Rockway and First (North Pelham) Pastoral Charge
23rd Sunday after Pentecost / All Saints Day
November 1, 2026
Worship at Home

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: "O LORD, you have searched me and you know me." (Psalm 139:1)
P: We come just as we are, with nothing to prove and no need to hide.
L: God knows us completely and welcomes us with love.
P: We bring our thanks and our hopes, our fears and our struggles.
L: God formed us and holds us, and is worthy of our praise.
P: We praise you, O God, for you know us and love us.
L: Jesus welcomes our questions and says to us, "Come and see."
P: We open our hearts to your mercy, healing, and peace.
L: Known and loved by God, let us draw near.
All: Let us worship God together!

Hymn 11 **The Lord's my shepherd**

Prayers of Approach and Confession
Loving God,
you know us completely and love us faithfully. When we hide, you seek us out. We come just as we are, with thankful hearts and hidden burdens, trusting that we are welcome in your presence.

Yet sometimes we are afraid to open our hearts. We carry guilt for things we have done and shame that makes us want to hide. Forgive us for the times when we have spoken without kindness, turned away from someone in need, or allowed fear to close our hearts. We have held back love, been slow to listen, and failed to make peace. Help us to be honest with ourselves and with you, trusting in your mercy.

In the silence, we bring you what needs forgiveness and healing. (silence)

Compassionate God,
meet our honesty with grace. Where we have caused harm, help us take responsibility and make amends. Where we have been wounded, hold us gently and help us heal. By your Holy Spirit, renew our faith and guide our steps. Help us offer others the patient love you offer us.

And today, on All Saints' Day, we thank you for those whose love and faith have shaped our lives. As your love holds them still, help us continue to share Christ's love. We pray in the name of Jesus, 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 373 **Jesus loves me, this I know**

Prayer for Illumination
Loving God,
open our hearts to your Word. Remind us that we are fully known and deeply loved, and help us trust you and share your love. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE
Responsive Psalm 139: 1-18
Genesis 3: 1-8; John 1: 43-51

Sermon **Fully Known and Deeply Loved**

Picture the coffee hour after worship. Someone kindly asks, "How are you?" and the answer comes quickly, with a warm smile: "Fine, thanks. And you?" Yet behind that smile there may be a sleepless night, a worry about test results, or a sorrow nobody else knows about.

Most of us have been that person. We want to be understood, but we are afraid of being judged. Deep down we wonder, "If they knew everything about me, would they still care?"

Today's readings bring a comforting promise. God knows us completely, loves us faithfully, and invites us to come out of hiding. We do not have to become someone else before we come to God. We can come just as we are, with our thanks and our questions, our strengths and our struggles.

Still, trusting that love is not always easy, and our reading from Genesis helps us see why. Adam and Eve lived in a garden full of God's good gifts. They had a place to belong, food to enjoy, and a close friendship with their Creator. But the serpent planted a doubt in their minds. Could God really be trusted? Was God holding something good back from them?

They ate the fruit God had told them not to eat, and everything changed. They felt ashamed, covered themselves, and hid among the trees. The garden was still there, and God was still there. But now they were afraid of being seen.

Perhaps we recognize ourselves in that story. When we say something hurtful, we may avoid the person we hurt. When we make a mistake, we may make excuses. When we feel ashamed, we may pull away from people who care about us, and sometimes even from God. We think, "I

should be stronger by now. Surely God is disappointed in me." But hiding never brings the peace we long for. It only leaves us carrying our burdens alone.

Here is the part I love most. In our reading, they hear God walking in the garden. In the very next verse, God calls out, “Where are you?” I hear care in that question. Even after they have turned away, God still calls to them. Even in our hiding places, God goes looking for us, gently and patiently, the way a parent calls a child in from the dark.

Of course, shame is not the only reason we hide. Sometimes we protect ourselves because someone has hurt us. A person may have broken our confidence or brushed aside our feelings. When that happens, trust takes time, and God understands. God does not demand that wounded hearts heal overnight. Being honest with God also does not mean telling everyone our private business. We can keep healthy boundaries and choose wisely whom we trust. The invitation is simply to begin bringing our real selves to God, even if our first prayer is only, "Lord, I am afraid."

