**Contemplation and Conversation: 10th Sunday after Pentecost, August 9, 2020**

**Scripture:** Matthew 14:22-33 NRSV <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2014:22-33&version=NRSV>

**Contemplation and Conversation*:*** *Where in your life do you long for Jesus’ saving power?*

**From Rev. Heather Leffler:**

Peter, Andrew, James and John had spent their lives fishing on this sea. Even if the other disciples were frightened, they knew what to do when the winds blew up and the waves rose. What they couldn’t fathom was how to respond to the unknown – the specter walking across the water to them. When Peter took the risk to step out of the boat, he focused on Jesus and everything was fine. When he let his glance turn back to the winds and waves, he was filled with terror and began to sink. Like the disciples, we live in the same world, we lived in back in March. Yet everything is different and disorienting. We see the people who mean so much to us on screens or at a distance. Often it is hard to recognize people we have known for years behind our masks. While we have food and shelter, many people continue to receive financial support and we are able to gather for worship and other activities on Zoom; we face many unknowns. Individuals and businesses are struggling to make ends meet. Parents, students and teachers are anxious about the coming school year. Many people are wrestling with mental illness. All of us are wondering how long it will be before there is a vaccine. Just as Jesus invited the disciples to trust in him, he invites us to carry our struggles and concerns to God in prayer trusting we will receive healing and hope.

*Whether you are at home trying to help slow the spread of the virus,
working to help care for those who are impacted most by COVID-19
or working to keep some normalcy in this time,
may you know God’s deep and abiding love in your life.
Know you are a valued part of our Rockwood and Stone United Church families.*

***Canadian Foodgrains Bank***

*Last week, a horrendous explosion devastated Beirut, the capital city of Lebanon. Over 150 people died and more than 5,000 wounded. Much of the city’s infrastructure was destroyed and over 3,000 families had their homes damaged. The heavily damaged grain silos contained 85% of the countries grain supply. The food crisis is unprecedented. The Canadian Foodgrains Bank is coordinating an appeal with its partners, including the United Church of Canada. They will be working with their humanitarian partners on the ground in Lebanon to ensure donations reach those in need. Bill Allen will be coordinating donations for the* ***Lebanon Relief Fund****. All donations received before August 24th will be matched by the Canadian government. Please either send your donations by e-transfer to* *stoneuc.treasurer@gmail.com* *or mail to Bill Allen 4949 Wellington Rd. #29, Guelph, ON N1H 6H8. Thank you!*

***August 23rd will be Foodgrains Sunday*** *when we will share information on our project and the impact the Canadian Foodgrains efforts have in combatting global hunger.*

*On a related note:* ***The Great Pumpkin was recently seen on the 4th Line. Someone let Linus know!***

***If you have pictures of your pumpkins, please send them to*** ***hleffler@rogers.com*** ***this week.***

*A gift of belonging to a church is that the practice of gathering together for worship … to pray, sing, listen to scripture and share how God touches our lives – helps us grow in deeper relationship to God and each other. With COVID-19 keeping us at home and physically distant from our Stone or Rockwood families, we are missing each other. We are offering this practice of sharing beyond Sunday morning to deepen our connection. Each week you will be offered a picture, a scripture and a question for contemplation, as well as a short reflection for you to contemplate, have conversation with people in your life and/or join an online conversation on our Rockwood Stone Facebook page.*