



Rockwood Stone News

Rockwood-Stone Pastoral Charge

The United Church of Canada

Visit our website at www.rockwoodstoneunitedchurches.com



*"The little church with
a big heart"*

Stone United Church

5370 Fourth Line

Rockwood, ON NOB 2K0



Find us on Facebook. **Friend**
"Rockwood Stone" and like our page
"Rockwood-Stone United Churches"
for updates and reminders about upcoming

May 2021

Minister: Rev. Heather Leffler

hleffler@rogers.com

519-265-7385 or text 519-573-9642

Secretary: Sharyn Southworth

rockwoodstoneuc@gmail.com

519-856-4160



"Live, Love, Laugh"

Rockwood United Church

119 Harris St.

Rockwood, ON NOB 2K0

Join us for...

Worship with us on **Sundays** on **Zoom**.

At **9:30 am** there will be time to gather.

At **10 am**, join Heather for our **Sunday Worship**. Following worship stay and visit.

Contact Heather Leffler or check your announcements for the Zoom link.

If you are having trouble connecting to Zoom or would like help trying it for the first time, contact Heather Leffler at 519-265-7385, hleffler@rogers.com or text 519-573-9642.

Sunday, June 13 join us to celebrate

Rockwood's 154th Anniversary

at **10 am**, on **Zoom**.

Our guest **Rev. Tim Reaburn** will speak about becoming Affirming Churches.

Tim has lived and worked in rural Ontario for most of his life. He currently resides in Sauble Beach on the shores of Lake Huron and serves Hepworth Sauble Beach Pastoral Charge. Ordained by the United Church of Canada in 2001, he currently sits on the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council and General Council Executives and the Board of Directors for the United Church of Canada Foundation.

Sharyn Southworth, our secretary works from home and monitors messages virtually.

Email the church office at

rockwoodstoneuc@gmail.com

or leave a message at 519-856-4160.

Announcements are emailed on Thursday each week.

Contemplation and Conversation is emailed on Sunday.

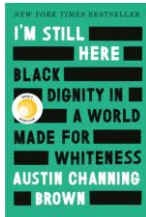
For **pastoral concerns**, to share ideas about how we can connect when we are apart, or just to talk, contact Rev. Heather Leffler at 519-265-7385, text 519-573-9642 or hleffler@rogers.com.

Tuesday, May 18 join us for

Bible Study

at 7:30 pm on Zoom.

Ask questions, share ideas and make connections between the Word of God and our lives, as we begin our study of Romans.



Wednesday, May 19,
Genesis Book Club
at 7:30 pm, on Zoom

Engage in a thought provoking conversation about Austin Channing Brown's *I'm Still Here*.

May 20 and every other Thursday
For Women: come to **Tea and Talk**
from 10 am to 12 noon, on Zoom.

Bring your tea (or coffee) and goodies and enjoy this time together.



Sunday, May 23

is our **Worship and Picnic**

Join us for **Communion** at 10am
and stay for fun and fellowship after worship.

May 27 and every other Thursday
For Men: you are invited to
Coffee Connections
from 10 am to 12 noon, on Zoom.



Bring your coffee (or tea) and snacks and join in the conversation and fellowship!

May 29 join us for
Spiritual Saturdays
on Zoom from 1 to 3:30 pm.

We will learn to pray scripture together, take some time away from the computer to pray the scripture and then come together again to companion each other. Everyone is welcome. Please contact Lisa Leffler lleffler@live.ca by May 26 to receive the materials.

Friday, June 4

Faith, Food, Friendship and Fun

beginning at 6 pm, on Zoom.

Join us for activities, conversation, a craft, and casual time of worship. During COVID-19 we invite you to prepare your own supper and eat with us.

Contact Heather at hleffler@rogers.com or 519-265-7385 by Wednesday, June 2, so we can drop off your craft supplies.

