



Rockway and First (North Pelham) Pastoral Charge
6th Sunday of Easter, May 10, 2026
Worship at Home

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: We come to worship, thankful for the gift of life.

P: We give thanks to our Creator God, who has given us life.

L: We give thanks for the earth God created, which nourishes us and sustains us.

P: We give thanks for our mothers, and for all who have nurtured us with love.

L: We come with thanksgiving, even when life feels fragile, difficult, or uncertain.

P: We come seeking God's renewal, recreation, and rebirth.

L: We come to rediscover faith, hope, and love through the light of Christ.

P: Find us, renew us, and raise us up as we worship you this hour, O God.

All: Let us worship God.

Hymn 814

Morning has broken

PRAYERS OF APPROACH, CONFESSION and The Lord's Prayer

We come, O God, as those who are seeking.

We are seeking new life, even as we live the life familiar to us—with its wonders and joys, but also with its burdens and challenges. We are seeking newness, light, and transformation. We are seeking the kind of faith and hope that makes love a stronger force in our lives and relationships. We are seeking the kind of faith and hope that believes we can still make a difference for good in the world.

On this Mother's Day, we give thanks for mothers and for all who have nurtured us with care, patience, and love. We also hold gently before you those for whom this day brings grief, longing, or complicated memories. Surround each one with your tender compassion. Open our eyes, O God, so we can see the good that is happening around us. Open our hearts, so we can give thanks, even when there is still so much pain and trouble in the world.

In the silence now, O God, help us to see what holds us back from the newness of life you still make possible for us. (silence)

Some of us are tired, O God; renew our strength. Some of us are asleep in spirit; awaken us. Some of us are burdened by guilt and shame; free us by your forgiveness and love. Remind us that your grace is not given to leave us where we are, but to raise us into new life.

Like the springtime before us, let your Spirit bring life where we feel dry, hope where we feel discouraged, and light where we feel hidden in darkness. Visit us in this time of our lives, O God.

Visit us in this time of worship. Create in us new hearts, and renew us by your Spirit. We pray 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.

Sharing The Peace of Jesus Christ

Hymn 389

Breathe on me, breath of God

Children of God's Moment

Prayer for Understanding

Holy God,

as we hear your Word, open our hearts to your light. By your Spirit, renew us and lead us into rebirth, so we may live as your beloved children with faith, hope, and love. In Jesus' name, Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Responsive Psalm 104: 24-35

Genesis 1: 1-5; John 1: 1-5, 10-13; John 3: 1-8

SERMON

Born Again by Spirit

In the beginning, God created. That is how the Bible begins. Before there were people, before there were nations, before there were churches, before there were names and stories and families, there was God. And God created the heavens and the earth.

Genesis tells us that the earth was without form. Darkness covered the deep waters. Then the Spirit, or the wind, of God moved over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light." And there was light. God saw that the light was good.

This is one of the most beautiful pictures in the Bible. There is darkness. There is emptiness. There is confusion. But God is there. God's Spirit is moving. God speaks. And light comes. This is not only a story about the beginning of the world. It is also a story about what God continues to do. God brings light into darkness. God brings life where there seems to be emptiness. God brings order where there is confusion. God creates, and God also recreates.

Sometimes we think creation happened only once, a long time ago. But God is still creating. God is still shaping life. God is still bringing new beginnings. God is still working in us. We see this

in nature. Every spring, the earth comes alive again. The garden that looked dead begins to grow. Flowers rise from the soil. Trees become green again. The old season passes, and a new season begins.

In a way, life is full of these moments. Something old ends, and something new begins. We go through changes. We face loss. We experience grief, disappointment, fear, or tiredness. But by God's grace, we can also experience renewal. We can rise again. We can begin again. This brings us to the word "rebirth." Birth is the beginning of life. Rebirth means a new beginning. It means that life is being renewed from the inside. It means that God is doing something new in our hearts and spirits.

The Gospel of John begins in a way that sounds very much like Genesis. Genesis says, "In the beginning God created." John says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John is telling us that Jesus, the living Word of God, was with God from the beginning. Through God, all things came into being. In God was life, and that life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

What a powerful promise. The darkness does not overcome the light. But sometimes darkness feels strong. Sometimes the darkness is fear. Sometimes it is grief. Sometimes it is anger. Sometimes it is guilt. Sometimes it is loneliness. Sometimes it is the feeling that we have no energy left. Sometimes it is the pain of the world around us. Sometimes it is simply the tiredness of daily life. And sometimes, even when the light of Christ is near us, we do not receive it. John says that Christ came into the world, but the world did not know him. He came to his own people, but they did not accept him.

Why do people reject the light? Maybe because the light shows us what we do not want to see. Maybe the light calls us to love when we would rather stay angry. Maybe the light calls us to forgive when forgiveness feels too hard. Maybe the light calls us to care when we feel too tired to care. Maybe the light calls us to change, and change can be frightening.

