



Rockway and First (North Pelham) Pastoral Charge
Thanksgiving Sunday
October 11, 2026
Worship at Home

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: We come to worship God, some of us wanting more out of life.

P: Fill us with your love and grace, O God.

L: We come carrying worries, attachments, and mixed-up priorities.

P: Help us open our hands and our hearts.

L: We come seeking new fullness, direction, purpose, and peace.

P: Re-order our lives in your wisdom and love.

L: On this Thanksgiving Sunday, let us find our way again.

All: Let us worship God together. Thanks be to God!

Hymn 803 **Come, Ye Thankful people, come**

Prayers of Approach and Confession

Now we come to our Prayer of Approach and Confession, which will end with the Lord's Prayer. Many of the Psalms use personal "I" language, and this can help us come honestly before God. Let us bow our heads and pray.

Generous God,

Giver of every good thing, I come to you this Thanksgiving Sunday. Thank you for food and shelter, for family and friends, for this church, and for the gift of another day.

I come as I am, O God. Not with my achievements, my reputation, my goodness, or my money. I come as I am. Even though my life holds many good things, I still feel empty at times. And I confess that I keep trying to fill myself with the wrong things. I hold on tightly to what I have. I want more, and I forget to see enough. I cling to comfort, to my own way, and to old hurts. You know me beyond all pretending. You know my fears and the ways I hide from others and from myself. You know when I have hurt someone. It is hard to say sorry and mean it, because I am afraid of being humbled.

But in your presence, I do not have to pretend. You made me, and you love me. I have not always paid attention to the people you have given me. They are gifts, even when they are hard to love. Help me to notice them, and to notice your goodness all around me. Now, O God, I stop using words and sit in silence, so that you can read what is in my heart. (silence)

Hear the good news. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. God's love finds new ways to love us, even when we mess up. Thanks be to God. In Jesus' name, as he taught us, we 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.

Hymn 435 **All things bright and beautiful**

Prayer for Illumination

Gracious God,

as we hear your Word, open our ears, our minds, and our hearts. Help us to let go of what weighs us down, and lead us toward the fullness of life found in you. Speak to us with truth, comfort, and grace. In Jesus' name, Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Responsive Psalm 62: 5–12

1 Kings 21:1-16; Mark 10:17-27

SERMON

Finding Fullness

On this Thanksgiving Sunday, many of us come from very different places in life. Some of us come from homes that feel comfortable and secure. Some of us come carrying worries about bills, health, family, or the future. Some of us have more than enough by the world's standards, while others may feel they are just getting by.

And yet, whatever our situation may be, many of us know the same quiet feeling inside: the feeling that there must be something more. The question is: more of what?

Sometimes we know what we want. Sometimes we do not. We want more money, more health, more peace, more love, more time. And even when we get what we wanted, something inside us can still feel unfilled. The ancient philosopher Plato once used an image for this. He said we are like leaky jars. We keep pouring things in: money, success, comfort, control. But the water runs out, and the emptiness comes back. So the real question is not, "How can I get more?" The deeper question is, "How can my soul be filled in a way that lasts?"

Our two readings today speak to that question. Let's begin with King Ahab. He already has a palace, land, and power. But right beside his palace is a vineyard owned by a man named Naboth, and Ahab wants it. He offers a fair price. From a business point of view, it sounds reasonable. But Naboth says no. Why? Because this land is not just property to him. It was handed down from his ancestors, and in his faith, it was a trust from God. He says, "The Lord forbid that I should give you my ancestral inheritance." Naboth sees what he has as a gift to look after. Ahab sees everything as something to grab.

That should have been the end of the story. But Ahab cannot let go. He sulks, he refuses to eat, and he turns his face to the wall. Here is a king with so much, and he is miserable over the one thing he does not have. Then Queen Jezebel steps in. She arranges lies against Naboth, and an innocent man is killed. Ahab takes the vineyard. It is a terrible story, and it is not only an ancient one. People with power still take from people with less. And closer to home, when we insist on our own way no matter the cost, the people nearest to us often pay for it.

Ahab and Jezebel thought they were gaining a vineyard. In truth, they were losing their souls. They needed a deeper relationship with God, and a more honest relationship with others. That is where true fullness begins.

Now our second reading gives us a very different picture. A man runs up to Jesus and kneels down in front of him. He is rich, but he is not cruel like Ahab. He is sincere. He asks, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" When Jesus reminds him of the commandments, the man says he has kept them since he was young. He is a good person, and yet he still senses that something is missing.

Then Mark tells us something very important. Jesus looks at him and loves him. Jesus does not shame him, and he does not look down on him for being rich. He loves him. And because he loves him, he tells him the truth: "You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." Mark says the man was shocked, and he went away grieving, because he had many possessions.

Notice what Jesus is not saying. He is not saying that money is evil. Money can feed families, support churches, and make healing and learning possible. But possessions become dangerous when they possess us. The rich man wanted more life, and Jesus showed him that the way to more life begins with open hands.

That is hard, and it is not only hard for the wealthy. We can hold tightly to comfort, to being right, to old hurts, or to a dream of how life should have turned out. Jesus looks at each of us with the same love and says, "There is more life for you than this."

Now, I want to be gentle here. Many of us are already letting go of things we never chose to lose. A home. Our health. The car keys. A husband, a wife, a dear friend. That is not the same as the rich man's choice, and no one should feel blamed for their grief. When loss is forced on us, God does not scold us. God comes close with comfort. The letting go Jesus invites us to is different. It is setting down what weighs us down, like bitterness, worry, or the need to control, so that our hands are free to receive.

