



Rockway and First (North Pelham) Pastoral Charge
Pentecost 6 Sunday / Holy Communion, July 5, 2026 – 10:00 am
Worship at Home

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: We come to worship as people made of dust and filled with God's breath.

P: **We come with our weakness, our hope, and our need for grace.**

L: Christ welcomes us not because we are perfect, but because we are loved.

P: **At this table, Christ meets us with mercy, forgiveness, and new life.**

L: As Paul declares, "Thanks be to God – through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Romans 7:25)

P: Let us worship God, who restores us, renews us, and makes us whole. Amen.

Hymn 318(R) **Come, thou fount of every blessing**

PRAYERS OF APPROACH, CONFESSION and ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Loving and gracious God,

we come before you with thankful hearts. You created us in your image, formed us from the dust, and breathed into us the breath of life. We thank you that we are precious to you, not because we are perfect, but because we are loved.

Yet we confess that we are fragile and imperfect. We want to love, but pride gets in the way. We want to forgive, but resentment remains. We want to trust you, but fear and worry often lead us. Forgive us for the ways we have hurt others, failed to listen, or forgotten your compassionate love. Hear us now as we confess to you in silence the things we carry in the hidden and hurting places within us. (pause)

Merciful God,

thank you for hearing us with grace. Thank you that Christ does not turn away from us in our weakness, but restores us with forgiveness and new life. As we prepare to come to the table of Communion today, open our hearts to receive your mercy through the bread and the cup. Breathe your Spirit into us again, and help us follow Jesus with humility, honesty, compassion, and hope. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Hymn 682 **Just as I am, without one plea**

Prayer of Illumination

Gracious God,

as we listen to your Word, open our hearts to your truth. Remind us that we are dust and breath, fragile yet loved, sinful yet forgiven. Breathe your grace into us again, and help us follow Jesus with humble and hopeful hearts. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Responsive Psalm 103: 8-14

Romans 7: 14-25; Luke 22: 54-62

SERMON

Dust, Breath, and Grace

The Bible tells us two beautiful truths about who we are. In Genesis chapter 1, we are told that God created human beings in the image of God. That means there is something sacred in every person. Every person carries dignity, value, and worth. No life is useless. No person is beyond the love of God. But in Genesis chapter 2, the Bible gives us another picture. It says that God formed the human being from the dust of the ground and breathed into him the breath of life.

So who are we? We are made in the image of God, but we are also made from dust. We carry God's breath, but we are also fragile. We are capable of love, kindness, courage, and compassion. But we are also capable of fear, selfishness, pride, and harm.

This is the deep truth about human life. We are precious, but we are not perfect. We are loved by God, but we are still weak. We are made for goodness, but we often struggle to live that goodness.

To become honest human beings and faithful Christians, we need to look at both sides of our life. We should not pretend that we are only strong and holy. But we should not despair and think we are only dust and failure. We are dust, yes. But we are dust filled with the breath of God.

A hard but honest example of this mixed human condition can be seen in the life of Jean Vanier. Jean Vanier was a Canadian Christian thinker who founded L'Arche, a community where people with intellectual disabilities and people without disabilities live together in friendship. He taught the world that every person is valuable, not because of success or strength, but because each person is loved by God. That message did real good, and it is still true.

But after his death, an investigation revealed that Vanier had used his position of spiritual trust to sexually abuse a number of women over many years. This was not a small failure. It was a serious abuse of power by someone many people trusted with their faith. Those women carried real pain, often quietly, for a long time. As we remember this story, our first thought should be with them, not with him.

This teaches us something important: good work and public honour never excuse harm, and they are never a shield against accountability. The more trust a person is given, the more responsibility they carry — and the deeper the wound when that trust is broken. No one, no matter how respected, stands beyond the need for humility and honesty before God and before others.

That is a heavy truth. But most of our own struggles are quieter than this. The Apostle Paul understood that quieter, everyday battle very well. In Romans 7, Paul opens his heart and says, "I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate." He wants to do what is good, but he often finds himself pulled another way.

Paul is not speaking as someone who doesn't know God. He loves God. He wants to serve Christ. Yet he still feels this battle inside himself. Many of us understand this.

We want to be patient, but we speak harshly.
We want to forgive, but we hold onto resentment.
We want to be generous, but fear makes us closed.
We want to love, but pride gets in the way.
We want to trust God, but worry fills our hearts.

This is not only Paul's story. It is our story too. Sin is not only the terrible things we see in the world. Sin also lives in the small places of our hearts. It can appear in our judgments, our coldness, our silence, our jealousy, our need to control, or our refusal to listen.

Sin is anything that harms our relationship with God, with others, with ourselves, and with creation. It is anything that makes us less loving, less truthful, less compassionate, and less human. That is why we need grace every day.

Peter also knew this truth. Peter loved Jesus. He was passionate and loyal. He said he would never leave Jesus, even if everyone else did. I believe Peter meant it when he said it. He truly wanted to be brave. He truly wanted to be faithful.

But when Jesus was arrested, fear took hold of Peter. Around the fire in the courtyard, people asked him if he knew Jesus. Three times, Peter said no. Then the rooster crowed. Luke tells us that Jesus turned and looked at Peter. That look must have gone straight into Peter's heart. Suddenly Peter remembered what Jesus had said. He saw the truth about himself. He went outside and wept bitterly.

