



Rockwood Stone News

Rockwood-Stone Pastoral Charge
The United Church of Canada

Visit our website at www.rockwoodstoneunitedchurches.com



"Live, Love, Laugh"

Rockwood United Church
119 Harris St.
Rockwood, ON NOB 2K0

November 2023

Minister: Rev. Heather Leffler
hleffler@rogers.com

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

Office:

Messages are monitored virtually.
rockwoodstoneuc@gmail.com

519-856-4160

Connect with us on Facebook at

Rockwood-Stone

for *Contemplation and Conversation*, updates
and reminders about upcoming events.



*"The little church
with a big heart"*

Stone United Church
5370 Fourth Line
Rockwood, ON NOB 2K0

Join us for...

Worship on **Sundays** at **9:45 am** at **Stone** and on **Zoom Worship**
and at **11:15 am** at **Rockwood** and on **Zoom** or watch on **YouTube**.

To join **Zoom** for **Worship and Meetings** click on the link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6995074926?pwd=eTk1T1d0V2NXVVNxazlEcGpuL3JpUT09> . To join by phone, dial +1-647-374-4685 or +1-647-558-0588 and enter **Meeting ID: 699 507 4926** and **Password: 20120701**.

If you are having trouble connecting to Zoom, contact Heather Leffler at 519-573-9642.

To receive
the **Announcements** on **Thursdays**,
Contemplation and Conversation
on **Sundays** each week, contact the office.
If you don't have email,
we can provide printed copies.

For pastoral concerns, to share ideas
about our activities, outreach or worship,
or just to talk, contact Rev. Heather Leffler
at 519-265-7385, text 519-573-9642 or
hleffler@rogers.com.

If you would like a copy of the worship slides
each Sunday, you can also email Heather.

Congregational Packages for Advent and Christmas

Do you have two or three **winter** or **Christmas** pictures you would like to share for Christmas cards?
Would you be willing to **bake cookies** for **December 2** or help with preparing the packages
on **December 2** at **2 pm** at **Stone**? Please contact Heather Leffler to volunteer.

Tuesday, November 14 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 continue our study of the epistles.



Wednesday, November 15,
Genesis Book Club
at **7:30 pm**, on **Zoom**
join us for a thoughtful,
thought-provoking discussion of
Weyward by Emilia Hart.

Friday, November 17
and the **third Friday** of each month
Faith, Food, Friendship and Fun
beginning at **6 pm**, at **Stone**.

Join us for dinner, conversation, activities, a craft, and casual time of worship. Contact Heather at hleffler@rogers.com or 519-265-7385 by the Wednesday before each event so we know how many people to cook dinner for.

November 23 and every other **Thursday**
For Women: come to **Tea and Talk**
from **10 am** to **12 noon**, on **Rockwood**.
Share in lively conversations, laughter,
and enjoy delicious treats!



Saturday, November 25 enjoy a
Foodgrains Breakfast and Silent Auction
at **Rockwood**, from **8 to 11 am**

Sponsored by Stone Foodgrains Committee with proceeds to **Canadian Foodgrains Bank**
Bring your family, friends and neighbours for a delicious breakfast and lively conversation and help fight hunger and achieve greater food security for all people.



Pumpkin Story Contest for Foodgrains

Children ages **5 -12** are invited
to **write a story** about:
Why is Pumpkin shedding a tear?
to benefit the Foodgrains Bank.



Submit your story by **Saturday, November 25** or bring it to the **Foodgrains Breakfast** at Rockwood.

The winning author will receive a \$50 prize & the Foodgrains Bank will receive \$100.

A panel of judges composed from both churches will decide "who has the most imaginative or touching story" A prize of \$25 will also be given to the most "unique" story.

Thanks to Elsa Hore for sponsoring the contest.



Saturday, November 25 join us at **10 am**
outside at **Rockwood** to **Deck the Halls**.

Bring environmental friendly ornaments
to add to the tree.

Spiritual Saturdays

Join us on **November 25** and the **last Saturday** of the month at **Stone** or on **Zoom** from **1 to 3:30 pm**

If you are praying scripture for the first time, contact Lisa Leffler to learn the practice. Email lleffler@live.ca by Wednesday to receive the materials. Take time to pray the scripture.

