



Rockway and First (North Pelham) Pastoral Charge
3rd Sunday after Pentecost, June 14, 2026
Worship at Home

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Now Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John and went up on the mountain to pray.

P: We come to worship God and listen for Christ's voice.

L: We come with our joys and sorrows, our questions and hopes.

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

L: God meets us in every season of life and calls us to walk in faith, hope, and love.

P: Let us worship God together.

Hymn 461 **Be thou my vision**

Prayers of Approach and Confession

We are here, O God, to grow our faith. Doubts and questions are important, but they can also swallow us up and fill us with uncertainty and fear. We are here, O God, to grow our hope. Too many things happen to us and to others beyond our control, and we can become overwhelmed with stress, fatalism, and hopelessness.

We are here, O God, to grow our love. Too many things have happened to wound and hurt us. People say things and do things, whether they mean to or not. It still hurts. And it can turn our hearts upside down and poison our spirits. We are here, O God, to grow our love. Listen to our hearts in the silence as they confess to you, beyond words, the burdens we carry and the things that weigh most heavily upon us these days. (silence)

You call us, O God, through the ups and downs, the successes and the failures, the good choices and the mistakes. You call us to rediscover our purpose as your beloved children. You call us to discover or rediscover the conviction that you have a plan for us, and it is always available to us if we find the courage, the grace, the clarity, and the love to choose it. Reveal it to us anew as we worship you this hour, O God. And now, we pray as Jesus 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.

Hymn 408 (R) **I surrender all**

Prayer for Understanding

Loving God,

open our hearts and minds as we hear your Word. By your Spirit, help us to understand your purpose for our lives and guide us in your way of love, faith, and hope. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Responsive Psalm 99

Exodus 34: 29-35; Luke 9: 28-36

SERMON

God Does Not Waste a Life

Most of us, at some point in our lives, have asked the question: Does God have a plan for me? When life is going well, it is easy to believe the answer is yes. But when suffering comes — when we lose someone we love, when illness strikes, when the world feels like it is falling apart — that question becomes much harder to answer.

Today's scripture readings take us to two mountaintops. First, Moses comes down from Mount Sinai, his face glowing so brightly that the people are afraid to come near him. On the second, Jesus is transfigured before his disciples — his clothes becoming dazzling white, Moses and Elijah appearing beside him, a cloud descending, and a voice from heaven saying: "This is my Son, my Chosen One. Listen to him." Both mountaintop moments point to the same truth: God is at work in human lives in ways that are far greater than we can fully understand. But how does that work, exactly — especially when life is so painful and unpredictable?

I want to be honest with you today. Our world is full of events that are hard to square with a loving God. The suffering of people fleeing war and terror. The devastation of earthquakes, floods, and wildfires. The deep wounds carried by Indigenous peoples in Canada. The grief of a pandemic that took so many lives. And closer to home — the pain of standing beside the bed of a beloved husband, wife, parent, child, or friend, and saying a final goodbye. I would never tell you that those sorrows were simply steps in a greater plan. That would not be honest, and it would not be kind.

So does this mean God has no plan at all? Are we just accidents of nature, left on our own to make sense of a random world? No. God does have a purpose — a deep and loving purpose — for each of us and for the whole world. But God's purpose does not operate like a rigid script, in which every event is preprogrammed. It works more like a living relationship, where God is always present, always loving, and always finding ways to bring something good out of even the worst that life throws at us.

The story of Moses helps us understand this. Moses did not arrive at Mount Sinai by following a neat, predestined path. He was born into danger, hidden in a basket by a desperate mother, found and adopted by Pharaoh's daughter, raised in a royal palace, and eventually fled into the desert after killing a man in anger. None of these events was carefully arranged by God like pieces on a chessboard. They were the messy, painful, complicated circumstances of one man's life.

And yet, through all of it, God was present. When Moses encountered the burning bush, God called him by name and invited him into a purpose larger than himself — to lead God's people out of slavery. Moses could have said no. He nearly did. He made excuses, pleaded inadequacy, and begged God to send someone else. But he said yes. And because he said yes, his face eventually shone with the light of God's presence.

Moses' glowing face was not the result of a perfect life or a flawless plan. It was the result of a life lived in response to God's call — through fear, failure, and faith. That radiance was real. And God can bring that same kind of radiance into our lives too, not because everything goes according to plan, but because God never stops working with what is.

Peter's story tells us the same thing from a different angle. Jesus chose Peter as one of his closest disciples, even though Peter was impulsive, unreliable, and prone to saying exactly the wrong thing at the wrong time. And Peter's biggest moment of failure — his three-fold denial of Jesus on the night of the crucifixion — was certainly not God's will. It was a painful, shameful betrayal. And yet, God used even that failure to deepen Peter and shape him into the leader the early church needed.

Our failures are not outside God's reach. The things we regret most deeply, the moments we wish we could take back — God does not waste them. Through them, if we are willing, God forms us into something we could not have become any other way.

And then there is Jesus himself. At the transfiguration, the voice from heaven says: "Listen to him." But what are we listening for? What is Jesus showing us?

Jesus came to turn the human heart back to God through love. He taught, healed, and welcomed the outcast. He showed people what God's kingdom looks like — a kingdom built not on power and violence, but on compassion, forgiveness, and grace. But the religious leaders of his day rejected this vision. They wanted a Messiah who would defeat their enemies and restore Israel's political power. They were not interested in a kingdom built on love.

As resistance hardened and the cross drew nearer, Jesus began to see something remarkable. He saw that his suffering and death could become the most powerful sermon ever preached — a sermon not spoken in words, but lived in flesh and blood. By loving his enemies, forgiving those who crucified him, and surrendering his life rather than retaliating, Jesus embodied the very heart of God's kingdom. The cross became the ultimate parable of forgiving love.

