faith instead of doubt. They carried the living presence of Jesus in their hearts. And this is not only their story. It is our story.

Jesus is still walking beside us. Even when we do not see him. Even when we do not feel him. Even when our hearts are heavy. He walks with us in our questions. He walks with us in our pain. He walks with us in our silence. And sometimes, without us even knowing, our hearts begin to change. A small spark of hope appears. A quiet peace begins to grow. And one day, we may look back and say — *"Were not our hearts burning within us?"*

May we recognize Jesus walking with us in our daily lives. May we trust that God is present, even in our struggles. May we open our hearts to the quiet work of God within us. And may we become people of resurrection — people who carry love, people who bring hope, people who walk with others in their pain. Because this is the good news of Easter: Love is stronger than fear. Hope is stronger than despair. And life is stronger than death. Jesus is risen. And he is walking with us. Amen.

### **Celebration of the Life and Faith of Catharine Tirpko**

Hymn 746	<b>What a friend we have in Jesus</b>
Words of remembrance and tribute	<b>Rev. Pearl Vaserhelyi</b>
Congregational sharing	<b>Family and Congregation</b>
Prayer of Thanksgiving	<b>Rev. Pearl Vaserhelyi / Rev. Jacob</b>

#### **Invitation to the Offering**

#### **Doxology**

#### **Prayer of Dedication**

Loving God,  
as you walk with us on our journey, receive these gifts we offer. Use them to share your love and hope with all who are in need. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Hymn 258	<b>Thine be the glory</b>
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**BENEDICTION**

May the grace of the Risen Jesus who walks with you, the love of God who holds you, and the Holy Spirit who renews you be with you now and always. 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**

**\*Next Sunday Worship on April 26, 2026, at Rockway**

**\*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.

**\*Remembering Catharine Tirpko:** This morning, we gather for our Sunday worship, and we will also take time within the service to remember and celebrate the life and faith of Catharine Tirpko, a beloved member of North Pelham. We warmly welcome Catharine's family and friends who are with us today. Following the service, all are invited to stay for a time of fellowship and refreshments, graciously prepared by Catharine's family. Please join us as we give thanks, share memories, and hold one another in care and love.

**\*Magazine Donations Requested:** Kristen Young, a member of Rockway and a Recreation Therapist in the mental health department at Niagara Health, is collecting old or used magazines for art and craft activities that support patients in their healing. Donation boxes are now available at the entrances of Rockway and North Pelham. Thank you for helping extend care to those in need in our community.

**\*Monday Tai Chi & Qigong:** Tai Chi & Qigong classes are held every Monday at North Pelham. The first class begins at 1:30 p.m. and the second class at 2:30 p.m. Everyone is warmly welcome to join for gentle movement, peaceful breathing, and joyful fellowship. There is no fee to attend, as Rockway and North Pelham are pleased to support this caring ministry for both our church members and the wider community.

**\*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.

**\*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.

**\*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: [jacoble0501@gmail.com](mailto:jacoble0501@gmail.com)** We are here to pray and care for one another. “Carry one another’s burdens.” (Galatians 6:2)