At 1 pm on Saturday afternoon join the group on Zoom, meet with and companion one another, and share in the large group conversation. Everyone is welcome.

Sunday, November 26

begin the Christmas season with
An Evening of Christmas Carols
at **7 pm**, at **Rockwood** and on **Zoom**
with our own Eramosa Ensemble.

Stay for hot chocolate and cookies. There will be a Free Will Offering for EWCS Foodbank to support people struggling with food security in our community.



Communion will be celebrated **December 3**
the first **Sunday of Advent**
at **9:45 am** at **Stone** and on
Zoom and at **11:15 am** at
Rockwood and on **Zoom**



Wear Your Festive Apparel for Advent...

On **December 3** wear something **red**
on **December 10** wear **green**
on **December 17** wear a **festive hat**
and/or Christmas sweater
on **December 24** wear **all of the above**
add adornments like festive belts, dangly earrings
and more – homemade all the better
and join us for **Worship!**



Advent Gifts – In the Spirit of Christmas help us
support **Anishnabeg Outreach Spirit Bundles.**

Most needed items include ...

- cleaning supplies
- larger size diapers (5,6) and pull ups (5,6,7)
- baby wipes
- personal hygiene supplies including tampons, shampoo & conditioner

Consider making a donation
to one of our outreach partners ...

**Mission and Service,
Anishnabeg Outreach,
Canadian Foodgrains Project,
East Wellington Community Services and
the Rural Women's Support Program.**



Outreach Christmas Market

December 3 from **10:30 am to 1 pm**

start your Christmas shopping at **Rockwood.**

Order your fresh Christmas arrangements to be
picked up at the market from Marcia. There will be
homemade goodies for people and
pets, a mini-Silent Auction, Christmas
crafts, Christmas cards and more.

The proceeds will enable us to give
grocery gift cards to the clients of EWCS
food bank and the women and children receiving
support from the Rural Women's Support Program.



Christmas Eve Day

Join Heather for **worship**
at **10 am** on **Zoom.**
You are welcome to join us in your
Christmas pj's.



Christmas Eve

from **6:15 to 7 pm** we will share
Readings and Reflections
with **Communion,**
accompanied by flute music
at **Rockwood.**



At **7:30 pm** we will celebrate
the Birth of Jesus
with **Communion, Scripture**
Story, Song and Conversation
at **Stone.**



New Year Eve's Day

the **Worship and Faith Formation Committee** will
lead **worship** at **10 am** on **Zoom.**

Beginning **Saturday, January 27, 2024**

Country Breakfasts

are back the last Saturday of the month
at **Rockwood,**
from **8 to 11 am**

Bring your family, friends and neighbours
for a delicious breakfast and lively conversation.
If anyone would like **to help serve, cook, clear tables**
or clean the kitchen afterwards,
please contact Marcia at **519-856-4968.**



Annual Meetings

Stone's Meeting

will be held on **Sunday, February 4.**

Rockwood's Meeting

will be held on **Sunday, February 11.**

**Thank you for supporting
our churches and
outreach partners!**

Letters, Notes and Emails ...

Brothers, Sisters and Siblings in Christ,

When our Creator gathered together the elements to bring this incredible, expansive universe into being, God saw that everything was good. Like all creatures, each of us was created as a valued, beloved child of God. We were created to be interdependent and valued parts of creation. In the Holy One's world, we are valued not because of what we believe and do but because we are.

The world we live in tells us people are good and bad, right and wrong, hardworking and lazy, winners and losers. Society tells us that if you work hard enough, believe and do the right things (whatever they are at this particular time), you deserve a good life. Sadly, this can lead to forming divisive groups hoping to be on the winning side. This way of thinking can also lead to hiding our shortcomings and differences to fit in.

As we talk about why the church matters, what comes to mind for me, again and again, is that in church we find community. Not a community that is right or better than other Christians, people of faith or people of no faith (though historically our church has been as guilty as any other in assuming we had the right way.) The community we find in church is the one that chooses to affirm all people and to seek the wellbeing of all God's creation.

