



Rockway and First (North Pelham) Pastoral Charge
16th Sunday after Pentecost, September 13, 2026
Worship at Home

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want... he restores my soul." (Psalm 23:1–3)

P: We come needing rest for our souls, and a shepherd who knows the way.

L: "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me." (Psalm 23:4)

P: We come trusting God walks with us, even when the road is hard.

L: "Why do you stand looking up? Jesus has been taken into heaven, and he will come back the same way you saw him go." (Acts 1:11)

P: We come holding onto hope, even when we cannot see the whole picture.

L: "When I was a child, I thought as a child. But when I grew up, I set aside childish ways." (1 Corinthians 13:11)

P: We come ready to keep growing in faith, in hope, and in love.

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

Prayers of Approach and Confession

Loving and faithful God,

we come to you as we are. We come with gratitude. We come with hope. We also come carrying concerns, questions, and burdens. Some of us are grieving. Some are waiting for medical news or facing treatment. Some are searching for guidance, strength, and peace.

You are our faithful Shepherd. You walk beside us through green pastures and through the darkest valleys. Even when we cannot understand what is happening, your compassionate love never leaves us.

Yet we confess, O God, that we often want easy answers and complete certainty. We want life to follow our plans, and we become anxious when it does not. Sometimes fear closes our hearts. Sometimes we resist the changes through which you are helping our faith to grow. We fail to listen patiently, to forgive generously, and to love one another as Christ has loved us. Hear us now in the silence, O God, as we open our hearts to you in confession. (silence)

Merciful God, you hear us. In Jesus Christ, you speak forgiveness, grace, and new life. Help us to receive your forgiveness and to share that same grace with others. Through your Holy Spirit, deepen our faith when the road is uncertain, renew our hope when we become discouraged, and teach us to grow in patient and compassionate love.

Make us the heart, hands, and feet of Christ — comforting those who grieve, supporting those who are anxious, and caring for those who need our help. Receive our worship, and shape our words, thoughts, and actions, so that our lives may bring glory to you. 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.

Passing the Peace of Jesus Christ

Hymn 40 (R)

The Lord's my Shepherd, I will not want

Prayer for Illumination

Spirit of God,

open our hearts to your Word. Deepen our faith, renew our hope, and help us grow in love, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Responsive Psalm 23

Acts 1: 1-11; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Sermon

Trusting God during Grief and Uncertainty

This has been a season when trust does not come easily. Grief has visited our church family more than once in recent months, and some among us are facing uncertain news in our own lives. So this morning, I want us to reflect on what it means to trust God—not only when everything makes sense, but especially when it does not.

I want to begin with something I learned through my relationship with my father. At each stage of my life, I had a different image of him. When I was a small child, I thought my father could do almost anything. He fed me, protected me, comforted me, and supported me. To me, he seemed very strong. When I became a teenager, I began to notice his weaknesses. Sometimes he made mistakes. I felt disappointed, because he was not the perfect father I had once imagined. Then, as a young adult, I began to see him differently. I saw that he was a human being who could grow tired, sick, worried, and weak. In the last years of his life, I saw how fragile he had become.

But seeing my father as an imperfect human being did not make me love him less. It helped me love him more honestly. I could offer him compassion, patience, and forgiveness. Our relationship grew deeper, because I no longer loved an image of a perfect father. I loved the real person in front of me.

In a similar way, my faith has changed over the years. My understanding of God is not exactly what it was when I was a child. It has grown through study, through ministry, through relationships, through mistakes, and through both joy and sorrow.

This does not mean God has changed. It means I have continued to grow. As the apostle Paul writes, "Now I know only in part." None of us sees the whole picture. Throughout our lives, God keeps teaching us, deepening us, and leading us into a more mature faith.

That growth is not always easy. Learning can be uncomfortable, because it sometimes asks us to let go of ideas that once made us feel safe. But an honest faith is better than an easy faith that cannot face reality. When we admit how uncertain and fragile life truly is, we learn to love more deeply. We grow more patient with the weaknesses of others, and with our own.

This is the heart of today's readings. In Acts, the disciples stand at the edge of a new stage of faith. Throughout his ministry, they had walked beside Jesus. They listened to his teaching and watched him heal the sick. Even after his death, the risen Jesus had appeared to them and renewed their hope.

