



Rockway and First (North Pelham) Pastoral Charge
10th Sunday after Pentecost, August 2, 2026
Worship at Home

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: “O Lord, you have searched me and known me.” (Psalm 139:1)

P: We come before the God who knows us completely.

L: “You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.” (Psalm 139:5)

P: We come to the God who holds us faithfully and loves us deeply.

L: Whoever we are, we belong to God.

All: Let us worship God with grateful hearts.

Hymn 321 **Praise to the Lord, the Almighty**

Prayers of Approach and Confession

Heavenly Creator,

You have woven each of us together with threads of life and love. You breathed your Spirit into us, and even when we feel vulnerable or alone, you remain with us—our Maker, our Sustainer, and our faithful Companion. You came to us in Jesus Christ to reveal the face of your compassionate love. You meet us in our joy and pain, offering strength and hope for the journey. Through your Holy Spirit, you speak words of wisdom and gently guide our way.

God who is present among us, speak to us in this time of worship. Speak the words we need to hear, so that we may know deep within our hearts that you understand us completely, hold us faithfully, and love us unconditionally.

Loving God, and yet we confess that there are times when we turn away from you. Out of fear, we try to hide parts of ourselves from you and from one another. We try to control what we cannot control, and believe we must manage every detail of life on our own. We become trapped in the expectations of the world and lose sight of your presence. We forget who created us, who sustains us, and to whom we belong.

In the silence of our hearts, we now confess to you the fears, failures, and burdens we have been carrying. (silence)

Forgive us, gracious God. Help us open our whole lives more fully to you. Give us hearts that seek your goodness, trust your wisdom, and rest in your deep love. Free us from the fear of being fully known, and help us remember that nothing within us can separate us from your compassionate mercy. Strengthen us when we feel vulnerable, lost, or unsure of who we are.

When we ask, "Who am I?" and cannot find an answer, help us surrender ourselves to you—the One who created us with loving care, knows our hearts and minds, and loves us without condition. Help us to pray with faith, "Whoever I am, you know me. I am yours, O God."

We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, who shows us the way of trust and surrender, 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.

Passing the Peace of Jesus Christ

Hymn 115 (R) **There's a wideness in God's mercy**

Prayer for Understanding

Loving God, open our hearts and minds to your Word. Help us hear that you know us completely, hold us faithfully, and love us deeply. By your Spirit, guide us to trust that we are yours. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Psalm 139: 1-18

Sermon

Whoever I Am, You Know Me

Last Sunday, we asked a simple but important question: how does God measure us? We heard that the world often measures people by success, wealth, looks, or how much they can still do. Those measurements divide people into those who seem important and those who don't. But God does not measure us that way. Our worth comes from God's grace and compassionate love, shown to us in Jesus Christ.

Today, Psalm 139 takes us one step deeper. If our worth doesn't depend on the world's measuring stick, then who are we in God's eyes? The psalmist gives us the answer in four words: known, made, held, and loved.

That answer touches one of the deepest questions any of us can ask: Who am I? We usually answer with a name, a job, or a role in the family. "I am a parent." "I am a grandparent." "I am a farmer, a teacher, a nurse." "I am retired."

But those answers don't tell the whole story. As the years pass, many of the things that once defined us start to change. We retire from our work. Our health grows weaker. Our children move away. A spouse or a close friend dies. We may leave the home we lived in for forty years. We can no longer do some of the things we once loved doing. And quietly, we start to wonder: Who am I now? Am I still the same person I used to be?

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrestled with that very question, in one of the darkest seasons of his life. Bonhoeffer was a German pastor and theologian who grew up in a large, loving, well-educated family. He became fascinated with the Christian faith, studied theology, and was ordained.

Then Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party rose to power. The regime spread hatred and violence. Jewish people and others were treated as less than human. Anyone who spoke against Hitler risked arrest or death. Bonhoeffer believed a Christian could not stay silent while neighbours suffered. For him, following Jesus meant standing with the harmed and resisting evil, whatever the cost.