Stone Takeout Dinners

Since the May 20 COVID lock down date is fast approaching and we are not sure if it will be extended, we have decided to proceed with our Ham Takeout Dinner a little differently. To meet with COVID regulations we will be offering takeout on four different dates so food can be prepared and packaged by two people from the same family at Stone Church.

The cost for the dinners remains the same **\$15.00** for **roast ham, scalloped potatoes, bean salad and roll, and a brownie** for dessert. 20 meals will be served on each of these four dates.

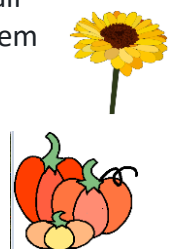
The dates will be **May 27 & 28** and **June 2 & 3**.

Watch the bulletin for more details.

Foodgrains Growing Project

The growing season will soon be upon us and with it, the opportunity to show off your green thumb. If you haven't done so already, consider joining our growing project in support of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

This year, you can choose to **grow pumpkins or sunflowers or both**. We supply the seeds all you have to do is plant them and watch them grow! Please let us know if you are in and which seeds you would like. Either email stoneuc.treasurer@gmail.com or mail Stone UC, P.O. Box 57, Rockwood, NOB 2K0.



Letters, Notes and Emails ...

Dear friends,

Colossians 3:12-14 invites us as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven us, so we also must forgive. Above all, Paul asks us to clothe ourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

As I reflect on the past year, I give thanks to God for each one of you. In a time when the world seems chaotic and confusing, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and your love and faithfulness, we have tasted the perfect harmony that Paul promises.

Your humility and patience as you learned new technology helped us connect online. Your care, compassion and coaching allowed others to risk joining us. Your patience has enabled me to continue to learn how to connect us better. You persevered when connections were unstable and Zoom seemed overwhelming and our missteps have led to rich worship and opportunities for faith formation. People have shared hidden talents. The online community we have created is warm and caring and has drawn our congregations closer together.

I am grateful for your creativity in finding ways to continue caring for one another and reaching out to people in need in our churches, community and world, during this time. Thank you especially for reaching out to members of our church family who are not able to join us on Zoom.

I give thanks to God for healing for those who have had COVID-19. I am deeply grateful for everyone who has been vaccinated, registered for the vaccine, followed the protocols Public Health has given us to care for others.

May we continue feel God's presence with us.

With Thanks and Blessings,



Dear friends.

Thank you for the opportunity you have given me to support our churches as Chair of the Pastoral Charge Board. I often think back to when we first moved to the area, thirty-eight years ago. Cate was working at a vet clinic in Oshawa, and I was being transferred to Georgetown. We had both graduated from University of Guelph and knew that we loved this area. Our vet friends, Drs. Barb and Ken Leslie, introduced us to Stone Church and, as the saying goes: "the rest is history". We have enjoyed the support and love from our Stone Church family as our own family grew to include our three sons, John, Christopher, and Peter and our Belarus 'son', Anton, who stayed with us for several summers starting in the nineties.

I retired last June from being a Principal with the Upper Grand District School Board. Cate continues to work at the University. We have enjoyed meeting many more members of Rockwood United since our Zoom services started. That has certainly been a positive outcome of COVID. It has also been very uplifting to see how cheery and optimistic people are at the Zoom services. I think it will set us up well for when we return to face-to-face services again. I know that we are all looking forward to that. There are a few who have not been able to join the on-line services and it will be great to see them again when we go back to meeting in person.

It is an exciting time in our churches as we go through the challenges of the pandemic and grow in our faith. I look forward to contributing to our journey as we learn to have a better understanding of what our new norm will look like. If you have questions or concerns that you would like to bring to the Board's attention, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Take care,
Randy Dewey

Why I Give

from Brian Mack

At a stewardship workshop last fall attended by Rev. Leffler, Sherol Steinberg, Bill Allen, and myself, we were often given homework. At the end of the first session, we were left to ponder the following question: Why give of our time, talent, and money? In answering that question, I was drawn to the words found in A Song of Faith italicized below.

