**Contemplation and Conversation: April 19, 2020**

**Scripture:** John 20:19-31 NRSV <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=john+20%3A19-31&version=NRSV>

**Contemplation and Conversation*:*** *Where do you need Jesus’ gift of peace in your life?*

**From Rev. Heather Leffler:**

There is much to be fearful and uncertain about in the world at any time. At this time separated from each other and with so many unknowns, we are invited to be gracious with each other when we are afraid or anxious. I invite you to pause and place yourself in the upper room with the disciples to know Jesus’ compassion and peace. Feel the disciples’ very real fear of being arrested and their confusion. They had seen Jesus crucified and his lifeless body placed in the tomb. Now the tomb is empty, and Mary Magdalene assures them that she has seen the Lord. How can it be true? Yet Mary’s horrible grief has turned into great joy? As belief begins to dawn, Jesus is with us, saying, “Peace be with you.” Not just once but again the next week, so Thomas too can feel the gift of his presence. We experience his presence when we are gentle and gracious with ourselves and those who live with us, when we reach out to others in love and prayer. May we trust that just as Jesus offered peace to the disciples, he offers us the assurance that he is with us in the midst of this strange time we find ourselves, in life, in death and in life beyond death.

Photo by M. Running

*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  
and the peace of Christ in your life.  
Know you are a valued part of our Rockwood and Stone United Church families.*

***Operation Haircut:*** *Check out the video introducing this fun fundraiser at* [***https://www.rockwoodstoneunitedchurches.com/life-in-our-churches---announcements.html***](https://www.rockwoodstoneunitedchurches.com/life-in-our-churches---announcements.html)

*Our Minister Heather Leffler has graciously volunteered to be the subject of a fundraising initiative for the Rockwood and Stone United Churches. She is willing to have her hair cut - not just a trim but all off! Whether she goes through with this challenge is up to you. If you want her to cut it off, vote yes! If you don't want to see her with a "buzz" cut, vote no! Every $10 you donate will count as one vote. The more money donated the more votes. Go to* [*https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/t/48493*](https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/t/48493) *to make a donation and register your vote or send an e-transfer to our treasurers at* [*stoneuc.treasurer@gmail.com*](mailto:stoneuc.treasurer@gmail.com) *or* [*rockwooduc.treasurer@gmail.com*](mailto:rockwooduc.treasurer@gmail.com) *or for cash or cheque donations, contact Sherol at* [*sherol.steins@gmail.com*](mailto:sherol.steins@gmail.com) *or call 519-856-9298. Remember to enter your vote at the bottom of the form in Canada Helps, in your email message or with Sherol. 80% of your donation will support our churches, 10% will support outreach and 10% will go to Mission and Service.*

***From Zoom Worship***

*Go to* <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1gWN3TGohsQyIeq4VqkUilAgF5C8dCvrp> *for Christine Wenger’s beautiful singing of “Whispering Hope”.*

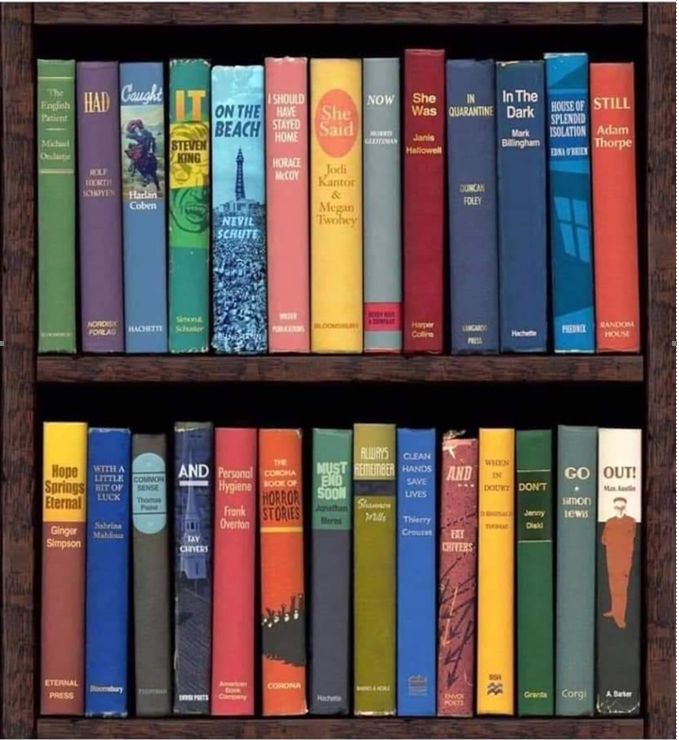
*Go to* [*https://www.dropbox.com/home/Rockwood%20and%20Stone*](https://www.dropbox.com/home/Rockwood%20and%20Stone) *to see the slides from worship for the prayers and hymns we shared.*

***Moderator's Online Worship – April 19, 2020***

*During the COVID-19 pandemic, Moderator Richard Bott offers an online service as a support to communities of faith. https://www.united-church.ca/blogs/round-table/moderators-online-worship-sunday-april-19-2020.*

*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.*

*From John Leffler: Read the book titles in order.*

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