I was so grateful for your decision to affirm people of the LGBTQ2S+ community and all people in June. When we seek to make a place where everyone can come together and be loved and valued, the church becomes a glimpse of God's commonwealth where no one is left out. This doesn't mean we will never have differences or struggle with one another's ideas, beliefs, actions and inactions. Life together will continue to be messy. What it does mean is that we will seek the gifts in one another and recognize that we are much better together than when we separate ourselves from one another.

When we gather in worship, our greetings, scriptures and conversations show us we are cared for. When we take time to connect with people we haven't seen and ask about the people they love, we tell them they are missed, valued and belong. When we talk about how God has called us and respond to the grace and love we are offered, we imagine worship and activities like the Harvest Table, Foodgrains Growing Project, Congregation Packs, Carol Sing, Advent Activities and Christmas market and so much more. These activities draw us closer to one another and seek to share the gifts we have received from God with others so we can be the world God imagined into being. May it be so.

Blessings,

Randy

November 2023

A Message from the Pastoral Charge Board Chair

Dear Friends,

As our November days get shorter and we become more accustomed to colder temperatures and cloudier skies, I think back to my last May message where I was encouraging everyone to take part in the meeting to decide whether our churches would become affirming. We had a large turnout and a unanimous vote from those who voted that we would become an affirming church! With all the world news about wars and hate, it is great to know that in our own corner of life, we are welcoming and accepting of everyone. Thanks to everyone who worked hard to make this happen.

I am always amazed to see how busy our church community is. Have a look at all the reports and I am sure you will agree that a lot has happened and there continues to be a wide range of activities available for everyone and anyone who wants to become involved. Please consider joining a group or just trying something out to see if you like it.

I wish you all the best as we approach the Advent Season. I hope the Spirit of Christmas is able to lighten up all your short days and cloudy skies!

*Take care,
Randy Dewey*



Pastoral Charge Treasurer – We are looking for a volunteer to work with Roy Steinberg and take over as Pastoral Charge Treasurer. To volunteer or nominate someone, please contact Randy Dewey randy.dewey11@gmail.com.

From The United Church – Rev. Roger Janes, Community of Faith Stewardship Support for First Dawn Eastern Edge, Region 15, Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters, Nakonha:ka, Eastern Ontario Outaouais, and East Central Ontario Regions of the United Church of Canada

Published On: March 13, 2023

There I was, 25 years old, in a room full of 60-year-olds. At a seminar to learn about retiring. I had just been ordained and my financial education was about to begin. As strange as it felt at the time, the lessons I learned at that event shaped my life.

Up until then I never thought much about money. Money came in, and money went out. I did not have a budget, but I had lots of debt, and no savings. During that retirement seminar, I first heard the expression, “pay yourself first”! The idea was to save a percentage of my income every month — before I spent a cent — and put it away for retirement. I wondered, “I don’t have any spare money now! How am I going to save a percentage of my income for the distant future?” The answer was simple: discern a meaningful and challenging amount and have it come straight out of my chequing account at the beginning of each month and go into an investment account. I was told I would never miss it. Make saving a priority, the financial planner said, and it will happen. And it did. It is the single best piece of financial advice I ever received.

At that very same age, being a person of faith and just starting to receive a full-time salary, I was also deciding how much money should I give to our church’s ministry. Should I also give to other charities? Once again, I didn’t have any extra cash to spare, yet I was taught that living out my faith included sharing what I had. For a second time that financial planner’s words rang in my ears — discern a meaningful and challenging amount, and “pay (this time) God” first. Take it off the top, and you will never miss it. Make it a priority and it will happen. And it did.

Now, at the start of every new year, I make it a spiritual practice to discern how much to give to the church and other charities. I call it my “faith in action” money. Making this a priority has also taught me to better trust God when I don’t think I have enough.

It turns out this is biblical. It is called "[Firstfruits Giving](#)" by Lynne A. Miller), and it’s about putting God first. The people of Israel, living in an agricultural society, offered the first of their harvest to God as a sign of gratitude for all that God had given them. We too can express our thanks to God by also giving our “first fruits.” In our modern capitalist society, that means money.