As a member of Rockwood-Stone Pastoral Charge, I am given opportunities to experience faith formation. I am encouraged to take on leadership roles if I wish. My monetary donations support the purchase of resources, pay for full time clergy, and provide for meeting the day-to-day expenses and upkeep of our buildings in which I worship.

*We offer worship as an outpouring of gratitude and awe
and a practice of opening ourselves
to God's still, small voice of comfort,
to God's rushing whirlwind of challenge.
Through word, music, art, and sacrament,
in community and in solitude,
God changes our lives, our relationships, and our world.*

In our churches, I am given the opportunity to build relationships and my gifts are used to support on-going initiatives related to social justice.

*In and with God, we can direct our lives toward right relationship
with each other and with God.
We can discover our place as one strand in the web of life.
We can grow in wisdom and compassion.
We can recognize all people as kin.*

Through the various outreach initiatives that I can participate in and support financially, I am given the opportunity to fulfil the great commandment "to love one another."

*Loving our neighbors
God transforms,
and calls us to protect the vulnerable,
to pray for deliverance from evil,
to work with God for the healing of the world,
that all might have abundant life.*

As you think about where your time can be best utilized, where your talents can be freely shared, and what financial contributions you can make to Rockwood-Stone, I would encourage you to take a few minutes to read "A Song of Faith" found at <https://united-church.ca/community-faith/welcome-united-church-canada/faith-statements/song-faith-2006> .

Supporting the Mission and Ministry of our Churches

During the pandemic, it has been a challenge to stay engaged with our congregations. However, we have still continued to deliver on our mission supporting our church members through Zoom Sunday Worship, small group gatherings such as Bible Study, Coffee Connections, Tea and Talk, Book Club and Faith, Food Friendship and Fun. Our outreach activities of Mission and Services, Foodgrains Growing Project, Rural Women's Support Program and Anishnabeg Outreach continue to receive strong support from our members. Thank you to all church members for the financial support either through PAR deductions or mailed cheques.

A reminder to **PAR** members, changes to your monthly contributions can be changed by simply emailing your treasurer.

Stone:

stoneuc.treasurer@gmail.com or

Rockwood:

rockwooduc.treasurer@gmail.com .

Cheque donations can be mailed to

Stone UC

P.O. 57, Rockwood, NOB 2K0 or

Rockwood UC

119 Harris St., Rockwood, NOB 2K0

**Thank you for your ongoing support
of Rockwood and Stone
United Churches!**

Committees and Groups ...

Rockwood and Stone Worship and Faith Formation

Submitted by Liz Guthrie and Barbara Eley

Thank you to:

- Scripture readers
- Everyone who provides special music and videos
- Heather for preparing and leading weekly worship and sharing Mission & Service videos
- Everyone who helped make and deliver Advent candle holders
- Lisa for her photos, technical skills and organizing the Magi March
- Lisa and Brian for leading our Celtic Christianity Lenten Study
- Everyone who prepared and delivered 130 Holy Week packages
- The Rockwood Stone and Barrie Hill Speedside scripture readers and musicians who took part in the Good Friday Zoom service
- The Worship and Faith Formation Committee and the Affirming Discernment Circle for leading worship on January 3/21 and January 10/21, respectively

Highlights

November 29/20 – Advent 1, communion celebrated.

December 6/20 – Advent 2, annual carol sing in the evening on Zoom with music provided by Eramosa Ensemble.

December 12/20 – The Magi March was a new and safe way of collecting donations for East Wellington Community Services

December 24/20 – Christmas Eve and Communion service on Zoom. Readings and Reflections service was pre-recorded and is available online. Thanks to Lisa Leffler for her photos and editing, Rev. Leffler for the readings and Barb Eley for the music.

January 3, 2021 – Richard Bott's video message entitled, "Honey from the Rock"

January 10, 2021 – Marion Bascom shared her daughter, Jennifer's story.

