



Rockway and First (North Pelham) Pastoral Charge
7th Sunday of Easter, May 17, 2026
Worship at Home

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Jesus says, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.” (John 14:27)

P: We come to worship with many things on our hearts—worries, fears, sadness, and questions.

L: Sometimes we are troubled by what has happened, by what we cannot change, and by what remains unresolved.

P: We come seeking the peace of Christ, deeper than our worries and stronger than our fears.

L: Christ welcomes us with love, and the Holy Spirit reminds us that we are not alone.

P: We belong to God. We are God’s beloved children.

L: Let us worship God, who gives us peace.

P: Let us worship God with open and thankful hearts.

Hymn 410 **Joyful, joyful we adore you**

PRAYERS OF APPROACH, CONFESSION and The Lord’s Prayer

God of peace,

we come before you carrying many different things in our hearts. Some of us come with gratitude and joy. Others come with worry, stress, grief, or uncertainty. Some of us are longing for peace within ourselves, peace in our relationships, and peace in our troubled world.

Quiet our restless minds, O God. Slow down the racing thoughts within us. Draw us close, and let your Spirit of love and grace settle over us like stillness after a long storm. Where there is anger within us, soften us. Where there is fear within us, reassure us. Where there is hurt within us, comfort us. Where there is bitterness within us, open a path toward healing. And where there is a feeling within us that we are not enough, remind us that we are precious and beloved in your sight.

Now, in the silence, we confess to you anything that keeps us from your peace, your love, and your way. (silence)

Teach us the peace of Christ — not a shallow peace that ignores pain and struggle, but a deeper peace that gives courage, hope, and strength even in difficult times. As we worship you this day, fill us with your presence. Renew our hearts with faith, hope, and love, so that we may become peacemakers in our homes, our community, and our world.

We pray this in Jesus' name, the same Jesus who said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.", and 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 400

Spirit of the living God

Children of God's Moment

Prayer for Understanding

God of peace,

as we hear your Word, open our hearts to receive the peace of Christ. Quiet our fears, strengthen our faith, and remind us that we belong to you. 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

The Peace of Jesus Christ

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." (John 14: 27)

These are the words of Jesus in John 14:27. What makes us lose our peace? There are many answers. We may lose peace because of illness, grief, family concerns, financial worries, loneliness, regret, or fear about the future. Sometimes life does not go the way we planned. Sometimes things happen that are not under our control. Sometimes we carry burdens quietly, and others may not know how heavy they are.

And yet, deep in our hearts, we all long for peace. We want peace in our homes, relationships, minds, bodies, church, and world. But how can we receive this peace when life is full of trouble, worry, and fear?

First, we need to notice what takes peace away from us. One thing that takes away our peace is the struggle to accept what we cannot change. There are things in life we can change, and we should try to change them with courage and wisdom. But there are also losses we cannot undo,

choices we cannot remake, opportunities that have passed, and people we love who are no longer with us in the same way.

When we cannot accept these things, our hearts may stay restless. We may ask, "What if I had done this?" or "What if things had been different?" Those questions are very human. But if we stay there too long, they can steal our peace.

I think of a woman I once heard about who had lost her husband after many years of marriage. For a long time, she could not stop replaying the final weeks, wondering if she had said enough, done enough, been enough. But slowly, through prayer, through the care of her church family, and through God's quiet presence, something began to shift. She said, "I realized I could not go back. But God was still with me going forward." That is what acceptance looks like in real life. Not pretending the pain wasn't real. Not forcing herself to feel better. Simply allowing God to walk with her through what could not be changed.

Acceptance does not mean that everything was good. It does not mean that our pain does not matter. Acceptance means that, with God's help, we begin to say, "This is part of my story now. I cannot change it, but God can still walk with me through it." By God's grace, even painful memories can slowly become places of learning, compassion, and gratitude. We may not give thanks for the pain itself, but we can give thanks for love that was real, lessons learned, strength received, and God's presence that carried us.

