



Rockway and First (North Pelham) Pastoral Charge
Day of Pentecost Sunday, May 24, 2026
Worship at Home

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: “When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly, a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.” (Acts 2:1-2)

P: We gather to be filled by the Spirit’s presence and power.

L: We come seeking hope, healing, and strength for the journey.

P: We come as God’s people, drawn by grace and united in love.

L: Come, Holy Spirit of the risen Jesus.

P: Come and renew our hearts with God’s love again!

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

PRAYERS OF APPROACH, CONFESSION and The Lord’s Prayer

Loving God,

on this Pentecost Sunday, we come before you with grateful hearts. You are the God who gives life, the God who renews your people, and the God who sends your Holy Spirit among us.

Come, Holy Spirit of the risen Jesus. Breathe new life into our worship. Open our hearts to your presence. Fill us with your peace, your courage, and your love. Where we are tired, renew us. Where we are worried, strengthen us. Where we feel alone, remind us that you are near.

Gracious God, we confess that we do not always live by your Spirit. We sometimes allow fear to close our hearts. We sometimes judge people who are different from us. We sometimes hold on to hurt instead of offering forgiveness. We sometimes speak about love, but fail to show love through patience, kindness, and care.

Hear us now as we make our confession to you in silence: our confession of all those things we carry in the difficult and wounded places within us. (silence)

Merciful God,

receive the prayers of our hearts. Forgive us and heal us. Break down the walls within us that keep us from loving one another as Jesus loves us. Teach us to listen with compassion, to serve with humility, to comfort those who are hurting, and to bring hope to those who feel weary or alone.

Fill us again with your Holy Spirit, so that our worship may be sincere, our faith may be active,

and our lives may become signs of your healing love in the world. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, 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 648

I'm gonna live so God can use me

Children of God's Moment

Prayer for Understanding

Come, Holy Spirit of Jesus, open our hearts to God's Word. Fill us with your love, and guide us to live it each day. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Psalm 104:24-35

Acts 2:1-21; 1 Corinthians 13:1-8; John 15:12-15

SERMON

The Real Miracle of Pentecost

Picture this. The disciples are huddled together behind locked doors. Jesus has been crucified. He has risen. He has appeared to them. And yet — they are still afraid. They are still uncertain. They know Jesus is alive, but they do not yet know what to do with that knowledge. They need more than a memory. They need more than a story. They need the living presence of God to fill them, guide them, and send them out. That is exactly what happens at Pentecost.

Jews and converts from all over the world had made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the festival of Pentecost — a celebration held fifty days after Passover. Suddenly, a sound like a mighty wind filled the place where the believers had gathered. What looked like flames of fire rested on each person. They began speaking in other languages. Peter stood up and told the crowd what they were witnessing: this was God in action. This was the Holy Spirit — filling ordinary, frightened people with boldness, courage, and peace.

And here is what we need to understand about that Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not a force separate from God. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Jesus — the Spirit of the One who showed us how to welcome God's love into our hearts, our minds, and our daily lives.

Ever since that first Pentecost, Christians have tried to understand — and sometimes recreate — that spectacular experience. I admit that I used to long for that kind of powerful, emotional encounter with the Spirit. Many Christians do. There is something beautiful and appealing about worship that is full of energy, music, and visible emotion.

Some Christian traditions, including many Pentecostal churches, place strong emphasis on enthusiastic experiences of the Spirit — powerful prayer, joyful singing, and speaking in tongues. Compared to that, our Presbyterian worship — which tends to find God in stillness, scripture, silence, and quiet guidance — can sometimes feel a little, well, "spiritless."

But I want to say this clearly: it is not. The Spirit of God is not only found in the spectacular. Many of us find the Spirit through quiet hymns, reflective music, humble prayer, and gentle acts of care. High-energy worship can lift our hearts. It can awaken our spirits. But I have often found that the emotional high can fade quickly once we leave the building. When we face seasons of grief, isolation, sickness, or deep uncertainty — those moments require something more than excitement. They require reflection, patience, and a stillness in which God can truly speak. We should never feel inferior about our thoughtful, quiet way of worship. That stillness is its own kind of spiritual depth.

The Apostle Paul understood this well — and he had to say so plainly to the church in Corinth. Those believers were eager to display their spirituality in public, especially by speaking in tongues. They were competing with one another over who was more spiritual, who was bolder, who was a better speaker. And it was tearing the church apart. Quiet believers felt like they lacked the Spirit. Louder believers felt superior. The whole thing had become about performance rather than love.

Paul had seen enough. He wrote to them with both firmness and grace: "If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal." "If I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing." "If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing."

Pause with me here for a moment. Think about someone in your own life — perhaps someone you have known for a long time — who never made a grand public display of their faith, but who loved quietly and consistently. Who showed up. Who listened. Who stayed. I think of people like that in every congregation I have served. They are not famous. They are not loud. But the Holy Spirit shines through them like a steady light. That is what Paul is pointing to. Any spirituality that becomes showy, competitive, or proud has lost its way. The true Spirit of God is not about performance. It is about love.

Jesus said it plainly in the upper room, on the night before he was crucified: "Love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." This is the identity of the Holy Spirit. The compassionate, self-giving love that Jesus both taught and lived — that is the Spirit in action.