February 7, 2021 – Stone's Annual Meeting via Zoom

February 14, 2021 – Rockwood's Annual Meeting via Zoom

February 21, 2021 – Communion at home to mark the season of Lent

March 14, 2021 – Pie (Public, Intentional, Explicit) Day Video with a message from our LGBTQ+ siblings

March 28, 2021 – Palm Sunday Communion. The booklet entitled, "Walking with Jesus through Holy Week" included a daily meditation and picture to colour. Each small bag contained symbols of a nail, corn, a coin, towel, cedar, rock and a perfume shaped cut-out.

April 2, 2021 – Our Good Friday Zoom Service involved many people from Barrie Hill, Speedside, Rockwood and Stone.

April 4, 2021 – Easter service with youth doing a Readers' Theatre version of the Easter story

April 18, 2021 – Celebration of John Arbuckle's 100th birthday after zoom church

Coming Events

May 23, 2021 – Annual Church Picnic via Zoom. Do you have an activity we could share?

June 13, 2021 – Tim Raeburn will be our guest speaker. He will help us understand why it is important to be affirming.

June 27 to September 5, 2021 – Summer services. Lisa Leffler will provide pulpit supply on the Sundays when Heather is on study leave or vacation.

September 12, 2021 – The Season of Creation Time begins. Watch for more at home activities.

*The Spirit challenges us to celebrate the holy
not only in what is familiar,
but also in that which seems foreign.*

From A Song of Faith

Rockwood Pastoral Care and Fellowship

Submitted by Ellen Thomson

Circle of Care/Church Roll: Since the new year we have learned that our members are doing a good job of reaching out to one another through telephone calls and email conversations. We ask that you send your new contact information to the church office, if you change your email or telephone number.

The following connections continue: Kids' Time on Zoom, along with sending out of children's activities on Sunday mornings has helped to connect younger families. For Lent, a booklet of readings with reflections and symbols were delivered by the members of the committee and Brent Stiles.

Ian has asked that people let him know if someone should receive a card. Thank-you, Ian, for the cards you have sent. Recently special birthdays were recognized for Lou Darcie (89) and Elsa Hore (90) on April 14, John Arbuckle (100) on April 23 and Harry Doyle (85) on May 9.

Baptism: We have received a request for a baptism. Heather has let the family know that we will need to wait until we are worshipping in person or until we can worship outdoors.

'Tea and Talk', 'Coffee and Conversation' and 'Faith, Food, Friendship and Fun' continue on Zoom. Thank you to Heather and Lisa Leffler for assisting with the technology! These activities help build community and relationships.

Workshops: We are gathering questions to help plan another series of workshops, later in 2021, about end of life, living wills, funeral planning, etc. as we did in 2013. If you have a question or concern, please forward your idea(s) to anyone on the committee – Lou and Ollie Darcie, Ian Pasmore or Ellen Thomson.

Ellen Thomson attended a "Death Café" webinar on Zoom on March 17 led by Kathy Douglas. This was an interesting evening. The format was conversational – talking about with whom and how we have experienced death; as well as

sharing our emotional reaction(s) to death. We were asked to think about what we want to do before we die. In the breakout group there was a palliative care worker who expressed her love for her work. During COVID-19 she indicated that grieving has been interrupted. She stressed that living a life well is most important. The dash between birth – death, is the story of life. She refers to 'death' as Holy Mystery. During this time there is a great sadness and loneliness because seniors are isolated from family members. More people are asking for medical assisted dying. When COVID ends she feels that there will be a collective need to grieve.

Lou and Ollie Darcie and Heather Leffler also attended a Death Café webinar on March 16.

Stone Pastoral Care and Fellowship

Submitted by John Leffler

Thanks to volunteers and our committee members, we helped deliver the Holy Week packages.

Patty Lancaster continues to send cards for special occasions, bereavement, thank you and illness. Please contact her at 519-822-1621 or patlarlancaster@hotmail.com, if you know of someone who would appreciate a card.

