



Rockway and First (North Pelham) Pastoral Charge
World Communion Sunday, October 4, 2026
Worship at Home

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Jesus asks, “Who do you say that I am?” (Luke 9:20)

P: **You are the Messiah of God, our Saviour and our hope.**

L: Jesus calls us to follow him daily in his way of love.

P: **By his grace, we will care for one another.**

L: With Christians around the world, we gather at Christ’s table.

P: **We come with our gratitude and grief, our faith and questions.**

ALL: Risen Christ, hold us in your love, nourish us at your table, and lead us to share your love. Amen.

Hymn 410

Joyful, joyful we adore you

PRAYERS OF ADORATION and CONFESSION

Loving God, we come as we are—thankful or troubled, hopeful or weary. You know us fully and welcome us with compassion. We praise you for your faithful love, revealed in Jesus Christ, who died and rose again.

Forgive us when we place our worth in success, try to control everything, or overlook the needs of others. Help us receive your love and follow Jesus in our daily choices.

Some of us carry grief, worry, or questions we cannot put into words. Hold us gently, and help us care for one another. In the silence, we bring you what weighs on our hearts and ask for your forgiveness and peace. (silence.)

Thank you, God, for hearing even our unspoken prayers. Through your Spirit, open our hearts as we listen, sing, pray, and gather at Christ’s table. Nourish us with your grace, and lead us to share your love. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Passing the Peace of Jesus Christ

Hymn 209

O Love that wilt not let me go

Prayer for Understanding

Loving God,

open our hearts to your Word. Help us trust the love that holds us and follow Jesus daily in sharing that love. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Psalm 63: 1-8, Luke 9: 18-25

SERMON

Holding On When Life Changes

I knew Peggy when she was a young mother in a former church. She loved her family and took joy in watching her daughters grow. Later, I heard that life had become very difficult. Peggy had faced breast cancer and its treatments, and her family was going through a painful time as well. I thought of her often and hoped she had people beside her.

When we met again, she told me those years had changed her. She had once placed great importance on success at work and on everything going well for her family. There was nothing wrong with wanting good things for them. But when illness and trouble came, she began to ask what mattered most. Peggy did not call those years easy, and she was not glad for the pain. Yet she spoke with gratitude about her family, about relationships that were healing, and about the hope she had found.

I was grateful to hear her story. But I also know that not every story unfolds like Peggy's. Some illnesses continue. Some relationships remain painful. Some people we love die, and their absence stays with us. Others carry troubles that no one around them can see. So Peggy's story is not a rule for what hardship will do. Instead, it gives us a question: When life changes in ways we did not choose, what can we hold on to?

Jesus asks a question of his own in today's Gospel reading from Luke, chapter 9. He has been praying alone with his disciples, and he asks them, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter answers, "The Messiah of God." That means God's promised rescuer. The disciples have seen Jesus teach, welcome people, and heal those who are suffering. They have good reason to hope that he will bring God's freedom.

But then Jesus tells them something they do not expect. He says he will suffer, be rejected and killed, and on the third day be raised. Imagine how hard that was to hear. The disciples may have hoped that following the Messiah would lead from one victory to another. Instead, Jesus says his way will pass through suffering. Yet suffering and death will not have the final word. God will raise him.

And then Jesus turns to everyone who wants to follow him. He says, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me." Now, those words can sound frightening, especially when life is already hard. So let's be clear about what Jesus is not saying. He is not telling a person with cancer to be grateful for illness. He is not telling someone who is grieving to hide their tears. He is not asking anyone to stay in harm's way. Illness, the loss of someone we love, and abuse are not crosses that God hands out as a test.

So what is Jesus saying? To "deny ourselves" does not mean to hate ourselves. It means we stop making ourselves the center of everything. Jesus calls us to follow his way of love, even when love asks something of us. It may cost us time or comfort. It may ask us to stand beside someone whom others have left alone. It may ask us to tell the truth when silence would be easier, or to say sorry when pride tells us not to.

Following Jesus also changes what we depend on for our sense of worth. Many of us have spent years trying to keep everything under control, or to look strong. We may believe we matter only when we are useful or successful. Jesus invites us to put those burdens down. He says, "Those who lose their life for my sake will save it." That is a promise of hope. As we trust Jesus and follow his way of love, we discover a life we could never secure by trying to control everything ourselves. That is why Jesus asks, "What does it profit them if they gain the whole world but lose or forfeit themselves?" Peggy came to see that her family did not need to look like a picture of success in order to be loved. She could not control all that happened to them. But she could begin to value their lives, and her own, in a new way.