That kind of honest welcome is exactly what we see in John's Gospel. Philip has met Jesus and wants his friend Nathanael to meet him too. But Nathanael is doubtful. When he hears that Jesus comes from Nazareth, he asks whether anything good can come from there. Philip does not argue. He simply says, "Come and see." That is a gracious invitation, because Nathanael does not have to settle every question first. He can come with his doubts.

And when Jesus sees him coming, he calls him a man with no deceit, someone honest at heart. Nathanael is stunned. "How do you know me?" he asks. Jesus answers that he saw him under the fig tree before Philip ever called him. We are not told what happened under that tree, but Jesus' words go straight to Nathanael's heart. Before Nathanael knew Jesus, Jesus had already seen him.

What a comfort that is for us. Before we find the words to pray, Christ knows what weighs on us. Before we explain our sorrow, Christ sees our tears. And Jesus promises Nathanael that he will see even greater things. Being known by Jesus is not the end of the story. It is the beginning of a life of following him, with more of God's goodness still ahead.

That is why we can bring our honest words to Christ. We can say, "Lord, I believe, but I am struggling." We can say, "I am thankful, but I am lonely." We can say, "I want to forgive, but the hurt is still deep." God already knows. Prayer simply lets us place what God knows into God's loving care.

Psalm 139 gives us words for this kind of friendship. The psalmist says God knows when he sits down and when he gets up, and knows his words before he speaks them. At first, being known so completely may sound unsettling, as if someone is watching for every failure. But listen to where the psalm goes. Wherever the writer travels, God is there. Even in the farthest places, God's hand leads and holds him.

Many of us know something about darkness. There is the darkness of grief, when a familiar chair stands empty, and the darkness of waiting for test results. There is the uncertainty we may face

as we grow older, when our bodies change and familiar tasks become difficult. I think of a porch light left on for someone coming home late. The light does not take away the night, and it does not scold the one who is late. It simply says, "You are expected, and you are welcome." That welcome reminds us of God's faithful love. And Psalm 139 promises something more: even in the darkness, God is already with us. Even the darkness is not dark to God. When we cannot see the way ahead, God has not lost sight of us.

The psalm also says God knew us while we were being formed before birth. Before we did anything useful, before anyone praised us, we were already precious to God. That matters at every age. Our worth does not shrink when we retire, need help, forget a name, or can no longer do what we once did. We are still known and loved.

So how do we begin to rest in this love? Start small. This week, take one quiet moment each day, perhaps in the morning or at bedtime, and pray this simple prayer: "Lord, you know me. Help me trust your love." You do not need to explain everything. If you want to say more, say it. If you cannot find the words, sit quietly, trusting that God understands. That one small habit, repeated day after day, can slowly teach our hearts that we do not face life alone.

And as we receive God's patient love, we can share it. We can listen without rushing to judge, and make room for someone's questions. We can be a church family where a person feels safe enough to answer "How are you?" with the truth: "Honestly, today is hard." In these ordinary ways, we become the heart, hands, and feet of Jesus.

Others have shown us this love before us. On this All Saints Day, we remember with gratitude those who have shared God's love with us and have now gone before us. They had questions, weaknesses, and struggles, just as we do. Yet God knew them completely and loved them faithfully. That same love holds them still. And as we continue through this season after Pentecost, the Holy Spirit helps us carry their legacy forward through our own ordinary acts of kindness and faith. In life and beyond death, we belong to God.

Dear church family, what are you carrying today that is hard to name? A regret, a fear, a sorrow you have kept to yourself? You can bring it to God. God's love gives us courage to face our mistakes, receive forgiveness, and begin again. And where we have been wounded, God meets us with compassion.

So the next time someone asks, "How are you?" remember this. You are known beyond the smile you offer the world. You are loved in the places where you feel most fragile. And wherever tomorrow takes you, God will be there. You do not have to hide from the One who loves you. Amen.