Karen Richardson updated our phone list for Stone United Church and it was sent to the congregation in the new year. If your email, phone number or address change, please let Karen know krichard@uoguelph.ca or 519-856-2089.

Rockwood Stone Finance & Stewardship

Submitted by Heather Leffler

The committee met on April 15, with Rockwood and Stone Trustees and Tomas Rincon of Frontier Capital to better understand Frontier's Canoe Funds that were developed for United Church congregations and members. These funds follow United Church investment guidelines being 97%

compliant with environmental and social investing.

Reports were received from our Treasurers. It was noted that our Secretary Sharyn Southworth is very happy with the new laptop. The software for it was licensed through Tech Soup to Stone. The committee agreed to pay for Heather Leffler's Zoom license for 2021. We will purchase a license for the pastoral charge when we move back to worshipping in our churches but want to keep sign in consistent for the time being.

We continue to seek ways to Inspire, Invite and Thank our congregations for their gifts of time, talent and treasure. Bill Allen and Amanda Hunter-Anthony were thanked for the inspiring letters of thanks, they included with the 2020 income tax receipts.

Bill Allen, Brian Mack, Heather Leffler and Sherol Steinberg took part in a Called to be the Church: The Journey workshop with Dave Jagger. The group's assignment of writing a Case for Support showing what we are doing in our churches became our Christmas flyer. The Stewardship Analysis Report we received was shared with the committee. Dave recommended having a narrative budget to identify how givings are used in relation to areas of ministry such as worship, faith formation, pastoral care etc. Another recommendation is that we develop legacy giving and gift acceptance policies.

Stone Property & Finance

Submitted by Jack Ward

Instead of our Annual Beef Dinner in October Marg Baker, Liz Guthrie, Edie Ward and Barb Parker planned a series of takeout dinners. Dinners planned for April and May 2021 were not held due to restrictions. They are still planning on having them during the late spring and early summer months.

Volunteers painted the panelling in the Jeannie Jackson room after renovations were completed. When the weather gets warmer the items for this room (which are presently being stored in the Sanctuary) will be put back.

Kitchen was inspected by Public Health on December 11, 2020 and passed. We were advised no water samples need to be done until takeout dinners resume. A water sample was taken and passed March 24 prior to our planned April dinner which did not happen due to restrictions.

We are in the process of checking our insurance coverage. The church has been appraised to make sure that our coverage is adequate.

The Maple Syrup fundraiser was another success. 280 gallons of syrup were purchased. Thanks to all who ordered syrup and to those who picked up and delivered it. A total of \$3,586 was raised and will offset the cost of fuel costs for the year.

Thanks to Don Martin and Tom Parker for requesting quotes for insulation and cladding of the back room. HFH was the successful bidder and the work was completed in March.

An insulation grant was applied for through the United Possibilities Fund – formerly Waterloo Presbytery Extension Council. We received \$4,000.00.

Financial Update – Submitted by Bill Allen

With the in-person church services closed down, electricity and heating costs are lower than usual. However, weekly offerings are reduced as well. Also, insurance costs have increased significantly this year. We are currently running an operational deficit of \$4,890. As noted above, maple syrup sales netted \$3,586 which is \$335 more than last year.

On the good news front, we have strong financial reserves with \$60,000 in our current account and a short-term GIC. Thank you to the PAR givers and those mailing in regular monthly cheques. Your support ensures our minister and church members continue to provide local and outreach activities for our community. A reminder that givings cheques can be mailed to **Stone United Church, P.O. Box 57, Rockwood, N0B 2K0** or by e-transfer to stoneuc.treasurer@gmail.com. PAR donors wishing to change their monthly givings please let Bill Allen know at the above address or email.