Jesus then turns to his disciples and says, "How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" He even says it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter God's kingdom. A camel was the biggest animal they knew, and a needle's eye the smallest opening. Jesus is painting a picture of something impossible. The disciples were

astounded, and they asked the question that is probably on our minds too: “Then who can be saved?” If everything depends on us letting go perfectly, who could ever do it?

Mark says that Jesus looked at them. Once again, it is a look of love. And he said, “For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible.”

There is the good news. We do not let go by gritting our teeth. We let go because God is holding us. The same Jesus who loves us enough to tell us the truth also gives us the strength to follow him. Letting go is not something we achieve on our own. It is something God helps us do. And that is where thanksgiving comes in. Gratitude is what grows in us when we realize we are held. A thankful heart does not need to grab.

God made us not for emptiness, but for fullness. But the fullness God gives is not simply a full bank account or a full table. God wants to fill us with love: love given and love received, love that forgives, love that rebuilds trust, love that makes room for others. Remember the leaky jars? God does not scold us for leaking. God keeps pouring, and then teaches us to pour out for others, so that love keeps flowing instead of sitting still.

So what might this look like this week? I invite you to do two small things. First, name one thing you are holding too tightly. It might be a worry, a grudge, or the need to have your own way. Quietly ask God to help you loosen your grip. Second, give something to one person. It might be your time, a phone call, a visit, or a gift to the food bank. That is how we become the heart, hands, and feet of Jesus, learning his way of life, grounded in compassionate love. Open hands are how love travels.

So, this Thanksgiving, let us give thanks not only for what we have, but for the God who holds us when we feel empty. Let us give thanks for the people who love us, challenge us, and help us grow. And when we feel like leaky jars, may we remember that we are in the hands of a generous God who never stops pouring. May our thanksgiving become more than words. May it become a freer life, a more generous life, a life filled not only with things, but with love. Amen.

Hymn 802

For the fruits of all creation

Invitation to the Offering

Doxology

Prayer of Dedication

Generous God,

you have given us more than we often notice. Receive these gifts, and help us loosen our grip on what weighs us down. Fill our hearts with gratitude, open our hands in generosity, and use what we offer to share your love and fullness with others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and for the People

For the harvest, for food on our tables, and for this Thanksgiving Sunday, we thank you, O God. For the ability to breathe, to eat and drink, to see, hear, and smell, we thank you, O God.

For new life among us, for new babies, new friendships, and fresh appreciation for one another, we thank you, O God. For beautiful memories of loved ones gone, yet always held in our hearts, we thank you, O God. For the peace of letting go, and the grace, with your help, to accept what is, we thank you, O God. For the love that fills us, for those who love us, and for all that reminds us what truly matters, we thank you, O God.

Now we pray for our world. For the people of Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan, Haiti, and all places wounded by war, violence, hunger, and displacement, we pray. For those facing hurricanes, floods, fires, and frightening storms, and for communities in Canada still recovering from wildfire and loss, we pray. For the grieving, the homeless, the frightened, and all who feel forgotten, hold them in your mercy. Give wisdom to leaders, courage to helpers, and comfort to families.

Now we pray for particular people in our church family. On this Thanksgiving Sunday, we remember those who are grieving: Janice, Jessica, and Joel as they remember Jim; Susan, Sarah, and Will as they remember Bill; Diane and Jill as they remember Roy; Tim and Pat, Beverley and Carrie as they remember Timothy; and Arden and her family as they remember Doreen. Hold them close in your tender love, and let their memories become gifts of comfort and thanksgiving.

We pray for those recovering from surgery, illness, and weakness: Don Hallett, Doug Hallett, Robert Lampman, Liz and Guy Cook, and all who carry quiet burdens known to you. Give healing to the sick, strength to the weary, and peace to the anxious.

Hear us now, O God, in a moment of silence, as we name those we are carrying especially deeply in our hearts. *(silence)*

Generous God, where we feel empty, fill us again with your love. Where we hold on too tightly, open our hands. Make us the heart, hands, and feet of Jesus, so that your love may flow through us to others.

We pray for healing, for peace, for resilience, and for a path to fullness. We do not ask this because we are strong. We ask because for you, O God, all things are possible. We pray all of this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Hymn 324 **Great is thy faithfulness**

BENEDICTION

May God fill your emptiness with love. May Christ open your hands in grace. May the Holy Spirit lead you to live lightly, generously, and fully. 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, October 18, at 10:00 am at North Pelham**

***Thanksgiving Food Donations:**

Thank you for your generous food donations today and last Sunday. Your gifts of non-perishable food, fresh produce, and monetary support will be delivered to help care for neighbours in need. Your kindness reflects God's love and provision. Thank you for sharing the joy of Thanksgiving. Happy Thanksgiving!

***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.

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

Join us next Sunday, October 18, as we happily celebrate North Pelham's 198th anniversary with guest speaker Dr. Michelle Vosburgh! As we thank God, we are undertaking a special mission project to support the Brock Chaplaincy. Donations collected during the service will help students in need, and contributions made through the church are eligible for a charitable tax deduction. Let's come tighter in prayer and gratitude, spreading love and support as we celebrate this special milestone. We look forward to celebrating with you!

***Tai Chi Thanksgiving Break:**

Please note that there will be no Tai Chi classes this Monday because of the Thanksgiving holiday. Classes will resume the following Monday, **October 19**, at the regular times: **1:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.** Thank you, and Happy Thanksgiving!

***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.