And so the deepest miracle of Pentecost was not only the wind, the fire, or the speaking in tongues. The deepest miracle was this: people from many nations, many cultures, and many languages were each being addressed in their own tongue. They were being recognized. They were being welcomed. They were being valued — exactly as they were, exactly where they came from. The walls that divide us — walls built on race, culture, language, history, fear, and misunderstanding — were being broken down. And the only thing that can truly break down those walls is love. Love that builds bridges.

Where is that miracle today? We still see hate, violence, loneliness, and division all around us. We look at our world — at the fighting, the indifference, the cynicism — and we wonder: where is the Holy Spirit now? We remember the pandemic. Many lives were lost. Many families grieved. Many of our seniors experienced weeks and months of painful loneliness and fear. Many people felt vulnerable in body, mind, and spirit.

But even in that dark time, we saw the Holy Spirit at work. We saw it in the frontline healthcare workers who put themselves at risk, day after day, to care for the sick. We saw it in the neighbours who delivered groceries to someone who could not go out. We saw it in the family members who sat beside a hospital bed, or made a phone call to someone who had not heard a friendly voice in weeks. We saw it in the volunteers, the caregivers, the quiet ones who prayed for people they would never meet. That selfless, patient, unglamorous love — that was Pentecost. That was the Holy Spirit.

Let me ask you: where have you seen it? Where has someone's simple act of kindness changed your day — or perhaps even changed your life? The miracle of Pentecost happens every time our hearts are moved to reach across the walls that divide us. It happens every time we listen — truly listen — to someone whose life looks very different from our own. It happens every time we visit the lonely, comfort the grieving, encourage the tired, or sit quietly with someone who is afraid. It happens every time we find the courage to say, "I am sorry." It happens every time we find the grace to say, "I forgive you" — even when that person is no longer with us. Pentecost happens every time we discover that God's love is not merely an idea — but a living experience that quietly transforms our priorities and redirects our lives.

That is why we come to church. That is why we gather, Sunday after Sunday, to be filled again by the Holy Spirit — the Spirit who is the source of all love. Not only a loud or passing rush of feeling, but a deep, steady, transforming love that heals what is broken, renews what is weary, and fills us with peace that the world cannot give.

May we experience that power this Pentecost Sunday. May the Spirit teach us to love as Jesus loves. May the Spirit help us build bridges where the world builds walls. And may we go from this place filled with gratitude, grace, courage, and peace — today and in all the days ahead. Amen.

Hymn 471

We are one in the Spirit

Invitation to the Offering

Doxology
Prayer of Dedication

Loving God,
 receive these gifts as signs of our love. By your Holy Spirit, use them and use us to bring care, hope, and peace to others, in the way of Jesus. Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and for the People

Loving God,
 on this Pentecost Sunday, we thank you for your Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the risen Jesus, who brings courage to fearful hearts, peace to troubled minds, and love that reaches out in care.

Thank you for the quiet signs of your Spirit among us: for those who listen, visit, encourage, forgive, prepare meals, make phone calls, offer prayers, and help others know they are not alone.

God of compassion,
 our world deeply needs your healing Spirit. We pray for all who suffer because of war, violence, hatred, and greed. We remember the peoples of Israel and Palestine, Ukraine, Iran, Lebanon, and every place where people live with danger, grief, and fear. Bring comfort to those who mourn, protection to those in danger, and guide leaders and peoples in the paths of justice and peace.

We pray for those close to us who struggle with poverty, inadequate housing, loneliness, discrimination, or fear of the future. By your Spirit, help us not only to pray, but also to notice, welcome, and care.

Finally, within our church families, we remember those who are grieving, those who are sick or weak, those in hospitals, long-term care, or at home, and those who can no longer worship with us in person. May they know that they are loved, remembered, and held in your compassionate care.

We pray especially for Jim Aulph, as he receives treatment and waits for surgery. Give him strength, comfort, and peace. We pray also for Jim Eybel, as he waits for the treatment he needs. Sustain him with patience and hope. And we remember the seniors in our congregations, each facing their own challenges. Bring healing where there is pain, companionship where there is loneliness, and peace where there is worry.

In a moment of silence, we remember those whose names and needs we carry personally in our hearts. (silence)

Holy Spirit of Jesus,
 may our prayers become love in action. Send us out to comfort the grieving, encourage the weary, care for the lonely, and build bridges where there is division. Fill our lives with the deep and steady love of Christ, so that others may see your grace and hope through us. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, we pray. Amen.

BENEDICTION

May the love of God surround you, the grace of Jesus Christ guide you, and the Holy Spirit fill you to love, serve, and build bridges of peace. 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 Service, May 31, at 10:00 am at North Pelham**

***Guest Worship Leaders While Rev. Jacob Is Away:**

While Jacob is away visiting his mother in South Korea, we are delighted to welcome two spiritually gifted worship leaders: **Rev. Martin Wehrman on May 31 and Mr. Kent Reynolds on June 7**. We look forward to being blessed through their worship leadership and warmly welcome them among us.

***Tai Chi Grant Approved**

We gratefully acknowledge a \$4,000 grant from Niagara Presbytery to support our Tai Chi & Qigong Community Outreach Ministry for our church and wider community.

***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!

***Magazine Donations:** Donation boxes for old or used magazines are available at the entrances of Rockway and North Pelham to support art activities for mental health patients at Niagara Health. Thank you for your care.

***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: jacoblee0501@gmail.com** We are here to pray and care for one another. “Carry one another’s burdens.” (Galatians 6:2)