Yet John gives us this beautiful promise: "To all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God." This is the heart of spiritual rebirth. When we receive Christ, the light of God enters us. We begin to see differently. We begin to live differently. We begin to know ourselves as children of God.

This is not something we can create by our own strength. We cannot force ourselves into new life. We cannot simply decide to become holy and loving by willpower alone. Spiritual rebirth is a gift from God. It is born of God. It is born of the Spirit.

That is what Jesus teaches Nicodemus. Nicodemus was a religious leader. He knew the Scriptures. He was respected. He was educated. But something was missing. He came to Jesus at night. Maybe he came at night because he was afraid of what others would think. Maybe he came at night because his own spirit was in darkness. Maybe he came because he saw something in Jesus that he did not fully understand, but deeply needed.

Nicodemus says to Jesus, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God.” But Jesus does not simply give him information. Jesus speaks to his deepest need. Jesus says, “No one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.”

Nicodemus is confused. He asks, “How can anyone be born after having grown old?” It is a very human question. How can an old person be born again? How can we begin again after so many years? How can we change when our habits are so deep? How can we hope again after disappointment? How can we love again after hurt? How can we trust again after fear?

Jesus answers, “What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit.” Jesus is not talking about physical birth. He is talking about spiritual birth. He is talking about a new life that comes from God’s Spirit. To be born again does not mean we become perfect. It does not mean we never struggle. It does not mean we suddenly have all the answers. To be born again means that God’s Spirit begins to renew us from the inside. It means the light of Christ enters the places where we are tired, wounded, afraid, or closed. It means God gives us a new heart, a new hope, and a new way of seeing life.

Sometimes this rebirth happens in a powerful moment. Some people can remember a certain day when they felt God’s love deeply. Some people have had moments when sadness turned into peace, fear turned into trust, or despair turned into hope. But for many of us, rebirth is more like a journey. It happens slowly. It happens as we pray. It happens as we worship. It happens as we listen to Scripture. It happens as we receive kindness. It happens as we forgive. It happens as we serve. It happens as we keep coming back to God, again and again.

Spiritual rebirth is not only one moment. It is an ongoing work of the Spirit. We may have times when we feel close to God. We may also have times when God feels far away. We may have times when our faith feels strong. We may also have times when our faith feels weak. We may have times when love flows easily. We may also have times when our hearts feel dry. But the good news is this: God does not give up on us.

Jesus did not give up on Nicodemus. Nicodemus came in the night, full of questions. He did not understand everything at once. But the story of Nicodemus did not end there. Later in John’s Gospel, Nicodemus appears again. Slowly, quietly, he seems to move closer to Jesus. That gives us hope. We do not have to understand everything today. We do not have to have perfect faith today. We do not have to be fully changed today. We only need to come to Jesus. We only need to open our hearts to the Spirit. We only need to allow God’s light to enter us.

And when God’s Spirit renews us, something begins to change. We become less controlled by fear. We become more open to hope. We become less trapped by anger. We become more able to forgive. We become less focused only on ourselves. We become more compassionate toward others. We begin to see people not as problems, but as beloved children of God. This is the sign of true rebirth: love grows in us.

The Spirit of God does not make us proud or harsh. The Spirit of God makes us humble, patient, tender, and compassionate. The Spirit helps us care for life around us. The Spirit helps us say yes to God's love and no to the things that destroy our peace.

So today, we may ask ourselves: Do I need rebirth? Do I need God to renew my heart? Do I need Christ's light to shine in some dark place within me? Do I need the Spirit to give me fresh hope, fresh strength, and fresh love?

The answer, for all of us, is yes. We all need God's renewing Spirit. We all need new beginnings. We all need Christ's light. We all need to be born from above, again and again. The good news is that God is already moving. Just as the Spirit moved over the waters in the beginning, the Spirit is moving over our lives now. Just as God said, "Let there be light," God still speaks light into our darkness. Just as Christ came as the light of the world, Christ still comes to us today.

So let us open our hearts. Let us receive the light. Let us allow God to recreate us. Let us be born again by the Spirit, renewed in faith, strengthened in hope, and filled with love. Amen.

Hymn 399

Spirit, Spirit of gentleness

Invitation to the Offering

Doxology

Prayer of Dedication

Generous God,

we offer these gifts with thankful hearts. Use them to bring light, hope, and love to others. Renew us by your Spirit, and help us share the gift of rebirth through our care, service, and compassion. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and for the People

Thank you, O God, for those in our lives who help us wake up, and for those who help us keep calm and go on. Thank you for those who challenge us to think again, to grow, and to see life in a new way. Thank you for those who see beauty in us and help us learn to love ourselves more gently.

Thank you for those who have guided us, inspired us, and helped us move toward transformation in the way we live, connect, and love. Thank you for those who have been there to help us pick up the pieces when something in us has felt broken.