Peter's tears were not just tears of sadness. They were tears of truth. He could no longer hide from his failure. He could no longer pretend to be stronger than he was. He had denied the one he loved.

But Peter's story did not end in the courtyard. After the resurrection, Jesus came to Peter again. Jesus did not throw Peter away. Jesus did not say, "You failed me, so I am finished with you." Instead, Jesus restored him. Jesus asked Peter, "Do you love me?" And Jesus gave him a new calling: "Feed my sheep."

This is the heart of the gospel. Jesus does not deny our failure. But Jesus does not let failure have the final word. Jesus meets us with truth, mercy, and a new beginning. Paul also experienced this grace. Before he became an apostle, Paul harmed the early followers of Jesus. He thought he was doing God's will, but he was wrong. Later, after meeting the risen Christ, Paul did not hide his past. He spoke honestly about it. He knew that his life was not built on his own goodness, but on the mercy of God.

So what makes a faithful Christian? A faithful Christian is not someone who never fails. That person does not exist. A faithful Christian is someone who, by the grace of God, learns to tell the truth about failure. A faithful Christian does not make excuses forever. A faithful Christian does not blame everyone else. A faithful Christian comes before God with honesty and says, "Lord, have mercy on me. Change my heart. Teach me to love again."

That is where healing begins. When we confess our sin, God does not meet us with cruelty. God meets us with mercy. When we bring our brokenness into the light, God does not crush us. God begins to heal us. When we admit that we are dust, God breathes new life into us again.

This is why the Christian life is not about pretending. It is about transformation. We come to worship not because we are perfect, but because we need God. We pray not because we are strong, but because we need help. We confess not because God hates us, but because God loves us enough to make us new. God knows our dust. God knows our weakness. God knows the parts of us that we try to hide. And still, God loves us. Still, Christ calls us. Still, the Holy Spirit works within us.

So today, let us be honest before God. Let us not be proud like people who think they never fail. Let us not despair like people who think they can never change. Let us stand in the middle of the truth: we are dust, and we are filled with God's breath.

We are weak, and we are loved.
 We are sinners, and we are forgiven.
 We fall, and Christ lifts us up.
 We fail, and God gives us a new beginning.

May we have the courage of Peter to weep honest tears. May we have the humility of Paul to depend on grace. And may we have the hope of Christ, who looks at us not to destroy us, but to restore us. Thanks be to God, who takes our dust, breathes life into us, and makes us new again. Amen.

Hymn 671 **I heard the voice of Jesus say**

Invitation to the Offering

Doxology

Prayer of Dedication

Gracious God,
 we offer these gifts with thankful hearts. We come as dust and breath, fragile yet loved, and blessed by your grace. Use what we give to share Christ's compassion, hope, and new life with others. Amen.

The Apostles' Creed (Hymn # 539)

Invitation to the Lord's Supper

Hymn 540**One bread, one body (vv. 1-2)****Great Prayer of Thanksgiving & The Lord's Prayer**

One: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them up to the Lord.

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

All: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

All: Christ has died!

Christ is risen!

Christ comes again and again! Hallelujah!

All: "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.

Words of Institution**Sharing of the Elements****Prayer after Communion (in unison)**

Gracious and loving God,

thank you for meeting us at this table with mercy and grace. We come as people of dust, fragile and imperfect, yet filled with your breath and held in your love. Through this bread and cup, remind us that Christ does not turn away from us in our weakness, but restores us with forgiveness and new life. Help us to be honest before you, gentle with others, and faithful in love. Send us out renewed by your Spirit, to live as forgiven people, to love with compassion, and to follow Jesus with humble and hopeful hearts. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

Hymn 540**One bread, one body (vv. 3-4)****Benediction:**

May the grace of our loving God, the mercy of Jesus Christ, who restores us, and the breath of the Holy Spirit, who renews us, be with you now and always. And all God's people said, "Amen."

Sung Response: “Go Now In Peace”

Postlude

The Life and Ministry of our Congregations, led by Rev. Jacob Lee:
Pastoral Charge of Rockway and First, North Pelham

We acknowledge that we meet on the traditional Territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

***Next Sunday Service, July 12, at 10:00 am at North Pelham**

***Rockway’s 217th Anniversary – With Thanks**

We give thanks to God for the joyful celebration of Rockway’s 217th Anniversary. Through our Anniversary Mission Project, \$790 was collected to support youth in need through The RAFT. As God has faithfully blessed Rockway through the years, we are grateful to share those blessings with others. Thank you for your generous support in God’s love.

***Tai Chi & Qigong – Summer Break:** Tai Chi & Qigong classes are now on summer break for July and August. Classes will resume on Monday, September 7, at 1:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.

***Wednesday Bible Study – Summer Break:** Wednesday Bible Study is now on summer break and will resume on Wednesday, September 9, at 10:00 a.m. at North Pelham. Thank you to Diane and all who shared in this time of study and fellowship.

***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.

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. Let us keep them in our prayers as they prepare for this joyful new chapter of life together. 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: jacoblee0501@gmail.com** We are here to pray and care for one another. “Carry one another’s burdens.” (Galatians 6:2)