In 2023, you and I have an excellent way to give our financial first fruits to God. The Pre-Authorized Remittance program (PAR), where a gift to the church is automatically withdrawn from our bank account monthly, can help us to take it off the top so we’ll never miss it.

It really comes down to this: years after I made the decision not to think about generosity as coming from what is left over, but to put God first, I am still discovering the hope and the promise that I will still have more than enough for my needs. It is indeed a decision that has shaped my life!

Thank You

Your faithfulness through PAR, e-transfers, Canada Helps and postdated cheques is keeping our finances stable and allowing us to continue to serve God in our church communities and the world.

How can I support our churches?

1. **PAR:** To sign up for monthly Pre-Authorized Remittances or to change your givings, contact Bill Allen at stoneuc.treasurer@gmail.com or 519-841-4170 for **Stone** or Amanda Hunter-Anthony at rockwooduc.treasurer@gmail.com or 519-856-1129 for **Rockwood**.
2. **E-transfer Stone** at stoneuc.treasurer@gmail.com or **Rockwood** at rockwooduc.treasurer@gmail.com
In the memo, please designate whether your offering is for your church, M&S and/or other and include your contact information.
3. **Canada Helps** is a Canadian registered charity that enables other charities to receive online gifts. Go to <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/80455/> or Rockwood <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/48574/> to make a credit card donation. You can designate your offering to the church, M&S and/or other in the message box.
4. **Cheques** can be sent to **Stone United Church**, PO Box 57 Rockwood, ON NOB 2K0 or **Rockwood United Church**, 119 Harris St., Rockwood, ON NOB 2K0

Committees and Groups ...

Rockwood and Stone Worship and Faith Formation

Submitted by Barb Eley and Brian Mack

It has been a very busy time since our last report in the May newsletter complete with celebrations, remembrances, and many opportunities to continue to get to know God and each other. As a committee, we are excited about honouring traditions and exploring new possibilities.

Lisa Leffler led services on May 14, June 25, July 2, July 9, August 27, and September 3 with the Worship and Faith Formation Committee leading the Remembrance Day Service on November 5. On these occasions, Rev. Leffler was on holidays or study leave.

Summer worship from June 25th until September 3rd was at 10 am beginning with Stone and alternating with Rockwood thereafter.

We continue to be grateful to God for everyone in our congregations who have contributed to worship and faith formation throughout the late spring and summer. Special thanks to those who have shared pictures for the worship slides and offering praise. Lisa and Heather Leffler have prepared videos using previously recorded music and we have been blessed with choir anthems and two hymns sung by Liz Guthrie, Patty Lancaster, and Paul May.

Spring, Summer & Fall Worship Highlights

- May 14 – Rogation/Rural Life Sunday – Lisa offered a video of farm pictures with the Rockwood Stone Choir singing *We Plough the Fields and Scatter* and Brian Mack reading a poem suggested by Barb Parker.
- May 28, Pentecost Sunday – We held our annual pastoral charge picnic on the lawn at Stone following a combined service. Tom Parker, Heather Leffler, and Lisa Leffler engaged us with a trivia contest, a craft and a scavenger hunt. The service which included communion was based on the *Dreaming Dreams* worship from the Western Ontario Waterways Spring Meeting.
- June 4, UCW Celebration at Stone – Marg Baker prepared the UCW closing that was part of worship and provided each member of the UCW with a rose. Heather prepared a slide show for

Offering Praise with pictures of UCW through the years. Bakers and Lefflers made cupcakes for fellowship following worship.

- June 4, Chimes Choir Anniversary at Rockwood – Following a delicious supper, the Chimes Choir shared their music and Christine Wenger, Brent Stiles, and Chris Barlow entertained with a skit.
- June 11, Rockwood's Anniversary – Natasha Luth spoke passionately about her church experience and her work with the Queer Christian Community as part of the U of G Ecumenical Campus Ministry. Following the service, a pastoral charge meeting was held chaired by Randy Dewey with Carol Smelsky recording the minutes. Our Affirming Vision statement was unanimously accepted. The congregations together also voted unanimously that we become an Affirming Pastoral Charge.
- September 24th, Orange Shirt Sunday – We wore orange in support of our Indigenous brothers and sisters who are still feeling the effects of residential schools.
- October 1, World Communion Sunday – Rev. Leffler used worship resource materials from Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council.
- October 15, Stone's 161st Anniversary – Guest speaker Anees Munshi talked about his faith journey and commonalities between various faiths. Following a "crock pot" luncheon, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank wrap up occurred outside the church and in the Jeanne Jackson Reading Room.
- October 29th, All Saint's Sunday – We remembered people who have died in each church during the past year.
- November 5, Remembrance Sunday – Worship was led by the Worship and Faith Formation committee at Rockwood at 10 am.

