Rockway and First (North Pelham) Pastoral Charge
Reign of Christ Sunday
November 22, 2026
Worship at Home

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Come, let us worship Christ, the King who reigns in love and truth.
P: We gather to honour the One whose kingdom has no end.
L: Christ is our Shepherd, our Judge, and our Peace.
P: We follow the One who serves, saves, and restores.
L: Let every heart and every voice give praise to God.
All: To Jesus Christ be glory and honour, now and forever.

Hymn 267 **Rejoice, the Lord is King**

Prayers of Approach and Confession

Gracious and loving God,
we praise you for Jesus Christ, our Lord and King.
His kingdom is marked by love, justice, mercy, and peace.
When the world feels uncertain, you remain faithful.
When we lose our way, Christ calls us back to the path of life.
With gratitude and wonder, we worship you.

Yet we confess that we do not always live as people of your kingdom.
We place our own priorities ahead of your will.
We overlook neighbours in need, resist your call to justice, and fail to trust your love.
Forgive us, O God, and renew us by your Spirit.

In a moment of silence, we offer our personal prayers of confession. Silent Prayer

Merciful God, hear our prayers.
By your grace, forgive what we have been,
renew who we are,
and lead us into the life you desire for us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord and King, who taught us to pray together, saying:

"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.

Sharing the Peace of Christ

L: May the Peace of Christ be with you all.

P: And also with you. *(congregational response)*

As people who are loved by God, let us share that peace with one another.

Hymn 410 **Joyful, joyful we adore you**

Children of God Moment – The Mitten Tree – A Sign of Christ's Kingdom

I want you to think for a moment about our mitten tree.

Every year, we invite people to donate mittens, hats, scarves, and other warm winter items. They are placed on our tree, and eventually those donations make their way to Community Care of West Niagara, where they can be distributed to people and families in our community who need a little extra help.

Now, we might look at a pair of mittens and think they are a pretty ordinary thing.

We buy them, we wear them, we lose them, and sometimes we find ourselves buying another pair because we can't remember where we put the first ones!

But I want us to think about those mittens from a different perspective.

Imagine someone in our community who is struggling financially. Perhaps they are trying to make ends meet, putting food on the table, paying the rent, keeping the heat on, and making sure their children have what they need.

Winter arrives, and there are expenses that simply cannot be avoided.

A new pair of mittens might not seem like a very big thing to most of us. But for someone who is struggling, it may be one less expense to worry about.

Today we are reminded that every person matters.

And when we contribute to our mitten tree, we are doing something that reflects that kingdom.

We may never meet the person who receives the mittens. We may never know their name or understand what they are going through but these mittens become more than wool and fabric.

They become an expression of compassion.

They become a reminder that people care. And they remind us what the Reign of Christ is really about.

Prayer of Understanding

Loving God, as we turn to your Word, quiet the noise within us and around us.

Open our minds to understand, our hearts to receive, and our lives to respond to what you would say to us today. Amen

Scripture Passages **Responsive Psalm 100; Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24**

Sermon **The King Who Lifts Us Up**

There is something interesting about the way we celebrate Reign of Christ Sunday.
We talk about Christ as King. We sing about his glory and majesty. We speak of his kingdom and his power. And yet, when we turn to our Scripture readings this morning, we discover something rather unexpected. Instead of a picture of a king sitting on a magnificent throne, surrounded by servants and soldiers, we find a picture of a shepherd.
A shepherd who searches for lost sheep.
A shepherd who gathers those who have wandered away.
A shepherd who cares for the injured.
A shepherd who strengthens the weak.
A shepherd who makes sure that no one is forgotten.
That is the kind of King we celebrate today.
And perhaps that is exactly the kind of King our world needs.
Our reading from Ezekiel takes us back to a difficult time in the history of God's people. The nation had been through tremendous hardship. Jerusalem had fallen. Many people had been taken into exile. Their lives had been turned upside down.
And the people were asking some very difficult questions.
Where was God?
Had God forgotten them?
Was there still hope for the future?
Through the prophet Ezekiel, God speaks about shepherds who had failed their sheep.
These shepherds were supposed to care for the people, but instead they had cared only for themselves. They had neglected the weak, ignored the sick, failed to search for the lost, and allowed the flock to become scattered.
God was not pleased.
And then comes this beautiful promise.
God says:
"I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out."
Notice those words.
God doesn't say, "I will send someone else."
God doesn't say, "I hope someone looks after them."
God says, "I myself will search."
God promises to gather the scattered, bring back those who have wandered, bind up the injured, and strengthen the weak.
What a wonderful picture of God's love.
And it tells us something important about the nature of God's kingdom.
God's kingdom is not about who has the most power, who has the most influence, or who sits in the highest position.
God's kingdom is about making sure that the lost are found, the hurting are cared for, and the forgotten are remembered.
And that brings us to Reign of Christ Sunday.
Because when we call Jesus Christ our King, we are not talking about a king who sits far away from the people, unaware of their struggles.
We are talking about a King who comes close.