At one point, Bonhoeffer was safe in the United States. Friends urged him to stay. But after much prayer, he chose to go home to Germany, believing he had no right to help rebuild his country after the war unless he shared in its suffering during the war. That choice led to his arrest. He was imprisoned, then sent to a concentration camp, and in April of 1945, only weeks before the war ended, he was executed.

While he was in prison, the people around Bonhoeffer saw a remarkably calm and courageous man. He spoke kindly to the guards. He encouraged frightened prisoners. To everyone watching, he seemed strong and unshaken.

But that was not the whole story. In his cell, Bonhoeffer wrote a poem called "Who Am I?" In it, he describes the gap between what others saw and what he felt inside. Other prisoners saw someone cheerful and in control, someone who seemed to face suffering the way a person faces a battle he expects to win. But inside, Bonhoeffer often felt restless, lonely, and afraid. He longed for freedom. He missed his family. He longed to see flowers and birds again. Some days he felt too tired even to pray.

So he asked himself: which one is the real me? The calm man others see, or the frightened man I know I am inside?

Perhaps we've asked a version of that same question. People tell us, "You're so strong." And yet inside, we feel tired and unsure. We smile at church while carrying grief in our hearts. We reassure our children while quietly worrying about our own health. We say "I'm fine" because we don't know how to explain what we're really feeling.

Does that make us dishonest? No. It makes us human. Courage doesn't mean we never feel afraid. Faith doesn't mean we never have questions. Sometimes courage simply means continuing to love and serve even while we're afraid. Sometimes faith means placing our questions in God's hands when we don't have the answers ourselves.

Bonhoeffer never fully resolved the question of who he was. But his poem doesn't end in despair. It ends with a prayer: "Whoever I am, you know me. I am yours, O God."

That is exactly the message of Psalm 139. The psalmist prays, "O Lord, you have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up." God knows what other people see, and God knows what they can't see. God knows the strength we show the world, and the weakness we hide inside it. And here is the good news underneath that knowledge: God's knowing is never cold or condemning. God knows us with compassion.

That's why the psalmist can say, "You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me." This is not the hand of a harsh judge waiting to catch us doing wrong. It's the hand of a loving parent resting gently on a frightened child, saying, "You are not alone. I am here."

The psalmist goes even further: there is nowhere we can go that is beyond God's reach. Rise to the heavens, God is there. Sink into the darkest valley, God is there. This doesn't mean God prevents every hard season. Bonhoeffer still suffered in that prison cell. We still face illness, grief, and loneliness. But it does mean that no darkness can separate us from God's compassionate love.

We see this same love in the way Jesus lived. He noticed Zacchaeus hiding up in a tree. He felt a woman's quiet touch in a crowded street. He heard blind Bartimaeus calling out from the roadside. He knew Peter's weakness even before Peter denied him three times. Jesus knew the whole truth about each of these people, and he didn't turn away. He came closer. He welcomed, healed, and restored them. Jesus knows the whole truth about us too, and he still calls us his own.

So here is what this means for us this week. When you find yourself lying awake wondering who you are now that so much has changed, don't try to answer that question alone. Bring the whole truth of it to God in prayer, just as Bonhoeffer did in his cell, just as the psalmist did on his bed at night. You don't need to arrive with the answer already sorted out, or with a brave face already in place. Simply say what he said: "Whoever I am, you know me. I am yours, O God." Let that be your prayer this week, whenever the question of who you are catches you off guard.

And watch for chances, however small, to offer someone else the same compassionate knowing God gives you. A phone call to someone who is lonely. A visit to someone in hospital. A patient ear for someone who says "I'm fine" but clearly isn't. When we know we are fully known and fully loved by God, we're set free to see other people the same way, and to love them without needing them to have it all together either.