Faith Formation

Many opportunities for faith formation exist. Over the summer and throughout the fall, those opportunities have included the following:

- Contemplation & Conversation – Rev. Leffer continues to challenge us through her weekly commentaries. She has been ably supported with contributions by Lisa Leffler, Tammy Smits, Liz Guthrie, Brian Mack, and Rosslyn Bentley. Along

with the commentaries we are often provided with links to various United Church resources for our own individual study.

- Creation Packages – Creation packs were prepared for distribution beginning September 3rd. The reflections and questions were provided by Rev. Leffler. Prayers were written by Brian Mack. The Lefflers offered activities, the mint, and arranged for preparing the packages. The photocopying was done by Lisa Leffler and the assembling of the packs was completed by Lisa Leffler, Michael Benham, Barb Parker and Tammy and Heidi Smits. A huge thanks is extended to all who delivered the packages.
- Bible Study – In the months leading up to summer, Bible Study continued to focus on the writings of Paul and provided for much deep discussion. Since mid-September, we have looked at Titus and 1st Peter.
- Spiritual Saturdays – Spiritual Saturdays were held until the end of June and focused on the theme “Called to Community”. For July and August, Lisa Leffler sent the materials for our own personal study. The new theme for the fall is “Bread of Life”.
- Genesis Book Club – The group continues to meet monthly with the summer highlight being our July meeting which was enhanced by a delicious pot luck followed by book selections for 2023-2024. You are encouraged to check out the book list even if you can’t join us.
- Tea and Talk – Ladies met bi-weekly in person until mid-June and have resumed gathering.
- Coffee Connections – Men met bi-weekly on-line until mid-June and have not yet resumed meeting.
- Faith, Food, Fellowship, and Fun – Gatherings were held on June 16, July 21, September 15, and October 20 at Rockwood, while Stone was the setting for our August 18th gathering. Heather, John, and Lisa Leffler plan the worship, the craft, and the supper.
- Choir – After a break over the summer, our choirs under the direction of Liz Guthrie and Barb Eley meet every Thursday night at 7 pm.

- Eramosa Ensemble – They continue to practice at Stone and played at private functions over the summer.
- Chimes Choir – Began rehearsing Sunday mornings at 10 am at Rockwood as of October 22.

Looking Forward – The Worship and Faith Formation committee met on September 27th and along with Rev. Leffler planned services until mid-February.

Upcoming Services/Special Events include:

- November 26, Carol Sing – At Rockwood led by the Eramosa Ensemble. Free will offering for the EWCS foodbank.
- December 3, 1st Sunday of Advent – Communion.
- December 3, Blue Christmas Service at 7 pm at Stone – The service will include the lighting of candles as the names of people we are remembering are shared.
- December 24th – Morning service on Zoom at 10 am.
- Christmas Eve – We will share Readings and Reflections from 6:15 until 7 pm at Rockwood and a Christmas Eve Communion Service will be held at Stone at 7:30 pm.
- December 31st – Morning service on Zoom at 10 am hosted by Lisa Leffler and led by the Worship and Faith Formation Committee.
- January 7th and 15th – Worship led by Lisa Leffler
- February 4th and 11th, Annual Meetings – Services will be based on Our Song of Faith.

We invite people to dress in red, green, Christmas clothing and adornments and all out Christmas for the Sundays in Advent.

The Advent Christmas Congregational Pack will include Christmas cards, cookies, and crocheted stars. Watch for an announcement for a chance to make the stars and to add sparkly beads to them on a Saturday.