A King who knows his sheep.
A King who knows when one is missing.
A King who notices when one is hurting.
A King who cares enough to go looking.
And that is a very different picture of leadership than the one we often see in our world.
We live in a world that often celebrates strength, success, independence, and achievement.
We are told to be strong.
To pull ourselves up by our bootstraps.
To keep going.
To figure things out.
And certainly not to let anyone see us struggle.
But the truth is, life doesn't always work that way.
Sometimes we get tired.
Sometimes we become discouraged.
Sometimes we lose our direction.
Sometimes we find ourselves facing challenges that are simply too big to manage on our own.
And sometimes, whether we admit it or not, we need someone to help lift us up.
There is a song by Josh Groban called *You Raise Me Up*.
It is a beautiful song, and I think it speaks to something that most of us understand.
It speaks about those moments when life feels overwhelming, when our strength seems to disappear, and when we need something or someone to help us rise above the difficulties we are facing.
There is something deeply moving about that message.
Because if we are honest, every one of us has had moments when we needed to be lifted up.
Perhaps it was during the loss of someone we loved.
Perhaps it was during an illness or a difficult diagnosis.
Perhaps it was a time of loneliness, disappointment, or uncertainty.
Perhaps it was simply one of those seasons when everything seemed to be going wrong.
And then, somehow, someone came alongside us.
A family member.
A friend.
A neighbour.
Someone from the church.
Someone who listened, offered a prayer, brought a meal, made a phone call, or simply sat with us when we didn't know what to say.
Sometimes the greatest gift we can give another person is simply to help them stand again.
And I believe that is one of the ways Christ works in our lives.
Christ raises us up.
Not necessarily by taking away every difficulty.
Not by promising that life will always be easy.
Not by making sure that we never experience sadness or disappointment.
But by reminding us that we are never alone.
When we are weak, Christ strengthens us.
When we are lost, Christ seeks us.

When we are hurting, Christ binds up our wounds.
When we are discouraged, Christ gives us hope.
And sometimes Christ raises us up through the hands and hearts of the people sitting right here in this congregation.
Think about that for a moment.
We sometimes think that making a difference in someone's life requires doing something extraordinary. We imagine that we need to do something big, something impressive, something that will change the world.
But very often, it is the simple acts of kindness that make the greatest difference.
Just look at some of the things happening right here in our own church family.
Think about our mitten tree. Every pair of mittens, every hat, every scarf that someone donates represents someone who will be a little warmer this winter. It might seem like a small thing to us, but to the person receiving those mittens, it could mean a great deal.
Think about our Tree of Lights. Each donation is a way of remembering someone we love, honouring their memory, or celebrating someone special in our lives. It is also an opportunity to turn that love and remembrance into something that reaches beyond ourselves and helps others.
And think about the people who sponsor turkey dinners for families in need. For some families, that gift means being able to sit down together and enjoy a special meal that might otherwise be difficult to provide. It means someone cares. It means someone has thought about them.
These may seem like ordinary things, but they are anything but ordinary to the people whose lives are touched by them.
And isn't that what the Shepherd in Ezekiel is asking of us?
To notice those who need help.
To care for those who are struggling.
To remember those who might otherwise be forgotten.
We may not be able to change the whole world, but we can make a difference in someone's world.
And every time we offer a little kindness, share what we have, or reach out to someone in need, we become part of Christ's shepherding work.
We become the hands and hearts through which others experience God's love.
Sometimes the greatest gift we can give another person is simply to help them stand again.