But now Jesus was ascending into heaven, and the disciples stood looking up, unsure what would come next. Who would lead them now? How could they carry on his work? Jesus did not hand them a detailed plan. Instead, he gave them a promise: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses."

The disciples were not being left alone. Through the Holy Spirit, the risen Christ would remain with them — not standing beside them the way he once had, but living within them and among them. They were being called to move from simply watching Jesus do God's work to joining in that work themselves, becoming his heart, his hands, and his feet in the world.

That same calling turns up in Paul's words to the Corinthians. Paul was writing to a church torn apart by pride and division. Some believed their spiritual gifts made them more important than others. Paul told them plainly that even the most impressive gifts mean nothing without love.

We may speak beautifully, understand deep mysteries, or give generously. But if love is missing, something essential is missing. Love is not one Christian virtue among many. Love is the heart of following Jesus. Love is patient and kind, Paul says. It does not envy or boast. It does not insist on its own way. It bears, believes, hopes, and endures.

This kind of love takes real strength. It takes courage to stay patient when we are frustrated. It takes humility to listen when we are sure we are right. It takes grace to forgive, and wisdom to know how to respond to someone who has hurt us. Love does not mean pretending that wrongdoing does not matter — true love seeks what is honest and healing for everyone involved.

That is why love requires prayer and discernment, because every person and every situation is different. As Paul admits, "For now we see in a mirror, dimly." We see only part of the picture. We may misread one another, or make mistakes even with good intentions. So mature faith is not

the belief that we have every answer. It is humble enough to say, "I do not know everything, but I trust God to guide me" — and it keeps asking, "What would Christ's love have me do here?"

Faith, hope, and love, Paul says, are what remain. Faith is trusting God when we cannot see the road ahead. Hope is confidence that God is still at work, even when the future is unclear. And love is the way faith and hope become visible in our daily lives.

We know this in our bones right now, as a church family. Only a few months ago, we said goodbye to our dear Jim Aulph and celebrated his life and faith. Then, within these past two weeks, we also said goodbye to Roy and Bill. Bill attended Roy's funeral to support his family in their grief—and the very next day, we learned that Bill himself had died. So much loss, coming so close together, has left our congregation deeply saddened and shaken. Several among us are also carrying difficult news—a cancer diagnosis, surgery, continuing treatments, or serious medical examinations still ahead. These are not distant ideas. They are the realities we are walking through together.

In faith, we entrust Jim, Roy and Bill to God's everlasting love and to the peace and eternal life Christ promises. And we do not walk through our own grief and worry alone either. Psalm 23 does not promise a life free of dark valleys. It promises that even there, God is with us. "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me." God's presence does not always remove the hard road, but God walks it with us — and God calls us to walk it with one another, through prayer for the anxious, practical help for the recovering, and simple company for the grieving.

Jesus never promised his followers a life without trouble. Being a Christian does not mean we are spared from illness, loss, or fear. It means we never face them alone. God did not spare Jesus from suffering and death — yet death did not have the final word. God raised him to new life. That resurrection assures us that suffering cannot destroy God's love, and death cannot defeat God's purpose.

So this week, here is one concrete thing we can each do: choose one person who is grieving, recovering, or afraid, and reach out to them directly — a call, a visit, a card, a shared meal. Not a vague good wish, but one real act of Christ's presence delivered to one real person. That is how faith, hope, and love stop being ideas and become visible.

We do not need to understand everything to trust God. We do not need to be strong all the time, or pretend life is easy. We need only to stay open to the Spirit and keep growing in love.

One day, faith will become sight, and hope will be fulfilled. But love will remain. Love comes from God, reveals the heart of Christ, and binds us to one another. So may we grow in faith when the road is uncertain, hold onto hope when the world feels troubled, and above all, grow in the patient, courageous love of Christ — becoming, together, his heart, his hands, and his feet in a world that needs him.

And when we see only dimly and know only in part, may we remember this: God knows us fully, God loves us completely, and God will never leave us alone. Amen.