Heather will be on holidays from December 25 to December 31, study leave from January 1 to 7, and Administrative Leave from January 8 to 14. The dates of her sabbatical in 2024 are not yet firm but it is anticipated that Lisa Leffler will lead services in her absence.

The Worship and Faith Formation Committee will next meet on January 31, 2024 at 6:15 pm on Zoom.

Rockwood Stone Ministry and Personnel

Submitted by Brian Mack

Since the last Pastoral Charge Board Meeting, Ministry and Personnel met on July 16th in-person at Rockwood and on October 11th via Zoom.

Actions taken were as follows:

- Received oral reports re: annual reviews of all lay personnel
- Received an oral report presented by Brian Mack concerning Rev. Leffler's annual review. Heather continues to enjoy working in partnership with our congregations.
- Received Rev. Leffler's goals for 2024
- Discussed ways in which our churches can support ministry personnel, lay employees, volunteers, and non-ministry personnel
- Provided recommendations to the Finance and Stewardship Committee for budget considerations re: salary and benefits for Rev. Leffler and our Secretary, Lisa Leffler
- Encouraged our Councils to review honorariums and rates of remuneration unique to each church
- Discussed Rev. Leffler's upcoming sabbatical in 2024 and supported her in determining which dates of leave work best for her, what the nature of her experience will entail, and how she will report to the congregations following the sabbatical
- Concurred with Worship and Faith Formation that Lisa Leffler provide pulpit supply when Rev. Leffler is on sabbatical

Ministry and Personnel will next meet in March of 2024.

Rockwood and Stone Trustees

Submitted by Heather Leffler

The Trustees met on October 26 at Stone and on Zoom. It was decided that Ed Nagel and Heather Leffler will be co-signers on the Manse Funds invested with Frontier Capital. The Trustees will recommend the full housing portion of the minister's salary will be withdrawn for 2024 and transferred to the Pastoral Charge.

Rockwood Stone Finance & Stewardship

Submitted by Heather Leffler

The Committee met briefly on November 1 to share information for the 2024 budget .

Stone Property & Finance

Submitted by Jack Ward and Bill Allen

Property – Jack Ward

Water samples were done June 28 and September 23 and passed.

Take-out roast beef dinner was held October 25, 2023, for 93 people and was well received.

The Fourth Line resurfacing was completed prior to Take-out dinner.

Yard cleanup was not held. Jack Ward did a lot of trimming etc. while the new furnace was installed.

Windows were cleaned inside and out August 9-10, 2023.

Kitchen was inspected by Public Health and passed September 5, 2023.

Bakeless Bake Sale will be held for the month of November. This was previously a UCW project.

Financial – Bill Allen

The Church's operating statement is showing a net loss of \$5,100 to the end of October. This loss can be partially attributed to reduced donations from the loss of two PAR donors and reduced donations from non-PAR givers. Fundraising and donations to our Foodgrains Growing Project currently stands at \$6,300. Donations to local and global outreach activities and appeals amounted to \$2,740. A total of \$2,900 was raised from the take-out dinners. In spite of the current operational deficit, Stone Church is in solid financial condition with \$88,000 invested in short and medium-term GIC's.

The Furnace/Heat Pump was installed at a capital cost of \$14,935, with the cost partially offset by a \$5,000 grant from the UPFund for a net cost of \$9,935.

In early December, we are planning to reach out to members of the Stone United Church who have lapsed in their donations to encourage support to the operation of our Church and outreach activities.

Rockwood Property & Finance

Submitted by Sherol Steinberg

Thank you to all who support the church with their resources and time. Please keep the church general fund in mind with the Christmas season approaching. Our financial position continues to be challenging. Thanks to a financial gift from the estate of Jeannie Southwell-Croft we were able to weather the first 9 months of the year.

We did not rent the church hall during the summer in hopes that we would start work on the kitchen but were unable to find a long enough time frame to complete. We have changed our plan and will complete the kitchen while keeping the hall and kitchen accessible and able to be used. Work on the kitchen will begin November 4 led by Kevin Anthony along with his able helpers. Along with our Launch Lunch to raise money for the Kitchen, we applied and received an UpFund Grant to be applied to the Kitchen renovations.