These things may seem small, but they are not small to the person who needs them.
They are signs of the Shepherd at work.
And that is where Psalm 100 fits so beautifully with our reading from Ezekiel.
Psalm 100 begins with an invitation:
"Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth."
It calls us to worship God with gladness, to come into God's presence with singing, and to give thanks.
And then it gives us the reason:
"Know that the Lord is God. It is he that made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture."
There it is again.
We are the sheep of God's pasture.
We belong to God.

What a comforting thought.
We belong to God when life is going well.
We belong to God when life is difficult.
We belong to God when we are strong.
We belong to God when we are weak.
We belong to God when we know exactly where we are going, and we belong to God when we have lost our way.
And perhaps that is why Psalm 100 is such an appropriate reading for Reign of Christ Sunday.
Because the reign of Christ is not something we celebrate only when everything is going well.
We celebrate it because, regardless of what is happening in our lives or in our world, Christ remains our Shepherd and our King.
There is another important part of the Ezekiel passage that we should not overlook.
God doesn't simply promise to gather the sheep. God also promises to care for them fairly.
Ezekiel speaks about the sheep that have become strong and have pushed aside the weaker ones.
God promises to judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep.
In other words, God's kingdom is not a place where the strongest get everything and the weakest are left behind.
It is a kingdom where justice matters.
It is a kingdom where the vulnerable matter.
It is a kingdom where everyone has value.
And that is an important reminder for the church.
If Christ is our King, then we are called to reflect the values of his kingdom.
We cannot simply celebrate Christ as our Shepherd and then ignore those who are struggling.
We cannot sing about God's love and then turn away from people who need our compassion.
We cannot talk about being God's people while forgetting those who feel lost, lonely, excluded, or forgotten.
The church is called to be a place where people are lifted up.
Not judged by how successful they are.
Not measured by how much they can contribute.
Not valued only when they are able to do something for us.
But welcomed, loved, and cared for because they are God's children.
And this is not just the responsibility of the minister or the elders.
It belongs to all of us.
Every one of us has an opportunity to be part of Christ's shepherding work.
Sometimes that means reaching out to someone who has not been to church for a while.
Sometimes it means making room for someone who feels they don't belong.
Sometimes it means listening rather than offering advice.
Sometimes it means recognizing that the person sitting beside us may be carrying a burden we know nothing about.
And sometimes it means simply being present.
We may never know how much difference one small act of kindness can make.
But God knows.
And that brings us back to the song, *You Raise Me Up*.
I think one of the reasons that song touches so many people is that it reminds us of something we sometimes forget.

We were never meant to face every challenge alone.
We need one another.
We need community.
We need encouragement.
And most importantly, we need God.
The beautiful promise of Ezekiel is that God does not abandon the flock.
God goes looking.
God gathers.
God heals.
God strengthens.
God leads.
And in Jesus Christ, we see that promise come alive.
Jesus is the shepherd who welcomes the outsider, reaches out to the hurting, eats with those others reject, and searches for those who have wandered away.
He is also the King who shows us that true greatness is not found in being served, but in serving others.
That is the King we celebrate today.
Not a king who demands that we prove our worth before he welcomes us.
Not a king who abandons us when we stumble.
But a King who loves us, seeks us, forgives us, and raises us up.
So, as we celebrate Reign of Christ Sunday, perhaps we should ask ourselves two questions.
First, where in our own lives do we need Christ to raise us up?
Where are we tired?
Where are we discouraged?
Where do we need healing, encouragement, or a fresh sense of hope?
And second, who around us might need us to help lift them up?
Who needs a kind word?
Who needs a listening ear?
Who needs to know that they haven't been forgotten?
Because when we reach out to another person, when we offer compassion, when we stand beside someone who is struggling, we are living out the very kingdom that Christ came to establish.
And so, today, let us give thanks.
Let us give thanks that we belong to God.
Let us give thanks that we are never beyond the reach of God's love.
Let us give thanks for a Shepherd who searches for us when we are lost and carries us when we are weak.
And let us remember the words of Psalm 100:
"We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture."
May we go from this place with grateful hearts, trusting in our Shepherd and King.
And may we, in turn, become the hands and hearts through which others discover that they are loved, that they are not alone, and that there is always hope.
For that is the reign of Christ.
A King who seeks us. A Shepherd who cares for us. And a Saviour who raises us up.
Amen.