Hymn 56 (R) **God will take care of you**

Invitation to the Offering

Doxology

Prayer of Dedication

God of love,

receive these gifts and use them to comfort those who grieve, support those in need, and bring hope to our community. May our faith become visible through generous and compassionate love. Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and for the People

We are here, O God.

We are alive because you, our Creator and the source of all life, have given us the gift of life. We did not create ourselves. Each breath, each new morning, and each season of life comes from you. Life brings many changes, joy and sorrow, strength and weakness, certainty and uncertainty. Through it all, you remain faithfully beside us. Thank you.

Even as our bodies grow older and our strength changes, you continue to renew us inwardly. You deepen our faith, restore our hope, and teach us to grow in love. Thank you for these sacred gifts of faith, hope, and love. We do not earn them, and they are not reserved for only a few. They are gifts of your grace, freely offered to all.

Thank you for the people who walk beside us through difficult valleys, for those who pray, visit, telephone, prepare meals, and offer quiet companionship. Help us to receive your gifts with open hearts and to share them through compassionate love. Hear us now in silence as we thank you for the people, opportunities, and blessings that make us truly grateful. (silence)

We also pray for your suffering world, O God. In so many places, flood, war, hunger, and disease make joy difficult to experience.

We pray for children and families living through war in the Middle East and beyond. Protect those who live in fear, comfort children who have lost homes and loved ones, and give courage to all who work for peace.

We pray for the people of Sudan, facing war, hunger, and displacement. Provide food for the hungry, shelter for the displaced, and strength for those bringing relief.

We pray for children and young people anxious about the future. Calm their fears, and help us build a world where they may live with greater safety and hope.

O God, where fear rules, bring courage. Where hatred divides, awaken compassion. Where people suffer, raise up helpers. Where hope is fading, let the light of your kingdom shine. Do not let our prayers end with words. Through your Holy Spirit, make us generous, courageous, and compassionate. Show us how we can become part of your healing work. Hear us now as we name before you, in silence, the people and situations close to our hearts. (silence)

We pray for the families of Jim, Roy, and Bill. Hold them close, comfort them in their grief, and surround them with your peace. We pray for Don Hallett as he recovers from surgery. Renew his strength, and bring healing day by day.

We also pray for those whose suffering in body or mind is unknown to us but fully known to you. Walk with them through every dark valley. Give rest to the weary, courage to the fearful, healing to the sick, and companionship to those who feel alone.

Deepen our faith when the road is uncertain. Renew our hope when we become discouraged. Fill us with the patient and compassionate love of Christ.

By your Spirit, help us reach out to those who are grieving, recovering, or afraid. May our faith, hope, and love become visible through our words, our presence, and our practical care. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our risen Lord. Amen.

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

BENEDICTION

May God hold you in love, Jesus walk with you through every valley, and the Holy Spirit deepen your faith, renew your hope, and make your love visible. 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, Sept. 20, at 10:00 am at North Pelham**

In Loving Memory of Bill Grimwood:

We are saddened by the sudden passing of Bill Grimwood following a heart attack. His funeral service was held last Wednesday. Bill's death comes only two weeks after we lost Roy Johnson, making this a particularly tender time for our North Pelham church family. We hold Bill's wife, Susan, their children, Sarah and Will, and all their family in our prayers. May God surround them with comfort, strength, and the hope of Jesus' resurrection.

***Fall BBQ Fellowship – Sunday, September 20:** Join us at North Pelham for a free outdoor BBQ lunch following worship next Sunday! We'll provide hamburgers and hot dogs. Please bring a salad or dessert to share, and your lawn chair. Come and enjoy good food and warm fellowship together!

***Tai Chi – Every Monday:** Our free Tai Chi classes continue every Monday as part of our church's community outreach ministry. Everyone from our church family and the wider community is warmly welcome! Classes begin at 1:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m., with no charge to participants. Come and enjoy gentle exercise, health benefits, and friendly fellowship together!

***Wednesday Bible Study:** Our Bible Study meets every Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. at North Pelham. Come grow in God's Word, faith, and fellowship. Everyone is warmly welcome!

***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 needs prayer or pastoral care, please contact your elder or Rev. Jacob at 289-213-2797 or jacoble0501@gmail.com. "Carry one another's burdens." — Galatians 6:2