Rockwood Property & Finance

Submitted by Sherol Steinberg

House of Joy: Work has proceeded on the site plan for the repurposed house property. As with everything in the time of COVID, it has been a challenge to keep timelines moving smoothly. Engineers have completed a site plan that received approval in principle from the Township and MTO at a pre-approval meeting. At that time, the Township also asked that a Landscape Architect Plan be submitted showing what will be done with the remaining green space. If all goes as planned, we should receive permission within four weeks of submission. Thanks to Darryl Nichol for his work moving this forward.

We will be moving the generator and having it installed by Day Hall. The Hall can then be used for emergency shelter in case of power outages. In addition, under consideration: sale and/re purposing of items from the house prior to demolition and working with fire department to allow for the house to be used for training purposes.

Church: The committee has put a hold on most expenditures until the Church has received approvals from the Township for demolition and construction on the house lot.

We will be looking at prioritizing needed renovations vs improvements. We are also looking at having an engineer/architect who is experienced working with historical buildings to do plans/recommendations based on what is needed-including accessibility updates (including but not limited to sound/lights/physical accessibility), so the church can create a staged plan that is practical and keeps the historical flavour of the building while making it more user friendly.

Bullas Glass has been contacted regarding the stained-glass window over the front door which seems to have shifted and will also be requesting they examine other windows for rejuvenation of the frames and plexiglass outer windows.

The fans in the sanctuary will need replacing (not all speeds work currently) but they are functional for now.

Kevin Anthony and Roy Steinberg did the snow clearing throughout the winter, with Darryl Nichol chipping in at the end of the snow season. Much thanks to all!

At Christmas, the Committee with the help of Lou, Ollie, Al Jay, Liam and Cees decorated outside the church. Thank you to Kevin who constructed an amazing creche that will be great to use for many years and thank you to Aaron Best who brought the creche to the church on a flat bed after it became too big to fit on a pickup. Thank you to Christine Wenger who allowed us to chop down a tree and Ray Thomson for providing straw bales. Thank you to Heather for the JOY that made a simple statement that touched many. Thank you to those in the congregation who dropped by and put-up decorations. The birds and squirrels have personally requested more popcorn strings and birch bark feeders for next year! We had positive feedback from church members and the community and left it up through February as a result of that feedback. There were community members who came and sat on the bench daily in the evening to have a peaceful moment.

Church Use: Church rentals and use have been suspended during shutdown. While in red zone, AA was allowed to meet with limited numbers. We have provided them with strict protocols that support the Provincial and Public Health protocols in order to keep everyone safe.

All rentals/users will be considered on a case-to-case basis, but we do not anticipate any further users at this time.

All who enter the church must contact sherol@rockwoodfc.com prior to entering to ensure that traffic in and out of the building is managed safely. All must fill out the contact forms by the door and follow the posted protocols.

Finances: Rockwood United Church is showing a \$4,172.87 operating deficit. There are 23 families enrolled in PAR with monies deposited on the 20th of every month and one weekly e-transfer, the continuing support of the life and work of the church is appreciated. While we are not able to meet in person, we still have bills to pay. The current balance of the General Fund is \$550.

There will be a transfer in from the trustees to cover the site plan expenditures that have already been paid. Donations to the General Fund can be made by PAR or e transfer, contact Amanda Hunter at 519-856-4160 or rockwooduc.treasurer@gmail.com for more information. You can mail post dated cheques to Rockwood United Church, 119 Harris Street, Rockwood ON N0B 2K0.

The Committee has been heading the Breakfast for Dinner fundraiser while we are unable to have the Country Breakfast. Thank you to all who provided food or bid on an offering, with all monies going to the General Fund. We will be doing a fundraiser in June taking orders for home made sausages, butter tarts, lemon tarts and chocolate chip cookies-stay tuned to the announcements.