Hymn 640 **Softly and tenderly**

Invitation to the Offering
Doxology
Prayer of Dedication

Loving God,
you know our hearts and bless us with your love. Receive these gifts and our lives, and use them to bring hope and care to others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and for the People
Loving God,
you know us completely and love us faithfully. Thank you for your presence in every season and for the kindness we receive through others.

On this All Saints' Sunday, we remember those whose love and faith have shaped us. We remember by name those we have lost this year: Fran Johnson, Roy Johnson, Jim Aulph, Timothy Norton, and Bill Grimwood. (silence) We miss them and entrust them to your everlasting care. Help us carry their love forward.

We bring before you our wounded world: those grieving the train collision in Spain, those affected by Cyclone Arnab in India, and all who endure war, hunger, and displacement. Comfort the bereaved, heal the injured, and strengthen those bringing help.

Amid unrest in France and across Europe, protect lives, uphold peaceful voices, and guide leaders toward justice and understanding.

Here in Canada, care for families facing sudden loss, violence, illness, and loneliness. We pray for those newly elected as mayors and councillors in our communities. Give them wisdom for difficult decisions, courage to serve the common good, and humility to listen, especially to those whose needs are easily overlooked.

We remember the quiet burdens carried within our church family and by others dear to us. For those who say "I am fine" while carrying heavy hearts, be near. In the silence, we bring them before you. (silence)

You know every name and every hidden sorrow. Help each person find comfort, support, and hope. By your Spirit, make us the heart, hands, and feet of Jesus, so that through our care, others may know they are fully known and deeply loved.

Receive our spoken and unspoken prayers, and guide us to respond with compassion. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Hymn 650 **He leadeth me**

BENEDICTION
May God hold you in love, Jesus walk beside you, and the Holy Spirit help you live and love, fully known and deeply loved. 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, November 8, 10:00 am at Rockway**

***New Projector – Cost Details and Thanks**
Our new projector has been installed, offering 4K picture quality with sharper, clearer images and easier-to-read worship materials. Our previous projector served us faithfully for 15 years. For financial transparency, the Session would like to share the final costs:

- **Projector and lens:** $10,453.09
- **Cables and accessories:** $200.00
- **Research and installation (Eric Braun):** $500.00
- **Total Cost: $11,153.09**

Heartfelt thanks to Kent Reynolds for his dedicated work, and to everyone for their patience and understanding. May this new projector serve our worshipping community well for many years to come!

***Willing Workers – Meat Pie Orders & Annual Bazaar**
1. Meat Pie Orders: Our Willing Workers are once again offering their delicious, "world-famous" meat pies! Choose from 9-inch Ground Beef or Chicken pies for $20 each, sold frozen for your convenience. Quantities are limited, so order early! Order online or call/text Janice Aulph at 905-246-9175.

2. Annual Bazaar – **Saturday, November 21, 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m**.: Everyone is warmly invited to enjoy our Annual Bazaar and pick up their meat pie orders! We gratefully welcome donations of baked goods, gently used items (especially children's toys), knitted or sewn items, and handmade crafts. No clothing, please.
All proceeds support the Willing Workers and their sponsorship of foster children. Thank you for your kindness and generous support!

***RPCW Meeting**: The RPCW will meet on Wednesday, Nov. 4 at 1:30 PM at the church.

***Mitten Tree Ministry** – Sharing Warmth and Love:
Our Mitten Tree will be up at Rockway from November 8 to December 6! Everyone is warmly invited to donate mittens, hats, scarves, and socks for Community Care of West Niagara. Your generous gifts will help bring warmth, comfort, and hope to neighbours in need this winter. Thank you for sharing God's love through these simple acts of kindness!

***Tai Chi – Every Monday:** Tai Chi classes continue every Monday as part of our church's community outreach ministry. Classes begin at 1:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.

***Wednesday Bible Study:** Join us every Wednesday at 10:00 AM at North Pelham, led by our spiritual leader, Diane McMillan.

***Outreach - Thursday 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 jacoblee0501@gmail.com.