The Country Breakfast was run September and October by Rockwood United Church. Stone United will be running a breakfast from Rockwood at the end of November in conjunction with a Silent Auction to benefit Foodgrains.

The stain glass window in the Narthex has been repaired and reinstalled and looks beyond amazing! Darryl is getting a quote to have work on the other three windows on the tower and narthex completed as the budget allows.

Gratitude and Thanks to

- the Country Breakfast Volunteers who are steadfast and true
- Cees Braamse and Kevin Anthony for grass cutting at the church and the house and for having willing hands to complete numerous small maintenance tasks throughout the year on a shoestring budget and lots of creativity
- all for decorating the outside and inside of the church especially to Colleen for decorating the church throughout the year-with help of her minions Phylliss, Ollie and Michele
- Helen who cleans the church weekly with the endless challenge of keeping the cobwebs at bay and her enduring patience and positive attitude

- Amanda, Treasurer of RUC
- my fellow committee members for their patience and support-we are few in number but mighty

Upcoming Dates

- Nov 4 – work bee at church in kitchen
 - Nov 13, 14 – electrical work in hall and kitchen
 - Nov 25 – outdoor decorating for Advent Season
-

Rockwood Outreach

Submitted by Marcia Haworth

Mission and Service

If donations continue for the remainder of the year at the present level, we should come close to meeting our 2023 target. We are always so grateful for the support that M & S receives from this congregation.

Coming up Outreach Events

During Advent we plan to support Anishnabeg Outreach with donations of items which would most benefit their members.

The Outreach Christmas market will be held on Sunday 3 December as a fundraiser to provide grocery gift cards to help out the clients of East Wellington Community Services (EWCS) food bank, and Rural Women's Support Program (RWSP) over the holidays. We will also be supporting Anishnabeg Outreach. This event will run from 10:30 am until 1 pm and we will be serving a light lunch of sandwiches and sweets including the ever-popular cinnamon buns. There will be lots of Christmas goodies and decorations for sale as well as gift items, creative stocking stuffers, and fresh indoor and outdoor arrangements. We are offering a small number of special items in our Silent Auction. Please invite your friends and family to join us in making this a success while getting ahead with Christmas baking and shopping.

Back by popular demand is our Robbie Burns Night celebration with great music, lots of Scottish songs, traditions and food. This will be held on either January 20th or 21st, 2024. The Eramosa Ensemble is already rehearsing!

Recent Fundraising

In June we catered the Chimes choir dinner before the concert, on which we made \$365. In July we catered a Celebration of Life at Rockmosa, donating a

portion of the money raised to the general fund. Our newest venture was the Pub Grub and Quiz Night, which everyone seemed to enjoy. There was certainly a great deal of friendly participation and competition as well as plenty of raucous laughter. We were happy to welcome two teams from Stone and also to donate \$200 to their Foodgrains Initiative. Our portion from this event was \$860 and will be used to purchase gift cards for EWCS food bank clients.

Supporting our Community

The local food bank has seen a huge increase in their client base this year and expects that this trend will continue. The number of families and senior couples experiencing food insecurity has doubled over the last 9 months. Combined with a reduced number of donations this is causing a concern for them. In response, we held a late summer food drive which was extremely successful and focused on the items that were in shortest supply. Several members of our congregation took us up on our offer to shop for the foodbank which enabled us to purchase much needed items when on special, after all the donations had been received. This was especially appreciated by the foodbank coordinator as it topped up the freezer with whole chickens and ground beef as well as a large quantity of frozen food from our friends at MacMillans Frozen Foods who always support us with a generous discount. In all we spent \$460.

Drop-In gift Cards

To date we have spent \$350 on grocery and gas cards to give folk who come to us for help. Again, this is a significant increase over last year.

Anishnabeg Outreach

Many people wore orange to worship on 24 September commemorating the residential school survivors and their families.

We continue to lift up our partnership with Anishnabeg Outreach by sharing Stephen Jackson's correspondence through the announcements and Contemplation and Conversation. Members of our churches have been invited to the Reconciliation Garden at Breslau through the summer and to join the harvest on The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation September 30. Our congregations have also been asked to consider sending donations

to AO through our treasurers. We will also lift up a way to support them through Advent.