This is why the cross stands at the centre of the Christian gospel. It is not there because suffering is good, or because God wanted Jesus to die. It is there because in the face of the worst that human hatred and fear could do, Jesus responded with love. And that love, as it turned out, could not be killed. It rose. And it is still rising in every life that opens itself to God's transforming purpose.

So what about you and me? Each of us has a story — and sometimes, God's purpose becomes most visible when we look at the story of someone we have loved. As I reflected on this message this week, I found myself thinking about Jim Aulph. Many of us gathered here just two days ago to give thanks for his life and to commend him into God's loving care. Looking back on Jim's life, I doubt anyone could have predicted exactly how his story would unfold. Like all of us, he experienced joys and sorrows, successes and disappointments, laughter and loss. Yet what so many people remembered was his kindness, his humour, his generosity, his love for his family, and the way he touched the lives of others. Jim's life reminds us that God's purpose is often revealed not in dramatic or extraordinary ways, but through ordinary people who faithfully share love, encouragement, and compassion day by day. Looking back, we can see how God's light shone through Jim's life, blessing many people around him.

And that is true for each one of us. God's purpose for our lives is not a detailed blueprint handed down from heaven. It is more like a compass — always pointing toward love, healing, and the flourishing of life.

Some of us can look back over our lives and trace God's hand with confidence. We can see, in hindsight, how God was present even in the darkest valleys. For others, self-doubt, grief, and old wounds make it hard to see any purpose at all. If that is where you are today, I want you to hear this: God has not given up on you. The same God who worked through a runaway murderer named Moses, through a broken denier named Peter, and through a crucified carpenter from Nazareth — that God is still at work in your life. Right now. In whatever brokenness you carry.

God's promise is not that life will be pain-free. God's promise is that nothing — not failure, not grief, not even death — can separate us from the love that holds us. And that love, given time and space, has a way of bringing beauty out of brokenness, and light out of the darkest night.

As Moses came down that mountain with his face shining, and as the disciples heard that voice on the mountain saying "Listen to him" — may we too listen.

May we open our lives to God's loving purpose. May we say yes to the call that comes to each of us, in whatever form it takes. And may the light of God's love shine through us, not because we are perfect, but because we belong to the One who is. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Hymn 324

Great is thy faithfulness

Invitation to the Offering

Doxology

Prayer of Dedication

Loving God,

we offer these gifts as a sign of our trust in your purpose for us. Use them to spread your love and hope in the world. May our giving reflect our commitment to your plan. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and for the People

Loving God,

Thank you for walking with us throughout our lives. We see your presence in the beauty of creation, in the people we love, and in the blessings we receive. Yet we also know that life can be painful, lonely, uncertain, and difficult, and at times your presence can seem far away.

Still, you continue to journey with us. You guide us through joys and sorrows, successes and failures, and help us discover your loving purpose even when the path ahead is unclear.

As we gather in worship, renew our faith and hope. Open our eyes to see your presence, our ears to hear your voice, and our hearts to trust your love more deeply. Hear us now as we offer our own silent prayers of thanksgiving. (silence)

We pray for our world. Where there is war, bring peace. Where there is suffering, bring comfort. Where there is injustice, bring healing. Where there is fear, bring hope. Help us to be instruments of your compassion and grace.

We pray for the members and friends of Rockway and North Pelham congregations, especially those who are sick, grieving, discouraged, lonely, or burdened in body, mind, or spirit. Surround them with your healing presence, strengthen those who care for them, and remind them that they are never alone.

Today we especially remember Janice, Jessica, Joel, and all who mourn the passing of Jim. Comfort them with your love, strengthen them with your peace, and assure them that nothing can separate us from your eternal care. As we give thanks for Jim's life and faithful witness, help us to trust in the promise of new life that we have in Christ.

And now, O God, as we leave this place, help us to trust that you are still at work in our lives. When the way forward is clear, give us the courage to follow. When the way forward is uncertain, give us faith to trust. Through all the changing circumstances of life, shape us by your love, strengthen us with your hope, and guide us by your Spirit. May your light shine through us, so that we may be a blessing to others and reflect the compassion, grace, and love of Christ in the world. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Hymn 687 Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine

BENEDICTION

May the love of God guide you, the grace of Christ walk with you, and the power of the Holy Spirit strengthen you. Go in faith, hope, and love, and be a blessing to others. 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, June 21, at 10:00 am at Rockway**

***In Loving Memory of Jim Aulph:** We give thanks for the life of Jim Aulph and for his many years of faithful service and friendship within our church family. We continue to remember Janice, Jessica, Joel, and their families in our prayers and commend them to God's comfort, peace, and love.

***Rockway's 217th Anniversary:** Next Sunday, **June 21**, we will joyfully celebrate **Rockway's 217th Anniversary**. We are delighted to welcome **Rev. Wally Hong** as our guest preacher. As we give thanks for God's blessings, we will also share our blessings through our **Anniversary Mission Project**, supporting youth in need through **The RAFT**. Special offering envelopes will be available. All are welcome to celebrate with gratitude and joy!

*** A cleaning bee** will take place at Rockway on Tuesday, June 16 from 9AM - 12. Everyone welcome.

***North Pelham Cemetery Board is looking for new board members** - if interested, please contact Asa Hansler for more information 905-892-2098 – The North Pelham Cemetery is not affiliated with North Pelham Church, so community members are also welcome.

***Magazine Donations:** Thank you for all the donations, the amount received will help us out for a while and have already been used for some recent projects! At this time, no more magazines are needed. *"Thank you again from myself, and our mental health program!" Kristen Young*

***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 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.

***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)