Hymn 635 **Brother, sister let me serve you**

Invitation to the Offering
Doxology
Prayer of Dedication
Loving God, with grateful hearts we bring these gifts to you.
Take what we offer and use it to make a difference in our community and in your world.
Use our resources, our abilities, and our lives to share the love of Christ.
In his name we pray. Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession
Gracious God,
On this Reign of Christ Sunday, we come before you with thankful hearts. We praise you for your steadfast love, for the gift of Jesus Christ, and for the hope we find in his reign of justice, mercy, and peace. We thank you for your faithfulness through every season of our lives and for the blessing of belonging to your family.
Loving God, we pray for those who are grieving. Draw near to all who mourn the loss of loved ones and comfort them with your presence. We pray especially for Rev. Jacob as he grieves the death of his mother. Surround him and his family with your peace, your strength, and the assurance of your abiding love.
We pray for those who are unwell in body, mind, or spirit. Be with those in hospital, those awaiting treatment, those living with chronic illness, and those who care for them. Bring healing where there may be healing, courage where there is fear, and comfort where there is pain.
We pray for those who are lonely, discouraged, burdened by anxiety, or facing uncertain days. Remind them that they are never beyond your care and that your love holds them fast.
God of compassion, we lift before you our troubled world. We pray for all who live amid war, violence, and conflict. We remember those who have been displaced from their homes, those who live in fear, and those who mourn the loss of loved ones. Bring wisdom to leaders, protection to the vulnerable, and courage to those who work for peace. May your kingdom of justice and reconciliation be known wherever there is division and suffering.
We pray for the people of Rockway and North Pelham. Bless our neighbours, families, schools, businesses, and community organizations. Strengthen those who serve others, encourage those who are struggling, and deepen the bonds of care and friendship among us. Help us, as your church, to be a faithful witness to Christ's love and a source of hope in our communities.
As followers of Christ our King, teach us to be people of compassion and justice. Help us to share your love, seek peace, and serve our neighbours both near and far.
We offer these prayers and the silent concerns of our hearts in the name of Jesus Christ, who reigns in love and whose kingdom shall have no end.
And now, in a moment of silence, we bring before you the people and situations that weigh upon our hearts. *Silent Prayer*
Through Jesus Christ our Lord and King, we pray.
Amen.

Hymn 634 **Will You Come and Follow Me**

BENEDICTION

Go now in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. May Christ the King guide your path, fill your hearts with peace, and send you out to love and serve the world. 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 29, 10:00 am at North Pelham – 1st Sunday of Advent**

***Christmas Benefit Concert – Pop-Up Choir Is Back!**
Come and share the joy of Christmas through music! Our Pop-Up Choir is looking for singers to join the Christmas Benefit Concert at North Pelham on Saturday, December 12, at 2:00 p.m. Rehearsals will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Thursdays, November 26, and December 3 and 10. Everyone is welcome! To join, please contact Jessica at 905-641-5377 or Jessica.stwrt@gmail.com. A freewill offering will be received to support people in need. Let's share the joy, hope, and love of Christmas together!

***Open Arms Mission Turkey Dinner Appeal**
Starting today, until December 6th, please consider a donation to sponsor a turkey dinner for a family in need - $45.00 purchases a holiday meal, but any donation is appreciated. Donations can be made by placing it on the offering plate marked OAM (tax receipt) or loose offering in the jar at each church (no receipt). We will total all donations and send them to Open Arms to buy as many holiday meals as we can. Thank you for helping share the joy, hope, and generosity of Christmas with those who need it most.

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

***Tree of Lights – A** cherished tradition at North Pelham, the **Tree of Lights** offers an opportunity to remember, and honour loved ones during the Christmas season.
If you would like to participate, please place a list of names to be remembered in an envelope along with a donation of any amount and place it on the offering plate. All proceeds will support **Pelham Care**. Donations are eligible for a tax receipt. Names and donations will be accepted

until **December 20**. May this tree be a beautiful reminder of the love, memories, and relationships that continue to light our lives.

***Tai Chi – Every Monday:** Tai Chi classes are 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.

***Annual Advent Tea, November 28 – Kirk on the Hill**
Everyone is warmly invited to the **Annual Advent Tea** at Kirk on the Hill Presbyterian Church (1344 Haist Street, Fonthill) on **Saturday, November 28, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.** Enjoy a joyful afternoon of Christmas carols, Scripture readings, and warm fellowship over tea. Come and share the hope and joy of the Advent season with our neighbouring church families!

***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.