O God, there are many things in life we can do something about, and there are many things that come unexpectedly and remain beyond our control. Give us the motivation, energy, and courage to act on what we can. Give us the grace to accept what we must, so that we may redirect our lives and learn again how to move into the next chapter.

As we seek compassion for ourselves, help us also to grow in compassion for others, especially those who struggle and suffer in a world marked by conflict, mistrust, hatred, and war. Remind

us that every life matters, and no life is merely collateral damage. We pray for peace, O God. We know that peace cannot be secured through destruction alone. It must be built through repair, dialogue, justice, and courage. Breathe wisdom and restraint into the hearts of leaders and nations.

We pray for people around the world who are on the move as refugees, seeking welcome, safety, and support through long and difficult journeys. We pray for those who are hiding because they fear violence, those caught in fighting between rival groups, and those living in war zones with no clear end in sight. Give them strength of soul, O God. Give them faith and hope, especially when they feel forgotten or forsaken.

We pray for those who struggle with the rising cost of living: those who cannot afford housing, food, medication, or the care they need. We pray for those living on our streets, in tents, and in unstable conditions. Surround them with compassion, support, mental health care, and safe housing.

On this Mother's Day, we also give thanks for our mothers and for all who have nurtured us with love. We recognize that this day can bring warm and tender feelings, but also grief, longing, and complicated memories. We remember those whose mothers have died, and those who carry sorrow in their hearts today. Hold each one in your tender care.

Now, O God, we take a moment in silence to name before you the people and situations that weigh heavily on our hearts. (silence)

In particular, we pray today for Jim Aulph and Jim Eybel, who are in hospital and waiting for the treatments they need. Be near to them, O God. Give wisdom and skill to their doctors and nurses. Bring comfort to their hearts, strength to their bodies, and hope to their spirits.

For healing, we pray, O God, trusting that healing may come in ways beyond what we can imagine. For strength of spirit, we pray. For rebirth, we pray. For peace, we pray.

Renew us by your Spirit, shine your light in our darkness, and help us live as your beloved children with faith, hope, and love. We offer all this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Hymn 350

To God be the glory

BENEDICTION

May God the Creator renew your life. May Jesus Christ, the Light of the world, shine in your heart. May the Holy Spirit lead you into rebirth, hope, and love. Go in peace, to live as beloved children of God. 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

***Worship on Sunday, May 17, at North Pelham**

***Joint Session Meeting:** The joint Session of Rockway and North Pelham will meet on May 13 at North Pelham at 7:00 p.m.

***Willing Workers Clothing Drive:** The Willing Workers will hold a **Clothing Drive throughout May** in partnership with the **Kidney Clothes program**, supporting those living with kidney disease and the foster children sponsored by the Willing Workers. Donations must be clean and in good, sellable condition. Accepted items include clothing, jewelry, accessories, handbags, shoes, linens, outerwear, draperies, fabric, yarn, patterns, and sleeping bags. Thank you for helping others through your generosity!

***North Pelham Plant, Bake Sale & BBQ:** Join us at North Pelham Church on Saturday, May 23, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. for our Plant, Bake Sale, and BBQ! No plants needed? Come enjoy the bake table and BBQ. The bake table runs until sold out, and the BBQ begins around 11:00 a.m. Bakers are warmly invited to contribute pies, tarts, muffins, cookies, cakes, or other treats. Please invite your family and friends!

***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.

***Vow Renewal** - To celebrate the 30th anniversary of their marriage, Rev. Steve and Kathleen Boose will be renewing their vows on Saturday, May 16th, at 1:00 in the afternoon. This will take place at Rockway, which is where they got married all those years ago, and a reception will follow in the church basement. If you wish to attend, RSVP to revboose@gmail.com or kathleen.boose@gmail.com by May 11th so that they can ensure there will be enough food... but if you realize that you're available at the last minute, come anyway! Let's gather for a happy celebration! Best wishes only!

***Celebrating with Christine & Jason:** We are delighted to share that Christine Stewart and Jason Hannigan will be married on August 1, 2026, in Hamilton, Ontario. As they prepare for this joyful day, they warmly invite our church family to join them for their Stag & Doe on Saturday, June 20 at 7:00 PM at the Wellandport Community Centre. Let us keep Christine and Jason in our prayers as they begin this new chapter of life together, and may God bless them with love, joy, and peace.

***SAFE CHURCH:** Rockway and North Pelham are congregations of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and follow its Safe Church policies: **Leading with Care, Policy and Procedures for Addressing Harassment in the Church, and Policy for Dealing with Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment.** As part of our commitment to safety and care, these policies will be linked on our website and may also be reviewed anytime at: <https://presbyterian.ca/resources/resources-od/safe-church/>

***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** We are here to pray and care for one another. "Carry one another's burdens." (Galatians 6:2)