Another thing that takes away our peace is worry. Worry is familiar to all of us. We worry about our health, people we love, the church, money, and what may happen tomorrow. Worry often asks, "What if something goes wrong?" Then it shows us the worst possible picture.

Of course, worry is part of being human. Having faith does not mean we never worry. Even faithful people can have anxious hearts. But faith helps us remember that worry does not have the final word. As we learn to trust God more deeply, worry may not disappear completely, but it begins to lose some of its power over us. Faith reminds us that we are not facing tomorrow alone. God is already present in the future we fear. There may be more grace, help, and strength than we can see right now.

Sometimes worry makes us feel powerless. But often we are less powerless than we think. There may be a small step we can take, someone we can call, a prayer we can offer, or a burden we can share. Peace grows when we bring our worries to God and say, "Lord, I cannot carry this by myself. Please help me."

A third thing that takes away our peace is the need to compete and compare. Competition is not always bad. Sometimes it helps us grow and use our gifts. But competition becomes dangerous when our identity depends on winning. It becomes painful when we believe our worth comes from being better than someone else.

In the world, there are often a few winners and many people who feel like losers. Many carry deep wounds because they feel they have failed, fallen behind, or not measured up. But Jesus

teaches us a different way. We do not find ourselves by defeating others. We find ourselves by discovering who we are in God. We are not precious because we win. We are not loved because we succeed. We are not valuable because we are stronger, richer, younger, healthier, or more talented than someone else. We are precious because God has loved us into being.

All three of these — our struggle to acceptance, our worry, our comparing — share a common root. At the bottom of each one is fear. Behind the grief that cannot yet rest, there may also be fear. Behind the worry that will not quiet, there is fear. Behind the need to measure up, there is fear. And deep beneath many of our fears lives this painful question: "What if I am alone? What if I have to carry this by myself?"

Jesus speaks directly to that fear. This is why his words matter so much: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives." The world often gives peace only when everything is going well — when we are healthy, successful, admired, and in control. But Jesus gives a deeper peace. Jesus gives peace even when life is uncertain, even when our hearts are trembling, and even when we cannot see the road ahead.

In this part of John's Gospel, Jesus promises the Holy Spirit. He promises that his followers will not be left alone. He tells them that God will be with them, in them, and among them. The Holy Spirit is the living presence of God — God's comfort, strength, breath, and love moving in our lives.

And the Apostle Paul echoes this truth in Romans 8. He tells us that we have not received a spirit of fear and slavery, but a Spirit of adoption. The Holy Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. Not orphans. Not strangers. Not forgotten. Children. Beloved children of a faithful and loving God.

That is the heart of Christian peace. We are not alone. We are not abandoned. We belong to God. The Bible gives us many images for this truth. God is like a loving parent, a shepherd who guides the sheep, a shelter in the storm, and light in the darkness. In Jesus, we see this God clearly — a God who comes near, touches the wounded, forgives sinners, welcomes outsiders, and comforts the afraid.

So peace is not simply a quiet feeling. Peace is a relationship. Peace grows as we know that we are held by God. Peace grows as we trust that Christ walks with us. Peace grows as the Holy Spirit whispers to our hearts, "You are not alone. You are loved. You belong."

This does not mean that our troubles disappear quickly. It does not mean grief ends in one day. It does not mean anxiety has no place in our lives. But it means that trouble, grief, and fear do not have to rule our hearts. With God's help, we can face the fears that make us feel alone, trapped, or forgotten. We can bring our regrets, our worries, our comparisons, and our need to prove ourselves to God. And God gives us something the world cannot give: a peace rooted in love. This peace says, "Even now, God is with me." This peace says, "Even here, Christ is near." This peace says, "Even when I am afraid, I still belong to God."

Jesus does not give peace as the world gives. The peace of Christ is not based on perfect circumstances. It is not taken away by one hard season or one painful memory. The peace of Christ comes from God's faithful love — a love that has claimed us, named us, and will never let us go.

So this week, when worry begins to rise, remember whose you are. When an old regret returns, bring it to God. When you feel the pull to measure yourself against others, hear again the Spirit's quiet word: you are a beloved child of God, and that is enough.