Rockwood Trustees

Submitted by Rosslyn Bentley

The Trustees and Sherol Steinberg, Council/Property and Finance Chairperson met on Zoom on January 13. Darryl Nichol reported that we have entered an Engineering Services Agreement with GM Blue Plan Engineering for an estimated budget of \$13,563 to cover:

- Completion of Topographical Survey and Base
- Preparation of Conceptual Parking Lot Layout
- Completion of Site Grading and Servicing Plan
- Completion of a Stormwater Management Design Report
- Site Plan Submission and SP meeting with Township
- Coordination with Township, County and MTO

Sherol noted that the Council had been polled and supported our proposal to withdraw funds from our investment to cover expenses for selling the existing parking lot and developing the new one. It was decided to withdraw \$10,000 on May 5.

Rosslyn Bentley joined the Stone Trustees and Property and Finance Committee to meet with Tomas Rincon of Frontier Capital to further explain their Canoe Funds which have been developed for United Churches.

Rockwood Outreach

Submitted by Marcia Haworth

Mission and Service

We appear to be on track to meet our 2021 target of \$12000. We appreciate the M&S videos that Heather presents on a monthly basis. During Lent they were shown weekly along with information and statistics about the scope of M&S both at home and worldwide.

Anishnabeg Outreach

We have donated a large quantity of clothing and footwear this year as well as quilts and home-made blankets.

Women in Crisis / Rural Women's Support Program

Thanks to the generous donation from The Rockwood Lionesses, via Ollie Darcie, we added \$1000 to the \$2000 previously allocated to support this agency. It was very gratefully received.

EWCS Food Bank

We plan a freezer fill when the current lock-down is over and they have additional room in their freezer.

We continue to try to come up fundraising ideas despite the restrictions imposed by COVID. To this end we resurrected the Food Fix for February, March, April and May and we are once again grateful to our determined food-loving folk that came through again. Our four offerings made over \$1500. In July we are planning to prepare and sell a limited number of take-out picnics featuring whole roast chickens, salads and fruit pies. We are incubating ideas for a pre-Christmas offering, including gift packaged preserves and festive arrangements

*We sing of the Spirit,
who speaks our prayers of deepest longing
and enfolds our concerns and confessions,
transforming us and the world.*

From A Song of Faith

***Rockwood Stone
Ministry and Personnel***
Submitted by Brian Mack

The Ministry and Personnel Committee met on May 6, 2021 at 7:30 pm via zoom. Committee members were reminded that many of us take on multiple roles within our individual churches and at the Pastoral Charge Board level given the size of our congregations. As a result, we have developed the practice of declaring a conflict of interest when appropriate or inviting another member to declare when there is a conflict or perceived conflict of interest.

Following a review of the terms of reference for the committee which were adopted by the Pastoral Charge Board on June 6, 2020, Reverend Leffler was invited to share her 2021 goals with the committee. Those goals are as follows – to continue to engage with our children and youth outside of Sunday mornings; to work with our Discernment Circles and Committees to build on the learnings from the pandemic; and to help us find safe ways to re-connect.

Brian Mack and Ellen Thomson reported briefly on the regional M & P workshops that they attended in November and March respectively via zoom. Committee members were encouraged to take advantage of these workshops in future.

Rev. Leffler was thanked for her innovative work over the course of the past year. Rosslyn Bentley's many contributions as chairperson and recording secretary for a number of years were acknowledged. Brian Mack will be Chairperson for 2021 and Ellen Thomson will be the recording secretary.

*Finding ourselves in a world of beauty
and mystery,
of living things, diverse and interdependent,
of complex patterns of growth and evolution,
of subatomic particles and cosmic swirls,
we sing of God the Creator,
the Maker and Source of all that is.*

From A Song of Faith

***Rockwood and Stone
Reopening Commission***
Submitted by Brian Mack

The Reopening Church Commission for the Rockwood-Stone Pastoral Charge met via zoom on February 3, 2021 at 7:30 pm. Our discussion focused on things that we are grateful for, challenges that our congregations have faced or anticipate facing in light of the pandemic, and opportunities that may arise in the coming months. As a pastoral charge, it was felt that we have adapted well to the ever-changing circumstances associated with the COVID-19 crisis. The energy and vitality of our congregations has helped to keep our faith communities focused on faith formation and our various outreach programs. We are indebted to everyone for their adaptability as we embrace new technologies, their willingness to try new approaches to being in community, and for their continued strong financial support of our churches of Rockwood and Stone.