In March, donations of clothing were dropped off for AO.

In July, seven people from Rockwood and Stone attended the celebration of AO's partnership with Trinity United in Guelph.

We continue to seek ways to strengthen this partnership.

Stone Canadian Foodgrains Bank Project

Submitted by Barb Parker

This is the 5th year of our fun growing project. Seeds for pumpkins, sunflowers and zucchini were distributed during the April 29 breakfast at Rockwood, after spring church services at Stone, and to previous participants from Arkell and Barrie Hill. The zucchini weigh off was held August 20 with various sized specimens received from participants.

Thank you to the Rockwood Outreach Committee for including our project in their October 1 fundraiser.

Our successful Growing Project Wrap Up was held on Sunday, October 15, following Stone's 161st Anniversary Service and lunch. Prizes were given out for pumpkins, sunflowers and cornstalks.

The new Harvest Table initiative was well supported, with fundraising and donations we have raised a total of \$6031.80 to date.

Thank you again to everyone for their support.

We look forward to your support at our November 25 Fundraising Breakfast and Silent Auction at Rockwood United to help us reach our goal of raising \$7000 for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. Let's work together to end global hunger.

Announcements were placed in the church announcements throughout the year to date, to raise the awareness of numerous Canadian Foodgrains Bank appeals for urgent and ongoing assistance.

Congratulations to Bill Allen for being selected for a Canadian Foodgrains Bank Learning Tour to Malawi in November.

Western Ontario Waterways

Submitted by Liz Guthrie

The fall gathering of Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council meeting was held online on September 28, 29 and 30, 2023. President Jennifer Irving and other advisors were situated at Nottawasaga Inn. The theme was *We are One – Living into Right Relations*.

A sacred fire was lit in Cape Crocker and kept burning until the end of the meeting. Joyce Johnston added many words of wisdom.

Bluevale United Church has disbanded.

Angus United Church and Grenfel United Church amalgamated and are now known as Grenfel United Church.

It has been suggested that Pastoral Charge supervisors be paid \$30/hour by the community of faith receiving supervision effective as of January 1, 2024.

Nine items were highlighted in the regional council evaluation. Breakout groups had the chance to have conversation around one of the nine evaluations of their choosing.

Category 3 Remit: "At General Council 44, the National Indigenous Circle asked for the removal of any structural barriers that would prevent the development and sustaining of an autonomous National Indigenous Organization within the United Church of Canada. With the passing of this remit, the National Indigenous Organization will have its own mechanisms to make any future changes to its structure and processes, and therefore will not be subject to the remit process."

Whitton Daley has been appointed to Cedar Hills United Church, Cambridge.

The spring meeting will be held May 24 and 25, 2024.

Rockwood Trustees

Submitted by Heather Leffler

The Trustees met in May to receive a letter of intent to purchase the parking lot. In August they met to accept the offer on the parking lot and are waiting for the conditions to be fulfilled.

Rockwood Pastoral Care and Fellowship

Submitted by Ellen Thomson

Circle of Care/Church Roll: Although our committee tries to keep up with special birthdays, illnesses and situations where maybe a card or telephone call should take place, I personally feel that we miss many people. Please remember to forward your change of address, email address or telephone number.

Fall packages were delivered for the Season of Creation.

Tea and Talk, Coffee and Conversation on Zoom and *Faith, Food, Friendship and Fun* continue. These activities help to build community and relationships among one another.

The committee has not met during this year. Plans are on hold.

We would like to have one more person on our committee.

Stone Pastoral Care and Fellowship

Submitted by John Leffler

Thank you to Karen Richardson for keeping up our list of phone, email and addresses. This allows us as a Church to keep in touch with each other through phone calls, emails and visits.

The harvest table has allowed us to share produce with our Church family and with Royal City Mission.

The Creation packages that we deliver help keep us connected to our Church family.

Cards are sent out for significant birthdays, anniversaries, weddings and funerals.

Contemplation and Conversation that goes out each week keeps our Church connected to our Church family and others in the wider community.



*Wishing You
& Your Loved
Ones
a Merry
Christmas &
a Happy
New Year!*