May this peace help us accept what we cannot change. May this peace calm our worries and guide our choices. May this peace free us from comparing ourselves with others. May this peace remind us that we are precious children of God. And may the Holy Spirit help us feel the living presence of God — around us, within us, and among us — so that even in troubled times, our hearts may rest in the peace of Christ. Amen.

Violin

Abide with me

Joy Jounq

Hymn 746

What a friend we have in Jesus

Invitation to the Offering

Doxology

Prayer of Dedication

God of peace,

we offer these gifts with thankful hearts. Use them to share your love, bring comfort to those in need, and help us become people of Christ's peace in our homes, church, and world. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and for the People

God of peace,

we thank you for meeting us as we are, with our worries, regrets, fears, and hopes. Thank you for the peace of Christ—not a peace that removes every problem, but a peace that reminds us we are not alone. Thank you for walking with us through what we cannot change, for calming us when worry rises, and for reminding us that we do not need to compare ourselves with others, because we are already your beloved children.

Keep us humble enough to receive your help, honest enough to bring our burdens to you, and gentle enough to share your peace with others.

We also pray for our world, where there is too little peace, care, and safety for too many people.

We pray for all who long for justice, mercy, and protection: for people living in war zones and troubled places, including Iran, Lebanon, Israel, Sudan, Gaza and the West Bank, Ukraine, and many other regions known to you. We pray also for places of deep hardship and desperation, including Cuba and Venezuela.

We pray for those facing illness, fear, and uncertainty, for people affected by infectious disease, for evacuees fleeing flooding and disaster, and for all who grieve what has been lost.

Closer to home, we pray for those struggling with finances, health, caregiving, and the need for care themselves. We pray for those waiting for special services at a time when systems are strained, and for workers doing their best with limited resources.

May your grace and peace flow through our world, O God. Soften hearts in a hardening time. Open minds to understanding in a polarized and conflicted world. Guide us to become people of compassion, patience, and peace.

Finally, we take a moment in silent prayer to name before you specific persons and situations within our personal circle of care. (silence)

For healing, we pray—healing of body, mind, and spirit. For strength, blessing, and daily provision, we pray. For those who feel alone, afraid, tired, or forgotten, we pray that they may know your gentle presence. And for peace, we pray—the peace of Christ, genuine peace within our minds and hearts, even in the face of much that is beyond our control.

Help us to carry this peace into our homes, our church, our community, and our world. We pray this in Jesus' name, the same Jesus who said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you." Amen.

Hymn 749

Be still, my soul

BENEDICTION

May the love of God hold you, may the peace of Christ calm and guide you, and may the Holy Spirit strengthen you to live as God's beloved children and peacemakers. And all God's people said, "Amen."

Sung Response- Go Now In Peace

Postlude

<p>We acknowledge that we meet on the traditional Territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe</p>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***Next Sunday Service, May 24, at 10:00 am at Rockway**

***Tai Chi Grant Approved**

We are grateful to share that Niagara Presbytery has approved a \$4,000 grant to support our Tai Chi & Qigong Community Outreach Ministry. This generous support will help us continue to offer this caring wellness ministry to our church members and the wider community. We give thanks to Niagara Presbytery for this blessing and encouragement.

***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!

***Plant, Bake Sale & BBQ – May 23:** 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! Come for plants, baked goods, lunch, and fellowship. The bake table runs until sold out, and the BBQ begins around **11:00 a.m.** Donations of plants and baking are warmly welcome. The church will be open for drop-off of donations for the **bake sale, plant sale, and clothing drive on Friday, May 22, from 6:30–8:00 p.m.,** or Saturday morning before **9:00 a.m.** 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.

***North Pelham Hall Open House, June 28:**

The North Pelham Youth Association welcomes our community to an open house at the North Pelham Hall on Sunday, June 28th from 12-5 p.m. Drop in after church for a BBQ to celebrate another step in their accessibility renovations. All are welcome!

***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)