In making decisions with regards to reopening, our emphasis on caution and due diligence has allowed Rev. Leffler to focus her attention on being creative in worship and in keeping our faith communities healthy and connected. We are appreciative of the suggestions provided by the Combined Worship Committee in this regard. We continue to monitor and implement the recommendations provided by Public Health with respect to the limited use of our facilities. Much of this work has fallen to Sherol Steinberg at Rockwood and to Jack Ward at Stone who look after rentals. Only AA has been allowed to meet periodically in the sanctuary at Rockwood since November and this organization is currently meeting virtually in accordance with current guidelines.

Members of our Commission are in regular contact via email and will meet via Zoom at the call of the Chair as the evolving situation warrants. We are pleased to welcome Randy Dewey to the Commission in his role as Pastoral Charge chairperson.

Stone UCW

Submitted by Edie Ward

Due to COVID-19 no meetings have been held.

A newsletter was created in December that UCW members could contribute to. It was sent out to the group and ladies of the Church who support UCW volunteer work and social times.

With donations over the year 2020, we were able to donate to Nutrition for Learning Programs at Rockwood Centennial, Eramosa and École Harris Mill Public Schools, Mission and Service, East Wellington Community Services, Canadian Food Grains Bank, Anishnabeg Outreach and general funds at Stone United. If you wish to continue your collection for 2021, contact Edie 519-856-4765 to arrange pickup, e-transfer to stoneuc.treasurer@gmail.com or mail to Stone United Church, PO Box 57, Rockwood, Ontario N0B 2K0.

A new stove has been purchased for the kitchen to replace an old unit.

Weekly cleaning of Church will commence when we reopen.

Affirming Discernment Circle

Submitted by Lisa Leffler

In January, the Affirming Church Discernment Circle led worship with Marion Bascom as our guest speaker. We are grateful for the gift of hearing Marion share her experience of her daughter coming out and for everyone who shared in the conversation following worship.

In Contemplation and Conversation, we are sharing articles and videos that help raise awareness to the places in life where people are discriminated against. Thank you to the congregation members who have sent us articles to share with everyone.

Looking ahead, we are excited to have Rev. Tim Raeburn join us for Rockwood's anniversary service to speak about his experiences with affirming churches.

We are currently looking for people to share stories of when they have faced discrimination or

rejection in a church or in the community because of their race, ability, economic status, sexuality, age, gender or gender identity and/or an experience of how they felt when they or someone close to them came out as LGBTQ2SI+. We are looking for people who are willing to be interviewed for a worship service – either live or pre-recorded according to their comfort level. Volunteers able to share their experience to help deepen understanding within our congregations or people who have questions about the process, are asked to contact a member of the Affirming Discernment Circle—Barb Elie, Brian Mack, Brent Stiles, Lisa Leffler, Liz Guthrie and Marion Bascom.

*Scripture is our song for the journey,
the living word
passed on from generation to generation
to guide and inspire,
that we might wrestle a holy revelation
for our time and place
from the human experiences
and cultural assumptions of another era.
God calls us to be doers of the word
and not hearers only.*

*The Spirit breathes revelatory power
into scripture,
bestowing upon it a unique and normative place
in the life of the community.
The Spirit judges us critically
when we abuse scripture
by interpreting it narrow-mindedly,
using it as a tool of oppression,
exclusion, or hatred.*

*The wholeness of scripture testifies
to the oneness and faithfulness of God.
The multiplicity of scripture testifies
to its depth:
two testaments, four gospels,
contrasting points of view held in tension—
all a faithful witness to the One and Triune God,
the Holy Mystery that is Wholly Love.*

From a Song of Faith