Notice, too, one small but important word in Luke: daily. Jesus says to take up the cross daily. Most of us do not face one great decision and then find that following Jesus is easy forever. We follow him through the choices of ordinary days. We make time for someone who needs us. We speak with kindness when we are tired. We ask for help when we cannot manage alone. And when we fall short, we begin again with God's grace.

Perhaps some of us hear these words while carrying a fresh loss. After the grief our church has known, we may simply be asking how to get through the week. If that is where you are, Jesus does not stand over you demanding that you feel stronger. He meets you right where you are. Following him today may begin with letting someone sit beside you, or trusting God with a prayer that has very few words.

But where do we find the strength to follow him day by day? Here, at his table. Today is World Communion Sunday, and at this table we remember Jesus' life, his death, and the promise of his resurrection. We receive bread and the cup as signs of his love given for us. We come to receive what we cannot make for ourselves. Some of us come with thankful hearts. Some come tired. Some are grieving someone whose place in our life feels painfully empty. Some are worried about their health or about a person they love. Some carry a private struggle and are not ready to speak of it. Christ knows each of us as we are, and there is room for every one of us at his table.

On this Sunday, we also remember that we do not gather alone. Christians in many parts of the world gather at the Lord's Table today. They speak different languages and sing different songs. Some worship in safety, while others gather amid conflict or fear. Some have plenty, and others wonder how they will feed their families. In Christ, we belong to one another.

So our congregation is part of that wider family. The bread we share points us toward the needs of people beyond these walls, and the cup reminds us that Christ's love reaches farther than we can see. Nourished by that love, we can share what we have. This week, we are beginning our Thanksgiving food collection for Pelham Cares. We receive a gift at Christ's table, and we carry

a gift to someone else's table. That is what it means to be the heart, hands, and feet of Jesus. And here is one more small step for the week: call one person who may be lonely or hurting, and simply listen. None of this removes every sorrow. But each act is a daily step in Jesus' way of love, and we can take those steps together.

Peggy's story gave me hope. But our deepest hope does not depend on every story ending as hers did. It rests in Jesus Christ, who suffered, died, and was raised. His love holds us when healing comes, when we are still waiting, and when life has changed forever. So, when life changes in ways we did not choose, what can we hold on to? We hold on to Christ, and we let Christ hold on to us.

Come to his table today with your gratitude or your grief, your faith or your questions. Receive his love alongside sisters and brothers around the world. Then, one day at a time, carry that love to someone else's table. Amen.

Hymn 481 **Blest be the tie that binds**

Invitation to the offering

Doxology

Prayer of Dedication

Generous God,

all we have is a gift from you. Receive these offerings and our lives, and use them to share Christ's love with those in need. Amen.

Invitation to the Lord's Supper

The Apostles' Creed (p.539)

Hymn 534 **All who hunger, gather gladly (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):

Thank you, loving God, for nourishing us at Christ’s table. Thank you, Jesus, for giving your life in love and sharing your risen life with us. Holy Spirit, help us trust that Christ holds us, even when life is difficult. Give us courage to follow him daily, sharing food, friendship, and care. May the love we have received become the love we offer to others. Amen.

Hymn 534

All who hunger, gather gladly (v. 3)

Benediction:

May God hold you in love, may Jesus lead you day by day, and may the Holy Spirit strengthen you to share that love wherever you go. 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:

***Thanksgiving Sunday Service, October 11, at 10:00 am at Rockway**

***In Loving Memory of Doreen White:**

We are saddened to share the passing of Doreen White, beloved mother of Arden Vaughn, at the age of 98. We hold Arden, Bill, and their family in our prayers during this time of loss. May God surround them with comfort, peace, and loving memories of Doreen.

***RPCW Meeting:** Wednesday, October 7, at 1:30 p.m. at Rockway Presbyterian Church.

***Joint Session Meeting:** The October Joint Session meeting of Rockway and North Pelham will be held on Wednesday, October 14, at 7:00 p.m. at North Pelham. Elders, please mark your calendars. Thank you for your faithful service and leadership.

***Thanksgiving Food Donations:**

On October 4 and 11, we will collect non-perishable food and fresh produce for people in need. Your gifts will help fill our Harvest Table and care for neighbours in our community. Monetary gifts are also welcome. Thank you for sharing the joy of Thanksgiving!

***North Pelham's 198th Anniversary:**

Join us on Sunday, October 18, as First Presbyterian Church, North Pelham celebrates its 198th anniversary. Dr. Michelle Vosburgh will be our guest speaker.

***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:** 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 jacoblee0501@gmail.com.