Our worth was never based on what we can still do, remember, or accomplish. It rests entirely on the God who made us, who knows every hidden corner of our hearts, and who holds us with a hand that will never let go. Whoever we are, however the years have changed us, we are known, wonderfully made, faithfully held, and deeply loved. We belong to God.

"Whoever I am, you know me. I am yours, O God."

Thanks be to God. Amen

Hymn 699

All the way my Saviour leads me

Invitation to the Offering

Doxology

Prayer of Dedication

Loving God,

receive these gifts as signs of our gratitude. Use them and use us to share your compassionate love with those in need. We are known, loved, and yours. Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and for the People

Here we are, O God—each of us with our own story, and all of us gathered together. You know every one of us. You know the courageous parts and the fearful parts, the parts we are proud of and the parts that bring us shame, the parts we allow others to see and the parts we try to hide, even from ourselves.

Yet you see our whole lives, O God, and you do not turn away. You cherish us in our incompleteness. You embrace us as we are—growing, unfinished, sometimes lost, sometimes stuck, and sometimes broken. You see us. You understand us. And still, you love us.

Thank you for the love that helps us grow, heal, and begin again. Because we are loved by you, we can face the truth about ourselves, repent, forgive, let go of what burdens us, say "no" to what causes harm, and say "yes" to your way of love.

Give us a faith that can surrender to you, trusting you to make a way forward even when we cannot yet see it. Help us place our lives in your hands and find deep rest in our souls, even while life remains uncertain and unfinished. In silence, we now become aware of the breath you have given us, breathing in and breathing out, resting in your loving presence. (Silence)

We entrust ourselves to you, O God, the giver of every breath and the source of all life. Fill us again with your peace, strength, and hope. Thank you for knowing us completely, holding us faithfully, and loving us deeply.

In this spirit of gratitude and surrender, we pray for your world and for all who are struggling to rise after being struck down.

We pray for those living amid war and violence—for those who have been injured, displaced, frightened, or bereaved. Bring an end to cruelty and destruction. Protect those in danger, guide leaders in the ways of justice and peace, and strengthen all who work to bring healing and reconciliation.

We pray for those forced to leave their homes or rebuild their lives after earthquakes, fires, floods, storms, and other disasters, and for those struggling to breathe in extreme heat or through illness.

We pray for those who have received terrible news or a devastating diagnosis. When their faith feels weak, and the way ahead is uncertain, hold them close. Surround them with loving family members, compassionate friends, and wise caregivers.

The suffering we see and hear about can weigh heavily upon our hearts, O God, and tempt us to turn away. Give us the courage to remain present. Grow within us a love that endures, deepen our compassion, and show us how we may become your heart, hands, and feet in a hurting world.

Now, in another moment of silence, we lift before you the people and situations we are carrying deeply within our hearts today. (Silence)

We especially pray for Don Hallett. As he continues to receive medical care and waits for another necessary surgery, ease his discomfort, strengthen his body and spirit, and grant him patience, hope, and faith. We also pray for Marilyn and their daughters, and Don's brother Doug as they care for Don with love. Give them strength when they are tired, peace when they are worried, and the assurance that they are not alone. Surround the whole family with your healing presence and compassionate care.

Into your loving hands, O God, we entrust ourselves, those whom we love, and the needs of your world. Whoever we are, you know us. We are yours. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Hymn 699

All the way my Saviour leads me

BENEDICTION

May God, who knows you completely, Jesus, who calls you his own, and the Holy Spirit, who holds you always, give you peace. You are known, loved, and belong to 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

***Next Sunday Service, August 9, at 10:00 am at North Pelham**

***Summer Pulpit Supply:**

Rev. Jacob will be on holiday from **August 10 to August 31**. During his absence, we are grateful for the spiritual leadership of our guest worship leaders:

- **Mr. Kent Reynolds – August 16 and August 30**
- **Rev. Martin Wehrmann – August 23**

We give thanks for their spiritual worship leadership and pray that God will bless them as they share God's Word with us.

***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.

***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)